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EXPLORATION OF THE IDEOLOGY OF THE BLACKS' STRUGGLE FOR LIBERATION IN
TONY MORRISON'S *LOVE*

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ABSTRACT

Morrison believes that the familiar themes of mainstream American literature such as innocence, individualism, masculinity, and freedom are responses to the 'Africanist presence' in America. Imagination interacting with the external world comes from the evasiveness about slavery, race, and the moral questions inherent in the country's treatment of blacks.

In this paper I tried to depict how Toni Morrison presents a complex portrait of an American era of public struggle. It deals with the depths of human experiences and the impact of the civil rights movement on the people who lived through it. My paper claims that the novel 'Love' deals with the complex questions that civil rights movement raised, and the intense impact it had on the personal lives and relationships of the characters. Morrison's works, time and again, show that identity and place are found in the community and in the communal experiences, when mainstream American life and literature are marked by a central and critical ideology based on the notions of individualism.

So, mostly in this paper I have tried to analyze the African American society in terms of how Morrison depicts them in the novel *Love*. In talking about notions of race, class and gender, I would first assert that they exist as components of capitalistic society. However, when it comes to the African American's experiences of capitalism, I have to speak about it in terms of the education that Morrison has given me as a reader of her text.

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INTRODUCTION

Morrison believes that the familiar themes of mainstream American literature such as innocence, individualism, masculinity, and freedom are responses to the 'Africanist presence' in America. Imagination interacting with the external world comes from the evasiveness about slavery, race, and the moral questions inherent in the country's treatment of blacks. Black writers had already won the battle for realism by 1970, when Morrison published her first novel, *The Bluest Eye* (1970). The 1975 was also the time of the 'Black Aesthetic' movement. Black writers were trying to create their own terms for evaluating literature, and it was important for them to establish that black

narrative had its own characteristics. Writers like Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, and Zora Neale Hurston show how much the American idiom owes to black culture. However, Morrison is able to draw inspiration where she finds it, either from traditional American writing or from the discoveries of black cultural nationalism. Her later works, *Beloved* (1987), *Jazz* (1992), *Paradise* (1998) and *Love* (2003), help to revise and expand American historical tradition.

In *Love*, Toni Morrison presents a complex portrait of an American era of public struggle. It deals with the depths of human experiences and the impact of the civil rights movement on the people who lived through it. *Love* deals with the complex questions that civil rights movement raised, and the intense impact it had on the personal lives and relationships of the characters. Morrison's works, time and again, show that identity and place are found in the community and in the communal experiences, when mainstream American life and literature are marked by a central and critical ideology based on the notions of individualism. For the African Americans, collectivism is more important in changing the nature of the society for the better, than individual efforts and achievements. Therefore, an African American should know the worth of the group's values, beliefs and customs. Before we look into the African American society as depicted in *Love*, we must have an idea about the present day African American society in general.

Nowadays, most of the African Americans live in urban areas. Along with a history of oppression for over three hundred years, discrimination is the central part of the African American experience. The poverty rates of the African Americans are as steady as they were some decades ago. They are the most segregated groups in American society. A convenient way to measure segregation is to look at housing and residential areas. In *Love*, L laments over the poor conditions of the houses made by the "Equal Opportunity developer" for the black community: "And he wasn't the one who boarded up the hotel and sold seventy-five acres to an Equal Opportunity developer for thirty-two houses built so cheap my shack puts them to shame" (Morrison 9), and in *Tar Baby*, Son shows how difficult life is in an all-black town like Eloe, where people "[. . .] didn't know about state aid [. . .] there were no welfare lines in Eloe and unemployment insurance was a year of trouble with no rewards" (Morrison 270). African Americans are over represented in city public housing developments. This problem has a lot to do with health issues as well. The infant mortality rate for blacks in America is one of the highest in the world, higher than any other industrialized country, and higher than even some of the third world countries. African American children have a mortality rate twice that of white children. Many African Americans at this point take a side-drive and try to explore the ideologies of the black liberation struggle. Many African Americans are often confused about the exact nature of these struggles. Besides, most of the older leaders were assassinated before they could really articulate their plans, and there have been numerous splits and divisions since then. The most crucial issue has been the question of whether to establish a separate existence or integrate into the dominant culture, which most of Morrison's characters are confused about.

Improving Through Education

Booker T. Washington (1856-1915) supported adaptation to existing realities by improving themselves through education, industrial training, and business ownership. W. E. B. Dubois (1868-1963) realized the need for more government involvement in changing economic conditions, which exploited blacks. Marcus Garvey (1880-1940) certified the "Back to Africa" movement, as he believed that white society would never accept African Americans as equals. Malcom X (1925-1965) pursued the separatist line, the creation of all-black communities, all-black institutions, and internationalization of the struggle. Martin Luther King (1929-1968), on the other hand, went for the integrationist line. He talked about a time when blacks would be able to join hands with whites as sisters and brothers. People like Stokely Carmichael (one of Morrison's students at Howard University), H. Rap Brown, and Angela Davis led the "Black Power" movement, which was basically socialist and saw capitalism as the major problem. The "Black Muslim" movement, led by Elijah Muhammed and his son, W. D. Muhammed, also went for racial separatism. The "Black Panther" movement (circa 1966) was led by Huey Newton, Bobby Scale and Fred Hampton as a paramilitary, self-defense group, which included the goal of overthrowing capitalism. The modern revolutionary struggle, with its Pan-Africanism and Black Nationalist force, is called Kammaasi, and

includes groups such as the All-African People's Revolutionary Party (AAPRP) and the Africa Reparations Movement (ARM) which aims to reach out to all 'Diaspora' groups deprived of land, such as the native Americans, Palestinians, and the Irish.

