



**The Issue of Slavery and Racism in Black Literature  
The Obsession with Color, Its Impact, and the Motivations for Creativity in  
the Work of the African American Scheherazade, Toni Morrison**

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Received :12/07/2025    Accepted :05/12/2025    Published :02/03/2026

**Abstract:**

Cultural criticism has undertaken the task of defending marginalized cultures by responding to the grand narratives authored by the West, which have depicted these cultures and their people negatively within the frameworks of colonial and postcolonial studies. Meanwhile, feminist criticism has taken on the responsibility of advocating for women's rights and freedoms. Women have endured a double oppression—first by the colonizer and then by the authority, dominance, and tyranny of men. This dual oppression has shaped the backdrop of women's writings and critiques, with issues of colour, race, and gender becoming central concerns and motivators for their work. How has the impact of colour manifested in women's creativity and critique?

This study aims to highlight the African-American writer Toni Morrison, who, through her various writings, sought to represent the world of Black people and embody the ongoing struggle between the self and the other. She endeavoured to liberate Black characters from the confines of slavery and the stereotypes that clung to them for so long. Morrison emphasized that the Black community possesses unique experiences across various domains, enabling it to break free from the chains of slavery and rebuild its identity and history within the framework of freedom known as postcolonialism.

**Keywords:** Color, Slavery and Racism, Black Community, Black, Suffering.

**Introduction:**

Once again, we return to the idea of suffering as the spark that ignites creativity, as if suffering is the catalyst that shapes the emotions, circumstances, and pressures experienced by the creator, releasing his creativity in the form of a story, novel, poem, or painting. When a writer portrays a character of his gender, it can be viewed as a form of "empathy," where the writer unconsciously assumes the role of the protagonist, experiencing the character's journey as if it were his own. As a product of his environment, the author often crafts words illuminating the darkness of oppression, ignorance, and hunger. The text then becomes a vessel for human suffering, reflecting life in its bleak and vibrant aspects, capturing the inner stirrings of the human soul. From the crucible of suffering, greatness is born—and why not, when writing is one of the most potent forms of expressing the human psyche? The heart translates emotions,



and imagination plays a crucial role in artistic portrayal, from which beautiful literary works emerge.

Toni Morrison portrays the side of the hardship and suffering she experienced when she grew up, stating: *"I was born in Cleveland. My roots go back to the South. My family escaped slavery in the last century. The constant struggle between adapting to white reality and preserving Black identity was always a pressing concern."*<sup>1</sup>

Reflecting the struggles she faced as a child, Toni Morrison—who grew into a celebrated author and Nobel laureate—employs her literary works to depict the harsh, bleak conditions encountered by Black people in a white-dominated America. Issues of race and gender play a crucial role in revealing the extent of oppression and suffering endured by African Americans. Since the advent of slavery and continuing into modern times, race and gender have been central issues in racial discrimination, with marginalized races treated poorly and denied their rights in America.

Morrison also successfully depicts the double oppression experienced by Black women—discrimination in white society and oppression by Black men. This dual oppression is vividly expressed through her unique narrative style, which blends folk storytelling, poetry, myth, and fable, enabling her to craft distinctive literary creations throughout her work.

### **1. Toni Morrison: Birth and Life**

On February 18, 1931, Toni Morrison was born in Lorain, Ohio, in the southern United States, to a father with a modest job and a mother who sang in the church choir to earn a few dollars. Her mother was full of energy and had a strong personality, even protesting against President Roosevelt when she found worms in the flour she was using. The family relied on food aid to survive, yet despite these hardships, Morrison succeeded in accomplishing her education and transformed the suffering she and millions of Black people around her endured into profound literature.

In these challenging social and political circumstances, Morrison witnessed a harsh and tumultuous life in a society that consistently placed Black people at the bottom of the social hierarchy. However, once she discovered her talent, she expanded her narrow world into a vast universe. She devoted much of her writing to combating racism, delving profoundly into the inner worlds of men and women and highlighting the trauma of slavery that plagued the Black community.

Morrison's birth name was Chloe Anthony. Her family had escaped slavery from the southern United States, a background that made her one of America's most influential literary voices. She had the unique ability to portray the oppression and injustice suffered by millions of people forcibly brought from Africa, enslaved by white men, and branded with a new identity—"Negroes," a label that clung to them for centuries.

