

DISCORDS OF MOTHER-DAUGHTER BOND IN TONI MORRISON'S *SULA*

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Abstract---Motherhood is the sanctified institution of humankind, and for certain races its beyond social significances and has the importance of its survival. Toni Morrison keen on emphasising this ideology and her fiction presents the role of mothers and daughters in the sustenance and continuation of race. As a Black American Author Morrison emphasis this conflict and Penetrate the readers into the understanding of solution which is often Culturally Rooted *Sula* presents Black mothers from different generations and their daughters. and Toni Morrison presents how the daughters of these new generations are in conflict with their mothers causing disruption of Afro American ideology lead to the displacement of their lineage. This has been the outcome of the ineffectual cultural knowledge of own race arisen from the defective relationship between Mothers and Daughters.

Keywords--- Mother Lineage, Race, Afro American, Roots, Culture, Matri-Focal.

I. Introduction

Toni Morrison is one of the pioneers among Afro American writers who propagate the ideology of Motherhood, which is distinctively unique and essential for the survival of Afro American Race. Motherhood is the tool and experience for Afro American women to build and fortify the bonds in family, Sometimes the rupturing of these bond happened due to personal , political , or social reasons will ruin the lives of its members, Toni Morrison being advocator of Afro American ideology of Mother hood portrays in her novels the various causes and effects of failed mothering and its remedies as a future precaution through the tales of its victims In *Sula* the daughters are in conflict with mothers and it causes them to reject their role models and alienate from their own roles. *Sula* presents black mothers from different generations and their daughters. These Daughters are in conflict with mothers and they try to establish an identity outside their cultural traditions. And it results in their rejection of mothers and alienation of self. Peace family conflicts for the “ideology of mother love” while in Wright family conflict is for/ against “white identifying values”.

II. Discussion

Nel and *Sula* are legatees of Wright and Peace family. Nel is brought up by her mother Helene wright. Helene had an uncommon childhood; she is a daughter of a Creole whore Rochelle and her Grandmother Cecile Sabat is a pious

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devotee of virgin Mary. To safe guard Helene from ‘‘wild blood’’(Sula, 2005,p.17) of her mother ,Her grandmother has carefully created a distance between mother and daughter and it consequently ruptures the bonding between mother and daughter .Being a staunch devotee of Virgin Mary her grandmother has lived her life according to Biblical convictions. Definitely she has been influenced by the guiding spirit of opposite binary factors good/ evil as the magnitude of one’s sanctity. So, the differences in Values and beliefs has distanced Cecile Sabat and her daughter Rochelle. Helene here becomes a wedge in their heritage. By safeguarding Helene and there after her daughter Nel they successfully wipeout the traces of ‘‘wild blood’’ from their lineage. Helene has successfully carried out the convictions of her grandmother. She has started earning a false superiority in her community by assimilating and carefully manipulating her livelihood in accordance with the standards of dominant race. Gradually it has been a privilege for her to adopt standards of domesticity and religious conformity based on the ‘‘presence and convictions of the legitimacy of her authority’’ (Sula, 2005, p.18).

Everything goes on fine until Helene’s self is put down in front of a white conductor on her trip to New Orleans for the funeral rites of her grandmother. The white conductor questions Helene for boarding on reserved compartment for whites. In order to escape from the situation Helene flaunts her sexuality and offers a coquettish smile to seduce the racist conductor but it hasn’t made any difference on the conductor.’’ We don’t low no mistakes on this train Now git your butt on in there we made a mistake, sir. You see there wasn’t no sign We just got in the wrong car, that’s all. Sir’’ (Sula, 2005, p.21).

Helene becomes Victim of the racist and sexist overtones of his language. The onlookers of the same compartment include soldiers returned from the battlefield of world war I. They got irritated and felt contempt for Helen’s uncultured behavior. They sense in here a demean attitude. The thought that might have flashed on their mind will be the insult fall on the race by this Undignified woman. Morrison shifts the after math of incident on Nel. From here on wards Nel’s changing perception on her Mother begins,

Nel has seen her mother as the one who maintains the utmost propriety in society, she is judgmental towards anyone who falls short of her standards of acceptable behavior. She is now struggling in front a white conductor to maintain her composure. More than Helene this incident has a serious impact on Nel’s identity she has begun to think there is a serious crack in Helen’s identity.

In New Orleans Helene is displeased to see her mother Rochelle. While Nel feels awe at her grandmother’s demeanor she realizes that her grandmother is beyond the conventional boundaries practiced by her mother. And there is a separatism between grandmother and mother. She also got strict instruction from her mother for not to follow grandmother’s tradition and to look upon as role model.

When Nel is back in home. She has with a determination on her identity. She has learned the follies of fabricated self cultivated in her through mother’s upbringing. It is not possible to forge some one’s racial identity Helene’s encounter with white conductor is an example for this ever-sustaining truth. If she had succeeded in forging her identity, she would not have suffered racism. The order and boundaries of religious conformity and domesticity in

affinity with white values do not protect blacks from racism. Not only she becomes victim of racism and sexism but also a demean lady in front of her own race.

