



## The Conflict Between Whites and Blacks in Toni Morrison's *Tar Baby*

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The Conflict Between Whites and Blacks in Toni Morrison's *Tar Baby* Abstract Toni Morrison is regarded as one of the outstanding Afro American novelists in English literature. She is an editor, critic, essayist and matchless champion of novels. She has been also well acquainted with the myths and folklores, that figure in her works.

The Bluest Eyes (1970), The Black Book (1974), Song of Solomon, (1977), Tar Baby (1981), etc are her major works that deal with the issues of race, gender, sexuality and social

### Abstract

Toni Morrison is regarded as one of the outstanding Afro- American novelists in English literature. She is an editor, critic, essayist and matchless champion of novels. She has been also well acquainted with the myths and folklores, that figure in her works. *The Bluest Eyes* (1970), *The Black Book* (1974), *Song of Solomon*, (1977), *Tar Baby* (1981), etc are her major works that deal with the issues of race, gender, sexuality and social class simultaneously. *Tar Baby* is her fourth novel and it accounts for the conflict between Whites and Blacks.

### Key Words

Black Literature, Gender Issues, Women Empowerment, Sexuality, Race and Myths.

*Tar Baby* offers a folk tale. It has a set of the French West Indies outside of the black community. It also represents the protections of life in the United States. It is a public novel which deals with the situation of society that probes the relationship between blacks and whites. It has three kinds of relationship -the relationship between blacks and whites, the relationship within families and the relationship between African American men and women. We find an onstage interaction between blacks and whites here. The novelist has stressed the need for a humanistic approach to life but she finds the conflict between Whites and Blacks in Society. Jadine, a black girl is educated in Paris and she is alienated from Afro- American culture. Her parents died and she lives as an orphan with her uncle Sidney and aunt, Ondine. Her uncle works in the house of the White Family as the servant.

The novel has the impact of the Fugitive. The whole story of the novel, centers round a

woman character, Jadine. It is a story of her struggle who comes to learn with her modern materialistic aspirations and loses her roots from the White. Her uncle and aunt engage in their work for a White Family, Valerian and Margaret Street and Jadine has to face conflicts in society. She is attracted to Son, the black young boy, an uneducated man. Son is a violent man who tries to disdain the Wealthy man in society. He likes to reside in the black community of his Florida Home.

Jadine is the protagonist of the novel, *Tar Baby*. Owing to the issues of race, class, culture and the effects of late capitalism she stabilizes complex vision of society. Although, the novel has an original plot line, the portrayal of the characters is quite strong in its nature which outshines the story. The tendency of doubt, misconception and suspicion towards her has been a common phenomenon in the novel. As its story progresses we find that complex is a far more issue than the single polarization of black and white. Jadine has been educated at Sorbonne and got financial assistance of Valernie street, a white. So, Jadine has to embrace the white cultural values and she acts as a white girl. She returns to America with Son. Son is contrary to the communal ghost. After that she departs to the island and Son follows her there. Son loves Jadine very much and returns to the Isle des chevaliers to reclaim her.

*Tar Baby* is a novel about conflicts related to biases and prejudices. Biases are concerned to race, gender and class level. The central conflict is the conflict within Jadine. It exists as 'race-traitor' in the novel. It is a Black- White conflict. Prejudice is found between the white and the black people Sidney and Ondine feel superior to the local men. To them, the Blacks are 'depersonalized figures' in society. Margaret is prejudiced White Woman and She hates Son because he is black. Jadine thinks that she is a racial traitor but she assumes that son may rape her:

"You rape me and they will feed you to the alligators.

Count on it. Nigger." -Jadine "Rape?" why? You little white girls think somebody is trying to rape you?" - Son

"White? I am not white. I am Am not that."- Jadine

"No<sup>2</sup> then why don't you Settle down and stop acting

Like it (i.e. like white men) – Son

"Oh God! Jadine moaned. (*Tar Baby* 83)

On the other hand, Son desires for Jadine, she should return home (Eloc). Thus, we find that both try to fight to live in a world where superficial differences do not pit people against each other.

Morrison has demonstrated Jadine's native and her thinking towards the impact of race and gender issues. In the course of time, she tells Son to ask Valerian to pay money for her education. But, Son doesn't like to say that. Jadine feels bad and Son tries to thwart her previous plan to marry to a white man. He also reminds her responsibility and deserted incident after the Christmas Eve fight. In this way, Son feels Jadine's rejection of her native culture and he rapes her telling the status of the *Tar Baby*. In the end, he leaves his return. Thus, we find that Jadine is the *Tar Baby* of the novel and Son is Bres Rabbit from the Uncle Remas stories. Jadine and Son both seem unable to find a world in which they thrive.

Thus, if we talk about disparity and discrimination, *Tar Baby* is the truthful portrayal of the plight of the woman in society. Jadine feels that the social structure of an American black woman is full of ups and downs, ifs and buts. As a girl, Jadine has to face cares and anxieties, fret and fever in life. Race creates a sense of great hatred in the heart of Jadine. Having known her suffering in society we find that the woman has been the subject of great mystery and controversy in history and legends. Her charms are irresistible and legends. Her charms are irresistible but they spell rain and disaster. So,

Henderson has rightly observed about the novelist.

Yet, in many respects, these writers were limited in their efforts to fully depict the physical and psychological suffering of African American people... Toni Morrison seeks to signify on those silences imposed by publishers and editors of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

In particular, Williams and Morrison extended the efforts of their predecessors by developing Creative responses to those calls centered on the wounds of the African American body. (scaring the Black Body<sup>12</sup>)

This is indeed, remaining rooted and defeating the challenges of race and gender. Here Morrisons's light towards the painful part of African Americans is revealed. These lines convey the buried experiences for a better understanding of African American history. *Tar Baby* is a real-life story, and event from African American history where special importance has been given to the lives of black women, sensuous prose, breath taking lyricism and its puzzling conclusion. In the end, Jadine leaves Son on the for side. In fact, her role in the novel parents that she is a truly rape traitor. In one hand Jadine losses culture but on the other, Son carries the heritage. Thus, the novelist has tried to relinquish the complicated examination of life in African-American Communities.

## Conclusion

Finally, we understand that women are not born, but made; every society has built a vast material, cultural and ideological tool to fabricate feminism. *Tar Baby* is a love-story of Jadine-son in which Morrison tries to intend to present problems but she does not say anything about their solutions in society. As a sophisticated and a thinker of highest order, she has planted difficult motifs in her novel uncovering racial and sexual conflicts.

## References

1. Morrison, Toni: *Tar Baby*, United States, Alfred Knoff, 1988.
2. CarolE, Handerson: *Scaring the Black Body: Race And Representation in African American Literature*, Columbia University of Missouri Press, 2002.

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