
The Concept of Racism in Morrison's " Sula"

Key word: Racism

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Abstract

Morrison's first novel was followed three years later by her second novel, *Sula*, 1973. *Sula* narrates the struggle of a black community in Ohio between 1919 and 1965. Primarily , it tells the story of two childhood friends, Nel Wright and Sula Peace, spiritual soul mates who go their separates ways when Nel Marries but reunite ten years later. In addition , it exposes the small mindedness of the black community toward Shadrack, a veteran suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, Nel's mother, Helene, the financially comfortable newcomer from New Orleans, and Sula and her grandmother Eva. The novel depicts the misery life of black people after the world war I and their struggle with the white society.

2. Racism in Sula

The novel opens with the destruction of the "Bottom", the black community's land to make way for suburban development. However, a tone of loss and reminiscence through the community tales about the Bottom was once a lively community with luscious trees, a pool hall, a beautyparlor, a church, a restaurant and many black inhabitants. There were music and familiarity among the inhabitants, and laughter could be heard as far away as the nearby valley. While this black community literally becomes homeless, it makes the pain of dislocation with humor in its perpetuation of the white man's joke that set up the community in the first place(Schreiber, 2010,19).

The Bottom got its name from a cruel joke played on a slave. A white farmer once promised his slave freedom and rich bottom land in exchange for some very difficult work. On completion of the work, the farmer did give the slave his freedom, but instead of fertile bottom

land , he gave him a hilly parcel of land worn away by erosion. The farmer told the slave that the hilly land was indeed bottom land, for it was " the bottom of heaven"(5). The slave unfortunately did not know any better so he accepted the land. Before long, the unfortunate slave found out the truth. He had been tricked by his master and given a piece of land that was worthless for farming.

The mater said: "Oh no! See those hills? That's bottom Land, rich and fertile".

"But it's high up in the hill," said the slave.

"High up from us," said the master, " but when God looks down, it's the bottom. That's why we call it so.

It's the bottom of heaven- best land there is."(5).

This framing of the novel encompasses the trauma of black life in white culture: scapegoat, butt of jokes, a lesser other. For a long time , the Bottom remained inhabited by the black people in the area, the white people stayed on the rich valley floor, at the start of the novel. However, the white inhabitants have discovered the beauty of the Bottom and have bought up the land , forcing the blacks to move out the Bottom with all its

rich history and comfortable familiarity, is being for a wealthy golf course(Ibid).

3. Racism in Army

The events of the novel open in (1919) when African American soldiers returned home from Europe after world war I and they did not receive as much respect for their service as the white soldiers. When they returned, many began working for civil rights .This chapter will tell us the story of another resident of the Bottom, Shadrack. He is the founder of the National Suicide Day(January 3). He suffers from shell shock, or what we would now call post- traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), because of disturbing things he saw in combat.

In 1917 France, Shadrack goes to first encounter with the enemy . As he is running with other men in his unit, dodging bullets and other artillery, he sees the man next to him get killed. Shadrack sees the man's " head disappear... under the inverted soup bowl of his helmet"(8).

As Shadrack recovers in the hospital, he finds that he has no control over his hand and other body parts:" anything could be anywhere"(8). He breaks down and cries when he emerges from the hospital and

realizes that" he didn't even know who or what he was... with no past, no language, no tribe, no source, no addressbook, no comb, no pencil, no clock... and nothing nothing nothing to do"(12). Like the freed slaves in *Beloved* and the orphaned Cholly in *The Bluest Eye*, Shadrack lacks a sense of self and has no clear idea of how to live in the world.(Bloom,1999,27).

After dismissal from a mental hospital to make more room, he is taken back to Medallion.

4. National Suicide Day

On his way to Medallion, Shadrack starts to think about some big issues like fear and death. He realizes that these things doesn't scare him, but the " unexpectedness"(14), does so he devises a way to deal with unknown by creating National Suicide Day(at this point it isn't really national, since only the people in the Bottom know about it.

