

ALTRUISM IN TONI MORRISON'S SUSLA

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Abstract

This paper proceeds from the Toni Morrison's novel Sula and it mainly concentrate on the mutual relationship between an individual. Altruism is the main axiomatic assumption of this paper, which expresses the fact of caring for the needs and happiness of other people more than ones own. The paper analyses some aspects of the Afro- American history and focuses on the individual characters in Sula and the Bottom society. Altruism is the basic premise of this paper. Relationship between an individual and society is considered dialectic. The basic assumptions are the necessity of an individual driving elements in the society for its ceaseless development. Subjectivism as the central point of view on human existence.

Key words: human psychology, friendship, race, society, subjectivism, womanism .

Nel and Sula's friendship was intense as well as sudden.

So when they met first in those chocolate halls and next though
the ropes of the swing, they felt the ease and comfort of old friends
they found in each other's eyes the intimacy they were looking for. (52)

The paper tells the story of a friendship between two black woman. Nel and the titular Sula. Their friendship starts out intensely. As children, they are joined at the hip and love spending each and every minute with each other. But as they grow from children to teens to adult women, a series of events – threaten to destroy their friendship for good . They are the death of a young boy, Sula's habit of sleeping with married men, Nel's adherence to societal norms, a debilitating illness- Sula offers commentary on the lives of black Americans and the hardship wrought by racism, on issues of gender, on the relationship between men and women relate to each other. Morrison has said that she is invested in recording Afro- American history, and while Sula mostly focuses on Nel and Sula, we

also get a look at the community of which they are a part of, their customs and tradition and of the ways in which they deal with pain, fear, sex, and death.

Toni Morrison is one of the most significant novelists of the post modern period. Her novels have consistently explored the African American experience, using historical, social and psychological themes to focus on the experience of women. Morrison's novel combines psychological realism, social critique, symbolism, and the myth poetics resulting in a style similar to marginal realism. Although her works are not limited to social protest, Morrison is concerned with racial themes frequently encountered in African- American literature. Morrison creates an African-American community in the fictional town Larain, Ohio, the author's hometown. Slavery implied the ironic naming of the bottom. The bottom is mostly black community in Ohio, situated in the hills above the mostly white, wealthier community of medallion. Shad rack, a resident of the bottom fought in WWI. He returns a shattered man, unable to accept the complexities of the world. He lives on the outskirts of town, attempting to create order in his life. Meanwhile the families of the children Nel and Sula are contrasted, Nel is the product of a family that believes deeply in social convention, hers is stable home, though some might characterize it as rigid. Nel is certain of the conventional life her mother, Helene wants for her, These doubts are hammered home when she meets Rochelle, her grandmother and a unconventional woman in her family line.

Four white boys in their early teens sons of some newly arrived Irish people, occasionally entertained themselves in the afternoon by harassing black school children. (115) Friendship that was so close, they themselves had difficulty in distinguishing one's thoughts from the others." They are both happy; Nel becomes a wife, and Sula goes to college. Ten years later Sula's return impacts magic to Nel's day that marriage had not. " Her old friend had come home Sula, whose past she had lived through and with the present was a constant sharing of perception. Talking to sula had always been a conversation with herself. (82)

Sula 's family is very different. She lives with her grandmother, Eva and her mother Hennah. Both of them are seen by the town as eccentric and loose. Their house also serves as a home for three informally adopted boys and steady stream of borders. Despite their difference Sula and Nel became fiercely attached to each other during adolescence. However a traumatic accident changes everything. The two girls begins to grow apart, after high school, Nel chooses to marry and settles into the conventional role of wife and mother ,Sula follows a wildly divergent path and lives a life of fierce independence and total disregard for social conventions, shortly after Nel's wedding Sula leaves the bottom for a period of 10 years. She has many affairs some with white men. However she finds people following the same boring routines elsewhere. So she returns to the bottom and to Nel. Upon her return the town regards Sula as the personification of evil of the blatant disregard of social conventions. Three years later, when Nel visits a dying sula, she asks,

why you didn't love me enough to leave him alone. To let him love me you had to take him away" sula replies " what you mean take him away? If we were such good friends, how come you couldn't get over it?(86) "All the time, all the time, I thought I was missing jude..... we were girls together LORD, Sula..... girl, girl, girl, girl, girl .(25)

Sula has an affair with Nel's husband ,Jude . Nel breaks off her friendship with Sula , just before Sula dies. They achieve a half hearted reconciliation with sula's death. The harmony that had reigned in the town quickly dissolves, Nel goes to the cemetery and mourns at Sula's grave calling out Sula's name in sadness. Although Nel and Sula share these strong bonds; they are different from each other in several respects. The paper address the confusing mysteries of human emotion and relationship, ultimately concluding that social conventions are inadequate as a foundation of living one's life. Their friendship is strong and is one when together and becomes nothing when they are broken apart . Nel turns into a dull house wife , living the life of her mother and Sula dies alone without anyone who truly love her by her side. They depending on each other but still have the ability to stand and out alone should they need to. However these perfect relationship do not always exist. The two start off learning from each other and giving to each other equally. But as they spend more

time together, Sula dislikes her disheveled house, and wishes that she could live in a house hold as clean as that of Nel. Sula's positive view of Nel's home challenges Nel to see it as a new light teaching her to appreciate. This concept stays current throughout out the early years of their relationship. Their friendship grows stronger. The two become practically inseparable, living completely and depending on each other for everything. Sula and Nel are reflection on not only of friendship but also of two African – American families.

When you gone to get married? You need to have babies .

It'll settle you Sula replied, I don't want to make somebody else.

I want to make myself. Eva further comment enhance the role of black women in American society selfish. Is not any woman got on business fleeing around without any man? (149)

In tracing the relationship of Nel and Sula through adulthood , Morrison shows how altruism can be affected by the differing routes taken by African- American women. Nel's pursuit of the traditional ideal marriage and family contrasts with the sexually liberated path chosen by Sula. Sula although of the folk culture, eventually moves beyond that culture, when she leaves medallion. Sula, Nel Wright is an orderly, proper young women who tries to fine peace in the face of jealousy and sexual danger. Like her mother Helene Wright, Nel believes in the importance of virtue and the following the rules. When as a young child, she befriends Sula Peace, a girl who is as wild and unpredictable as Nel as proper. Nel secretly fears and resents Sula's vivaciousness, and even smiles when Sula accidentally kills a young child,Chicken Little.in spite of her love for rules, Nel is capable of great feats of empathy for instance, she comes to understand Eva peace when no one else in the bottom will do so. In the end however Nel finds herself alone in the world.

To conclude the two female character Nel and Sula occupy the novel. The friendship of Nel and Sula is so close that they themselves find difficult to distinguish one from the other. In other words Nel and Sula are separate faces of one being,each other's alterego. In their quest of altruism they find their world with contradiction and tensions. They represent two sides of the coin. They stand for total human Personality.

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