

## Chapter 1

### Toni Morrison and Her Works

One of the best writers of twentieth century, born in Loraine, Ohio, Morrison was christened Chloe Anthony Wofford. Her mother's family were share croppers from Greenville, Alabama, who moved north after losing their land. Her father's family came from Georgia.

Morrison spent her early life listening the tales of other worlds and other times. Some she heard from her grandmother, who conscientiously kept a record of her dreams in a small notebook, and the other tales she heard from her parents who were wonderful storytellers. As roots provide nutrients to a tree, stories and folklore provided nourishment and support to her the creations of her imagination.

When Morrison started school, she was the only African American child in her first grade and the only one who could read. Her love of reading continued into adolescence as she immersed herself in the great American and Russian novels. Encouraged by her family, Morrison finished high school and went on to receive a bachelor of arts from Howard University in 1953. Two years later, she received her masters' degree from Cornell University and returned to Howard to teach and write. While there, she met Harold Morrison, an architecture student from Jamaica, and married him. Soon after her second son was born, Morrison began working as a textbook editor in Syracuse, New York, office of Random House. Later, she became senior editor and worked at the company's New York City office. Her position allowed her to help and encourage many young black writers and to arrange for the publication of books on African American history. In 1933 AD, she became the first African American to win the noble prize in literature. She currently holds a position as Goheen Professor in Humanities at Princeton University.

It was Morrison's own writings, her novels that established her as the major figure in American literature. Lyontyne Prince is very much inspired by her writing and he regards her writing as a painting with words. For him, reading and hearing those words is like listening to music. Morrison's first four novels *The Bluest Eye*, *Sula*, *Song of Solomon*, and *Tar Baby* reflect both pain and the beauty of African American experience. Her fifth novel, *Beloved*, won the Pulitzer Prize for literature in 1988. Her genius as a novelist lies in her ability to draw readers into the world she creates. The emotions she calls forth tie use to her characters, forcing us to feel their loveliness and love.

The racial issue becomes a dominant theme in Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*. As Edward Guerno writes, "*The Bluest Eye* (1970) holds as its central concern a critique of western beauty and its special destructiveness when imposed upon people of colour in general and women of colour in particular" (762). The novel basically deals with black race. Morrison has these women in mind when she asserts in the novel that the idea of physical beauty is of probably the most destructive idea in the history of human thought. Her belief about what beauty is against the belief of westerners' who believe that to be white is divinely blessing where as, to be black is a curse from God. The principal and the most poignant victim in all of Morrison's works are women. A twelve-year-old black girl named Pecola Breedlove who is the principal character in *The Bluest Eye* is identified to the readers when the novel opens. She is born into a violent, impoverished, underclass home environment who does not get much of start in her life. Her sad situation is compounded moreover, by a crushing sense of inferiority and ugliness which she has inherited from her family. Her sense of inferiority and ugliness arises from her birth in a black family. So, she attempts to ease her misery by retreating evermore deeply into confused state. But, finally, she

realizes her own self-image, that is, her black image as most beautiful. One can find a recurrent pattern in the novel. For in the case of Pecola, Morrison constructs the possibility of her discovering a sense self, a communing with nature. Then causes a shattering encounter with the structure of the dominant society.

Morrison asserts her patterns of self- discovery in her next novel *Sula* (1973) as well. Sula the principal female protagonist and Nel, next important female character, though opposite in terms of belief about beauty, are bonded for ever together by the memory of their childhood which remains a shared secret by both the characters. The communion with nature, which is a prominent characteristics of black self is more evident in *Sula*.

Diversity is another important aspect in the quest for blackness. The character of black literature come from different family background and they differ in their attitude as well. But, all the differences are reconciled at the end which is to indicate that the black want to maintain harmony and peace though the people are from different background. *Sula*, too, being an example of black literature, shares this theme as the characters initially differ in their attitude and finally the commonalities help to maintain harmony. The event which took place in their childhood when they used to play in a hill overlooking a river, symbolizes their deep communion with nature in *Sula*.

Another example of the quest of black self is evident in another character Shadrack. He is a male protagonist, who has been put into prison due to his madness, looks at his reflection in a toilet bowl and re-discovers his blackness and himself, upon confirming himself with the gaze as both black and real. It helps to ease Shadrack from the illness which he suffers, and he is content to fall into a primal sleep, a "sleep deeper than the hospital drugs; deeper than the pits of plum; steadier

than the condor's wings; move tranquil then the curve of eggs" (11-12). Here, the male mirror gaze affirms and establishes Shadrack's sense of identity. This self-discovery is made all more potent because Morrison constructs Shadrack as a mythical, pro-nationalist figure in the black community.

Morrison in *Song of Solomon* (1977) recognizes that under patriarchy the female gaze into the mirror confirms a sense of lack or self-negation. For through the working of narcissism and exhibitionism the mirror gaze entraps women as the displayed object of male desire. By realizing how Hagar falls obsessively in love with her cousin Milkman, the novel shows us the pathology of the mirror gaze. While returning to explore the theme of the destructive, devaluating power of white standards of beauty when inflicted upon black women. In an attempt to pull Hagar out of a near catatonic state of depression induced by Milkman's rejection of her fanatical attentions, Pilate gives her granddaughter a small plastic compact with gold trim. However, this proves to be a dangerous toy which she entertains Hagar. For when she looks into the mirror of the compact, a deadly, ensnaring, self-reflexive gaze into an alien standard of beauty is invoked. Confused, she thinks that Milkman isn't attracted to her because she lacks the straight hair and blue eyes that white society has constructed for all commoditized norms. Thus, Hagar rejects the natural self that she finds reflected in the mirror.

Morrison's fourth novel *Tar Baby* was published in 1980. This novel invoked the African American folk tale that was told and retold in African and American black communities. The major character Jadine Childs, with her Sorbonne education and modeling career, is overtly marked as a woman whose identity is in crisis. Some characters in the novel and some events that take place make her aware of that crisis and stimulate her to reconstruct her identity. One event is when she goes to a Parisian

supermarket and meets a black woman who is wearing yellow dress, looks at Jadine and spits at her. Son, the major male protagonist, who bears a mythical significance, as the woman in yellow, too, has a great role. He stimulates Jadine in her quest of black self. Jadine's retreat to her benefactor's island signals her attempts to step back and assess the competing sense of white world and racial identity. Jadine's tripping over tar, a black sticky object, is her mingling into the world of blackness. Tar, here, stands more symbolically. The blacks pay a great homage to nature. Tar is something found in nature. As its colour suggests, Jadine's fall over tar can be suggested as her love of blackness.

### **Quest of Black Self**

Quest is a journey that is undertaken by an individual or a group of individuals. The aim of the journey is to obtain something which one does not have at present. This something can be something material or spiritual. A spiritual quest is the quest of one's consciousness. To reach to the destination is to bring change in one's own consciousness. It is not always necessary that one has to cover a long distance for that quest. One can undertake the quest even by fixing in a specific place and contemplating upon something.

Black Self refers to black identity. This is the identity which the people of Afro-American origin possess. Therefore, Black Self means Afro-American authenticity. There are some prominent aspects which one needs to have for the authenticity. These aspects become the prominent features of black literature. The use of myth, and use of characters and communion to nature are the significant aspects of Afro-American literature. One, to have the black authenticity, needs to have these characteristics.

Myth is a traditional story which is based on fantasy. It is transmitted from one generation to another generation orally. The stories of myth represent certain cultural pattern or system. They are related to angels, gods, demons or other supernatural elements. Myth holds a significant position in the writings of Toni Morrison as well as other black writers.

The significant characteristic in Afro-American literature is diversity of characterization. The characters in African American literature come from different background and different socio-economic circumstances. They differ in their attitude and belief. But they have a secret which they all share. The complexities of characterization reflect the complexities of Afro-American life. The secret is that they have a communion with nature. In nature they find the reality of life. They can gain true experiences from nature.

The quest of black self is the exploration of true black characteristics. Sometimes, the characters find themselves misled or lack the African American authenticity. In this moment of crisis they are self induced or induced by others to explore the reality. The present researcher wants to explore the quest undertaken by the female protagonist, Jadine in Morrison's novel *Tar Baby*. In this course of exploration of her black authenticity, myth is taken as a significant tool

### **The Review of Literature**

Morrison's works have received a large number of criticisms. Some critics have commented upon the mythical aspects where as, others have analyzed her texts from Marxists perspectives. There are some other critics who have examined the feminist issue and others who have examined the racial elements in the texts of Toni Morrison. Infact, Morrison deals with numerous issues in her single text.