He thinks that a good way to control death would be to make it all happen on a single day, January 3 of every year, so " everybody could get it out of the way and the rest of the year, would be safe and free"(14). So he walks all around the Bottom that day and invites people to kill themselves, or someone else. The town people are understandably freaked out by Shadrack (and the fact that he's carrying a noose probably doesn't help), but as the years pass by, people get used to him. National Suicide Day becomes just another part of life in the Bottom. It's not that people actually commit suicide or kill on this day, but they start to refer to the day in conversation and as a way to mark time. Shadrack creates a new home for himself. The community members separates themselves from Shadrack just as those in *The Bluest Eye* kept a distance from the Breedloves and Pecola, but without the vicious aggressive production. (Beaulieu,2004,335).

Shadrack began a struggle... to order and focus experience.

It had to do with making a place for fear as a way of

Controlling it...It was not death or dying that frightened him

, but the unexpectedness of both... in this manner he institute

National Suicide Day(14).

Shadrack, like other black people, also suffers from racism because he is black. The white officers send the black soldiers to the dangerous places in the front, while white people stay at safe places. Shadrack recognizes the oppressive plight of African American

People cause by the dominant society. Morrison produced Shadrack's story to show how racial prejudice against black destroy their psyche. National Suicide Day is a metaphor for a real event that took place during world war I, when 350,000 African American soldiers and people who served in the war, then were denied their right(Mbalia,2010,44).

The individual lives very bad life in the Bottom because of the oppression. In 1920, the narration moves to describe Nel's family, which consists of Nel and her parents: Wiley Wright and Helene Wright. Helene Sabat, who was born in a brothel called the Sundown House to a " Creole whore who worked there"(1). Helene's grandmother, Cecile, takes her away from Sundown House and raises her in a house where she is always watched by a statue of the Virgin Mary. Cecile tells the young Helene " to be constantly on guard for any sight of her mother's wild blood"(1). Cecile is terrified that Helene will become a working girl like her mom. As a daughter of a prostitute, she tries to hide her past under the mental of a respectable domesticity and restrict religion, that is why all the people in the Bottom respect her.

When Wiley Wright, a ship's cook on the great lakes line, falls in love with and marries Helene, both she and her grandmother are pleased about her move to Medallion to " a lovely house with a brick porch and real lace curtains at the window"(17). Helene Wright makes a proper home (much like the Dick and Jane house in *The Bluest Eye*) for her husband, even though he is at home " only three days out of every sixteen"(17)(Schreiber,2010,20). Helene raises Nel under the same strict rules that governed her own childhood," any enthusiasms that little Nel showed were calmed by the mother until she drove her daughter's imagination underground"(18).under the hands of Helene Nel obedient, polite.

Like Geraldine and the other middle-class women in *The Bluest Eye*, Helene is influenced by white society. She forces her daughter to pull her nose in order to make it narrow " while you sittin, there, honey, go head and pull your nose. It hurts, Mama. Don't you want a nice nose when you grow up?"(55). She also forces Nel every Saturday endures " the hateful hot comb"(55). Helene aims for a "whiteness that offers a totality, a fullness that masquerades as being"

so as to reduce her cultural and personal anxiety(Ferguson, 2007, 155).

5. Racism in Transportation

In November , Helene gets a letter that her grandmother is dying, she hasn't been back home since she left with Wiley, and she isn't thrilled about going back, since she feels she is so far. But she decides to go and take Nel with her. Though Helen's conventionality is implicitly linked to the rich whites of Medallion, Helene still suffers from racism, as can be seen by her experience on the train. The order and boundaries of her conservative, religious, middle class respectability do not protect her from racism. When Helene and Nel board the train that will take them to see Cecile, they accidentally step into the car meant for " whites only". Helene quickly realizes what has happened, but she keeps moving through the car to get to the " colored only car".

The white conductor looks down on her and orders her to move into the other car which is less statues because it is prepared for blacks. He calls Helene by bad words saying " what you think you doin', gal?"(20). The word "gal" very bad word and makes Helene " hard tremble"(21). It meant to make her small and inadequate and it does.Helene feels humiliated, apologizes for her over sight and smiles at the conductor. African American soldiers, who sit by ,watch Helene with hatred in their faces and thy disgusted to see an African American woman smiling at the white man who has just insulted her. According to K.Sumana " despite her trappings of a lady, she finds that in going to her grandmother's funeral she is subhuman in the eyes of white society. when the train conductor humiliates her, she does not rebel but smiles... by this action Helene insures her own oppression and degradation".

