

**A Psychoanalytic Perspective in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*
with a Reference to the Protagonist Sethe**

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Beloved artificially combines a haunting amalgam of the past and the present experience of slavery. The novel is a series of flash backs and it is divided into three parts. Inspired by the story of a runaway slave who attempted to kill her own children rather than have them returned to slavery, Toni Morrison's novel explores the psychological and physical violence's caused by slavery and its deviating import on the successive generation. *Beloved* is specifically Sethe's story. It is also the story of all the slaves of the sweet home plantation of Kentucky, Baby Suggs, Paul D Garner, Paul F Garner, Paul A Garner, Halle Suggs and Sixo.

Toni Morrison's narration and portrayal of the character of Sethe in the novel is analyzed to make possible assumption on the personality. The analysis of the character is carried out through the various aspects and incidents from the novel.

Psychoanalytic theory refers to the definition of personality organization and the dynamics of personality development that underlines and guides the psychoanalytic, psychodynamics and psychotherapy called Psychoanalysis. Through the scope of psychoanalytic lens, humans are described as having sexual and aggressive derives. Psychoanalytic theorists believe that human behaviour is deterministic. It is governed by irrational forces, and the unconscious, as well institutional and biological derive. Due to this deterministic nature psychoanalytic theories do not believe in free will which is expressed in personality.

According to Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, personality is composed of three elements. These three elements of personality are known as the Id, the Ego, and the superego. They were together to create complex human behaviours. According to Freud when a child is born they are born only with 'Id' but later as the child grows it develops 'Ego' because of the 'Super Ego' that is formed in the unconscious of the child because of the society and culture in which the child lives in.

According to Freudian theory anything that a person says or thinks has to be from the Ego of a person's that is after a outcome of the conflict of the Id and Super Ego. This study would be an outcome from the psyche of the author. Since the author has her super Ego and Id just like every other person in this world. One can assume that the same can be applied to the common psyche of the entire humans.

The Id is the only component of personality that is present from birth. This aspect of personality is entirely unconscious and includes the instinctive and primitive behaviours. According to Freud, the Id is the source of all psychic energy, making it the primary component of personality. The Id is driven by the pleasure principle, which strives for immediate gratification of all drives, wants, and needs. If these needs are not satisfied immediately, the result is a state anxiety or tension.

For example, an increase in hunger or thirst should produce an immediate attempt to eat or drink. The Id is very important early in life, because it ensures that an infant's needs are met. If the infant is hungry or uncomfortable, they cry until the demands of the Id are met however, immediately satisfying these needs is not always realistic or even possible. If we were ruled entirely by the pleasure principle, we might find ourselves grabbing things we want of other people's hand to satisfy us. This sort of behaviour would be both disruptive and socially unacceptable. According to Freud's , the Id tries to resolve the tension created by the pleasure principle through the primary process, which involves forming a mental image of the desired object as a way of satisfying the need.

The Ego is the component of personality that is responsible for dealing with reality. According to Freud, the Ego develops from the Id and ensures that the impulses of the Id can be expressed in a manner acceptable in the real world. The Ego functions in three layers of conscious, preconscious, and unconscious mind.

The Ego operates based on the reality principle, which strives to satisfy the Id's desires in realistic and socially appropriate ways. The reality principle weighs the costs and benefits of an action before deciding to act upon or abandon impulse. In many cases, the Id's impulses can be satisfied through a process of delayed gratification. The Ego will eventually allow the behaviour, but only in the appropriate time and place. The Ego also discharges tension created by unmet impulse through the secondary process, in which the Ego tries to find an object in the real world that matches the mental image created by the Id's primary process. The Ego balances the Id, the Super Ego and reality in order to maintain state of consciousness.

The last component of personality to develop is the superego. The Super Ego is the aspect of personality that holds all of our internalized moral standards and ideals that we acquire from both parents and society, our sense of right and wrong. The Super Ego provides guidelines for making judgments. According to Freud, the Super Ego begins to emerge at around age of five.

This study is to concentrate on the inner mind of the protagonist. The conflict in the mind of protagonist is very important. The main problem is the background of the character and the past experiences that make all sorts of things. Therefore the research would construct itself around the conflict between id and the super ego. "BELOVED, she is my daughter. She is mine. see she come back to me of

her own free will and I don't have to explain....If I hadn't killed her she would have died and that is something I could not bear to happen to her" (236).

"She was n't even two years old when she died. Too little to understand, too little to talk much even" (5). In the quoted passage the protagonist Sethe, a former slave whose love for her children and hatred of slavery causes her to commit an unthinkable act in order to keep her children free from a life of bondage. No doubt that what was done by Sethe could be wrong in the eyes of a moralist. But she did it because she was surrounded by the most immoral and unjust world where justice and self-respect could not be restored accepted ways of injustice and self-destruction. The protagonist argues that a mother must and would do anything to ensure the welfare of her children, even it means prostituting herself like the "Saturday girls" who sell their bodies in the slaughter house yard. Here the opposing forces in conflict according to psychology are the id and the super ego. The super ego of Sethe character is revealed in these lines and explains how much she suffered in her life. "They beat you and you was pregnant? And they took my milk!" (20).

Before she could escape from the plantation, the two white boys, the school teacher's nephews sucked out her breast milk and lashed her with rawhide whips. Although she was in terrible pain from the whipping, Sethe ran away from the sweet home at that night. This incident reminds that Sethe's mind slightly changed into super ego. She thinks that her children will not face these kind of slave experience in their future. "I am not dead-I am not" (251).

Beloved is a combination of adult body and infant perceptions used to describe her experience on the other side where death is a "dead man on my face and daylight comes through the cracks". The strongest emotion is left to her love for Sethe, whom she observes chewing and swallowing. The depiction of the watery division between the Earth and after the life fails to separate Sethe from her daughter. Sethe's mind is fully filled with love of beloved. Unconsciously she feels in love with beloved and she tries to see her face here unconsciously plays a vital role. "I drank your blood...You are mine"(254 - 256).

The three merge in the final lines, blessed by milk, smile and blood. The benediction like a classic admirer's charm is uttered three times the Super Ego plays a vital role because each of them wants to expose their love with one another. The relationship between mother and daughter, sisters and relationship are with Sethe and Denver. Everyone wants to be as mine. Through unconsciously they reveal their inner ideas because they long for love and care from their loved ones. This makes clear; they are ready to sacrifice their wishes. Denver wants to become close with beloved and she wishes to see her face whereas Sethe wants to see the smile, they feel happy when she finds again.

Slavery is presented as a pattern. The owners of slaves believe that they should show their superiority over the slaves and justify their actions. The damage that

every black inherits at the hands of slave master forces to kill babies to avoid children turning slaves.

Toni Morrison's *Beloved* is not many writers had attempted to recreate the internal life of the mind and the spirit of a slave woman. One might well paraphrase the thought of the contemporary psychoanalytic critic Julia Kristeva to ask "what do we know about the discourse of the slave mother. In other words, what do we know about the minds the emotions the psychological forces operating in these slaves?"

Reference

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