In all of Morrison's works, Black characters—male or female—face the fears that the African-American community harbours about itself. Her writings evoke the memories of 60 million people who were guilty of nothing more than being born with dark skin—a "crime" for which they perished under bullets and the lash of whips.



This iconic novelist described herself as a "half-stranger, New Yorker, New Jerseyite, American, Afro-American, and woman" when she accepted the Nobel Prize in 1993. Toni Morrison was not just an American novelist who won the Nobel Prize; she was one of the most prominent voices exposing the racism and inequality faced by Black Americans. She skillfully drew inspiration from her early childhood, folklore, and myths about racial discrimination and the lingering remnants of slavery in American society. Morrison became a symbol of hope and equality for many Black Americans<sup>2</sup>.

## **2. Her Works:**

Toni Morrison's literary world spans various generations. In her work, she delves into the deep roots of her race, reaching back into history when she sits behind the writing desk, only to return to later generations—those who rebel and reject all forms of violence in American society. She evokes rituals and beliefs in magic, sorcery, and spirit conjuring, reminiscent of those in the Third World.

Morrison's writings are distinguished by their depth and richness while also conveying, through profoundly emotional storytelling, the struggles and emotions of Black women who were subjected to slavery and endured oppression, exploitation, rape, and the lash of the whip. These women were forced into labour, owning nothing but the bread their masters provided. Morrison's works depict Black women searching for love yet suffering from a lack of security in a society that, under the lash of the white master, draws red lines they cannot cross.

Although Morrison successfully depicts the lives of Black women, she does not neglect the Black man, who suffered under the same conditions. Her works serve as a collective memory of the oppression and alienation endured by Black people under the yoke of slavery. Even after slavery ended in America, Black Americans were unable to forget the horrors they experienced under the whip of the white master. This is evident in her novel *Song of Solomon*, which tells the story of a Black man attempting to escape the memories of slavery yet constantly returning to the suffering of his Black ancestors<sup>3</sup>.

Overall, Morrison has become one of the pioneers of this distinct branch of American literature, which has captured the attention of critics globally. Morrison portrays the stark differences between Black skin and white cultural values in all her novels. This emphasizes the negative theme of how the Black community is seduced and betrayed by white culture, while the positive theme centres on the search for the Black cultural identity necessary for their survival in America.

Morrison also revived a hidden part of American memory in some of her books, especially in her six famous novels published between 1970 and 1995. These include *The Bluest Eye* (1970), *Sula* (1974), *Song of Solomon* (1977), *Tar Baby* (1981), *Beloved* (which won the Pulitzer Prize in 1988), and *Jazz* (1992). In 2012, she published *Home*, translated into Arabic as *Al-Diyar*, which also won a Pulitzer Prize. In 2015, she released the novel *God Help the Child*<sup>4</sup>.

In all these novels, we always encounter the same Black woman across three generations of women. The first generation lived through the years of slavery or experienced a time close to it. The second-generation women try to forget this period, creating their world to forge a unique cultural and social identity, such as through jazz music. The third generation of women is more



liberated and joyful, but, given the era, they also endure more suffering. Therefore, though the past was extremely harsh, it seems more merciful than the present reality. As a result, the writer's novels are filled with nostalgia for the 1920s.

### **3. The Novel *Sula*:**

In *Sula*, one of Toni Morrison's most significant works, the story follows a woman whose soul is tainted by sin, leading her to live a tumultuous and often eccentric life.

*Sula* represents the third generation of African Americans during the period Morrison chose for the novel, from the 1920s until 1941, when *Sula* dies, with the story continuing until 1965—when African American lives witnessed some improvement. *Sula* grows up as a rebellious and defiant girl, and violence starts to infiltrate her spirit from childhood, intensifying during her adolescence. It eventually leads her to forcibly commit her grandmother, Eva, to a nursing home with the help of two men, thus becoming her legal guardian.

Morrison sets the novel in the fictional town of Medallion, specifically in the African American neighbourhoods on the hills overlooking the town's valley. This area is called "The Bottom," symbolizing the lower stratum of the city where Black people live. Despite its elevated position, it is referred to as "The Bottom" because it is where the poor and oppressed reside, while the white population inhabits the fertile valley below. This setup ironically comforts the Black residents with the thought that they are closer to the sky and watching over the white people. In reality, however, the whites enjoy fertile lands, while farming in "The Bottom" is laborious, with eroding soil that takes the seeds with it and fierce winds blowing throughout the winter. The entire neighbourhood is impoverished, with hunger, disease, and ignorance rampant, yet it pulses with life—sometimes filled with the sounds of banjo music, singing, and women performing traditional Black dances<sup>5</sup>.