Nel shocks to see her mother smiling to the conductor. It could be a sign of defiance or resignation. Nel surprises with this incidents she has never seen her strong and respectable mother act so shamelessly , eager to make up for the fact that she is black. Nel vows never to allow anyone to make her act in such a pathetic manner. She doesn't ever want to be " custard" like her Mom .Nel hates the white society because the bad treatment for the blacks. When they discover that there are no toilet for the "colored" and that they must go in the grass

with the other blacks, Nel further experiences the degradation of the greater culture that Helene has avoided by living in Ohio.

By the time Helene and Nel arrive New Orleans, Cecile has already died. Instead of meeting Cecile, Helene meets her mother Rochelle. Nel is happy to see her grandmother. Nel is shocked by Rochelle's appearance and behavior. Nel likes her grandmother and realizes that woman can be free in defying the conventional boundaries whether of feminism or community. She is struck by the fact the conventions are not necessarily equate to strength person's identity or personality and Helene's humiliation by the white conductor is best example. Two things on the trip greatly influence Nel: the Pathetic groveling of her mother toward the sneering white conductor and her prostitute grandmother .(Shukla,2007,182).

6. *The Struggle for Individual Fulfillment*

When she returns to the Medallion ,Nel realizes that the trip has changed her, she feels a more like an individual. Nel looks into the mirror and she whispers " I'm me. I'm not their daughter. I'm not Nel. I'm me. Me... I want to be wonderful. Oh Jesus, make me wonderful."(28,29). She hopes to see more of the world and develop into a wonderful adult. Nel meets a young girl named Sula. Helene initially disapproves for Sula's mother, Hannah has a wild reputation in town. Sula, however appears to be quite, and Helene allows the friendship between them to grow.Nel enjoys visiting Sula at her house, for she prefers the chaos and wild behavior she finds there.

Sumana said that: Nel and Sula represent the two sides of the coin that stands for the total human personality. Morrison says that " Sula and Nel very much a like". They complement each other, they support each other, Together could have made a wonderful single human being.

Their friendship was as intense as it was sudden .They found relief in each other's personality. Although both were unshaped, from less things, Nel seems stronger and more consistent than Sula, who could hardly be counted on to sustain any emotion for more than three minutes.(53).

7. *Racism and Womanhood*

In both Sula and Nel there is a quest for social and gender identity to which bonds created between them bear testimony and relevance. Morrison describes how Sula" had clung to Nel as the closest thing to

both and other and a self, only to discover that she and Nel were not only one and the same thing"(55). Nel and Sula are drawn towards each other out of their awareness that their lives as black females, are restricted by their community and by the outer society.

Barbara Smith writes that the friendship between Nel and Sula is an example of " the necessary bonding that has always taken place between black women for the barest survival. Together the two girls can find the courage to create themselves". Together Sula and Nel enter puberty, together they discover boys and together they become aware of their own sexuality.

Although Nel and Sula share these strong bonds, they are different from each other in several respects. Sula is emotional and adventures and Nel is cautious and consistent. Whereas Nel becomes a slave to sexism and racism, Sula becomes a liberated women. The standard of womanhood that Nel represents is not the pure image of the ideal southern lady, but one based on the status of working – class black men in the society. this role is seen by Nel's community as good, while Sula as seen as evil.

For Sula not only refuses the role, but steps outside the

caste of women, beyond any class definition within the caste, when she insists on making herself. She is interested neither in being beautiful nor becoming a mother. She keeps herself outside the sex, race, and class definitions of the society(Christian, 1980,34). Nel and Sula found the dilemma of their lives and its solution. African American women are oppressed and to escape from their oppression, they must become self-dependent.

8. *Racism and family Structure*

Chapter three is entitled (1921). In this chapter, Morrison visualizes the house of Sula, which consists of her grandmother Eva, Hannah, Pearl, Eva's son, Plum, just returned from the war, a white man called Tar Baby who is quite alcoholic and three adopted indistinguishable boys named Deweys. Plum is unable to adjust after war and becomes a drug addict. Eva does not accept this change and sets him on fire. Hannah also burns to death, she is caught in a yard fire. Eva tries to save her by jumping out of an upper level window, Sula watches from the porch.