Cynthia A. Davis, an American critic and educator in her essay “Self Society and Myth in the Toni Morrison’s Fiction” examines Morrison’s treatment of identity, society and myth in *The Bluest Eye*, *Sula*, *Song of Solomon* and *Tar Baby*:

All of Morrison’s characters exist in a world defined by its blackness and by the surrounding white society that both violates and devoid it, the destructive effect of the white society can take the form of outright physical violence but oppression in Morrison’s world is more often psychic violence. (217)

African American authenticity, as Davis elaborates, is the prominent feature of the characters in Toni Morrison's novel. The world where they live is the real world in which they have to face a lot of troubles caused by whites. There is a struggle between blacks and whites but Morrison is regarded more liberal. She wants to violate the white's norms more psychically or by changing one's consciousness. To change consciousness, the characters have to realize the significance of their own identity.

Darwin T. Turner, an American poet, critic and editor in his essay “Theme, Characterization and Style in the Works of Toni Morrison” examines theme, characterization and style in *The Bluest Eye*, *Sula*, *Song of Solomon* and *Tar Baby*:

In four novels published between 1970 and 1981, Toni Morrison has earned a reputation as a gifted story teller and masterful stylist who created haunting images of human isolated by their failures in love and their problems with identity... When one compares *Tar Baby* with Morrison’s earlier works *Jadine* and *Son* seem too ordinary, too stereotypical created solely to demonstrate the clash of culture. (224-28)

Characterization is mainly focused on his essay by Turner. The character in *Tar Baby* like Jadine and Son differ from each other. There is a continuous clash between them since they come from diverse background. This diversity of characterization becomes a prominent aspect of authentic African American life.

Catherine Rainwater, an American educator, editor and critic, in her essay, published on "*Worthy Messenger: Narrative voices in Toni Morrison's Novels*", examines the narrative strategies Morrison employs in her novels:

Toni Morrison's narrators consistently try to formulate or adopt a system of values appropriative to African American experience. Their search leads only to keen sense of the complexities of human existence. She complains that Morrison fails to defend the value that she provokes at least. (223)

Here, Rainwater argues about the quest to establish the real African American values. The characters could explore complexities of life. The complexities of life they discover is the true picture of African American society. Rainwater also makes a modernist comment over Morrison's characters:

A prominent theme in Morrison work concerns the absence of reliable authority, the inscrutability of one human being to another concomitantly, the lack of definitive meaning in phenomenal events. As the narrator of *Tar Baby* concludes, "individuals are formed, fleshed, thick with a life which is... not accessible."(233)

Absence is a major theme in modernists writing. The significant is the theme which gets its absence of the reliable authority is the presence of it. When the life itself is full of complexities how it can have a definitive meaning.



John N. Duvall, in his essay "Descent in the House of Chloe", examines themes of race, rape and identity in *Tar Baby*.

...*Tar Baby* carries forward the thematic of Morrison's earlier work that it centrally participates in her ongoing fictive projects. Notably, there is the issue of how the media constructs western beauty as a universal standard... Jadine Child whose subjectivities are split between a desire to assimilate to the values of the white middleclass and the voices that urge them to acknowledge a black racial identity...Morrison seems engaged in a form self fashioning... (255).

Duvall's argument focuses upon the European standard of life and their effects in African Americans. Jadine is the product of European standard who is a black originally. So, her consciousness is split, she neither can be a westerner nor can be a black. Her inner psyche urges her to designate the journey to discover her own self and put the original identity.

Letitia L Moffit critiques Toni Morrison's novel *Tar Baby*, which focuses on the way how black figures are represented, and then given complexities of motivation and perception. Among the other things, she states that there in Morrison neither provides a simplified vision nor expects readers will there own, but rather in plurality of each individual perspective, which as a result, insists on a complex vision.

Toni Morrison's *Tar Baby* continues to create on readers an impression similar to the one that the original Tar Baby folk tale had on Morrison herself. She called it a rather complicated story that worried her with many unanswered question. Critics have often been troubled by the novel's apparent overall lack of wholeness. It does not have a simplified plot style. Its fragmented and highly subjective narrative

structure and the absence of single character who is definitively accepted as representing the novel's central vision.

The above criticisms on race or identity or characterization have an overall focus upon the quest of authentic self which can be further elaborated with their assistance from the mythical perspective into this present research.

## Chapter Two

### Myth and Its Functions

Myth, a traditional plot, is transmitted orally from one generation to another. Generally, it is believed that the story of myth is not based on reality. However, myth may be either real or invented. In this regard, B. Malinowski in his book *Myth in Primitive Psychology* claims:

Myth as it exists in a savage community, that is, in its living primitive form, not merely a story told but a reality lived. It is not of the nature of fiction, such as we read today in a novel, but it is a living reality, believed to have once happened in primeval times, and continuing ever since to influence the world and human destinies. This myth is to the savage what to a fully believing Christian, is the Biblical Story of creation, of the fall, of the Redemption by Christ's Sacrifice on the cross. As our sacred story lives in our morality, as it governs our, faith and controls our conduct. (631)

The story of myth deals with the origin of anything in the universe. Strictly stated, myth is based on the story of creation. For instance, this universe is created by the Lord according to Christian mythology. Significantly, gods, demons, angels and supernatural forces are characters of mythical stories. It is also believed that myth is the creation of primitive people based on their culture. The major parameter to distinguish myth from other genres is religion. It is to be noted that there must be a religious aspect in the myth. It is apparent that myth has a relationship with society. So, it is a vehicle to demonstrate cultural phenomena. Of course myth is based on fantasy and imagination. However, mythical stories serve as a practical cultural force, which shapes and motivates the moral and social life of a group. It is obvious that myth is an

articulation of culture values. Moreover, the myth gives warranty to every individual act, thought, and ritualistic performance. Taking consideration into these facts it is clear that the stories of myth incorporate universal features. Consequently, myths are public and communicable. Moreover, they express subliminal mental patterns that come close to the compulsive drives of the unconscious. Thus, it can be concluded that myths range from external to inner world. The stories of myth represent certain cultural, religious pattern or system. They are related to angels, gods, demons or other supernatural elements. Significantly, interference of heavenly role is most dominant in myth. So, myth is a traditionally accepted belief related to genesis of anything, for example, the universe, the earth, man or other things. Hence, it is obvious that gods, angles and demons are significant characters in Myth. It does not mean that human beings are not the characters in Myth. However, they are always led by spiritual or supernatural drives. The origin of myth goes back to historical past. It is believed that mythical stories are outcome of anonymous origin accepted by primitive people as truth. In this regard Gagley remarks, "Myth are stories of anonymous origin, prevalent among people and by them accepted as truth, concerting supernatural being and events influenced by supernatural agencies" (1). The date about the origin is never known, they are the stories of very primitive time. But, the significance that lies in myth is that their stories are believed to be true by the people even at present and they still remember the stories. Gagley further says, "Myth is born notmade. They are born in infancy of people. They owe their features not to anyone, but to the imaginative efforts of generations of storytellers" (1). What gave birth to myth is the imaginative faculties of people. They are the consequences of their infancies and the characteristics that mythical characters bear are attributed to no historic individual.

Moreover, they depend upon the imaginative power of story tellers of different periods. Their power can bring certain changes in the mythical stories.

It is believed that the stories of myth are born but not made they can not be ordered, invented or permanently suppressed. They are spontaneous productions of human psyche. It is interesting that mythical stories are demonstrated through strange rituals and have been reported from the primitive tribes at present in order to make the present generation know their great civilization of the past. For instance, Greek people danced around the alter celebrating the joy on the name of Zeus. Broadly speaking, myth tells of the creation of man, of animal and of landmarks. Moreover, they tell why a certain animal has certain characteristics (eg. Why the bat is blind or flies only at night, why and how rituals and ceremonies began and why they continue). It does not mean that each and every story about origin is myth. But, a myth has its religious background and its principal actors and actress are gods or deities.

Myth is very different from fable in the sense that fable, a story of animal with the aim of instruction, uses animal tale not to explain characteristics or behaviour of animal but to inculcate moral lesson for human beings or to satirize the conduct of human beings. Sometimes myth is fused with dreams. But, it holds a significant distinction with dream, that is, dream is a personalized myth and myth a personalized dream. If the story of dream is known to all and believed by all it becomes a myth whereas, if it remains only in an individual it is only his infancy. Whatever the stories in dream come are the stories of imagination or people's infancy. Both, myth and dreams are symbolic in nature, but myths are universal and objective. The problems and their solution shown in myth are directly valid for all mankind. They have got a universal acceptance.

Myth holds a remarkable distinction from other literary aspects as folktale and legend. The main difference between myth and folktale is that the gods and deities do not appear in folktale. When a trickster becomes human rather than divine, when a hero is a man rather than a god, myth becomes legend. In other words, if the protagonist is a person rather than supernatural beings who are not gods, and the story is not part of the systematic mythology, it is usually classified as folktales.

After the turn of the nineteenth century, various approaches emerged to interpret the myth. One of the remarkable modes is archetypal. Some of the anthropologists such as J. G. Frazer, Carl G. Jung, Northrop Frye and Joseph Campbell have contributed a lot to develop this sort of perspective. Though they slightly differ from each other, they share certain commonalities that are archetype. The term archetype denotes recurrent narrative designs, patterns of action, character types, or images which are said to be identifiable in a wide variety of works of literature, as well as in myth, dream and even ritualized modes of social behaviour. Jung applies the word “archetype” to refer to primordial images the psychic residue, which means the repeated patterns of experiences in the lives of our very ancient ancestors which exist in the collective unconscious of the human race and are expressed in myths, religion, dreams and private fantasies, as well as in literature.