Life in this poor neighbourhood appears calm on the surface, but beneath it, Black people hold no value in the eyes of white society, whether in life or death. African Americans have their own designated seats at the back of trains and are buried far from white cemeteries. If they make a mistake, as one of the characters, Helene, does, they face public humiliation<sup>6</sup>.

*Sula* does not appear in the opening pages of the novel. Instead, Morrison introduces the character "Shadrack," a handsome young man with no past, no language, no tribe, and no personal belongings. He returns from war with a broken spirit and a foggy memory. All he can recall is a window, a river, and whispered voices behind a door. However, he does not know where the window or river are, nor can he identify the source of the whispers.

Morrison immerses us in the search for the origin of this young man's story, who will meet *Sula* several years later when her reputation has deteriorated to the point where she is shunned by the Bottom's community. This rejection only deepens her defiance of a life that humiliates people of colour, despite her grandmother telling her that all of this is a luxury compared to what happened in 1895 when everything was worse. Back then, Black people were dying like flies. "You are now at the top of the ladder," her grandmother would say.

However, *Sula* refuses to acknowledge this "ladder." She seeks to leap to the top, for she is a wild soul, and her desire to ascend became the goal she relentlessly pursued, indifferent to the opinions of others. This led her to become an outcast, then alone and ill. Yet, even in her dire



condition, she retained the pride she inherited from her grandmother to the point where she told her friend Nel, on the verge of death, "Other women die like rags, but I will sink into the ground like a mighty tree. I have lived my life."<sup>7</sup>

With her death, the residents of the Bottom breathe a sigh of relief, as if her passing had lifted a curse from them. The last person she had a relationship with was the unstable Shadrack, with whom Morrison began the novel. Shadrack, unable to reclaim his roots or summon the spirits of the officers, soldiers, and enemies from the tragic war he fought in, drifts into a life shaped by Sula.

After Sula's death, the novel jumps to 1965, when many things have changed. Black people can now move freely through the city, work in modest shops, or teach in high schools. The "Bottom" has collapsed, as those who amassed small fortunes during the war have moved far from the vast valley. No longer do Black people live on the hills; they have moved down to the valley, where the white people used to reside, while the white population builds houses on the hills. Have the tables turned? Are they now the ones watching over the Black community from above<sup>8</sup>?

Critics regard *Sula* as an essential work filled with rich cultural insight, especially in its depiction of African American rituals and customs. The novel profoundly captures the struggle and suffering of Black people over decades as they fought for a better life. This theme is a recurring theme in much of Toni Morrison's work, which consistently focuses on the lived experiences of African Americans.

#### **4. The Novel *A Mercy* - Slavery and the Rights of Black Women:**

Morrison reveals an unwavering commitment to the issues she writes about, infusing her work with genuine feelings as if she were writing about herself or her closest circles. Nearly 15 years after winning the Nobel Prize, she remained dedicated to giving lectures and travelling the world to achieve invitations from around the globe. She continued to write about the long history of oppression, injustice, and the violation of the rights of Black women in America during the era of slavery. In 2008, she published her novel *A Mercy*, which critics hailed as one of the ten best novels released that year, printed in New York and Toronto.

In this relatively short work, the author returns to her favoured subject, delving into the dark well of slavery and unearthing the torments from its roots, starting from the beginnings of modern American history—the journey between Africa and North America. She explores the pages of the early history of what is now known as America, blending imagination with possible interpretations to comprehend the mechanisms that shaped this society, which has become the world's leading power today.

In this novel, Morrison firmly asserts her identity as an African American woman, crafting a violent, harsh, and intricate narrative. It is multi-layered and rich with voices, confusing the reader, particularly in the early pages. Gradually, it begins to demonstrate the depths of the characters and the events in each individual's life, tracing back to the early seventeenth century—the beginning of migration from various regions and the formation of this land, which seemed as though "it had not been trodden by Noah's feet<sup>9</sup>." The story begins with the arrival of enslaved people, forced to work without pay, just enough to keep them alive on this land.



