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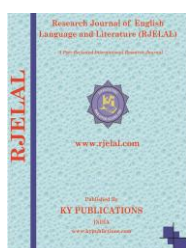
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## MOTHERHOOD IN TONI MORRISON AMERCY

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### ABSTRACT

Motherhood provides them with essential skills and character to be good to provide something which someone can use. Morrison can understand the imaginary impact of suffering on these Black mothers depicted by the writer in her novels. A Mercy, the concept of motherhood is expanded to include more than the traditional bonds between mothers and daughters. Mother love acquires a different bond in this novel blood relation to a different connect between all female characters. Motherhood in her novel is individual with a broken spirit and shattered self. It is not an easy but a strained relationship between mother and child.

Keywords: Motherhood, black mothers, A Mercy, Toni Morrison.

### INTRODUCTION

Mothering is a central issue for feminist theory. Motherhood is a persistent presence in the work of Toni Morrison. Morrison builds upon black women's experiences in terms of both maternal identity and role.

Motherhood is one of the most complicated jobs there is. It shows a new chapter in every woman's story. It gives you a new belief in yourself, something you didn't know was it until you had children. It also gives you a new presence of purpose and meaning in life. You attain a love and passion for your children that you've never experienced as it's.

Motherhood is emotional. It's heads yourself as a mom and sometimes forgotten who you really are, who you were before these beautiful babies introduced. Most of the times it can make you feel better like your only aim has to change diapers and do clothes all day. And so much love as it is we have for our kids, sometimes motherhood left us with an aching for activities better than what lies outside the walls of our home.

Motherhood, in Morrison's view, is fundamentally and profoundly an act of resistance, essential and integral to black women's fight against racism, sexism and their ability to achieve well-being for themselves and their culture. The power of motherhood and the empowerment of mothering pave the way for the better world.

In her writing, Morrison shows the complexity of black women's minds as mothers. Linda Wagner-Martin has analysed several of Morrison's fictions and she argues that: "the author's variations in drawing the roles of mothers, as well as the outcomes of that mothering in the equalised different characters of children, provide necessary critical information" Morrison goes beyond the stereotypical image of African-American women as impeccable mothers, while at the same time challenging the notion that motherhood deteriorates women. Although the portrayal of black mothers as mighty can be empowering for women, there is a tendency to romanticize black women's maternal experiences, which confines women to be exemplary mothers. Carole Boyce Davies shows that, in the past, there has been "a feel in black cultures to affect black motherhood and/or to

construct an essential mother as a strategic response to restrict constructs... this affirmation becomes as it is defining and limiting for women”.

Morrison's writings break away begins labels that essentialist women's experiences as mothers to depict as different experiences of as it's her characters. Black mams are often depicted as having an ambivalent nature. This idea dangerously finalized motherhood with womanhood, base of it implies that women are only complete as mothers. Motherhood is often seen throughout lens of a biological imperative that considers women to feels a maternal instinct with desire to be mothers. This perspective tends with idealize motherhood, also when applied with the experiences of black women in the context of slavery with its aftermath, leads to the erroneous picture of this black mother as completely selfless, or as its astoundingly cruel or dominant.

#### **Motherhood in Toni Morrison's A Mercy**

In Morrison's A Mercy, Florens's mother experiences the confining contradictions imposed on black mothers during slavery and the lack of opportunity to explain her actions. Florensof her mother initially belong to D'Ortega, a Portuguese slave of owner, who owes finacial to Jacob, a tradesman. Jacob belongs to D'Ortega's plantation to receive his payment, "it became clear what D'Ortega had left to offer. Slaves"(A M21)