However, African Americans exist at all levels of the American class structure, even the upper-upper class-the black elite. There are wealthy and politically influential blacks who come from the rich families that have been receiving inheritance since the days of slavery. This group does not tend to associate with other blacks. At the lower-upper level (the new rich), black entertainers, artists and athletes have achieved wealth and prestige:

People like Bill Cosby, Michael Jordan, Oprah Winfrey, Michael Jackson or the Williams sisters for example. They have done it in one generation in spite of white stereotyping and insensitivity. Families from black middle class (the black bourgeois) are usually small, stable, and well planned. In many respects, they are like white middle class families. Studies of this group have shown that they compensate for financial insecurity at times with obvious consumption. This group is stuck in the middle; too well off to qualify for most tax breaks, and too far in debt to ever get out of it on their own. At this level, there is the shortage of black males able to support a nuclear family, and there have been lots of examples of one-parent households making it to middle-class status. In fact, throughout her entire career, Morrison herself has been a single parent with two sons.

An estimated two-thirds of all African Americans fall into the lower classes, and approximately one-third are below the poverty line. The majority, then, are in the upper-lower class: the *working class*. *Typical occupations for the working class people include truck driving, industrial jobs, or auto mechanics. They value hard work, college education, and dream of a better life for their children. They have faced colour barriers that prevent them from attaining progress. Blacks at the lower-lower level are completely powerless, disorganized, segregated, and in distress. It seems that they have no hopes of prosperity. The lower-lower class black has become the stereotype of all social class discriminations.*

The blacks in America have a definite culture that is completely dissimilar to anything Euro centric. It is not that they did not develop any law, science, or social institutions; it is just that they developed completely different ones that few anthropologists would be 'bothered to recognize. Besides, each African came from a different tribe, with his/her distinct genetics, language and customs. Therefore, it is quite difficult to bring these diverse peoples around a common popular "black culture". Yet it is well recognized that a black culture exists with unique characteristics, speech, clothing and food. Black culture often considered to be something inferior, which is impossible since cultures are neither inferior nor superior, but rather, functional in terms of survival value for its people. On the other hand, some elements of black culture have successfully penetrated white culture. *The legacy of slavery is the central element in black culture. Many view the phrase " legacy of slavery" as neocolonialism, which means modern or new forms of dominating paternalism Most blacks are kept in slums, usually owned by white absentee landlords; there are no community services unless they serve the needs of the community with cheap lab our and trained police are ready to seal off the area and crush any disturbance. The situation is similar to that of the colonial era, but it cannot be called colonialism because the perpetrators involved are citizens, not colonists. That is why it is called neocolonialism, which is built into a capitalistic institutional structure.*

African Americans stand out as the most visible minority group in America. Even though skin colour is genetic, ironically in a sociological sense it defines and arbitrates status. The prejudice becomes easy because black and white are instantly perceived as opposite colours. The problem comes in when characteristics like visible skin colour are taken as indicators of quality: quality of housing, quality of service. Whites suspect an inferior quality whenever black-skinned faces are found, and blacks perceive a superior quality whenever white skinned faces are found. It has almost become a common law.

African Americans throughout most of the twentieth century have been discriminated against in housing, education, employment, and politics. Separate, inferior school buildings existed for most of the century, and even today, the issue of sufficient state support for historically Black Colleges and Universities depends on such terms that this support will diminish public resources. The industrial job

market is the primary target for most blacks, but the unions there, have rules forbidding black membership or leadership.

Discriminations: Neither Recognized Nor Equalized

Until today, these discriminations are not even recognized or equalized. *Affirmative Actions*, which are the only remedy that has been offered, is somehow becoming dismantled as a result of its unpopularity and charges of reverse discrimination. In fact, when politicians say that the proper role of government is not to fix all of America's socio-economic problems, what they really mean is that there will be no remedy for past discriminations against African Americans. Bills toward slavery reparations have always been defeated in Congress. In the corporate world, African Americans are mostly appointed to human resources or public relation positions, where they serve as 'puppets' to the outside world and cannot play any significant role in terms of policy making. The actual production, sales, and marketing positions that lead to top management posts, on the other hand, mostly go to whites.

However, black business nourished with the support of the segregated black community. But after integration, people found it unnecessary to go to black restaurants, black owned hotels or black doctors. Integration in a way brought an economic loss to the society. People tend to forget this particular side of the civil rights movement while documenting its history. Morrison has taken an interest in focusing on the economic loss that came along with the civil rights movement. She depicts the effects of this transition on the families, the people, and individuals entangled in it. As Christine realizes later on: "Now she finally understood her mother. The world May knew was always crumbling; her place in it never secure. A poor, hungry preacher's child, May saw her life as depending on colored people who rocked boats only at sea. [. . .] Her world had been invaded, occupied, turned into scum" (Morrison, *Love* 96-97). Affirmative Action, the set of public policies and initiatives designed to help eliminate past and present discrimination based on race, colour, religion, sex, or national origin in America. So, the black-owned resort in *Love* was a kind of paradise for the people during segregation. