

THE VOICES OF ANGER AND DISSENT: ASSERTION OF BLACK FEMALE IDENTITY AND CONSCIOUSNESS IN SONG OF SOLOMON

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Abstract

"One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman". Simon De Beauvoir's quote from her book *The Second Sex* startlingly compresses the whole debate of feminism by stressing how the enriching machinery operative within any culture enforces the initiative of performativity on the genders presents within the society. A society that privileges the male gender over the female gender deems in ritual recurrence of specific tasks and activities that consign the female gender to a subordinate status. Even when born with equal apparatus as the male equivalent, women are made to live as an inferior grade through social conditioning. In this manner, a woman becomes that category that is socially, politically, economically, and in many other ways exploited, and these exploitations could be both evident and undetectable. Several forms of abuse and physical torment are visible forms of violence committed against women. However, indistinguishable grave forms of violence that women are subjected to include being shorn of the right to education, vote, economic independence, professional opportunities, abortions, and right to inheritance.

Keywords: Gender, Subordinate, Abuse, Torment, violence.

Feminism or feminisms are a series of movements, beliefs and social activism that requests to accomplish social equity for women. Discourse recuperated the suppressed bodies and voices that the social and cultural discrimination buried. These oppressive subjects are not superior to men but also to the female gender. These became patriarchal over centuries of social conditioning that privileged the male gender and believed the discrimination against women to be normative. It is not far off unviable to look at feminism as a consistent body for each society at a different level of gender-based bias. Furthermore, the feminists in cultures seek social equity differently. For instance, in upper-class families, the right for women to step out according to their will would be liberating. However, in another class, where both men and women work because of their pecuniary needs, the working woman does not involuntarily become a symbol of an empowered woman. For this reason, the term feminisms are plural and diverse, but at the core, attempt to threaten the cultural machinery that regards women as 'the other' or the inferior sex. Collectively, African-American women lives and conscience are critically affected by capitalism, racism and sexism. Racism is but a by-product of capitalism. As sexism and racism have been well co-related in the history of America, novelists such as Alice Walker, Paule Marshall, Gloria Naylor and Toni Morrison have reflected that relationship in novels. Just as blacks are relegated to an underclass in America by their race, women are consigned. In America, women are consigned to a separate caste by their sex, similarly to black people relegated to an underclass by their race. Therefore, black women novelists like Morrison have continued to analyse the relationship between class, race, and gender.

Morrison gives importance to racism in *BE. Pecola*, the protagonist, primarily suffers because she is a black girl, victimised by Western beauty standards. In *Sula*, Morrison focuses on gender. *Sula* suffers because she is a woman in a male-dominated society. In *Song of Solomon* (1977), Morrison marks sexism as subordinate to racism and capitalism, knowing well that the exploitation of the African woman by the African man is the direct outcome of her national and class oppression. As a result, Morrison gives focus on class and its dominance over race and gender in *SS*. The focus in *SS* is not on the concept of woman, as in *Sula*, for its protagonist is a man bearing a peculiar but highly symbolic name, Milkman Dead. Although Morrison does not focus primarily on gender to class in *SS*, she does integrate that concern into her central theme. As the daughter of the only black doctor in the town, Ruth is bred to an upper-middle-class existence. She is presented as the bottom of the ideal southern lady image. She is thoroughly cut off from life, benevolently imprisoned by her father who tries to make her into his girl-doll, spitefully