Archetypes are supposed to reflect a set of universal, primitive and elemental mental forms. They bind a tribe or nation together in common psychological and spiritual activities. Hence, myths are accepted by nature as collective and communal. Carl G. Jung’s emphasis is not on the individual unconscious but on what he calls collective unconscious, shared by the individuals in all cultures. It is regarded as a repository of racial memories and primordial images and patterns which Jung calls archetypes. He does not view literature as a disguised form of libidinal wish

fulfillment that parallels the fantasies of a person suffering from neurosis as Freud does. Instead Jung regards great literature as, like the myth, an expression of the archetypes of the collective unconscious. While focusing that archetypes are actually inherited from, Jung also goes further than most of the anthropologists. The anthropologists tend to see these forms as social phenomena passed down from one generation to that next through various sacred rites rather than through the structure of psyche itself. Furthermore, in "Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious", he theorized that myth is not derived from external factors such as seasonal solar cycle but are, in truth, the projections of innate psychic phenomena.

Myth is the projection of unconscious. It is the symbolic expression of reality of a culture but not the kind of narrative which has its significance at the other place which we call allegory. The expressions of unconscious are the reflection of one's inner psyche:

All the mythologized process of nature, such as summer and winter, the phases of the moon, the rain seasons and so forth, are in no sense allegories rather than the symbolic expressions of the inner, unconscious drives of the psyche which become accessible to man's consciousness by a way of projection that is mirrored in the events of nature.(6)

Myths take their specific shapes from the cultural environment in which they grow. Similar themes may be found among many different mythologies and certain images that recur in the myth of people-widely separated in time and place. Moreover, they tend to have a common or accurate meaning. Also they tend to elicit comparable psychological responses to serve similar cultural functions. Such motifs and images

are called archetypes. Stated simply, archetypes are universal symbols. James G. Frazer explains:

Under the name of Osiers, Tamoniz, Adonis and Attis, the people of Egypt and Western Asia represented the early decay and revival of life. Especially vegetable life, which they personified as a good who annually died and rose again from the death. In name and detail, the rites varied from place to place but, in substance, they were same.

(325)

The central motif with which Frazer deals is the archetype of crucifixion and resurrection, specially the myths describing the killing of divine king. Certain symbols, such as the sky father and earth mother and others recur in cultures so remote from one another in space and time. There is no possibility of any historical influence and causal connection among them. In terms of its narrative, myth is the imitation of actions near or at the conceivable limits of human desire. There desires may or may not be attainable. We can find a beautiful woman reduced to an insignificant lady by god, or a man is assisted by a goddess. These are what a man wants to do which are sometimes fulfilled and sometimes not. We try to interpret it in term of myth which is an expression of the realities of the relationship among man, nature and universe. Mythical stories move from fantasy to lifelikeness. The problem is that the structural principal of literature in myth is isolated. According to Frye, there is a solution for making the myth plausible. He says, "The device to solve these problems is Displacement" (136). With the device of displacement we make the myth acceptable. For instance, the story about Persephone says that once Pluto was inspecting his dark realm and was seen by Venus and Cupid, the mother asked her son to dart her with his arrow. Cupid included Pluto in his dominion. He was shot right in



to the heart. Consequently, Pluto carried Persephone away. Demeter, mother of Persephone, cursed the soil when she saw the fallen flowers dropped by her daughter on the way. Thus, the fertility was lost in the land because Persephone had taken nothing with her but pomegranate. In this context. Bullfinch says:

This story of Persephone and Demeter is now an allegory. The mythical story is displaced that Persephone signifies the seed corn which, when cast into the ground, lies between these concealed, that is, she is carried off by the god of the under world, it reappears, that is, Persephone is restored to her mother. Spring leads her back to its light of day. The allegory is that of death and revival. (85)

Frye identifies myth with literature, asserting that myth is a “structural organizing principle of literary form” (341) and that an “archetype is essentially an element of one’s literary experience” (365). The occurrence of mythical patterns is emphasized in literature rather than the artful manifestations of sophisticated writers. The commonly employed archetypal themes, images and characters in literature are death, rebirth, the heroic journey, and the heavenly ascent, the search for the father, the escape goat, the earth goddess, the fatal women, and so on. It is obvious that under archetypal criticism, we have got various perspectives. However, Campbell’s hero archetype can be made the proper basis to analyze the novel *Tar Baby*. But, before going to discuss in detail about Campbell’s idea, it is necessary to discuss one of the various approaches to interpret myth, that is, psychology.

Psychologically speaking, there is externalization of what happens in the human psychology. Psychology further interprets myth being closely related to biological science. Obviously, psychology reflects the unconscious desires and anxieties of the individual. Sigmund Freud has pointed out many parallels between

myths and symbols by expressing the unacknowledged static physical attitudes. He has coined the terms like 'Oedipus Complex' for the sexual attachment to son to her mother and 'Electra complex' to refer to the daughter's erotic attachment with her father because of co-existing jealousy of the mother. These complexes, as Freud says, remain hidden in the unconscious mind and are expressed in various ways in different forms.

C.G. Jung further elaborates Freud's idea and says that the mythical characters are the symbols of hopes, wishes, passion; not only that but they are historical individuals too. Because of the realization of the desires of unconscious mind, the mythical stories of Greece end in tragedy. We have evidences of Narcissus, Oedipus and Trojan War. They deal with human problems as love, war, pain, courage, tyranny, fate, man to man relation and man to divine, which are sometimes just and sometimes cruel. They, by illuminating the covered corners of soul give hundreds of vital meanings to our life. Because of this universality, myths are rewritten and illustrated representing the inner thoughts and feeling of human beings. Next approach is historical which analyzes myths as the story about human beings divinities and super humans, warriors and chiefs who had been changed into gods by their admirers and followers for example, Hercules, Zeus, Mars, Gilgamesh and others. Though psychological concept to interpret myth occupies an essential space, the archetypal concept of Joseph Campbell is the most relevant tool to interpret *Tar Baby*.

In the book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1982), Joseph Campbell has developed the archetypal approach in terms of Journey covered by mythical hero. Broadly speaking, he has developed hero archetype. In this regard he remarks,

A hero ventures forth from world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and

decisive victory is won: the hero comes from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man. (30)

Campbell has projected the standard path of the mythical adventures of the hero in structural representation in the steps separation-initiation-return. The term separation refers to the departure of the hero from the common world, and the initiation to the penetration to some source of power, and a life enhancing return. He has further divided the first great stage into five subsections: The Call of the Adventure, The Refusal of the Call, Supernatural Aid, The Crossing of the First Threshold, and The Belly of the Whale (The passage into the realm of night). Similarly, the stage of initiation has been classified into six subsections: The Road of Trials, The Meeting with the Goddess, Woman as the Temptress, Atonement with the Father, Apotheosis, and The Ultimate Boon. Similarly, the stage of initiation has been classified into three subsections: The Road of Trials, The Meeting with the Goddess and Women as the Temptress. In the same manner, the third passage is categorized under six subheadings: Refusal of the Return, The Magic Flight, Rescue from Without, The Crossing of the Return Threshold, Master of the Two Worlds, and Freedom to Live. Now, the mythical path covered by the hero is discussed one by one. Firstly, the call to adventure signifies that the hero is either summoned or lured by the destiny to go out of the society to an unknown zone. Generally, the hero willingly goes forth to accomplish the adventure. He approaches the entrance of the dark world. He has to undergo various obstacles as dark forest dragons, secret island monsters, offering charm and so on. In this context, someone refuses the journey, whereas someone moves ahead bearing great challenges. When he proceeds ahead, he encounters with the protective figure who provides the hero certain advice to overcome certain evil forces. It is to be noted that the hero gets supernatural helper who may be either male

or female. In the course of his journey, the hero enters into the realm of darkness, crossing the thresholds.

Having traversed this zone, the hero approaches the world of trials in which he finds supernatural helper everywhere. He undergoes a supreme ordeal and gains his rewards. He overcomes all the barriers and ogres. His triumph may be represented as his sexual union with the goddess mother of the world (sacred to marriage). This is the crisis at the nadir or at the central point of cosmos. In this stage, many transfigurations undergo. The goddess lures, guides and bids the hero burst fetters. She becomes the guide to the sublime acme of sensuous adventure. She is tempted by ugliness and banality. This meeting with goddess keeps important aspect of heroic journey in the sense that it is the final test of the talent of the hero to win the boon of love. This mystical marriage with the queen goddess of the world reveals the hero's total mystery of life because the hero its knower and master. From this event, he learns that he and father are one: he is in father's place. Then, the hero transcends life with its peculiar blind spot and for a moment rises to a glimpse of the source. He beholds the face of the father. Consequently, both the hero and his father become one. Similarly the hero maintains continuity in his journey and is empowered by divine force. Hence, two opposite forces collapse. Consequently, he attains divinity and becomes a godlike figure. He, after overcoming pain and pleasure, keeps them under his control. Thus, he gains boon, an expansion of his consciousness.

