

ROTTEN FEMALE'S INDIVIDUALITY AND REVOLT AGAINST IT : CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

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Toni Morrison's main focus always goes on the miserable condition of black women who suffer the supremacy of both black and white males in U.S.A.. Russel avers – "This person, this female, this black didn't exist center self" (45). Through her novels, Morrison endeavours to challenge the issues –"the culture's assumptions inscribed in the binary oppositions of rural versus urban people, of old versus young, of the values and traditions of the past versus those of the present, and of male versus female roles and experience." (Moblely, 9).

Morrison has revealed a unique problem related to Female Individuality. It is not only the problem of black women but problem of every woman in the world. By now woman is regarded inferior to men in patriarchal society. A woman has no identity without a man in family and society. A female is known with her father's name not with her mother. She has no freedom and rights like her brother in her family. After marriage, she is accepted by her husband not an equal life-partner but his legal property. As a mother, she is recognized the mother of her son. Like her husband, her son dominates her mother and other females of the house. A female as a daughter, wife and mother has to suffer harassment by the male. She has not right to think her life outside of it. Female domination is carried on constantly from generation to generation from the past time in the patriarchal society.

Equality and autonomy are forbidden and a day dream to all women. It has become fortune of women to live under patriarchy. The same sufferings of black women are shown in 'Sula'. The novel displays the struggle of a black girl Sula to live an exist in a male dominant society. She denies conservative rules of the patriarchal society who accept woman in the limited role of daughter, wife, mother and prostitute. Sula struggles for equality between male and female that reveals feminist awareness of a woman for her rights. She refuses the supremacy of male and believes only on herself. Hence, she is considered an evil by the people and outcasted from her own community.

Black culture subjugates black women and resists them to get equality and freedom. Black people believe that a woman cannot get honour in society without male. All black women follow this system and help to continue it without objection. Sula defies the rules and orders of the community made only for women, and tries to get practical knowledge of everything. The novel 'Sula' "offers a view of female psychological development that defies traditional male centered interpretations of female development and calls out for an expansion of the woman centered paradigm" (Gillespie).

In her childhood, Sula fights with the white boys, cuts her finger with a knife and speaks boldly "If I can do that for myself, what you suppose I'll do to you?" (54-55). Her confrontation

with the white boys makes her confident in her struggle for equality. Sula does not perceive any ideal figure in her mother Hannah and grandmother Eva because they follow traditional rules of the community willingly. Black women think themselves complete with men whenever black men left them alone because they consider black women burden, deny to take their responsibility forever.

Sula's grandmother is left by her husband with three babies. Eva never raises her voice against her husband, and follows the role of mother silently. Like Eva, Hannah accepts the male made rules and authority of the community. After her husband's death, Hannah gets pleasure with men and accepted as a prostitute in the community. Her mother's word that she does not like Sula drags her towards frustration. Her frustration increases when Sula watches her mother with a man in the bed. Unintentionally Hannah transfers her negative personality to her daughter. Sula is deprived of love, care and affection in her family. She does whatever she desires. In her loneliness, she makes friendship with Nel. They support each-other and share everything. Women intimacy is –

“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” (Smith, 168)

After her marriage, Nel separates from Sula, follows the traditional rules and typical manner of a woman. But Sula is determining in her struggle for equality. She goes outside for her further education. She wanders many cities to enhance her ability but it is the negative effect of her family, she gets knowledge of social and sexual life deeply. Sula get astonished when her grandmother behaves like others, and compelled Sula to get married and settle in a family. Sula replies confidently – “I don't want to make somebody else. I want to make myself (92). It reveals her firmness for her rights.

Sula efforts to arouse consciousness in black women for equality. Sula endeavors to inform black women about the reality of their husbands who are cheating them secretly: “for she would lay their husbands once and then no more” (115). Black women fail to understand her intention and stand with their husbands against Sula. Like other women's husband, Sula sleeps with Jude to show Nel the deceit of her husband who accepts Nel not as an equal life partner but for sexual pleasure. But Nel is grieved for Sula's deceit and mourns for Jude's departure.

Though her way to aware black women is unjust and immoral, her intention is not wrong. Black women blame Sula. They deny that their husband take part in the sexual act willingly. After sexual act, Jude leaves Nel as if he was searching for a reason to get out of family responsibility. Sula's obstinacy for equality and strange behave make her enemy among her people. Sula's informal sexual relation annoys black men, destroys their prestige because they feel themselves superior to women and can not forbear their insult by a woman. Sula denies oppression and humiliation of woman by her own people. Horne asserts:

“Sula is a pariah whose values are often the polar opposites of those adopted by her provincial society. She becomes a pariah precisely because she rejects those values that aim at uniformity and stifle the self” (31).

Sula chooses improper way for equality. She does which she observes in her family. Her illegal relation with married men is the genetic effect of her mother who slept with her friend's husband without any fear. Sula “had no intimate knowledge of marriage, having lived in a house with women who thought all men available, and selected from among them with a care only for their tastes, she was ill prepared for the possessiveness of the one person she felt close to” (119).

Unlike Hannah, Sula finds black men untrustworthy and spurns them again. Sula's free nature attracts Ajax towards her who thinks he will never have to take her responsibility. Sula accepts his company because he listens her thoughts properly. But for her total dependency on him, Ajax leaves her alone. Sula realizes her fault soon that "a lover was not a comrade and could never be for a woman" (121).

Her refusal by her own community, by her friend Nel and later by her lover Ajax becomes the cause of her untimely death. She fights continuously for women liberation and never bends down until her death. She never gets love in family and society; unluckily there is nobody with Sula in her dying moments. Black women suffer harassment in their own black society. Black men negate equality between male and female. They subdue women and treated them like a puppet of their hands. If any woman opposes against harassment either suffers subordination or meet death like Sula.

Though Sula is considered and evil by the community in her life, a good change is observed in the people on that time. They called her evil for her stubbornness but they tried to make themselves good. Wives were taking care of their husband, mothers of their children and children of their grandparents. Sula's presence brings a good change in the society. Her revolt was essential for the improvement of the society. Positivity comes when negativity is dispersed everywhere. Without negative there is no positive.

After Sula's death, Nel realizes that Sula was not an evil but her best friend. She wants to expose the reality of her husband, if Jude really loved her, he would never left her alone and slept with another woman. At last, Nel denies the patriarchal orders of the community and knows the importance of equality. She ascertains Sula's sacrifice for all black women. Heinze states –"both women are alone at the end- Nel in life and Sula in death- contemplating the futility of their search for wholeness in monogamy and domesticity" (82).

Sula's effort makes her evil but her continuity for equality is an example to all women who deny the importance of equality that is essential to survive with honour in society. The novelist instructs black women to recognize the importance of women's power and unity to get equality in male dominant society. Russel avers: "Black women has to be real and genuine to each other, there was no one else.... for physical and psychological survival" (45).

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