Nel befriends Sula she is in need of someone who is able to show her true self. She wants to be herself. "I'm me, I'm not their daughter, I'm me" (Sula, 2005, p.28) "The trip perhaps, or her new found self-gave her the strength to cultivate a friend in spite of her mother's advice. "(Sula, 2005, p.29.) The two girls are connected to fill up their voidness and negligence's in their individual lives by what they could gain from others life. Before befriends Sula, Nel had routinely followed her mother's instructions to shape her nose with clothespin and comb hair to silky straight, secretly slips from the chores and hide the clothespin under her blanket. Grewel observes clothespin symbolizes" a homely instrument of torture and is symbol of nurturing denied to Nel" (Chattaraj,2013, p. 45). The resolutions Nel has made on her New Orleans trips starts fortifying "in mutual admiration" (Sula, 2005.p.55). between girls but it needs to insist that they are not similar. They are having a common vision but different desires. Universal Theory of opposite attract each other connects the friendship between Sula and Nel.

Like Nel, Sula's home is also Matri-centered. Eva is the head of peace family. She is a self empowered in all ways to ensure the survival of family. To Quote Morrison's words "Eva is a ship and safe harbor at the same time" (O'Reilly2004.p.151). Eva's life is a fight against obstacles for the survival of children. The spirit of mothering never lets Eva down because she believes that her life is to sacrifice emotionally and physically for children. The ideology of motherhood in Eva is to preserve the life of children foremost. Barbara Hill Rigney contemplates Eva as "nommo the creative potential and the sacred aspect of nature itself." (Hill, 1991. p.14).

Several critics condemn Eva for focusing only on preservative love in comparison to sensitive mothering. Morrison standpoint on Eva is more crucial than any other comments. O'Reilly points that "for Morrison, this pathologizing of preservative love is particularly problematic because only by way of preservative love black women can keep alive their children in a world hostile to their well being. Preservative love is at the heart of black women's mother work" (O, Reilly,2004, p.20)

Sara Ruddick in theory maternal practice highlights the importance of preservative love in Blackwoman. "The first duty of mothers is to protect and preserve their children to keep safe whatever is vulnerable and valuable in child "(Ruddick, 1989 p.80) Ruddick details "preserving the lives of children is the central constitutive, invariant aim of maternal practices, the commitment to achieving that aim is the constitutive maternal act"(Ruddick,1989, p.19). Eva is ferociously dedicated to her children. Sacrifice and dedication are the two qualities that make mothers great and mothering a priceless act. Eva has in abundance these Qualities. Eva and her daughter Hannah and granddaughter Sula are beads of mother line tradition of peace family in Afro American community, but they are in conflict with the ideology of mother love.

Hannah, daughter of Eva in conversation with their group discusses about their love on children." Oh, I don't know. My Rudy minds his daddy. He just wild with me. Be glad when he grown and gone." Hannah smiled and

said, "Shut your mouth. You love the ground he pees on." "Well, Hester grown now, and I can't say love is exactly what i feel." Sure, you do. You love her, like I love Sula. I just don't like her. That's the difference. "Guess so. Likin' them is another thing." "Sure. They different people, you know..."(Sula2005, p.57). Hannah's inability to connect with Eva deprives Sula to have a close bonding with her grandmother too there by enriching her identity worth for a black woman hood.

Two incidents have shaped Sula's identity and disconnects her from the mother line traditions of community .one is Hannah's comment on here motherly love towards Sula "I love Sula, I just don't like her" That is the difference " (Sula,2005, p.57). Sula's psychological reaction after hearing Hannah's comment "she only heard Hannah 's words' and the pronouncement sent her flying up stairs in bewilderment she stood at the window fingering the curtain edge, aware of sting in her eye ." (Sula,2005 ,p.57.)A Child could not face the bitter reality of mother love. Even if mothers do not like or love them. They like to believe that mothers both love and like them unconditionally. It became unbearable for Sula to face the rejection and abandonment from her mother. Immediately after hearing Hannah's comment Sula accidently drown the young boy chicken little "this drowning symbolically marks Sula's alienation from her mother line tradition and in particular maternity" (O, Reilly, 2004.p.60).

Sula's friendship with Nel and vice-versa is meant to fill the gap comes short on the nurturing yardstick of their mothers. Nel's mother Helene Initially disliked her friendship with Sula "... the girl she had seen for five years at Garfield primary but never played with never knew, because her mother said that Sula's mother was sooty (Sula,2005. p.29). But in Sula she has found "None of the mother's slackness" (Sula,2005, p.29). They complement each other and signifies one's self in other but still Nel and Sula are separate entities.