Generally, the hero in this stage is supported by all the powers of his supernatural patron. Sometimes, hero's wish to return to the world has been resented by the gods and demons. If this condition occurs, he will maintain magical flight. Subsequently, hero reemerges from being the master of two worlds (phenomenal and divine). Now, he does not rest heavily in a single spot, but gaily, lightly, turns and

leaps from one position to another. Significantly, the hero gives up completely all the attachment to his personal limitation, idiosyncrasies, hopes and fears. He no longer resists self-annihilation that is prerequisite to rebirth in the realization of truth. He, at last, becomes matured for the great atonement. Since, his personal ambitions are totally dissolved. He no longer attempts to live but willingly relaxes to whatever may come to pass in him. He becomes anonymity. The law lives in him. Hence forth, his self completely remains free from bodily bondage. The hero, being master of the two worlds, namely the heavenly world and manly world, and gets back to society and restores the world with the help of the boon achieved in his journey.

Next prominent aspect of mythical exploitation is in distorted form. Myths are deformed and lose their original sense. In this regard, Campbell points out, “When civilization has passed from a mythological to a secular point of view, the older images are no longer felt or quite approved”(248). To prove the above stated statement, better illustration would be from Greco-Roman culture, which states that the ancient gods were reduced to mere civic patrons, household pets, and literacy favorites. When myth is interpreted as biography, history or science, the significance it bears is lost. Hence, the living images become only remote facts of a distant time or sky. When myth is misinterpreted, its life goes out of it. For instance, temples become museum, and real sense of Myth is dissolved. Ultimately, mythical distortion leads to the cultural loss of any society.

### **The Myth of Tar Lady**

Literally, Tar Lady refers to black lady. Mythically speaking, Tar Lady is associated with Moses’s mother Jochebed, who represents African womanhood. Jochebed is a daughter of Levi and the mother of Aaron, Moses and Miriam. She was aunt and wife of Abram. To protect Moses from Pharaoh’s command that every male

Hebrew child be killed, she placed him in an ark of bulrushes in the river. After Pharaoh's daughter discovered the baby, Jochebed became his nurse. In this way, Jochebed saved Moses, who frees Egyptian slaves from slavery. She achieved her goal by bearing challenges. Therefore, she is still remembered as courageous mythical lady in African society. Moreover, Tar lady is associated with African tar, used by African women to build pyramids. Through pyramids, African women's craftsmanship and creativity have been transmitted from generations to generations. It is to be noted that Tar and Tar lady represent African culture and womanhood. Moreover, tar possesses funky qualities, as thickness, blackness, stickiness and brightness. So, it can hold things together. Likewise, tar an ancient property of American people, comes from earth, and so, it encompasses elemental and earthly qualities, significantly, tar symbolizes black women's cohesive and creative power.

Morrison in an interview with Thomas le Clair claims that "tar held things like Moses' little boat and the pyramids. For me, the Tar Lady comes to mean the black women who can hold thing together" (225). The Tar Lady is Moses' mother. Morrison's remark itself has been an evidence for this research as the Moses's boat is the creation of his mother, Jochebed. Similarly, Theresa Hoover writes of black women as being "truly the glue that held churches together" (380-81). Hoover and Morrison suggest that black women substantively hold things together. So, Toni Morrison has employed tar lady myth to reveal the sacred power of tar and to prophesize the significance of Afro-American centered understandings of the sacredness of community of community for the present.

### **The Myth of Tar Baby (A Reconstruction of Tar Lady Myth)**

Morrison herself believes that Tar Baby myth is originated from African myth, Tar Lady. She claims that white culture has distorted Tar Lady Myth, substituted by

Tar Baby. Tar Baby, an African folk tale, reappeared in distorted form in nineteenth century America. Initially, it was an African American response to slavery. Later, Joel Chandler Harris, an American white author, included this story in his *Uncle Remus Tales*. But he changed the plot while taking the story from African culture. The story opens with Brer Fox creating the Tar Baby as an attempt to capture the Brer Rabbit once and for all.

In “Tar Baby” story, a trickster figure such as Brer Rabbit meets a tar baby that has been placed on the road by a white farmer. Brer Rabbit approaches there and greets the Tar baby. Then, Brer Rabbit asks question to the Tar Baby. But The Tar Baby fails to respond. So, he strikes it and then becomes stuck to it. Brer Rabbit escapes when he is convinced of his capacities that he is terrified of being thrown in the briar patch, which is really his home. He is able to free himself by playing on their underestimation of his character and then runs away taunting them. Toni Morrison in her novel *Tar Baby* employs Tar Baby myth, an altered form of Tar lady, an African American myth. It is to be noted that Tar Baby myth is an original version of African myth, whereas, Tar Baby is a creation of white culture. The evidence is Brer Fox, a white farmer, who created tar baby. Thus Brer Fox creates Tar Baby to trap Brer Rabbit (black). Tar Baby becomes just a doll by replacing the sacred quality of Tar Lady.

In terms of the origin of Tar Baby Myth, Morrison in her interview with Thomas le Clair, remarks: “The Tar Baby of southern folklore originates from the myth of a 'Tar Lady' in ancient Africa. She was originally a powerful symbol of black womanhood. The tar lady is a black woman who holds things together. She is a builder and cohesive force” *The New Republic*. (26-27). Morrison examines and reconstructs tar baby story from south. She explores what it means to be a tar baby

according to the westernized plantation version of the story and what it may mean to be a tar baby according to the original myth. In an interview, Morrison has explained that the western version of the story has a tar baby in it, needed by a white man to catch Rabbit, especially black girls. It is a name similar to nigger. Morrison has explored the tar baby tale because tar seemed to her to be odd things to be in a western story. In her research, she has found that there is a tar lady in African mythology. Morrison explains: "At one time, a tar pit was a holy place, at least an important place because tar was used to build things. It came naturally out of the earth. It held together things like Moses' little boat and the pyramids"(The New Republic: 8).The phrase "Moses' little boat" is related to his mother Jochebed who preserved from the attack of Egyptian king. Firstly, she hid him for three months by building a basket with tar. But when she could not hide him any longer, she took a basket made of reeds and covered it with tar to make it watertight. She put the baby in it and then placed it in the tall grass at the edge of the river. Thus, tar in the Moses' story is significant because Moses became the prophetic healer of an Exodus from slavery. Tar, in this interpretation, has sacred quality. Moreover, historically, tar was used to build pyramids in African cultures. The pyramids of Northern Africa commemorate and sacralize the lives of ancestors. For Morrison, tar is sacred because it has played an important role in the preservation of African culture. Again, Morrison suggests that the myth of tar baby reveals black women's spiritual power and moral wisdom to hold things together: "For me, the tar baby came to mean the black women who can hold things together. The story was a point of a departure to history and prophecies. That's what I mean dusting off the myth, looking, clearly at it to see what it might conceal..." (26-27).In this sense, Tar Baby myth functions as a metaphor for black womanhood. The tar embodies the protective and cohesive power of life and



community as black women have. Tar used by Afro-Americans to denigrate black woman has been positively envisioned by Morrison.

The meaning of Tar Lady has been distorted by white culture, but it can be redefined by black women. Tar is more negative than black skin. It is good and natural. It upholds sacred structures. It preserves life, culture, and community. The reconstruction of tar lady in *Tar Baby* can be observed from the female, protagonist, Jadine, who does not fully embody tar qualities. Instead of the preserving black culture, she becomes a traitor of her own race. She is a tar baby which the westerners have created. Morrison maintains that no black women should apologies for being educated (like Jadine) or anything else. However, there is a problem in not paying attention to the ancient properties. One can gather ancient sacred, spiritual qualities that belong to African women. In Morrison's view, black women like Jadine who neglects any thought or remembrance of the ancient properties of black womanhood are incapable of anchoring the past heritage and properties. Till now, the discussion is centered on how Tar lady is distorted into Tar baby and used in the novel, *Tar Baby*, grasping the views from the whites.

Tar Baby can even be said a shadow of Tar Lady. It is believed which Morrison herself tries to attribute her thoughts to Tar Baby. It can be even further elaborated that the journey Jadine takes for the reconstruction of her lost origin, as a Tar Baby is the process of reconstructing Tar Baby into Tar Lady which will be the basic concern for the present research study.

## Chapter Three

### Jadine, A Product of European Educational System

Jadine is the major female character who appears throughout the novel. And most significantly, the whole novel depicts her experiences and feelings. Jadine Child an African American by birth grows up in a white man, Valerian Street's house. She receives Sorbonne education and, as a result, adopts the career of modeling.