Morrison wants to make a comparison between Nel's and Sula's house. Nel's house is bound by the social standards that define the conventional meaning of "family". Sula's household is built on an unconventional family structure. She lives in a multigenerational household run by woman. Whereas Nel's household is static and repressive, Sula's household is vibrant, active and subject to constant change. A constant stream of boarders complement the long-term residents of her house. The differences in the houses are evident in the Physical

structure themselves. Nel's house is always in order and well-kept, Sula's house is huge and rambling, as Eva has added on additional rooms piece by piece over time. The houses symbolize the differing potential for growth and change in the girl's families(Goyal, 2013, 177).

Sula Peace lived in a house of many rooms that had been Built over a period of five years...Eva Peace, who sat in a Wagon on the third floor directing the lives of her children, Friends, strays, and a constant stream of boarders.(30).

Eva likes other inhabitants of the Bottom faces humiliation and racism. Eva Married to Boy Boy whose name speaks to his maturity and sense of responsibility, and they have three kids. One is Hannah(Sula's mom), Pearl and their son's name is Ralph nicknamed(Plum). Eva's marriage to Boy Boy is very short, and he is really a horrible guy. He drinks, abuses her, and cheats on her. When he finally takes off, he leaves her with \$1.65 and three kids to take care of. Eva suffers a lot because she is black woman, she has no any opportunity to work. So she depends on help from neighbors to feed the kids. But they are just as poor as she is and she knows she cannot count on them for ever. One day, Eva left her children with neighbor. She told them she would return after few hours, but she comes back after eighteen months.

She returns with one leg and ten thousand dollars. " Somebody said Eva stuck it under a train and made them of.

Another said she sold it to a hospital for 10,000"(31).

Carmean says that "Precisely how Eva loses her leg becomes the topic of speculation in the Bottom, though it is suggested that Eva sacrifices it in a train accident for an insurance settlement".

Morrison depicts the miserable situation of blacks during the 1920s. Eva cut off her leg intentionally in order to collect the ensures money to feed her family. Upon her return to Medallion with the money, Eva built a house for herself and the children. Plum goes to world war I and Pearl marries at the age of fourteen and moves to Michigan. Hannah marries Rekus, Sula's father who died when Sula was a baby.(Ibid)

Eva and Hannah live together in the same house. Because there were no men in the house, they loved all men, " It was manlove that Eva bequeathed to her daughter"(41). Eva enjoys flirting with men although she does not sleep with them. Bell says that " Eva is a women without man but she is not without men, they are there to comprehend that feminine, spiritual, physical and emotional part of herself".

As for Hannah, she " simply refused to live without the attentions of a man, and after the Rekus's death had a steady sequence of lover, mostly the husbands of her friends neighbors"(42). Hannah often had sex with many different men like the whores in (The Bluest Eye). It makes no difference to her if they are married or not. The majority of them are the husbands of her friends, and neighbors.

Hannah is afraid to have any kind of permanent relationship with a male. Hannah, frequently enjoys sex with any man who comes to visit the house, even the newly wed husbands who have rented a room in the Peace house for their honey moon. Hannah seems to be addicted to casual sex and what Eva actually bequeaths to Hannah, who in turn passes this on Sula. It is a thwarted love of men, leaving both her daughter and grandmother incapable of committing themselves to any healthy relationship.

Both Eva and Hannah make their way to secure their financial state. At the time 1920s the only paid work in Medallion for black women is either domesticity for the white families or prostitution(Shukla,2007,29).

Plum has returned from the war depressed and hopelessly , addicted to the heroin. He steals from the family in order to buy his drugs and sleeps in his room for days with record playing on. Eva as a mother feels sorry to see her son suffering in this way. One night in late 1920, Eva goes into Plum's room to confront her son about his miserable life and his addiction to painkiller. He is barely conscious because of the drags. She sits on the bed crying and holding Plum for one last time. Eva, then pours Kerosene on Plum's bed light it, and returned to the room. When Hannah wakes and comes to tell Eva , what is happening, the two women look into each other's eyes with full realization of what has happened. The neighbors help put out the fire, but Plum is already dead.

So late one night in 1921, Eva got up from her bed and put On her clothes... she arrived at Plum's door and pushed it Open with the tip of crutch...she sat down and gathered Pulm into her arms... she rolled a bit of newspaper into a tight stick about six inches long, lit it and threw it onto the bed where the Kerosene- soaked Plum lay in sung delight. (45,47).

