



# Quest for Self Identity in Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon*

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In the world of modern African-American fiction, Toni Morrison holds a special place. Most people agree that Toni Morrison is one of the most important African-American novelists to have appeared in the 1970s. She is just the eighth woman and first African-American to win the Nobel Prize in Literature. African-American women occupy a distinctive position in American culture and literature. African-American authors including Maya Angelou, Alice Walker, Gwendolyn Brooks, Audre Lorde, Ntozake Shange, and Rita Dove made their best efforts to develop and maintain a standard of nationality.

In all of her writings, Morrison has made it a point to accurately represent the concerns, values, and points of view of women. The world of domesticity, gestation, childbirth, and nurture, as well as mother-daughter and woman-woman relationships, and woman-man relationships, are among the topics Morrison is interested in presenting. Morrison's desire to depict a feminine form of experience, or "subjectivity," in thinking, feeling, valuing, and understanding oneself and the outside world is another area of focus. After collecting psychological traumas, Morrison moved on to exposing her female protagonist's hunger for adventure and daily routine. The resolution of her works involves perfect union, conciliation, compromise, impotent resignation, and no consolation.

Morrison does a fantastic job of capturing the underlying rage that women experience as well as the rising tide of independence and empowerment. She reveals to us the subliminal patterns that exist in the feminine psyche. We may say that most of Morrison's works are rife with her feminist issues and a potent portrayal of feminine sensibility. Morrison depicts the profoundly impacted and horribly damaged black psyche as it is impacted by the black struggles in America. She frequently explores how racism, misogyny, and classism interact to impair the quality of black women's lives in her works. Even though Milkman is the main character in *Song of Solomon*, other significant characters include Milkman's mother Ruth Foster Dead, father Macon Dead II, sisters Magdalene nicknamed Lena and First Corinthian, as well as his aunt Pilate Dead, her daughter Reba, and granddaughter Hagar. From his family, Milkman Dead has learned all the traditional morals. He reaches a turning point where he feels the desire to learn more about his family's past and their real names. Through his aunt Pilate Dead, he

finally accepts who he is. What's more, Pilate not only starts him off on his adventure but also guides him every step of the way.

Milkman is connected to his aunt and her principles on the one hand, as well as his father and his values, on the other. His aunt and father reflect two very distinct value systems. Actually, Macon Dead II has more white than black characters. While Pilate takes an Afro-centric stance, he is firmly Euro-centric. As a result of embracing white social and economic norms, Macon Dead II develops into a vicious and harsh businessman. He suggests that his son receive the same instruction. A distorted version of his love of the land and his family as a child, his selfish preoccupation with possessing things and people is that. There is no room for spiritual values like love, compassion, kindness, or tolerance because Macon is consumed by his proprietorship and estranged from his family and community. Other people are never treated by him as living beings, but rather as things that belong to him. Macon has made the decision to follow in his father's footsteps by accumulating as much real estate and cash as he can. His Sunday travels in the new Packard with Corinthians and Lena in the back and Ruth and Milkman in the front are just a parade of his belongings.

The Packard's lifeless metallic exterior stands in for the inside passengers' deadening connections and emotions. His attitude toward everyone who was connected to him—including Ruth, Lena, the first Corinthian, and his sister Pilate—was purely materialistic. His sister Pilate is the one relationship Macon has that appears to humanise him. The younger sister of Macon, Pilate Dead, stands in sharp contrast to her brother and his family. Macon rejects both Pilate's humanity and the fact that she is her sister. His anger stems from his suspicion that she took the gold that the two of them ought to have shared. However, he avoids her company more severely since he finds her manner to be socially inappropriate. However, Pilate's blatant contempt for social standing, profession, and etiquette allows her to promote spiritual qualities like compassion, respect, loyalty, and charity whereas Macon's love of property and money decides the nature of their relationship. Pilate is in charge of a home where the women are the majority, just like Macon. Her brother's existence appears to be empty on the one hand, while Pilate's family is brimming with life and sensuality on the other.

Her birth circumstances give her a larger-than-life personality and enable her to transcend the boundaries of her historical era and environment. Pilate gave birth to herself and was born without a navel. She is cut off from society due to her smooth stomach because people who are aware of her condition avoid her. She learned the history of the beliefs that have supported Milkman and, consequently, the black community, during her formative years.

Pilate is mercilessly and unexpectedly expelled as an orphan into the broader reality after having been nurtured in relative isolation in the Edenic Lincoln's Heaven. In fact, her lack of a navel has made her feel even more isolated from the outside world. Her life has been severely assaulted by racism, misogyny, and then nature. Sexual desire, the most fundamental human urge, never quite satiated her in the way she desired. Pilate only makes up her mind to stop caring about the world with the birth of her

daughter Reba. She had to handle things on her own due to alienation, which helped her become independent. Once she understands her place in her community, she abandons all presumptions and starts over. She is regarded as a unique individual, a truth-seeker who rejects every social and cultural presumption and tradition she has ever encountered. She develops life-sustaining behaviours as a result of her self-inquiring reflections, realising the value of nurturing as evidenced by her unbiased hospitality to others. Pilate stands for an unselfish love free from materialistic and egoistic worries. Despite the fact that Pilate experiences loneliness, she never rejects anyone who come to her. She places a high value on relationships to her community and family. Even beyond her personal family, she is willing to offer her compassion.

Through the relationship between Hagar and Milkman, her cousin, Morrison continues to highlight the negative repercussions of white dominance on black male/female relationships that happen when one voluntarily sacrifices self for the love of the other. When Milkman pays her a visit for the first time, Hagar commits her own act of disobedience by falling in love with him. She learns that Milkman favours a different type of beauty, which profoundly hurts her. She decides to kill him because she has nothing to offer him. Macon is married to Ruth, the most reputable black physician in their Michigan town. However, she is unaware that Macon marries her more out of ambition to amass more money than out of true love. But Ruth's ability to meet her demands is even less free now that she is married. Macon abuses Ruth in many ways, both physically and psychologically. Pilate stands for a kind of love that is pure of ego and worldliness. She places a high value on relationships to her community and family. Even beyond her personal family, she is willing to offer her compassion. Despite the fact that Pilate too sees her father being murdered, her response to the tragedy is different from that of her brother. In the form of her songs, stories, and bag of bones, she takes the past with her rather than suppressing it. It is not sufficient to merely put the past in the past and look forward; rather, she thinks that one's sense of identity is built in the ability to look back to the past and blend it with the present. She perishes towards the book's conclusion when Guitar accidentally murders her in his attempt to kill Milkman. But Milkman would always follow her lessons through good times and bad in his life.

As a result, Pilate, Reba, and Hagar walk one route in search of self-fulfillment, while Ruth, Corinthian, and Lena walk the other. No other woman, besides Pilate, is able to recognise and comprehend her place in American culture. Morrison portrays and bemoans the wretched situation of black women, who have suffered greatly as a result of the dynamics of slavery, colonialism, consumerism, as well as other repercussions of racism and sexism. On their human mind, all of these have terrible consequences. No black woman has a fully developed personality as a result. Black women's sex and ethnicity both hinder their quest for completeness and awareness.

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