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Comparative Analysis Of Toni Morrison's Paradise And Song Of Solomon

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Abstract

Toni Morrison's two novels *Paradise* and *Songs of Solomon* are analyzed comparatively in this article. Race, gender, sexuality, social class, and slavery are issues of this study. In other words, they put under investigation the marginalized people of society, like black people, females, and slaves. Toni Morrison is a great writer in this regard. His writings are replete with cultural issues. Black people are the main characters of Toni Morrison's most of the novels. Therefore, it can be concluded that for her, marginalized people of society and minorities especially females, are at center. So, it is aimed to highlight comparative analysis of Toni Morrison's *Paradise* and *Song of Songs* novels in this paper.

Keywords: comparison, feminism, Paradise, Songs of Solomon.

1. Introduction

Literature is a good way for restoring the power of expression and speech of black people that has been suppressed long and promising a reversal of trend and reconstructing womanhood. The period after the American Civil War, where women face the double discrimination, first for being as woman second for being black. The complex blend of social and cultural forces shapes the novelist of black writing attitude towards life and language. Morrison seeks to expose the explicitly and the long series of struggle that the blacks have had against the exploitative tendencies of the white. Morrison presents a new interpretation of American history and their struggle to remake themselves in their worlds.

Toni Morrison was the first black woman to receive the noble prize for literature. She was the eight women and the first black woman to do so. Her books have won the National Book Critic Circle Award (*Song of Solomon*, 1977) and the Pulitzer Prize (*Beloved*, 1987). She is the recipient of the Condorcet Medal, the National Humanities Medal, the Coretta Scott King Award and the Enoch Pratt Free Library Lifetime Literary Achievement Award. In 1993, she was awarded the Noble Prize for literature.

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The conflict between society and the individual were explored in all of Toni Morrison (February 18, 1931- August 06, 2019) fiction. How the individual who defies social pressures can create a self by drawing on the resources of natural world, on a sense of continuity within the family and within the history of a people, and on dreams and other unaccountable sources of psychic power were illustrated by her.

2. Paradise

Morrison's seventh novel is *Paradise*. It was inspired by a little-known event in African American history as like her previous two. This time the 1970's westward migration of former slaves set on establishing their own all-black utopia, known in the book as Ruby. In 1976, shifting back and forth across a century of time, while a group of the settlers' male descendants attack a mansion-turned convent of women, *Paradise* begins. It convinced the women's eschewing of male companionship and their questionable pasts that threaten the town's survival. African Americans are turned away settlers for having skin that was "too black." Not only to white racism but also to other African Americans, Ruby is founded as a response. To keep Ruby as pristine and trouble-free as possible, the town's elders Twin brothers Deacon and Steward are deeply committed. Ruby's twin identity and conscience symbolized by them together.

There was no crime in the beginning, so no needs police. As there is no hunger, each one assists those in need. As the uprising of 1960's youth movement seeps into Ruby, on the other hand such total separation from the external world proves to be the town's undoing. A ragtag women's group, avoids most abusive relationships or motherhood responsibilities, settle outside Ruby. There the maternal leader is Consolata among others; her teen mother abandoned Seneca, as a child; and Pallas, a white woman escaping from her wealthy but negligent parents. Among the men of Ruby and the self-exiled

women the violent conflict is, partly, brought on by the black men's anger at women who have deliberately selected a life without them. An important addition to Morrison's body of work is *Paradise*.

The power and position of women as spiritual and ethical leaders also remain central were written 20 years later in *Paradise*. Instead in Gnostic ideas, to critique Biblical racism and misogyny, Morrison pivots from using irony, inversion and revision and grounds herself in this novel. Female divinity and ways of "knowing," or gnosis, as correctives to the patriarchal hegemony and doctrine that was coming to define an emerging Orthodox Christianity were emphasized in Gnostic ideas. While writing *Paradise*, she portrays herself as trying to "write a religion-inflected prose narrative that [did] not rest its case entirely or mainly on biblical language" for the reason that she wanted to "make the experience and journey of faith fresh, as new and as linguistically unencumbered as it was too early believers, who themselves had no collection of books to rely on" (Morrison 2019, p. 253).

For readers, she wanted to create a chance to witness the spiritual transcendence in *Paradise*. As well as even Christ's early followers experienced ecstasy. A "gospel of Toni" is the result of the two approaches Morrison takes in *Song of Solomon* and *Paradise*. It preaches womanist-inflected, spiritual and ethical way of being that exposes and critiques the misogyny undergirding orthodox Christianity. As well as offers female spiritual leaders, grounded in mercy, communal wholeness, and love, as salvific alternatives.