Being a product of European educational system, Jadine maintains a vast gap with the historical African women. She, instead of bearing cultural values transmitted from generations to generations, assimilates herself with mainstream culture by accepting European way of life style. Her assimilation with white culture is shown by the food she generally takes. Jadine, her uncle Sydney and her aunt Ondine eat chicken liver, chocolate, ham, toast, coconut cake and turkey which are common food items of Europeans. When Jadine talks to Ondine about food items, she says:

'I've got some nice liver sautéed just right with eggs.'

"what kind of livers?"

"Chicken."

"The chicken's eggs and its liver? Is there anything inside a chicken we don't eat?"(35)

The above conversation between Ondine, Jadine's aunt and Jadine illustrates their fascination towards the food items preferred by white Americans and Europeans. Jadine eats soufflé (a dish of eggs, milk and flour mixed with cheese, fruit and so on) sitting together with whites. Once, Margaret Street, landlady of Jadine, can not eat faster than Jadine, consoling her, points out: "It's soufflé Margaret" (61). Similarly, Jadine eats food with spoon and fork instead of her hands. Interestingly, Jadine often

organizes party when she is in France. She chooses restaurant as better place for the party:

Everything on her list was sure to be there, and no substitutes or compromises were necessary Major Grey's chutney, real brown rice, fresh pimiento, tamarind rinds, coconut and the split breasts of two young lambs. There were Chinese mushroom and arugula, palm hearts and Bertuli's Jucany olive oil. (41)

The above lines mention the various food items which can be known only by good European. To know all them by an African American is almost impossible. But, Jadine, though being an African American, easily knows all of them.

Jadine has even rejected her heritage and culture. She knows herself to be inauthentic and hollow when she sees the woman is yellow with tar-colored skin. The woman recognizes Jadine's inauthenticity and spits at her. In this regard, Jane S. Baker has suggested some about her. Jadine, who alternatively calls herself Jade, appreciates Picasso over Itumba masks, Ane Maria over gospel music. It suggests that she compares African art with fake and pretension. She loves Picasso, and European artist. As Kevin Luisa Badt says: "Jadine has so willingly embraced white culture that she has become, literally, its cover model" (567). Gideon warns Son against the possibility that Jadine might be out of reach:

You first Yalla? He asked look out. It's hard for them to be white people. Hard I'm telling you. Most never make it. Some try, but most do not make it. She's not a Yalla, said son. Just a little light. He didn't want any discussion about shades of black folk. Don't fool yourself.

You should have seen her two months ago what you see is taming from

the sun. Yallas don't come to being black natural like. They have to choose it and most don't choose it. (156)

Historically, it is obvious the fact that whites always attack black culture. On the contrary, Michael, the son of white master, Valerian, warns Jadine that she is out of cultural route and is forgetting her own past. He suggests her to anchor her past heritage.

Remembering his idea, Jadine says to Valerine:

I think he wanted me to string cowry beads or sell Afro combs. The system was all fucked up, he said, and only a return to handicraft and barter could change it. The welfare mothers could do crafts, pottery, clothing in their homes, like the lace makers of Belgium and Voila!

Dignity and no more welfare. (71)

The above lines provide hint that Jadine has neglected any thought or remembrance of ancient properties of black womanhood. She is now not the culture bearing lady as Tar Lady used to do in the past. Consequently, the craftsmanship of African women weaving cloth, pottery and comb-selling has disappeared. The terms welfare mothers refers to African women who had power to preserve sacred life, community and family. Jadine now wears necklace instead of cowries beads, an ancient property of African women. Indicating the cultural loss of African Americans, Toni Morrison in her interview with Judith Wilson complains: "Jadine has been almost constructed by the western thing and grateful to it" (85). Instead of finding herself in crisis of losing one's own originality, Jadine feels proud to follow the western life style and forgets who she infact is

Jadine not only forgets her ancient properties, but also indulges into the world of drinking and smoking. She smokes cigarette from a crystal cigarette holder, which is quite contrast to the behavior of African mythical woman, Tar Lady. More significantly, she wears sealskin coat and expensive jewellery. She moves from Caribbean Island to Paris. She becomes a great model and actress there. She has occupied certain space on the front page of each and every national magazine of France. Now she is completely commercialized. Instead of selling African combs, she sells her body. Similarly, instead of wearing African cloth and making pots, she indulges into the world of fashion and sex. She does not possess any sticky quality of Tar, which was used to build pyramids by African women. Instead she assimilates with white culture. Jadine's such behaviors guided by white culture make her feel great pain to be back in her origin.

Edward Guerno describes Jadine depicted totally as “the narcissistic, exhibitionistic fashion model” (769). Jadine's narcissism and exhibitionism are made clear as she translates to Son, from French her biography in the article that, when taken with the “four page spread” of photos, signifies her total objectification. This point is further stressed by the incomplete, fragmented way that she reads her history: “Mademoiselle... Graduate of the Sorbonne...an accomplished student of art history...a degree in...An American now living in Paris and Rome, where she had a small but brilliantly executed role in the film by...”(99-100). Of course, the irony of this biography is that in the context of the magazine, none of her accomplishments as an educated black woman have meaning in themselves; they are only packaging to valorize the object.

As a high fashion model raised in a white household that is completely isolated from the black community which in some manner always asserts itself in the

verisimilitude of Morrison's novels. While out shopping, Jadine chances upon a stunning African woman whom she perceives as a "woman's an...mother/sister/she" (39) with jet black skin, wearing a canary yellow dress. However, Jadine's admiring gaze at this "un photographable beauty" (39) is returned with resistance and rejection. The African woman meets Jadine with her contempt as she spits on the street.

Jadine is trapped and can not fly away from white culture because of her European education. Both psychologically and physically, she is enslaved by white values, in this context, Jadine herself expresses:

They educated me paid for my travel, my lodgings, my clothes, my schools. My mother died when I was twelve; my father when I was two, I am an orphan. Sydney and Ondine are all the family I have, and Valerian did what nobody else offered to do. (18)

Jadine has a feeling of indebtedness to Valerian Street. Whatever she feels she has learned is his contribution. She feels that her life would have been meaningless if she had not been supported by him in her education, feeding and care.

Jadine, though a black lady by birth and colour, has forgotten her originality since she passes her life staying in a white man Valerian Street's house and obtains western education. In whatever way she behaves makes us feel that she has lost her originality. Once, when she goes to a supermarket to buy the things for the celebration of Christmas, she finds a woman in yellow dress. Her meeting with the woman in yellow dress is described as:

Under such benevolent circumstances, knowing she was intelligent and lucky, everything on her list would of course be there. And when the vision materialized in a yellow dress Jadine was not sure it was not all

part of her list-an addition to the coconut and tamarind, a kind of plus to go with the limes and pimiento. (42)

For Jadine to be lucky is to get everything for the celebration of Christmas at a single place. The objects in her list are the objects which the whites like. Jadine's meeting with the woman in yellow dress was not expected. She had not mentioned this in the list of the items which she went to buy. But she feels it to be an addition in her list. Her meeting with the yellow woman is not a part of her business. So, it becomes very hard for her.

### **Jadine's Quest of Black Self**

Jadine's quest of black self begins after her meeting with woman in yellow dress at the Parisian supermarket. Initially uncomfortable though Jadine feels, a desire grows in her mind and she wants to keep some relationship with her. Her meeting with the woman is described as "another piece of her luck" (42). It is accepted that the woman in yellow dress could bring her a fortune; something Jadine has not found yet, which she has lost. It is her authenticity, that is, authentic identity.

It is necessary to describe the woman. Her physical appearance is described as:

The vision itself was a woman much too tall. Under her canary yellow dress, Jadine knew there was too much hip, too much bust. The agency would laugh her out the lobby, so why was she and everybody else in the store transfixed? The height ? The skin like Tar against the canary yellow dress? (42)

The description of the woman is similar to mythical woman having some extra ordinary features in her height and weight. The other interesting thing about the

woman is her tar like colour. Her presence at the supermarket draws the attention of everyone. She looks like a lady with Supernatural power

The woman's activities and her influence to the people together with Jadine is further described as:

The woman walked down the aisle as though her many-coloured sandals were pressing gold tracks on the floor... The people in the aisle watched her without embarrassment; with full glances instead of sly ones...Jadine turned around and went back down to reexamine the vegetables. The woman leaned in to the dairy section and opened a carton from which she selected three eggs. Then she put her right elbow into the palm of her left hand and held the eggs aloft between earlobe and shoulder...confidence of transcendent beauty and it flew open in silent obedience. (42-43)

The beauty and power described of the woman is not like the power of an ordinary woman. She was able to catch the stare of everybody in the supermarket. Her power can be compared to the power of Tar lady. The three eggs which the woman selected from a carton are highly symbolic. The creation of every living being starts from eggs. Possession of eggs is possession of motherhood. So, we can say that the woman is the symbol of black motherhood. Her beauty transcends everything. Everyone feels hypnotized as if nymph or fairy has been there.