Through this novel, the author expresses her perspective on slavery in America and the link between human enslavement and the vile racism prevalent in the New World. She acknowledges that all civilizations throughout history—Greek, Roman, Pharaonic, and others—were built on the exploitation of labour and the enslavement of workers. However, what is particularly unjust about the situation in America is the unfair association between race and slavery. She specifically addresses the plight of Black people, which is a central focus of the novel. There is no specific moment in history when one could pinpoint the beginning of human enslavement; slavery, in general, has existed across all civilizations, cultures, and both secular and divine religions throughout history, even until recent times. Yet, in the New World, under the rule of the white master, slavery became tied to a colour barrier between the European white and the blacks.

The author's reflections emphasize the profoundly racist nature of the institution of slavery in America, a theme that resonates throughout her literature. It was expected that the negative connotations associated with the colour black in European culture and consciousness would serve as a justification for the brutal and inhumane relationships within the institution of slavery in the United States. This brutality was borne by Black Americans, and Toni Morrison vividly portrayed its harsh realities.

Slavery in the New World, which later became known as the United States of America, was a legal relationship imposed by the (European-white) master, in which one person (the Black person) was owned by another person by law. The master's authority over his slave was continuously reinforced, not only through physical oppression and the imposition of corporal punishment—which included the master's right to execute his slave<sup>10</sup>—but also through other symbolic means to maintain the subjugation of these individuals and ensure they felt their status as property whenever they transitioned from one master to another, and sometimes even within the same master over time, humiliating them and stripping them of their identity.

Furthermore, a common practice involved calling all-male enslaved Black people "boys," regardless of their age. For instance, whipping was not merely a method of punishing enslaved Black people for mistakes or shortcomings in serving their owners; it was also a tool for controlling them and affecting their psyche, constantly reminding them of their social status as individuals without dignity. Moreover, whipping was often seen as the only suitable incentive to extract more effort from enslaved people, whether they were domestic servants or enslaved people performing other tasks<sup>11</sup>.

Morrison wrote her novel *A Mercy* against these conditions surrounding enslaved Black people in America. The characters of different origins and races find themselves compelled to live together on Jacob Vaark's farm, forced to behave as a family despite all the differences among this group of people who became victims of transactions they had no part in, merely treated as commodities exchanged to settle debts owed by the original owner or family members. Hence, the coloured Portuguese mother barter her daughter for debt repayment, having herself been battered by her master in Africa. This situation extends to the wife of the farm owner, "Rebecca," who comes from England, burdened with a dark memory of experiencing the violence and killing of that era, finding herself with no choice but to become the wife of the farm owner.



Slavery dominates everyone, including "Lina," the Native American who witnessed the destruction of her village and her ethnic kin, and "Sorrow," who is mentally impaired. In this regard, the position of the owner, who controls the lives of the enslaved people in his service, is comparable to that of the mother and father, who overlook their offspring, each with their justifications. The mother, portrayed as a cat defending her young, pleads with the owner to take her daughter when he comes to demand his debts. When the man agrees to her entreaties, "the woman whose scent was garlic bent down to the ground and closed her eyes<sup>12</sup>," she thanks God. They then wrote a note agreeing that the price for the girl "Florence" was 15 English pounds, or its equivalent in tobacco, while she was still under ten<sup>13</sup>.

Florence discovers the significance of letters, words, and writing. At the beginning, she says, "Do not be distressed. What I say will not harm you... despite what you have been through... What I tell you can be considered a confession if you wish<sup>14</sup>..." However, things seem mixed up because memory is not faithful, and imagination plays its part. The girl remembers the image of a mother holding her young son, standing by the door, with the child's shoe tucked in her apron pocket; little Florence, who had always been fond of shoes and high heels, could not bear the bare ground beneath her tiny feet, even on hot days. This made the mother anxious about her daughter's ambitious desires, knowing she would grow up without her mother being able to fulfill her dreams. She would grow up and find that others would not show her mercy as they witnessed her femininity maturing quickly.

The writer draws the title of the novel from the situation of this mother, who found salvation merely by accepting the farm owner's decision to take the daughter out of compassion for the child and the family. The mother believed this was the only way to offer her a better life than if she remained in the company of her impoverished mother, the enslaved person who had been raped and sold and had given birth to two sons without knowing their father.