3. Song of Solomon

Again, the making of a self was traced by Morrison in *Song of Solomon*. For Morrison, the novel is a different approach. A young man, Milkman Dead is the protagonist in that and not female. In a comfortable, insulated, middle-class family Milkman grows up. He is grandson of a doctor on his mother's side and the son of a businessman, whose father owned his own farm. Milkman son of a doting mother nursed a long time, the reason for his nickname, and is sent to school in velvet knickers. Milkman's friend is Guitar Baines, a Southside black also a friend against the other children's teasing.

As the novel progresses, however, the reality of his family and friends discovers by Milkman, as separate people with their own griefs and torments, Milkman comes to feel that everyone wants him dead. Ironically, Milkman's last name actually is "Dead". While Milkman's grandfather was registering with the Freedmen's Bureau, the result of a drunken clerk is error.

Since even before his birth his father tried to kill him, Milkman learns that his mere existence is extraordinary. Through the intercession of his mother and his aunt, this threat and survived by Milkman. His aunt, Pilate is a woman with no navel. After having been conjured by Pilate into making love to his wife again, years after he had turned against her, Macon Dead wanted the resulting baby aborted. Out of fear of her husband, Ruth took measures to bring about an abortion. But again Pilate gets involved and helped Ruth to find the courage to save the child and bear him.

Hagar is Milkman's cousin. In the present action of the novel, his first love and his first lover follow him month after month to kill him with whatever weapon she can find. Milkman's living life is wanted by Hagar, not his dead life. However, Milkman has rejected her, out of boredom and fear that he will be planning to marry her. He does not want to be tied down at the moment. Freedom and escape are his desires.

As Milkman does not like her black, curly hair, Hagar feels unlovely and unloved, rejected. Pilate says that Milkman cannot not love her hair without not loving himself because it is the same hair that grows from his own body. Another victim of an absolutely univocal standard of beauty is Hagar. Moreover, she is a character who needs a supporting society, a chorus of aunts and cousins and sisters to surround her with suggestion and security. Her weakness does not understand by grandmother and mother, two women who very powerful and independent, instead, she has only Pilate and Reba. With

various weapons Milkman chased by Hager, as disturbed through Milkman's rejection of her. It is repeatedly disarmed, and lastly dies in total discouragement.

Milkman travels to Virginia, to Shalimar, a black town, to find out about his family's past. There, he challenged by the men in the general store to fight, and one attacks him with a knife. These people behaviour does not understand by Milkman. However, with his powerful northern money and his brusque treatment of them, they think he has insulted and denied their masculinity, by not asking their names and not offering his own.

Milkman's friend and spiritual brother Guitar turns out the most serious threat to Milkman's life. The reality of their friendship for the idea of revenge against whites and compensation for the personal deprivation he has suffered is told by him while Guitar tries to kill Milkman. For the reason that Milkman does not share a cache of gold with Guitar, he decides to kill him. Guitar rationalizes his decision by saying that the money is for the cause, for the work of the Seven Days, a group of seven black men sworn to avenge the deaths of innocent black people at the hands of the whites.

At all, Milkman's being alive is a success, a victory. Slowly, he comes to appreciate after coming out of his comfortable shell of self-involvement. The suffering and grief's of his mother and father and even his sisters Magdelene and Corinthians realized by Milkman unwillingly. However, the quest for Pilate's gold on which his father sets him is the decisive experience in his self-making. The men are convinced that Pilate's gold hangs in a green sack from the ceiling of her house, and Guitar and Milkman try to steal it in the first stage. As the women in the house are simply puzzled, the two friends succeed in taking the sack wondering why the men want a sack that is really full of old bones. Two men are arrested; Pilate should save them and the bones by doing an Aunt Jemima act for the white policemen when they leave the house. Macon is father of Milkman. Macon convincing about the gold still exists somewhere. By going back to Pennsylvania, Milkman sets out to find it. Macon and Pilate grew up in Pennsylvania, and later to Virginia, where the earlier generation lived.

Many of the archetypal adventures of the heroes of legend and myth are included in Milkman's making of a self. Milkman limps, with one leg shorter than the other, a mark of his specialness like other heroes of legend. His parents try to kill him early in his life like Oedipus's parents. There, help and advice given by a wise old lady. He continues to search for treasure, and he hopes for gold and the hand of a beautiful princess. To achieve his quest and confirm his identity, a puzzle or riddle solved by him. He has a transcendent experience and reaches heights of prowess (he can fly). He gives his life for them while his people turn against him.

From the processes of nature, the reality of physical experience, a connection to history and family continuity, and springs of human possibility through legends, myth, dreams, and other sources of psychic power, Milkman create a self.

The processes of nature in a struggle against the physical environment and an understanding of physical experience are reached by Milkman. Milkman was insulated from nature since a rich city boy. However, in his trip south to try to get the gold, a series of physical obstacles overcomes by him to reach the cave. In the cave, white people and gold were encountered by Macon and Pilate in their youth. Only after falling into the river and climbing up 20 feet of rock, splitting his shoes and the clothes that mark him as a city man, Milkman gets there. In a place where his father's name and father's money do not protect him, Milkman loses his possessions-trunk, clothes, and whiskey-and he makes it on his own during the trip. Circe successfully found by Milkman. Years ago, Circe sheltered Pilate and Macon when their father was killed; also he reaches the cave where there is no longer any gold.