Barbara Christian says that, Eva " like the primeval Earth mother Goddess, feared and worshiped by man, like the goddesses of antiquity, older even than the Biblical Eva, Eva both gives life and takes it away. She performs a ritual killing inspired by love- a ritual of sacrifice by fire".

Eva's action of killing Plum, her son, represents the ambiguous power of love. Of all her children, Eva clearly loves Plum more . This has not changed even with his return from the war as a heroin addict, and Eva's decision to kill him is an expression of her love for him. At one level, this is a sacrifice: a mother putting her son whom she loves out of his misery and thereby losing him. At another level, it is an act of selfishness, because she loves him, Eva believes that she has the right to decide what is best for him, and believes that death is better than addiction(Goyal,2007,118).

The relationship of Eva and Plum Morrison makes the claim

that love is far more complicated than the way in which it is usually perceived.

Love is not merely a thing of beauty and moral good. Morrison claims it is rather a forceful amoral emotion that drives people to actions both selfish and selfless(Sumana, 1998,77).

The year 1922 sheds light on the development of the relationship between Sula and Nel. We know that each girl has come from a different house regime and found in the other a complement for her dimension. The oppression of African- American women in the united states , especially in the first quarter of the twentieth century, is documented throughout the novel. The manner in which Morrison chooses to explore the nature of the women's oppression is unique. She creates two female characters,Nel and Sula. The idea that Nel and Sula represents two halves of one person reverberates through the novel.

When Sula and Nel become friends they become inseparable, but with their very different homes upbringing and mothers. They choose different lives when entering adulthood. Nel and Sula seek each other out. " They were solitary little girls whose loneliness was so profound it intoxicated them."(51). Sula and Nel both twelve years old, are in their way to Edna Finch's Mellow House, an ice cream parlor, where children are welcome. The men of the Bottom sit outside and watch every female in sight walk passed them. As Sula and Nel pass, one of the men named Ajax calls" Pig meat"(50),(which is apparently some sort of sexual reference).(Lang, 1996, 55).

The girls are both embarrassed and Pleased. Although the two girls have only dimly began to understand the mysteries of sexuality, they are becoming interested in the opposite sex. As they are black girls, they face racism from the Irish immigrants who come to Medallion, and experience discrimination against blacks. The Irish kids start bullying the blacks kids, and one day Nel becomes the unfortunate object of their attention. On her way home from school, a group of Irish boy grabs Nel and pushes her from hand to hand "until they grew tired of the frightened helpless face" (54).

She does everything she can to avoid them after this, including taking the long way home. Sula at first accompanies her on these long walks home, but one day she decides that they are not going to hide

any more. " Let's us go on home the shortest way"(54). They encounter the boys of course who step in front of them to stop them from passing. This is when Sula shows us her tough side. She pulls out Knife, which at first does not scare the boys but then she cut off part of her own finger and says " If I can do that to myself", she tells them, " what you suppose I'll do to you?" (55). That does the trick and the boys take off without touching the girls.

Sula is careless about her bleeding finger because she used to see many severe incidents in her family and this is cause that makes her dare to do that. Charles Berryman says that " Sula who inherently strong, willed and independent- inherits the strength to conflict pain even as a child she cuts off the end of a finger".

Though Sula frightens Nel with her severity and strange behavior but their friendship goes on. Nel is now able to escape from her strict mother. She notices that Sula does not care about her physical shape of her hair style though she is strong and can do whatever she wants. Nel is free to express herself, which is something she cannot do when she is at home, because she must be obedient girl. Nel starts skip the cloth spin from her nose at night, and leaves her hair as it is without straightening it(Davis,1999,5).

One day during summer, Sula hears her mother talking to her friends, she tells that loving your children is different from liking them. The other women agree and say that children are a pain even though they love them. Not realizing that Sula is nearby and listening. Hannah tells the women that she loves her daughter, but does not like her. Sula socked by her mother words, but hides her feelings." Sure you do. You love her, like I love Sula. I just don't like her. That's the difference."(57)

Sula loses her trust in herself after hearing her mother saying these words. Hannah's words cause Sula to feel unworthy and this leads to a feeling of shame caused by her mother. Lack of love has its impact on Sula for the rest of her life. She runs outside to join Nel. The two girls run down to the river to play. Hannah's comment make Sula feel insecure and upset. It is the hardest shock she got in her shattered life, but not the last. They wildly dig a hole in the ground, fill it with twigs, paper, and grass and then cover it up, all without

speaking a word. Critics, like Harris, who interprets this scene of making holes then filling them with trash as a symbolic one.