D'Ortega insists that Jacob should carry a slave for payment, but Jacob is hesitant to slaves are couldn't goods he trades in. But near her house, Florens's mother watches Jacob's attention: "He saw a woman standing in the doorway with two kids. One on her sides; one hiding behind her long skirt. She shows healthy enough, better fed than others. On a whim, mostly to silence him with fairly sure D'Ortega would reduce, he said, 'Her. That one. I'll care her' (A M23-24). Jacob explains Florens's mother, who are a house slave bit valuable to D'Ortega. He answers: "Ah, no. Impossible. My wife won't allow. She won't live without her" (A M24). Jacob perceives from his reaction that "There was more than cooking D'Ortega stood to lose" (A M24). It is implied that Florens's mother is abused by D'Ortega and with that reason; she is kept around the house. Although D'Ortega says his spouse can't

live without her, it is him that wants her close. Interrupting the conversation between both men characters, the narrator describes the scene of Florens and they mother:

The little girl stepped from behind the mother. On her feet was a couple of steps woman's shoes... The woman lading the small boy on her body came forward. Her voice as barely above a clumps but there was no mistaking its urgency. "Please, Senhor. Not mine. Take her. Take my daughter.(A M 26)

In an act that surprises Jacob, the woman offers her daughter to be taken away. Because of this event, Jacob misinterprets Florens's mother's, describing Florens as the: "illshod child the mother was throwing away". (A M 34)

Like his prose, he had a distorted view of motherhood that sees black mothers as cruel and detached. This assumption benefits Jacob, because it releases him of any guilt for his action of buying a young girl and, thus, depriving the little girl of her mother's company. Florens's mother as judged through the witness of a fair male who fails to understand the reality of black women during workaholic. He conveniently portrays Florens's mother as monstrous with convinces himself that he is doing Florens a favours taking her apart from this unnatural mother. Jacob thinks to himself that the "Acquisition... Could be seen as a rescue" (A M 34)

However, later as the novel, Florens's mother had that chance to tell her stories with shed light on her actions. That is possible because she narrates the final chapter herself. She tells her story of viewpoint as if speaking directly to them daughter:

"You wanted the shoes of a loose woman, and a cloth around your chest did no good. You caught Senhor's eye"(A M 166)

Despite Florens's mother's strike to keep her as a kid as long of it possible, she is worried because D'Ortega begins to notice her daughter. She knows of it Florens stays, she is doomed to have them same fate as herself: should be abused with serving the sexual needs of her white employer. She continues

to explain her actions: "One chance, I thought. There is no protection but there is difference". (A M 166)

In Morrison's liabilities, motherhood becomes a fluid with complexly-developed experience. As it as to A Mercy, the novel Sula could be said to: "problematize the mother rather than romanticize her". The novel challenges the notion that all black women are inherently good and nurturing mothers, or even if such a concept is possible. In Sula, various forms of motherhood illustrate the complication of the experience of black mothers in a postslavery homes.

In A Mercy, the concept of motherhood is expanded to include more than the traditional biological bonds between mothers and daughters. As common to African-American literature, mothers can be represented through grandmothers, friends, and even neighbours. A Mercy, Lina, a Native American as a slave, comes to represent to the surrogate mother for Florens. The mother has the main person responsible for her child is actually a notions of modern ideal society, as the nuclear family becomes reduced and the community is separated from that regular process of mothering.

In A Mercy, Lina becomes a surrogate mother of Florens, as it long to take care and be carried for. Both situated characters are separated from their families at a very crucial early age. As discussed earlier, Florens is sold to Jacob. She is separated from her mother while still a child and longs for a mother figure. Lina, while also a kid, is one of them few Native American survivors of a dangerous disease of plague in her village. French soldiers find her hiding up a tree and take her to a Presbyterian village nearby. There, she suffers bravery and abuse because she is Native American slave. When she refused as a victim nireacts, she is marginalized and expelled from each and every household, being forced to live outside, along with animals. When Jacob visits the town, he takes Lina, who is already older, but still longs to find another family. Although Lina maintains to survive by herself, she desires to have family connections and confections as she once had as a child.