Also nature encountered by Milkman as an obstacle to be overcome. With the older men of Shalimar, he is invited to go on a coon hunt into the woods after the knife fight in Shalimar. Another time, Milkman undergoes a test, having to move through the woods in the dark, having to show the courage and physical endurance necessary to be one of the hunters. Also, the language before

language, the music of the hunt, the communication between the men and the dogs, of a time when people were so close to their physical reality that they were in harmony with all creatures were experienced by Milkman.

In searching for his origins, Milkman creates himself. He finds himself, in searching for his fathers; Milkman should find the reality of his fathers to know his own potential as like the Telemachus of Greek mythology and James Joyce's Stephen Dedalus. Milkman's original search of the gold seems to be desires he gets from his father, the man of business, and even from his grandfather. His grandfather was a lover of property. The quest however, changes as Milkman pursues it, finding the thread of his family's history. Stopping in Pennsylvania, the stories of the men who knew his father and grandfather as well as who rejoice in their successes were heard by Milkman. For black people in America, the dream and the failure of that dream dramatizes in the story of the Dead family. When white men killed the older Macon Dead for his flourishing farm, the possibilities of his neighbors were narrowed and their lives scarred. Milkman can understand better by seeing his father and grandfather through their former neighbor's eyes. The pride that Macon had when he said that his father had let Macon work side by side with him and trusted him to share in his achievements.

By piecing together the memories of people and by deciphering the children's game and song, a song about Solomon and Rynah that seems to be interspersed with nonsense words, Milkman also learns about his great-grandfather in Shalimar. This song is matched to a song that he had heard Pilate sing about Sugarman by Milkman. The riddle of the song solved by him, and even figured out what the ghost of Pilate's father meant when he said, "Sing," by him and when he told Pilate to go get the bones. At last, he finds out that his grandmother was an American Indian, Singing Bird. As well as his great-grandfather, Solomon, was one of the legendary flying Africans, the father of 21 sons, a slave one day flew back to Africa. When Solomon dropped him, through the branches of a tree, his grandfather Jake had fallen, trying to take his last baby son back with him. Milkman enables himself while learning that magic to fly as he surrenders to the air and let's himself be upheld.

Milkman creates a self so that he can share it and even sacrifice it for a friend. Milkman buries the bones of Jake with Pilate, his grandfather, on Solomon's Leap. Guitar has continued to follow Milkman, shoots and kills Pilate, but Milkman, saying to Guitar, "Do you want my life? Take it if it is any good to you," leaps into the air and flies. Guitar is free to kill his friend, but Milkman soars. The transcendence of the spirit showed in the ending of the novel, as the hero attains his destiny. From the success of the human spirit, the satisfaction of the ending also soars into legend. The triumph that even death cannot destroy. A beautiful, serious, funny novel that moves beyond the social to the mythic is *Song of Solomon*.

4. Conclusion

In this paper, attention is converged upon discussion of the influence of slavery on the collective past of the community and the memory of the individual through the Experience of motherhood. Toni Morrison has skillfully delved into how the traumatic collective past of the Blacks and the heroine's own memory leads to distorted experience of motherhood. However, the heroine succeeds in overcoming these haunting experiences through growing awareness and forbearance. Toni Morrison, in *Beloved*, Points out the necessity of new beginnings and faith that the Blacks should maintain in order to live as free people.

Thus, Morrison has succeeded in showing African American how to exercise the ghosts of slavery and the horrible. The myth of the Garden of Eden and the Song of Songs compared in this article, to suggest that the latter is a comment on the former, from within the historical process, but not to establish a direct, conscious dependence, nor a unique relationship. To discuss the same themes, the same terms used by them; through other books of the Bible and beyond it, these can be traced. A nostalgic return to Paradise characterizes the pastoral; in many parts of the Bible, elements of the myth of Paradise are found. Other images in the Song will be found to belong to different paradigms, to have different references.

These two novels suggest that the “gospel of Toni” considers redemption as the outcome of engaging in the difficult and often painful processes of self-knowledge and self-forgiveness. It is a “gospel” that preaches inclusion, equality and communal wholeness as the goal and defines love and mercy as the means by which to attain it. Morrison offers a womanist-inflected, spiritual and ethical alternative in which women, and black women in particular, act as a salvific force in a vindictive and vengeful world through irony, inversion and revision of canonical biblical narratives and orthodox Christian histories that position men at the center of a patriarchal church, in *Song of Solomon* and *Paradise*. That is quite a corrective gospel, indeed.

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