The holes symbolize the girls, life and the trash symbolizes the trashing and low status of the female identity(Kubitschek, 1998,48).

Both Sula and Nel climb a tree when a small boy named Chicken Little comes to play there. Sula teases him, but then helps him climb a tree. Next, Sula swing the Little boy around and around by his arm, then she slips him from to the water. The girls wait, but the child does not come back. Harris says that "Chicken becomes a sacrifice to Sula and Nel's friendship, for there has been an accidental/ intentional aura surrounding the drowning. Sula runs to the nearest house which belongs to Shadrack. She thinks that she may have seen the whole terrible incident. He has seen nothing and simply smiles at her and says one word " always".(62).

When Sula returns to Nel, Nel denies Sula's responsibility, not only that she seems equally distressed about Sula's missing belt than on Chicken Little's death. (Karmen,1993,36,37). Chicken's body eventually surfaces and a white bargeman finds him. He is not going to bother with him since the person is black, but then he sees that it is a kid, so he brings chicken that Chicken's mom and dad have killed him on a purpose. He calls black people " those people" and thinks that they are " fit for nothing but substitute for mules, only mules didn't kill each other the way niggers did."(63).There is an emotional funeral at the church which everyone attends, including Nel and Sula. They do not speak any word at the funeral they simply watch and listen in grief silence as the preacher speaks of the innocence of children.

Nel and sula hold hands tight on their way to home.

"1923 " shows us that Sula is the production of Peace women, she is the victim of their behavior and their unconventionally of feelings and thoughts. Sula's relationship with her mother physically structures her conception of morality and self. The Peace women suffer from living alone without any connection with the community or with each other(Solomon and Marla, 2000,50). One day, the Peace women discuss the Sula's strange behavior and her isolation from them all. Sula starts bothering the Deweys and taking food from the newlyweds

who live in the house. Later after a nap, Hannah tells Eva that she dreamed of a red wedding dress, a frightening image of blood and violence. Both women know this a bad omen.

The next strange event happens when Eva tries to find her comb. As she is looking for it, she cannot find her comb anywhere, which is strange because "Nobody moved stuff in Eva's room except to clean and then put everything right back"(75). For blacks, this foreshadow that Eva is going to lose a dear person. When she finally finds it, she looks outside and sees that Hannah has caught on fire. Eva lifts herself out of her wheelchair and throws herself through the second window, hoping that to crawl across the yard to cover her daughter's body to put out the flames. Neighbors see the fire and try to douse the flames, but the stream sears Hannah's flesh. Both women taking to the hospital, Hannah dies on the way to the hospital while Eva bleeds but still a live(Goyal,2013,121).

In the hospital, Eva remembers Hannah's dream about the red wedding dress, she thinks that the dream of wedding always means death. She then remember show she jumped onto the window and watched from the bushes as her daughter burned to death. Suddenly she realizes that Sula had been on the porch watching her burning mother and doing nothing to help. When Eva tells her friends about Sula doing nothing to help Hannah, they all say that the girl was probably in shock, struck dumb and paralyzed by fear. However, Eva believes that calm observation of her mother dying was intentional and evil.

She knew that as she lay on the ground trying to drag Herself through the sweet peas and clover to get to Hannah, she had seen Sula standing on the back porch Just looking. When Eva... mentioned what she thought she'd Seen to a few friends, they said that it was natural. Sula was probably Struck dumb, as any body would be who saw her mamma burn up(78).

Sula has experience with death many time. Her first experience with death was with her uncle, Plum, and this affects her opinion about family relationship. Then with Chicken Little's death. So she learns that death is easy and irresponsible that is why she watched her mother's death without fear(O'Reilly,2004, 118).

Through this event, Sula reflects her hatred toward her mother by watching her mother Hannah burning to death without

moving to help her. Sula wants to express a mutual feeling with her mother who stated before that she does not love Sula.

