



TRAUMATIC STATE OF SETHE IN TONI MORRISON'S BELOVED

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ABSTRACT:

The purpose of this paper is mainly to deal with psychological factor which affected the character "Sethe" in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. The reason behind the trauma of Sethe is of two incidents that took place in her hard life as a black women. Sethe Being a mother of four children and an ex slave who underwent various threads in her life. Connecting all the trauma and bringing out the detailed analysis of the character.

KEYWORDS: Trauma, psychology, struggle, violation.

Toni Morrison's *Beloved* novel focus mainly on life's hardship especially the story is on a escaped slave. This novel also explicate how the protagonist Sethe is psychologically ill after the murder of her little daughter beloved. That incident keeps haunting her throughout the novel. And that often takes her to the past memory which eventually destroys her present. The character Sethe demonstrates as a victim of being abused by the men in Sweet Home. Sethe was the only one women among the other six men who worked along with her in the plantation. Even there she faced lots of struggles being a blackwomen, because all the co workers always approach her with lustful intension. Sethe had underwent lots of trauma and that was the main reason behind the murder of her child Beloved. This is the bitter reality of women, as they are taken for granted. Sethe being a mother who had unconditional love towards her children and that is the reason why she cut off her daughter Beloved's throat. This seems to be an act of true love and care of a mother.

Paul D, one among the six men in Sweet home. Sethe meets him after eighteen years after she escaped from Sweet Home along with her children in order to get rid of brutal slavery. Paul D's arrival flashed her back to the time when she worked with them and Halle, Sethe's husband whom she chose as her lover and married him. In the present where Paul D gets into Sethe's place for his shelter and gradually their relationships grow strong and they build their sexual relationship with one another. This also turns hers by affecting her psychologically. Which started to affected

her motherly relationship with her daughter Denver. Prior to now, Denver is been distorted after her two brothers had left 124 Blue stone, because of the strange events that had taken place in their house. Sethe shatter herself from present to past and several events keeps her haunting, which is also blocking her in leading the present life. Recalling of the murder takes place in her mind often. Sethe who wanted her dead daughter Beloved's tomb to be chiselled with her name in pink glittering chips. Where the engraver demands of 10 minutes sex with him in order to carve the word "Beloved" in her tombstone without paying the money. That puts her into a pathetic situation . Sethe during her escape from Sweet Home along with children, She had her breast milk for her baby to nurse, but it was stolen and she was helpless at the situation. Nobody was there to rescue her. Sethe has undergone almost all the psychological and physical harassment as a blackwomen. The psychological ana physical harassment floats in her mind and that made her to kill Beloved, hoping that she should not undergo same struggle which Sethe had faced in her hard life . Being a mother she feels that it is right to kill her daughter for protecting her from slavery. Beloved's deadly spirit haunts Sethe and Denver in 124 Blue Stone. Motherly figure is something who brings a little creature into this world but where as in the case of Sethe, she is trapped to end the life of her own little baby girl. This story clearly depicts very clearly the conflict between a mother and daughter relationship with African American society, how people are brutally pushed into violence. Sethe is often preoccupied by her past memory. Morrison had used an incredible word "Rememory", which carries a lot of meaning in it. Here it is clearly noted that Sethe is undergoing such a traumatic state, where she is held up with memory of the dead child.

There are incidents which happen in each and everyone's life and that is very hard to remove or to take off from the mind. Same thing had happened to the protagonist of the novel, who is locked up with the past incident and struggles to get rid of it. Chapter 5 introduces a grownup lady with tender skin, lineless and smooth, who had fallen asleep near 124 Blue Stone. Denver, Sethe and Paul D who returned from the carnival and they felt something strange with that girl. When Paul D enquired about her name, she replied Beloved. Immediately after hearing the name Beloved, Sethe was shocked to hear that and felt that her dead daughter Beloved is back to her. Sethe was so much engaged with Beloved and special care was given to her. Thinking that her dead daughter has come to her as a reincarnation. The sin of black family is clearly exposed by Morrison, as Beloved fallen sick of cholera and the family members are not in the position to cure it . A strong bond had been created between Sethe and Beloved. Sethe shares her remembrance of her mother, who had a circle and cross burnt in the skin. But she was not that matured enough to know what really it is. As days passed, when she underwent those scares only then she realized what it is. Sethe also remembers how she was brutally violated by school teacher. And the pain she gone through. Most hardest part is nobody was there to rescue her. The theft of Sethe's breast milk plays a central role in this novel, because not even one was there to voice out the problem. And if so they speak then their tongues will be cut into pieces.