Lina is not Florens's physically mother or a relative; yet, she becomes a surrogate mother of Florens. Not limited to relatives, othermothers

help women cope with the failures of their biological mothers, which was a common pattern in slavery. Patricia Hill Collins as it is also adopts the term othermothers to widely refer to that women bonds among black women they helps them survive and shape their subjectivities. The term othermother was adopted in this article, and its meaning as extended beyond that of black women, as of include women with color, as is the case with Lina. She can be shown as an othermother to Florens, because despite their differences, a mother-daughter bond marks them relationship and together they resist that paradigms as of a slave holding society that ruptures women's bonds. Lina and Florens met when Jacob brings Florens at farm. As possible as she arrives in Jacob's farm, Lina is absorbed with feelings of care, as she: "had fallen in love with her right away, as soon as she saw her shivering in the snow" (A M 60)

Florens mentions with delight, "Lina smiles when she looks at me and wraps me for warmth" (A M 8)

Immediately, both sympathize with each other. They slowly become more involved with one another: "they had memorable nights, lying tighter, when Florens listened in rigid delight to Lina's stories" (A M 61) and their relationship is gradually strengthened. Florens means safe in her arm also "would sigh then, she head on Lina's shoulder and when sleep came the little girl's smile lingered smartly". (A M 63)

Lina much comforts her, and they begin to love and trust each other slowly. Florens likes to hear Lina's stories, but the one she loves most are always those about maternal bonds: "especially called for were stories of mothers fighting to save their children from wolves and natural disasters". (A M 61)

She admires and loves protective mothers who struggle to ensure the survival of their kids by keeping them close. Florens longs with same kind of bond, because of she erroneously believes her mother offered her to Jacob out of lack of love immorally. As an othermother, Lina tries to show helping hands to Florens through love and care. When Florens is stand alone, she constantly misses Lina and needs her. While on an errand to get the

blacksmith to save Jacob's wife from an illness, Florens longs for Lina's guidance: "I need Lina to say how to shelter in wilderness". (A M 42)

As her othermother, Lina represents the wisdom and curial knowledge that Florens deeply needs. While alone, Florens misses "sleeping with the broken sleigh with Lina". (A M.6). Like a daughter who carefully listens to her mother's serious advice, Florens makes constant reference to Lina's teachings: "Lina says... not at all natives are like her... so watch out". (A M 5)

She tries to remember things that she learned with Lina so she will be tightly able to survive on her own in the woods. Florens with Lina were in need of love, as they are trying to survive in a society that has lacerated their family bonds. The narrator states likely that "the mother hunger - to be one or of it have one - both of them were actually reeling from that longing which, Lina knew, still remained alive, traveling the bone". (A M. 63)

Both feel the need to have a mother-daughter bond to survive under the cruel realities of slavery. By seemingly cultivating mutual feelings of love with loyal respect, both characters cope fully with their previous traumas of abandonment and loss. As Lina and Florens perform the roles of mother and daughter, respectively, it can be argued that "the concept of motherhood cannot be reduced to a biological function", especially in a slaveholding society.

## CONCLUSION

Morrison's *A Mercy*, novel that challenge conventional portrayals of motherhood. The analysis of various forms of motherhood suggests it of there is no fairy tale or an idealized scripted story about mothers in these novels. The comparative analysis of Morrison's *Sula* and *A Mercy* illustrates the complexity of motherhood, challenging stereotype black mothers beyond biological determinants. This study none stabilizes patterns that classify black women characters as simply mothers -like or not mothers- like. Black mothers could not be simply judged as likely good or unlikely bad. The various live realities of that presenting women characters show the heterogeneous experiences of motherhood under unforgettable slavery and in its post-slavery society. In such a context, motherhood

is not a limited to lively biological connections. Different women come to play the roles of mothers and other mothers. In Morrison's *A Mercy*, motherhood reflects the many possible manifestations of such bonds during slavery and in its aftermath.

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