

# Nature of Human Relationship in Toni Morrison's Novel

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**Abstract:** The terms "Human" and "Relationship" are combined to make the phrase "human relationship." "Human" is defined as"

1. Of, relating to, or characteristic of human beings: the course of human events; the human race" in the American Heritage Dictionary.
2. Possessing or demonstrating the qualities that set humans apart from other animals, such as kindness.

While the word "relationship" is defined as:

1. The state or fact of relationship; connection or affiliation.
2. Kinship; a relationship based on blood or marriage.
3. A specific relationship between individuals who are connected to or interact with one another.

Being the first African-American to receive the Nobel Prize in literature in 1993, Toni Morrison is the most accomplished African American woman novelist of the modern era. Present paper tries to study the nature of human relationship in Toni Morrison's novels.

**Keywords:** Human Relationship, Toni Morrison, Novel.

In the Ohio rust belt town of Lorain, Toni Morrison was born on February 18, 1931. George Wofford, her father, was a Georgia-born shipyard welder. Ramah, her mother, from Alabama originally, Willis Wofford. The second of four children, Toni was. "Chloe Anthony Wofford" is how her parents named her. She spent her early years in a diverse and somewhat unfriendly area in Lorain, Ohio. The Wofford family "had an Italian family on one side and a Greek family on the other. There was neither segregation on a class basis nor overt racial hostility in their area because everyone lived in poverty. Toni Morrison's early years were not dominated by black responses to white oppression notwithstanding the great depression. Morrison began working for Random House in Syracuse as "an associate editor" in 1964. In addition to raising her sons, she spent her evenings writing.

She thought it was thrilling and difficult. Morrison then started working at Random House in New York as a senior editor in 1967. There, she worked as an editor for numerous works by notable black American writers including Andrew Young, Angela Davis, Muhammad Ali, etc. She served as the State University of New York at Purchase's associate professor of English from 1971 to 1972. She also spent the 1976–1977 academic year as a guest lecturer at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut. She held the Albert Schweitzer Chair in the Humanities at the State University of New York at Albany from 1984 to 1989. Morrison was appointed the Council of Humanities' Robert F. Goheen Professor at Princeton University in 1987.

Eight novels have been written by Morrison. The most recent films are Love (2003), The Bluest Eye (1997), Sula (1974), Song of Solomon (1977), Tar Baby (1981), Beloved (1987), Jazz (1992), Paradise (1998), and Tar Baby (1981). Each one of them has a lot to offer and is also varied and interesting. Her distinctive storytelling style, which varies from book to book, is delightful. However, the abiding impression is one of humanity and sympathy, which is always grounded in great laughter.

One of the best creations of man is the relation or relationship between mother, father, sister, son, daughter, husband, wife and in-laws." These relations along with several others form a society. Society implies a group of people maintaining human relationships. Hence, it is the product of human relationships. The origin and very identity of the society is closely related to the human relationships. Race, colour, culture, religion, power, and language are some of the important factors, which play their roles in maintaining or straining human relationships.

The definition of "human relations" in Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language is "the social relations between human beings, especially when being investigated."

One of the most influential authors in African American literature, Toni Morrison also addresses "the pain and agony caused by the African American oppressor" in addition to advocating the importance of good and healthy human relationships in African American society. The whites who were the blacks' masters caused them great suffering. Her works contain a significant amount of information about the mysterious sufferings of black people and the skewed human relationships in American culture. Her genuine sentiments about the lack of healthy human interactions occasionally come across in her entire fictional universe. Her books have a variety of themes. All of her stories share a common theme, though, which is how she portrays her inhumanely human relationships. Her characters' broken and torn interpersonal bonds serve as the fundamental foundation of her make-believe universe. In her books, Morrison explores four significant iterations of the issue of interpersonal connections. The first is the relationship between a parent and child, followed by the relationship between a man and a woman, companionship, and finally, the relationship between an individual and society. The growth of Morrison's philosophy has been influenced by a variety of causes. These include the social setting, her family history, the black community, African American folklore, her educational background, her experiences

in her early professional life, her time as an editor at Random House, and, most importantly, the works of great writers. Her characters' interpersonal connections demonstrate how strongly forebears have influenced them. This impact has a variety of components, including socioeconomic, religious, and political implications.

In addition, the historical context of black people has an effect on how her characters interact with one another. The interaction between parents and children is crucial to family ties. Through her works, Morrison explores the nuances of parent-child relationships, including their difficulties. There are many different variations of this relationship, including mother-daughter relationships, father-daughter relationships, mother-son relationships, father-son relationships, and surrogate parents who have fostered children.