Previously, terrified with the woman in the yellow dress who held up the chicken eggs, Jadine now appropriates eggs for herself for all its grimness. This conceit reiterates the notions of self reliance while insisting upon female fecundity;



Jadine here confronts the ancient property of female nurturance in its starkest, most primal form.

At last, Jadine, too, could not remain uninfluenced when she saw the woman.

How she got influenced from the appearance of woman is described as:

She would deny it now, but along with everybody else in the market street, Jadine gasped. Just, a sudden intake of air, just a quick snatch of breath before that woman's, woman-that mother/ sister/ she that unphotographable beauty-took it all away. (43)

Since, Jadine has forgotten her Afro-American origin and has started behaving fully like a European; she tried to deny whatever the woman in yellow did. But, as everybody in the supermarket was influenced, she could not remain an exception. Her long breath in which she uttered the words like 'woman', that 'mother', 'sister' 'she' are very significant to study her quest for black self. She in anyway, regards a black woman as her mother. It indicates the exploration of her authentic origin.

Jadine's journey for the exploration of her authenticity is further described in the following lines.

Jadine followed her profile, then her back as she passed the store window-followed her all the way to the edge of the world where the pallet glass stopped. And there, just there-a moment before the cataclysm when all loveliness and life and breath in the world was about to disappear the woman turned her head sharply around to the left and looked right at Jadine. Turned and eyes too beautiful for eyelashes on Jadine and with a small parting of her lips, shot an arrow

of saliva between her teeth down to the pavement and hearts below.

(42)

Jadine was shocked for she did not have in her what the woman in yellow had while Jadine was unknown about her authenticity. The phrase used to describe the woman before she disappears bears a great significance and power of blackness. Her disappearance is said the great disaster which took away all loveliness and life. She is said loveliness and life of all. It was unbearable for the woman to see Jadine as a European. She was angry with her and spit when they met each other face to face.

Though Jadine's quest started from her meeting with woman in yellow, no more changes are observed in her life. She kept on behaving as a white which she had started from the very beginning of her life. After her meeting with the woman in yellow, she is described as, "Despite the soul searching she undertakes after the tall woman insults her, Jadine can not give up competitions and success. And like the tar baby of the folk tale, the beautiful model almost irritably attracts Son to her values" (201). The modeling career which Jadine adopted while in France gets its continuation though she is insulted by the black woman for not preserving her ancestral property, black motherhood and Afro-American values. The phrase 'soul searching' used in the above line refers to Jadine's inner exploration; who she is inwardly and what her original identity is. She can not attain her authentic self and keeps on wearing the mask put on by the whites.

While talking about Jadine's quest for black self, it is very essential to talk about Son to whom Jadine wants to transform in her own away but finally falls in his love. About Son, Jadine, Keith Byerman has suggested, "Son the man who values brotherhood, does not eat candy to survive when he first arrives on Isle des Chevaliers, but he knows the dangers of the sweet life and tries to avoid them" (201).

Son possesses what Afro-Americans possess. He disregards all the white values. He has a great distaste over the food items which the whites eat. There lies a great difference between Son and Jadine. Son has a totally black skin whereas Jadine looks light skinned. He respects the traditional life style of African Americans and does not give up the habits at any time.

Son's sudden arrival to Caribbean Island can be compared to Star's sneaking into Eden. Jadine's fall into love with Son contributes a lot in her quest of black self. She thinks:

I guess the person I want to marry is him, but I wonder if the person he wants to marry is me or a black girl? And if it isn't me he wants, but any black girl who looks like me, talks and acts like me, what will happen. When he finds out that I hate ear hoops, that I don't have to straighten my hair, that Mingus puts me to sleep, that sometimes I want to get out of my skin and be only the person inside-not American-not black just me? (45)

Though Jadine truly loves Son, she is suspicious either he will marry her or not. She thinks Son the person she wants to marry. But her fascination of European life style leads her towards a doubt that he may hate her. If she has to marry him, she thinks, it will be difficult for her as she has to give up her modeling career.

Leaving others to celebrate the coherence and unity of the black race, Morrison reveals the diversity that characterizes the black world. "It seems to me", she says "that one of the most fetching qualities of black people is the variety in which they come, and the enormous layers of the lives they live. It is a compelling thing for me because no single layers are it" (*Interview* 420). In *Tar Baby* Morrison

not only shows the variety in which blacks come, but more importantly their conflicting ideologies and lifestyles and the aspects which they share though their ideologies differ. On the one hand there are the blacks of Eloë, Son's home town, and Gideon and Therese, who all carry on a traditional way of life in isolation from the present-day society. On the other, there are member of an older generation modeled on the Philadelphia Negro. They share the views and values of their master and are prepared to do anything to please and protect him. They take a great deal of pride in their work and look with contempt on members of their own race like Son who has no principles to guide their lives. While their servility is a mask, it is also a reality since they have no means to survive independently. All of their hopes and aspirations are concentrated on Jadine who, for her part, may love and respect them but, she is not guided by them. However, her journey to Eloë with Son can be her quest for black authenticity. Her fall in tar on the way to Eloë, her desire to pass the night with Son in the same room there show her great interest in blackness. The diversity of characteristics within, which has been mostly presented by Morrison, reflects the authentic black lifestyle.

Who is authentic black in this mass of men and women? Jadine or Son? They are two polar opposites. Indeed, no two characters can be more dissimilar in background and outlook than Jadine and Son, and there is no question that either one will concede the claims of the other. Jadine is educated and successful-thanks to the patronage of Mr. Street. Lacking college education and a degree, Son has no regular job, and no prospects of getting one. He has, however, a strong native intelligence and natural winning way. Educated in institutions in the white-dominated world, Jadine feels more at home with white people than her own behaviour, in Son's view's, tantamount to disloyalty to the black race. But her self-confidence is, no doubt,

shaken frequently by feelings in authenticity and insecurity. So, she is more interested to discover her authenticity. Different as they are in their upbringing and views, Jadine and son fall in love with each other, and each tries to bring round the other to his or her way of thinking. In this regard Son is more successful than Jadine is. Some of the ways in which they try to bring the other to their own thinking can be seen when Jadine proposes son to go to law school. Son says he does not want to be a lawyer and hassle his fellows like himself and Jadine. Jadine argues that there are other kinds of law. His reply is "No, there isn't. Besides, I don't want to know their laws; want to know mine." (265) Jadine mentions that he does not have any. To this Son coolly responds, "Then that's problem with it" (265).

Another time Jadine suggests that they borrow money from Mr. Street to open a shop or start an agency. But Son doesn't wish to turn to a white man for help. Jadine says she doesn't care what colour Mr. Street is, and further points out that he is a person, not a white man who put her through school. Son remains unimpressed in love. He believes that Mr. Street helped her because she was obedient and did what she was told to do, a quality white people appreciated. He asks her, "did he do anything hard for you? Did he give-up anything important for you?" (265). Jadine replies that Mr. Street was not required to and even then, may be he would have since he was required to educate her. Son responds with disgust "that was toilet paper, Jadine. He should have wiped his ass after he shit all over your uncle and aunt. He was required to; he still is. His debt is big woman. He can't ever pay it off!"(266). Son's attitude towards the whites is seen much disgusting. He thinks whatever the whites do for black is for their self interest.

Acknowledging her indebtedness to Mr. Street for educating her, Jadine refuses to accept that educations are not important. She also emphasizes that nobody

else helped her, not even Son. When Son was aimlessly moving around creating trouble for himself and others, she was working hard to make something out of her life, learning how to make it in this world, which she says she could not have done without the help and care of Mr. Street. Son snubs her and retorts:

The truth is that whatever you learned in those colleges that didn't include me ain't shit. What did they teach you about me? What tests did they give? Did they tell you what was I like; did they tell you what was on my mind? Did they describe me to you? Did they tell you what was in my heart? If they didn't teach you that, then they didn't teach nothing, because until you know about me, you don't know anything at all about your children and anything at all about mama and papa. You find out about me you educate nitwit! (267)

Son claims himself not an ordinary son but a person bearing the tribal authenticity. Whatever, experiences he has, are the experiences of black race. He says Jadine has no knowledge of these experiences. She has been rootless. It can be assumed that sudden arrival of Son in Caribbean Island is to teach her who she is, what her originality is. Son becomes the archetypal hero. To know him is to know the myth and to know the ancestors.

The purpose behind Son's arrival to Valerian Street's house was to help to her discover originality. But it is very difficult for him to reach to his destination.

However, he succeeds in his aims as succeeds to seduce her.

It has been very much traumatic for Jadine to have been sexually violated by the man she loves. At the same time, the figuration of Son as "the man who fucked like a star" (291) points back to the consensual moment on Valerian's Island when they

consummated their love. In that first sexual union, Son tells Jadine' to imagine herself as a star feels itself: "Star throbs, Over and Over and Over. Like this, Stars just throb and throb and sometimes, when they can't throb any more, when they can't hold it anymore they fall out of the sky" (214). By explicitly ending the chapter with Jadine's recollection of Son's gentleness, the novel implies that, despite her pain, Jadine will be able to retain that which has been nurturing in her relationship with Son.