1927 describes the marriage of Nel and Jude Green. Jude is 20 years old and works as a waiter in the Hotel Medallion. Jude knows that his job could never support a wife, but he has a plan to move on to something more lucrative. Actually racial conditions played an important part in shaping this marriage because Jude has been longing to have job in the new tunnel that is being built on the river near Medallion. Jude stands six days and sees that the white bosses pick out southern white boys, Greek and Italian but never the black men from the Bottom. Morrison wants to show the severity of those whites who prevent black men of gaining honorable jobs. This situation makes the black men lose sense of manhood as they are not given any opportunity to practice real jobs in this country. Jude decides to marry Nel so as to have " someone to take care about his hurt, to care very deeply. Deep enough to hold him, to ask him, how you feel? You all right"(82).

This marriage is not based on love or true choice but it is a result of racial oppression . Nigro says that " Jude's masculinity is offended; his job at the hotel not only pays poorly, but it is demeaning to carry trays and pick up after other people when he wants so desperately the self- affirming job of building something where nothing had existed before.it was then that he considers marriage to Nel. He determines that she will be his anchor.

At first, Nel does not accept the idea of marriage, but then she knows that Jude is suffering and needs her. She accepts to

become his wife instead of covering out her identity. By doing, that she follows the norms of community and the gender role. Although Sula and Nel were insuperable in the adolescent years, the differences in their nature become clear and as years go by, they lose touch with each other. Nel who embraces the conventional way of life of her mother, finds marriage the best resort especially after the problems she faced with Sula.

Jude provides Nel with at least some self-esteem in the beginning of their relationship, and Nel amazed by the way in which Jude sees her. "She didn't even knew she had a neck until Jude remarked on it, or that her smile was anything but the spreading of her lips until he saw it as a small miracle"(84). Jude becomes Nel's priority, she even put him above her best friend , because with Jude, Nel experiences" the new feeling of being needed by someone" and this feeling becomes" greater than her friendship"(84). Sula stands in opposition to the ideal of a woman because her desire is not toward getting married or having children. Friendship with Nel is Sula's first choice. Nevertheless, when Sula loses Nel to a man, she is willing to find a new life for herself away from her family and community. Christian says " as their childhood ends, all of these events reach their logical conclusion. Nel , the daughter of the proper Hellenewright, marries Jude, losing the sense of her own identity she had gotten a glimpse of in her friendship with Sula, and Sula daughter of the distinctive peace women, leaves the Bottom".

This incident makes Sula leaves the Bottom and attends the college in New York city.

She wants to explore the liberty in New York and how these people are practicing it.

She wants to imitate them and wants to violet the cultural conditions of the Bottom. She will never returns back to the Bottom until she has got the college certificate and an identity of the independent free woman(Shukla, 2007,23)." She was free of ambition with no affection for money, property or things, no greed, no desire to come and attention or complements... no ego. For that reason she felt no compulsion to verify herself- be consisted with herself"(119).

Morrison comments on Sula's character saying that " Sula has inherited this need for independence, this arrogance, this orneriness, at least partially from the Eva who had the guilt to destroy plum her only son(Harries,1999,109). The community and family make Sula a person who lacks coherent self. Sula not threated by racism experienced but by misunderstood and oppressed by her own people. She believes that black women are humiliated and outcaste everywhere in America. Peter Lang says that " All doors to

meaningful self and place in the community are close... Sula struck down for attempting bot exploring and conformity"(Lang, 1996, 78).

1937 denotes to the return of Sula to Bottom after ten years absence. She dressed like movies star. She comes back to Medallion on the same day that a plague of robins has arrived." Accompanied by a plague of robins, Sula come back to Medallion"(89). The people of her town considers the arrival of both the bird and Sula to be an evil omen. Sula goes to her house, where only Eva and the Deweys remain there.

When Sula arrives at Eva's house, she notices four dead robins out front. Sula avoid them and goes inside to look for Eva. As she always, she is up above in her room. She looks at Sula and says " I might have knowed those birds meant something"(91). It is not happy greeting.

The reunion between grandmother and granddaughter is cool, without affection. Eva tells Sula that she needs to settle down, to find a man. Sula says she only needs herself. " when you gone to get married? You need to have some babies. It'll settle you", " I don't want to make somebody else. I want to make myself"(92). For Sula getting married and having babies not necessary, because she has grown up in a disintegrated family. In a house of many broken marriages and miserable life. So she wants to make herself rather than others.