The profound influence they have on each other never makes a change in their personality. Throughout their friendship they remain true to themselves. Highly demanding mother of Nel and self-indulged mother of Sula are no longer pestering for them "In the safeharbor of each other's company they could afford to abandon the ways of other people" (Sula,2005, p.55).

The bond between Nel and Sula inaugurated in them a desire "explore everything that interested them "(Sula2005, p.55) Now their interest is on men." The new theme they were now discovering was men. So, they met regularly, without even planning it, to walk down the road to Edna Finch Mellow House, even though it was too cool for ice cream" (Sula2005, p.56). This is also a silent wish of adolescent girls as to treat like sexual objects from men to their own community. The experience of adult hood on their own mutual consent and desires is welcoming for Sula and Nel. But the same Sula and Nel dare enough to threatened sexual attack of Irish boys.

This act reminds of Eva's self mutilation to protect and preserve the dear ones. Sula has shown the same response to protect Nel. Here Sula becomes Eva her grandmother. Preservation and protection are the qualities of her grandmother. Sula's attitude while protecting Nel reveals these traits are naturally acquired in her. By cutting off the

tip of index finger Sula threatens the Irish boys. Being a prodigy of Matri-Focal community Sula like her grandmother Eva does not allow any practice of patriarchy both outside and inside community.

Sula and Nel's turning point in their friendship starts from Nel's acceptance of Jude and Sula's consequent decision to pursue education. Both these girl's decision has a strong influence of their family traditions Nel has been brought up by mother of strong white identifying values and patriarch discourse of family life Considers marriage is the last word for a woman. Whereas Sula's brought up lies in strong matriarchal tradition believes in independency of female and sustaining of their tradition thorough motherhood. The role of man in women's life is an important

Sula's return to Bottom after ten years startles its inhabitants. As like the indication of her arrival Bottom is inflicted with plague and flocks of robin. People of Bottom senses Sula as a sign of bad omen. Sula's appearance overwhelms its inhabitants they have felt a style statement in her demeanor and her accessories are luxurious. In course of time Sula's actions will become a proof of their believes.

The first thing she has done on her return is to put Eva in old age home. It is an impulsive decision from Sula taken out of a conflict from Eva. She demands a settlement from Sula with husband and children but Sula becomes judgmental over here she observes Eva as an autonomous Matriarch trying to control her so she asserts to her that she doesn't want to become someone else as she has her own identity." I don't want to make somebody else. I am myself. (Sula2005, p.92.)

Later when Nel Questions Sula for her impulsive decision to put Eva in sunny dale Sula explains to her that it is out fear. She has done the cruelest decision. Here Eva's maternal power is misunderstood as the haughtiness of a despotic matriarch. Sula seems to repeat the mistakes of Hannah here. Like Hannah Sula wrongly interprets Eva on the basis of ideology mother love Sula's conversation with Eva reflects her doubt on Eva's love towards them" but not you. I am not never going to need you and you know what may be one night when you dozing in that wagon flicking flies and swallowing split' maybe I'll just tip on up here with kerosene and – who knows – you may make the brightest flame of all."(Sula2005,p.94)

Sula's reaction toward her grandmother perceives from own mother Hannah's rejection of her. Sula and Hannah become rebels by discarding their mother line tradition. Hannah is passive in actions, she adopts a rather cold attitude towards the assigned role of mother and daughter by the community, but Sula fiercely rejects the system of community and declared her independence. Her actions are visible denial of traditional values. Hannah's indifferent attitude and remarks damages Sula's inner spirit as black woman. She could not become a self learner or try to understand the maternal power of grandmother. The methods she adopts to acquire self sufficiency and independency will not empower her as black woman. She has diverted to wrong route from her mother line and has lost the cultural tradition of motherhood. According to Morrison "Sula may her way" "she does not understand her past" (O, reilly2004, p..63) Hannah and Sula are equally deficient in realizing the mother love of Eva. Their woman hood is incomplete without the realization of their tradition. Society begins to afraid her "unfettered sexuality" It poses a threat on the system of society. She has spoiled the marital relationships and recover the men from the after

math of scornful rejection by her is difficult while the demonization of Sula is socially useful because women become alert and more willingly carry out their role of a wife and mother.

III. Conclusion

Sula is now rejected by mother, friend, lover and society. She is seen in dying stage and Nel who visits Sula blames Sula for her actions specially to have illegal sex with Jude. And rejection of her grandmother Eva. While Sula does not deny her action but refuses to be accept total responsibility for the rupture of their friendship. Sula states she slept with Jude, but it does not mean that she wants to take away Jude from Nel. Sula also reminds that she has no connection with Jude to end their marital life. Nel becomes upset for Sula's Unwillingness to accept all the consequences of her actions. Nel finally tells they all black women and they should live according to that in reply Sula tells here she is beyond all those conventions finally when Nel reminds Sula the ultimate goal of black women is their commitment towards children. Sula declares that she will leave them like black men do. Maternal rejection of Sula echoes here.

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