Consistent with Morrison's image of the soldier ants, after Son rapes Jadine, he metaphorically dies. His one role-to initiate her struggle to attain an authentic identity-is over. Although he attempts to pursue back to Valerian's Island, Therese rows him to the back side of the island, where Son essentially ceases to be representational, becoming instead a kind of cartoon rabbit and escaping back into his same-as-it-never-was briar patch. Son is relegated to the trash hip not of history but of mythology. Morrison, speaking of Son's end, claims that he "may identify totally and exclusively with the past, which is a kind of death, because you have no future, but a suspended place" (112).

The overtly personal dedication and the coded reference to personal identity in the biblical epigraph prefacing *Tar Baby*, therefore, imply that the personal does not drop out once s/he turns the page and enters Morrison's fictional world. Taken together, dedication and epigraph create a curious parallel between Morrison's relation to her woman relatives and gender struggle with the "night woman" in *Tar Baby* who haunt her dreams and demand her acceptance of a particular enactment of black female identity. The novel in one sense becomes a disguised portrait of the artist as an African American woman has not yet achieved a racialized adult identity but that an important precondition of that identity has been reached: namely, she recognizes that

female identity need not accept its constriction by black man when that constriction is complicate with the assumptions of white patriarchy.

In *Tar Baby*, whatever racialized identity Jadine may be able to construct is marked in its inception by rape. But it is a rape that is rhetorically constructed to deny the reader's awareness of the violence. In this regard, the rape in *Tar Baby* produces an oddly homologous relation in Toni Morrison's act of self-naming that intentionally obscures the origin of her name. Yet Morrison provides clues in the novel about both the hidden rape and her hidden name. Taken together, these two gestures of concealment speak to the profoundly difficult negotiation of black female identity that Morrison performs. It is a successful black woman whose work is validated by white corporate and academic culture. She does not wish to dismiss the constriction of identity and community made by black men, who are largely excluded from those structures that confirm her success, but at the same time she wishes to maintain that the black woman can not be forced, sexually or psychologically, back to the agrarian past.

Morrison learned a number of techniques from the modernists and her fiction contains numerous senses in which the main thing that is not represented is the main thing. Thus, it is with the crucial violation that occasions the demise of Son and Jadine's relationship. Many critics note the impasse that Son and Jadine come to when the narrator says: "Each knew it as it was meant or ought to be. One had past, the other a future and each one bore the culture to save in his hands. Mama-spoiled black man, will you mature with me? Culture-bearing black woman, whose culture are you bearing?"(269). In the heated argument that ensues, lines are crossed not merely rhetorically but also physically. The first telling detail comes immediately prior to Son's telling the story of the tar baby, when "he tore open his shirt" (270). This



gesture is the prelude to a rape. As he tells her the story of tar baby that identifies her as a creation of a white man, Jadine speaks the following lines; for emphasis, I will cite the following part of the dialogue.

“Don’t touch me Don’ touch me.”...

“Quit! Leave me alone!”...

“You better kill me. Because if you don’t, when you’re through, I’m going to kill you”...

“I’m going to kill you, kill you”...

“As sure I love”, she said “I’m going to kill you”... (271)

After Son leaves, Jadine lays in the wrinkled sheets, slippery and is unable to use her hands to remove a piece of hair from her mouth. More telling is Son’s response when he returns four hours later; he is “repentant terrified that he had gone too far” (271). During their final conversation, Jadine is wearing only a T-shirt, which lead to this description for her from Son’s point of view: “The Cheech and Chong T-shirt was up around her waist and her nakedness below embarrassed him now. He had produced that nakedness and having soiled it, it shamed him” (272). Son’s sexual violation of Jadine is stated in two ways; first, for the way critics have commented upon this key scene without noticing the sexual violation; and second, for the way that Morrison’s own less than candid remarks on her novel have helped to conceal the rape.

Speaking of Son and Jadine in an interview, Morrison cryptically notes: “I may have some attitude about which one is more right than the other, but in a funny sense that book was very unsettling to me because everybody was sort of wrong.(Laughter). Some more wrong than others” (*Interview*: 178). What the rape suggests is that the one who is “more right” counter intuitively may be Jadine, even

though she still has much to learn. At the very least, the scene should make problematic to those discussions that identify Son as the source of value in the novel. Morrison's ambivalent discussion that refuses to name the rape points to a similar deflection of attention away from the act in *Tar Baby*.

One effect of Son's sexual advance is a moment of self-reflexivity in which Jadine is aware of her double-consciousness. Intending to tell Valerian of Son's insult, her thoughts lead her to how she enacts a subject position for whites: "She needed only to be stunning, and to convince them she was not as smart as they were. Say the obvious, ask stupid questions, laugh with abandon, look interested and light up at any display of humanity if they showed it" (126-27). This moment of Son's function is a function of mentor figure to Jadine.

The protracted courtship that precedes Son and Jadine's consummation of their desire again seems to show how restrained Son can be. Jadine certainly is more attracted to Son after he has bathed, shaved cut his hair, and donned some of Valerian's old clothes. She agrees to go down the beach with him for lunch. In the ensuing conversation he is able to persuade Jadine to allow him to touch the arch of her foot, a curious moment of sexual simulacra; she asks him to stop, "but his forefinger stayed where his finger had been in the valley of her naked foot. Even after she laced of the canvas shoes." (179-80). This moment of sexual foreplay marks Son's initial success in his desire to reconstruct Jadine's consciousness. When the jeep runs out of the gas and Son leaves Jadine to get fuel, she encounters for the first time an eerie presence that in this sense is only subliminal but which will later become the nightmare vision that attends her relationship with Son. Walking a long a part of the island known as Sein de Veilles, or 'witch's tit' Jadine falls into a black, tarlike jelly that threatens to engulf her. Tar is something which nurtures the African-

Americans. The colour of tar is the colour of blacks. But her fall upon the tar gives a lot of discomfort to Jadine. In this moment she remembers Son who is not present.

Although Son is literally absent, he remains present in the sketch Jadine has made of him. From the trees, spirit women look at Jadine's struggle.

They were delighted when they first saw her, thinking a runaway child had been restored to them. But upon looking closer they saw differently. This girl was fighting to get away from them. The women hanging from the trees were quiet now, but arrogant mindful as they were of their value; their exceptional femaleness; knowing as they did that the first world of the world had been built with their sacred properties.

Although Jadine is unaware of these women, whose sacred properties are most centrally the ability to bring forth new life, their presence marks the extent to which Son's agenda with Jadine seems to be advancing. These women are the mythologized version of Son's preventing, while it has something important to teach her, is also fraught with danger.

Son might sense anti-Valerian in the way he curses his host's racist/classiest assumptions at the Christmas dinner on the island and destroys Valerian's illusion of mastery. Shortly after this abortive dinner, Jadine and Son consummate their relationship in a scene that shows Son's tender, careful treatment of Jadine. Son and Jadine then fly to New York, where Son's desire to remake Jadine is countered by her equally strong urge to reshape him.

In an effort to complete in reconstructing of her unconscious, Son insists on their going to the origin of his image of black agrarian bliss, Eloë, Floirda. Eloë is symbolically referred to the text. It is said where no others live but blacks. The real blackness can be searched in Eloë. As it is said by Son a place of blacks "Black people, no whites. No whites live in Eloë" (173). By taking Jadine to Eloë, Son hopes

to reveal Jadine an authentic African community, one that will cause her to abandon her investment in white culture. It is in Eloë that Son's goal, a fundamental reshaping of the way Jadine imagines the world, seems to be nearly completed.

Jadine doesn't want to go to Eloë instantly and keeps on engaging Son in other affairs to please him. "But he insisted on Eloë. In spite of the Gate and Central Park in the snow...still he insisted on Eloë. Even after she earned \$2500 for four walks and a picture spend all in two weeks..." (224-25). Material pleasure can not tempt Son. He is strict in his aim though Jadine earns a lot of property and tires to transform him.

At last, Jadine's heart could not remain unmelted. She agrees to Son to go to Eloë. "Yet he insisted on Eloë. She agreed..." (230). This acceptance started bringing some changes in her life, she felt as if she regained her parents though they were dead long time back:

Gradually she came to feel unorphaned. He cherished and safeguarded her. When she woke up in the night from on uneasy dream she had only to turn and there was the stability of his shoulder and his limitless, eternal chest, no part of her was hidden from him...There was nothing to forgive, nothing to win and the future was five minutes away. He unorphaned her completely. Gave her a brand new childhood. They were the last lovers in New York City-the first in the world. So, there position was in efficient and kept no savings account. (231)

A new life is shaped in Jadine. She gets her past back in her. She feels as if she has got someone who gave her birth. Son provided Jadine her parenthood. The new life begins in Jadine. It can be said that she is resurrected in the fatherhood of Son. The

sentence 'the future was a minute a way' refers that their destination is nearly completed. The orphanage, which Jadine felt previously, is completely forgotten then.