When Eva accuses Sula as a selfish woman and care only of herself. Sula answers " you did... mama did... you sold your life for twenty-three dollars a month"(93). Sula accuses Eva of murdering Plum, Eva reminds Sula that she watched Hannah burn to death. Sula threatens to kill Eva in the same way Eva killed Plum. Frightened Eva keeps her door locked at night.."

The reason behind the bad behavior of Sula is her family. She lived with Hannah and Eva who spend most of their time love-making with men. They never want to stick to one man and making family. Thus in her first act of rebellion against the her family, Sula claims power of attorney over Eva and commits her to a nursing home. Shocking the entire community, they decide that Sula is truly evil. Carmean says that " to the Bottom, she is the embodiment of evil.

And what actions illustrate the nature of her evil? She places Eva in a nursing home and she selects sexual partners from among married men". Sula moves to see her old friend Nel. For Nel, the world again becomes magical and interesting because Sula's presence, thinking that her dull life will be changed with her arrival.

Nel asks about her years in college , but she mentions more information about her failure to live there or to quest for new identity. Sula tells Nel that she puts Eva in the mental hospital and Nel completely shocked. She tries to understand why Sula would do something so horrible, and Sula tells Nel that Eva frightens her. We know this is not true since we get to witness the nasty fight between the two women.

Nel realizes that Sula has not changed, that she is still" incapable of making any but the most trivial decision"(101). Sula is upset as her friend now disagrees with her, she tells Nel that she has really changed. Although the two friends try to pick up where they have left off , their differences soon become obvious. Nel disapproves of Sula's treatment of Eva, she feels that putting a grandmother in a nursing home goes against the family values of the black community. (Christian, 1999,42). Sula is upset because Nel so much changed. Sula, is also upset that Nel has bought into a dull married existence, filled with the obedience and expectation. By contrast , Sula lives in defiance of all traditional role. We realize that they have taken different roads in life.

10. Conclusion

Morrison wants to parallel between the civil rights struggle of black during 1960s, when 200,000 African American demonstrated because they were denied their rights for the second time after World War II, and the demonstration of the blacks in the Bottom through the National Suicide Day(Winters, 2002, 48). Those riots and efforts bring change later to blacks, especially in the Bottom. During 1965, people began to work and gain more civil rights, and they have been wealthier in the years following the war. On the surface, this seems like a positive thing. However, they have also lost something, black heritage and identity, when they start selling their houses to the white. Blacks move to the valley that was previously all whites. Everyone in Medallion lives separately with little concern for their neighbors.

The Bottom is discovered to be expensive land, that is why the whites look to expand their houses to the Bottom up. They want their houses overlook the river and elm trees to enjoy the nice sight(Christian, 1999, 40).Barbara Christian says that" the Bottom and its distinctiveness have disappeared. Ironically black folk had moved from the Bottom only to realize too late that hill land had become valuable. In, fact what the white farmer had told his slave a hundred years before," the bottom of Heaven".

Trough Sula Morrison shows the readers that African American still face many difficulties when they try to assimilate into main stream society. Discrimination of African American is still strong which is clearly visible in the denied job

opportunities for African American in Medallion. Morrison visualizes the friendship between Nel and Sula. The girls realize at an early age that their situation in society is complicated, because they are blacks and females. Sula and Nel help each other define their personalities, they provide each other with production they lack, and they fight together against oppression.

المخلص

مفهوم العنصرية في رواية سولا للروائية توني مورسن كلمة المفتاح: العنصرية

البحث مستل من اطروحة دكتوراه

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كلية اليرموك الجامعة

جامعة السودان للعلوم والتكنولوجيا / كلية اللغات

مورسن اطلقت روايتها الثانية بعد ثلاث سنوات من اطلاقها الرواية الاولى سنة ١٩٧٣ . هذه الرواية تكشف النقاب عن معاناة المجتمع الاسود من سنة ١٩١٩-١٩٦٥. الرواية تكشف طفولة اثنين من الشخصيات الرئيسية نيلي رايت و سولا ببس اللتين افترقتا بعد سنة من زواج نيل. وانها تكشف علاقة المجتمع بشدرك الذي امضى اغلب حياته في الجيش. هذه الرواية ترسم الحياة المزرية للمجتمع الاسود وكفاحهم ضد العنصرية.

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