This is America, and if we claim that its history is 'black,' we will find that the vocabulary of the language practices racial color discrimination. Let us pause, in particular, to examine the condition of the mother and daughter in this shocking, fragmented narrative, carried by the glow of poetic language, knowing where it leads.

As the positions dissipate toward the end of the relatively short novel, the mother's voice appears as she explains her situation in an emotional letter to her daughter, but the letter never reaches her. Likewise, the girl's voice will not get her mother through a narrative revealing the soul's emotions and pains.

At the novel's end, the mother tells her daughter that she knows what awaits her and understands the temperament of men. She knows she cannot trust anyone, especially now that her breasts have begun to appear early and rapidly. Even the Black boys working in the same area cannot be trusted for their intentions and desires toward her. She states, "The truth is, I do not know who your father is. It was the darkness of night; they came and took three women from us... There was no protection... Being a woman in this place means being an open wound, never healing. Even if there are no scars, the pain extends deeper<sup>15</sup>".

The mother also describes the first step on the path of slavery: "They came and clashed with our men, burned the houses, and took those they could not kill. We were traded several times and moved from place to place. Our numbers kept increasing, and there we encountered men



we thought were sick or dead. However, it seems their skin color, which had turned white, confused us. The men who led and traded us were Black and assured us that white men would not eat us<sup>16</sup>. They separated us and took us in different directions to a house that floated on the water. The whales surrounded the boat, waiting for a meal. I welcomed the circling whales, but they avoided me, as if they knew I preferred them to nibble away at the chains around my neck, wrists, and ankles<sup>17</sup>. When the boat set sail, some of us jumped into the water... Here, there was neither reason nor law governing what could happen: who lives and who dies? It was simply a matter of living in filth or living off the filth of others. We arrived in Barbados. There, I found that my dance, dress, language, and customs—everything—was mixed with the color of my skin. They took me from the sugar cane fields on a boat to the north to work in the tobacco fields, and before work, I was sexually assaulted. They took us away in the darkness, and afterward, they gave us an orange. In both cases, it was fine; the result was you and your brother<sup>18</sup>.

She adds, "I wanted the tall man to take you; he might look at you as a human child. I yearned for a miracle. Then he said yes, and there was the miracle. Mercy was given by a human being. I knelt for a long time in the dust, where my heart will remain every night and every day until you understand what I went through and what I wanted to tell you. Ah, Florence, my love... and listen..."<sup>19</sup>

However, Florence, who adored letters, also lived her sorrow, saying, "One sad thing remains. All this time, I could not know what my mother was saying, and she also did not know what I wanted to tell her"<sup>20</sup>.

This is not the first novel Morrison has written about a mother who kills or sells her children to spare them the evil of slavery, but in her narrative, she never focuses solely on the fates of women. She engages in exposing society in all its classes—men and women, black, white, and people of colour. Between her lines, violence intertwines with hatred, love, and hope.

Through the novel *A Mercy*, Toni Morrison successfully documents a significant historical period in the New World (America)—a history of slavery and freedom, of race and control... the control of one human over another, and the manipulation of people as if they were objects—shoes, cups, machines—devoid of identity. Morrison excels in portraying this era through the lives of three women who, in my opinion, are heroines, as women embody society and life. Transforming their stories into a narrative of history intertwined with humanitarian issues is a remarkable achievement for the writer. Furthermore, Morrison illustrates the status of the free woman (the mistress), the wife of the master, who owns these three women (the enslaved people).

Events in the novel can be categorized under various terms: religion, colour, love, and freedom; religion, where men of religion exploit belief or disbelief in the most horrific ways; colour, which becomes an accusation; love between the enslaved person and the free person; and the freedom sought by Black people.

Ultimately, the author's choice of a woman to be the centre and star of her novel emphasizes her deep concern for reconstructing African-American culture and the history of slavery. The suffering of African-American women at the hands of both Black and white men has made them combat and struggle for survival inside and outside the home. Therefore, the stories and



narratives of these women, even in contemporary American society, are fraught with dual obstacles and dangers represented by gender and race. Despite liberation, education, and gradual progress in the workplace, they still lag far behind white women and Black men.

Toni Morrison's literary works demonstrate the dire, miserable conditions that black people live in within white America. The issues of gender and race significantly contribute to demonstrating the extent of the oppression and suffering encountered by African Americans. From the beginning of slavery to the present, colour and gender have been among the most critical issues of racial discrimination. The different races have been isolated, marginalized, and treated poorly to the point of being deprived of their rights in America.