Black community people often express their problems and struggles of slavery through singing. Sethe remembers about Baby Suggs, her mother in law who has left this beautiful world. It's been nine years passed without her. Baby Suggs used to tell that flesh need to be loved, feet that need rest, backs that need support and the shoulders that need arm to rest. She reminds as a

inspiring soul, but whereas in her later days she was rolling in room and carving for colours. The reason for Baby Suggs trouble is she has lost all her eight children and that is the main reason why she had suffered. Same thing Sethe is also facing as a mother, as she lost her two sons and a daughter who is been murdered.

Amy Denver, a white lady who helped Sethe in delivering her baby. Once after she left the place, Sethe came across a Black men along with two boys. One of the boys jacket was given to Sethe for wrapping the infant. This picturize the mankind and there are people who are really good and kind, in the violating world where people abuse women. And some are there to render their hands when people are really in need. Sethe was injured a lot and her legs was been hurt so much and reflects the cruelty of slavery and physical violations. Sethe also remembers of her postpartum period of twenty eight days, which is the only time where she lived a unslaved life. That remains as the period of unslaved life in Sethe's life. Sethe was also hoping for her husband Halle to knock up the door of 124 Blue Stone. But she expects is something which is not going to happen for sure in her life and there is no chance of it. Sethe even doesn't know whether Halle is alive or not .

Sethe's mind skaters to Beloved who has come to 124 Blue Stone, she believes that Beloved is her daughter's reincarnation. Beloved's neediness towards Sethe seems like how a small baby is dependent on her mother . After the arrival of Beloved, lots of changes was seen in Paul D's behaviour. He is aware of loosing Sethe. Because he feels Sethe is giving atmost love, care and affection to Beloved and Denver. Which he couldn't accept , so he insists Sethe to become pregnant and have a separate family for themselves. But Sethe is not ready to accept that as she already undergone several trauma and she is no more agreeable to have another baby. These thoughts even more drags Sethe into a psychological illness. Already she has faced millions of psychological and physical pressure in her life being a black female mother. She herself indulged in bringing up the children. Despite of various problems, struggles and violations, Sethe had solved everything with one blow. This reflects how powerful and strong every women is. Women are more capable of tacking the problems and overcoming it, even though they face lots of trauma they will always have their inner spirit to be strong enough in breaking it.

Sethe constantly showered love on Beloved but eventually she pacifies herself in order to get rid of the unpleasant past. And she believes that Beloved is only a ordinary girl whom she rescued when Beloved was in need. Before the entry of Beloved, Denver was the one and only happiness and source of leading life. But whereas after Beloved, gradually Denver's importance in Sethe's life started to fall down. Which eventually as days passed Sethe understood.

All the women characters in this undergo various painful experience. Protagonist Sethe deals with various traumatic situation and she didn't find any companion to exchange her thoughts. And she seeks for a comforting words from the people she surrounded with. As the society isolated the Sethe and her family. Black community people are treated as commodity. Sethe in this novel faces various psychological issues regarding the murder of her daughter Beloved. The reason why she murdered her daughter is not out of her own intension, but she was believes that it is a act of love and she doesn't want anyone to hurt her children.

Sethe thought killing is the one and only way to rescue her children from slavery. And she feels it is right and justifies in this novel. But whereas a controversy arise there because Paul D finds it unfair of killing a person out of love. He takes this incident as a crime or a sin, which shouldn't be done. Sethe faces trauma of her mind shifting from past to present. Sethe remembers the day of Beloved's funeral. Sethe is been isolated by her neighbours. This is also the major important theme in this novel. Beloved hums a song, Sethe was shocked after hearing it ,because that was the song she once sang for her children and nobody knows it. As days passed, Denver started to feel a find of isolation as Sethe is prioritizing Beloved. Denver later comes to know that Sethe was the one who killed her little sister few years back. Sethe wanted to tell her what exactly had happened and the reason for the murder , she believes that definitely Denver will understand the mother's feeling. There comes a few clash and break in Denver and Sethe's mother and daughter relationship. Sethe's mind flashes back to the time when Mrs.Garner who used to call her "strong as a mule"

Novel is drifted to Beloved's experience which signifies the problem of a motherly figure. Beloved tells the experience of how she was rescued by Sethe . This separation and return of mother and daughter denotes how Africans are tortured and finally they come back to their motherland. Sethe was the last image which Beloved saw before emerging in the water. But finally she comes back to her mother itself. Sethe feels it as a law of nature. It also reflects a kind of separation from slavery or merely a separation from motherland. In the later part of the novel , Denver steps out of the house for the sake of the survival of her own family. Inorder to protect and look after Sethe and Beloved. Sudden change in Sethe's self realization, which leads Denver to move to her adult life. Sethe's struggle of past memory is slowly relieved as days and people engage with her.

REFERENCE

Beloved – Toni Morrison