Finally, they went to Eloë. Jadine had a camera with her. So, she captured the photographs on their way. She was very much excited as she said, “Beautiful, Fantastic, Now over here... This way. Beautiful, Hold it. Hooooold it Heaven” (253). Jadine's affinity to nature is clearly observed in their journey to Eloë. She feels too much existed to take photographs while going there. She felt as if she reached to heaven.

When Jadine went for sleeping to Rosa, Son's neighbor's house, after supper, she put off her clothes and sat naked. There were two doors in the room. One remained wide opened and the other was closed:

She opened the latter and looked out into the blackest nothing she had ever seen. Blacker and bleaker than Isle des Chevaliers, and loud. Loud with the presence of plants and field life. If she was wombling air, there wasn't any, its not possible, she thought, for anything to be this black. Maybe if stood there long enough light would come from somewhere and she could see shadows... (253).

Her desire to look at nature gradually increases. She tried to find out what the real blackness from nature looking outside the door. Though she could find nothing initially, the last line indicates some hope in her quest for black self. She may know her authenticity through the light which, she hopes, may come out:

She remembered the blackness she saw when Son told her to close her eyes, and put a star in it. That would be the only way it would get there, she thought, for the world in the direction of the sky, in that

place where the sky ought to be, was starless...She might as well have been in a care, a grave, a dark womb of the earth, suffocating with the sound of plant life moving but deprived of its sight. (254)

As she kept on looking in the dark for a long time, she is reminded of a past event which took place when Son told her to keep her eyes closed. She finds advancement in her power of imagination which leads to her imagine as if she were a baby in the womb who is in darkness knowing nothing waiting for the day to come out to the real world. The real world is the world of blacks which she has totally forgotten.

There is not doubt that the primary contribution for Jadine's quest of black self goes to Son. Here again we can take another example:

He hurried. Something was in his hand as he knelt by the bed, leaves of fern or something. He made her take the slip off and he brushed her all over with the fern and she tried not to moan or laugh or cry out while he was saying Sssh, Sss. He undressed and climbed in, Jadine opened her arms to this man accustomed to the best pussy in Florida. It must have been that thought, put there by soldier that made her competitive, made her struggle to outdo Cheyenne. (260)

Ideologically though Son and Jadine differed, Son knows the thing which they both shared. Leaves are part of nature. He takes them in his hand and caresses Jadine with them. This way Son can make her believe that they have same origin. The purpose of taking reference to Cheyenne, a black lady, is to describe what kind of girls are preferred in black community. Cheyenne is a smart lady because of her big pussy. And the blacks prefer such ladies. Beautiful is the lady who has a best vagina. When Jadine knows this, she wants to prove herself a beautiful black lady. So, she asks Son

whether she has a pussy like that of Cheyenne. A sense of competition grows in her in Eloë.

Jadine has to bear lot of interruption in her love making with Son. It is because she is not accepted as an individual with black authenticity and black motherhood. The black people do not accept their relationship tied with non blacks. There are the women who come to warn Jadine in Eloë:

What do you want with me, goddamn it! They looked as though they had just been each waiting for that question and they each pulled out a breast and showed it to her ... There wasn't much room-revealing one breast and then two and Jadine was shocked... Here she was wide awake, but in total darkness looking at her own mother for God's sake and Nanadine! (260)

Jadine does a lot of struggle to prove the woman that she, too, can give motherhood. The breasts are the symbol of the woman who can nurture their child. Jadine also wants to prove that she also has the authenticity like those of other women. So, she also shows her breast to those women.

“I have breasts too,” she said or thought or willed, “I have breasts too.” But they did not believe her. They just held their own higher and pushed their own farther out and looked her. All of them revealing both their breasts except the woman in yellow... she stretched out a long arm and showed shocking Jadine her three big eggs. (261)

Jadine wants to make a strong claim that she is not deprived of motherhood. She can give birth to her child and feed her breast to him/her. The exposal of her breasts is her effort to prove the authenticity which the woman in shadow bore.

Terry Otten remarks: “*Tar Baby* like her other novels, describes the passage from innocence to experience with biblical and theological overtones, garden images, references to the serpent, expression of guilt and lost innocence, a yearning to return to the garden”(80). In fact, the present researcher is of the opinion similar to Otten. The story itself is parallel to the story of fall. Son can be compared with serpent as he himself has killed his wife and ran away from Caribbean Island. He bears the African American authenticity and has come to educate Jadine to preserve black culture which he reveals.

Son seduced Jadine and he made Jadine realize the loss of her ancestral heritage. He could make Jadine forget the sense of being orphan though she had lost her parents long time back. He took her to different parts to know African American culture.

The yellow woman and the others whom Jadine meets at Parisian supermarket and Eloë are not ordinary women. They look like the women bearing mythical significance in *Tar Baby*. They came to provide motherhood to Jadine. And as Jadine herself utters the words like ‘she’, ‘women’, ‘mother’ for the woman in yellows it is her yearning for the loss of ancient properties. So, the present researcher is of the opinion that the desire to be back to previous state is a dominant theme in the novel.

Jadine’s black authenticity has been doubted. The women can not accept her as a woman of their own race. The novel ends with a tragic fate to Jadine. All her efforts to obtain and establish authenticity end in despair. At last she herself can not adjust herself in Eloë, and makes hurry to flee. She leaves Eloë and goes to New York and then France where she can breathe a fresh air.



Thus, the novel with various mythical elements, such as, the woman in yellow, son's arrival to Isle des Chevalier, Eloë, Tar, etc. as the chief characteristics of African-American society has been essential to be looked from the perspective though the end is not satisfactory, rather despair.

## Chapter Four

### Conclusion

Jadine, the major female protagonist, is a mythical Tar Baby in the novel. The education she has received and the house where she grew up are all westerners. She has a white man's consciousness though she belongs to black race. Her light skinned colour, fascination with modeling career, charm to white man's food item and love of mob and sex represent that she is a construction of the westerners.

The story of *Tar Baby* can be compared to the ancient folk lore of "Tar Baby". Brer Rabbit, a construction of white made from Tar, is used to catch Brer Fox, that is, black in the folk lore. Jadine becomes Brer Rabbit who wants to impose the westerners' values upon Son. She wants to transform Son, the major male protagonist bearing the authentic black values, to her own way of life.

The most significant aspect in Tar Morrison's *Tar Baby* lies in the reshaping of Tar Baby myth. Tar, for Morrison, is something possessing sacred qualities. In the primitive time it was used to build the pyramids of gods and goddesses. Thus, tar represents the real black qualities used to symbolize black power and sacred qualities that the blacks possess.

The reconstruction of Tar Baby myth lies in reshaping the authentic self of Jadine. Jadine, though born in a black family, finds herself misled and in crisis in her authentic self when she meets the woman in yellow dress in a Parisian supermarket and the lady spits at her. Her utterances in the air which indicate that she wants to keep some relationship with the woman are the proper evidences to prove her quest of black self. The woman can be compared to the mythical woman Tar Lady persevering, the womanhood of black race. She holds eggs in her hand which proves

her fecundity. The innocent Jadine is very much inspired by the woman and she keeps on following her. But, the sudden disappearance of the woman leaves her alone. Her sudden appearance and disappearance proves the supernatural power the woman possesses.

The unfulfilled quest of black self further takes its course after the sudden arrival of Son, the major male protagonist, in the island where Jadine lives. In whatever way Son behaves makes one believe him an individual preserving the heritage of black race. Though Jadine tries to transform him at the beginning, she falls in love with Son. Her love with her is her love for black colour. Son in his effort to provide Jadine with her real identity, succeeds to seduce her. Jadine, when with Son, forgets her orphanage and feels as if she has got new life or rebirth. In course of his mission, Son takes Jadine to Eloë, a place symbolizing blackness. The vision of the supernatural women in the tree and Jadine's fall over tar on the way are representation of real black life.

Jadine, in Eloë, is so much inspired to see the natural scenario. She takes photographs of different natural scenes. Her being closer to nature symbolizes her approach to destiny. In the night she looks out at the complete darkness and hopes for the presence of some light in it. What she hopes to come as light is the materialization of her real self. The black women and woman in yellow who come in her dream in Eloë do not believe in Jadine's quest. They mock her showing their breasts in order to prove that Jadine does not preserve the motherhood. Jadine competes with them and exposing her breasts tries to show that she also can give birth. Jadine feels it impossible to stay in Eloë any longer and runs away to France. It symbolizes that Toni Morrison's reconstruction of Tar Lady to Tar Baby does not end in satisfaction. The role Son takes, as the mythical hero takes, to put a boon to an individual, finally

remains unfulfilled. This way it can be concluded that Jadine's quest of authentic self supported by reconstruction of Tar Baby myth does not end in fulfillment rather in despair. Jadine finally cannot put on her original self though she takes long course in this quest.

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