Morrison's writings are closely linked to her people's history, suffering, and torments. Over those decades, she sought to revive the hidden aspects of collective memory and then attempted to build a new life distinguished by freedom and equality away from those painful memories. Suffering, the harshness of life, and brutal racial segregation are common denominators that unite Morrison's characters across all her works. In her literary world, women are characterized by beauty, sensuality, and a fierce spirit, yet they suffer from a noticeable lack of a complete relationship with another party. Morrison's world is filled with tragic ironies, and women live in cruelty, violence, and harsh ridicule. Nevertheless, it is vast, rich, and unique, focusing on aesthetic techniques that are foundational for every new artistic work. It is not merely about the magical realism of a work based on the construction and deconstruction of human myth, beginning with folklore, beliefs, and lifestyles in black communities and the history of Africa alone. Instead, imagination for the author is a cultural drive and seeds that can only grow after the imagination is formed.

### **Conclusion:**

Toni Morrison's novels are rich with diverse cultural narratives, and perhaps the most dominant theme in *A Mercy* is slavery. Through her works, Morrison recaptures the life of slavery and ownership that once prevailed. Her stories often portray women who free themselves from the bonds of slavery, breaking the constraints that once bound them. The novel also explores the relationships between master and slave, rich and poor. One of the most important manifestations of slavery, racism, is portrayed in an aesthetic manner that blends realism with elements of the fantastical.

Morrison found writing to be the most powerful way to express the experiences of Black people and document their lived reality. Just as white people have their literature, Black people too have the right to their own literature through which they can express their reality and respond to those who subjected them to domination and forced conformity. Hence, they made their voices heard in American society. This enabled Morrison to etch her name in the annals of literary history, as she became the first Black woman novelist to win the Nobel Prize in Literature.

Among the most notable conclusions reached are the following:

- Morrison dedicated her creative works to attacking racial discrimination between whites and Blacks, as well as liberating her fellow citizens from the bondage of



Blackness. As a result, the idea of resisting oppression dominated her creative world in her traditional trilogy (racial oppression, sexual oppression, and linguistic oppression).

- Throughout her life, Morrison encountered two persistent issues: her problem of a failed marriage and the broader issue of her Black identity in American society, as well as the struggle between Blacks and whites.
- One of the goals Morrison sought to fulfill in her writing was to highlight the similarities between the American enslavement of Black people and the Nazi persecution of Jews (according to her claims). This was evident in her fifth novel, "Beloved."
- Toni Morrison successfully portrayed the life of slavery and bondage, and the characters in her novels are filled with conflicts, particularly when we delve into their past. She depicted the ongoing struggle between whites and Blacks, and Blacks existed as slaves, which is vividly illustrated in many passages of the novel

### Footnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Abdullah Zakaria Al-Ansari, *Adab Al-Ma'anaah (The Literature of Suffering)*, Al-Rubaiaan Library, Kuwait, 2004, p. 53.

<sup>2</sup> Mahmoud Qassem, *The Nobel Prize Encyclopedia 1901-1995*, Madbouly Library, Cairo, 1995, p. 165.

<sup>3</sup> Toni Morrison, *Song of Solomon*, Dar Al-Awda, Beirut, n.d., 1994, p. 67.

<sup>4</sup> Michel Khoury, *Nobel Prizes 1901-1989*, Tlas Publishing for studies, Translation, and Publishing, Syria, 1990, p. 85.

<sup>5</sup> Khaled Mohammed Ghazi, *The Golden Apple: Nobel Women... The Winners in Literature*, p. 85.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 87.

<sup>7</sup> Toni Morrison, *Sula*, p. 64.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 89.

<sup>9</sup> Toni Morrison, *A Mercy*, Arab Scientific Publishers, Beirut, Lebanon, 2nd ed., 2012, p. 22.

<sup>10</sup> Khaled Mohammed Ghazi, *The Golden Apple: Nobel Women... The Winners in Literature*, p. 95.

<sup>11</sup> Michel Khoury, *Nobel Prizes 1901-1989*, p. 67.

<sup>12</sup> Toni Morrison, *A Mercy*, p. 34.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., n.p.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 131.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 134.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., pp. 134-135.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 139.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 149.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 152.

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