A skewed parent-child relationship is the main subject of *The Bluest Eye* (1970). Pecola Breedlove's main character is an ugly eleven-year-old girl. Her relationships with her parents and other people are damaged by her lack of beauty, as this novel demonstrates. In this book, Morrison expresses her intense personal experience with domestic abuse and dysfunctional parent-child relationships.

In *Beloved* (1987), the parent-child bond is seen from a different angle. The book's main character, Sethe, was once a slave who chose to kill her unborn child rather than continue living in servitude. The mother-child bond is portrayed in this book with all of its quirks. It gives us a firsthand account of the devastation caused by the tremendous love a slave mother had for her child. She adds yet another dimension to parent-child relationships in her novel *Paradise* (1998), a young mother in this book. Mavis abandons her newborn twins in a Cadillac on a hot day with the windows open and the babies perish as a result of her difficult circumstances and her abusive husband. She then expresses regret and claims that she did not experience any hardship because they were her only children. The awful meeting of love and destructive force between a parent and kid is shown by Morrison.

The tale of Milkman Dead is found in "*Song of Solomon* (1977)". This book illustrates Milkman's parents' barren and shattered relationship with their son. While Milkman's mother cherishes her father's deified memory, Milkman's father prioritizes owning property. This book demonstrates how the parents' quirky love affects their interactions with their kids.

In *Sula* (1974), Eva and Plum's mother-son bond is violated, which causes Plum to develop a "Oedipus Complex." Morrison explores several facets of the issue of man-woman relationships. They include husband-wife connections and romantic interactions. The husband-wife relationship in *The Bluest Eye* (1970) is torn between love and anger. Cholly and Pauline fight all the time. Both struggle with an inferiority complex.

In this book, Morrison has masterfully captured the unsatisfactory and toxic relationships between husband and wife. Two different approaches to the issue of man-woman relationships are revealed in *Song of Solomon*. Relationships between Ruth Dead and her husband Macon Dead II are complicated and entangled.

The distorted husband-wife relationship is a product of Ruth's concern with her deceased father's memories and Macon's obsession with money. The love connection between Milkman Dead and his cousin Hagar is also discussed in this book.

Morrison depicts the husband-and-wife relationships between the black slaves in *Beloved* (1987). The fate of Sethe and Halle's marriage rests with their white overlords. In this book, the relationship between Sethe and Paul D is yet another example of a man and woman dating. In *Jazz* (1992), a high school student named Dorcas and a woman named Joe Trace who sells women's beauty products engage in a soaring love affair. Everything is like a television programme to Dorcas. Once she leaves him to go dancing, so in a fit of uncontrollable rage, Joe shoots her. In her final statement, the victim declines to say who killed her. The sublimity of adolescent love is captured in this book, even though Joe is in an extramarital relationship. The triangular man-woman connection between Joe, his wife Violet, and the teenage girl Dorcas has been expertly portrayed by Morrison.

In addition to parent-child and man-woman interactions, Morrison has explored a wide range of other human connections in her books. They include friendships, connections between people and the larger society, master-slave ties, tenant-landlord partnerships, and more. According to the plots of her works, she has accurately described them.

Frieda MacTeer, Pecola Breedlove, and Claudia are clearly close friends in *The Bluest Eye*. It is a fairly well-known illustration of female friendship.

Morrison demonstrates her woman-to-woman attitude in this connection. In *Song of Solomon*, she also addresses boy-to-boy friendship. In this book, Milkman Dead and Guitar Bains are depicted as having a male friendship.

*Sula* follows the friendship between two young black girls named Nel Wright and Sula Peace. Morrison captured every colour and cry of this relationship in his painting.

Pecola Breedlove is derided in *The Bluest Eye*'s black culture because, by their standards, she is unattractive. This book demonstrates the terrible repercussions of unrealistic beauty standards on interpersonal connections between people and in society. It also goes without saying that no society, black or white, can accept a member who challenges its norms and traditions. *Sula* criticises and mocks the attitudes and beliefs of black society in her book *Sula*. She suffers as a result from social exclusion. In this story, the one-versus-all dilemma is expertly portrayed in terms of the human bond between the individual and society.

In *Tar Baby*, Morrison portrays an intercultural romance. The book's main character, Jadine, is a sort of member of two families: the one of her white financial backers and the one of her black parents. The juxtaposition of the black and white worlds in this book reveals the range of interpersonal relationships between the black and white world's women and men.

A predominantly male-dominated black society is depicted in *Paradise* (1998). All of the ladies who reside at "the Convent" are either victims of domestic violence committed by their husbands or lovers or have a troubled history. They are viewed negatively by the black men of Ruby and as a danger to their moral integrity. The warped, unpleasant human interactions are the central theme of this book.

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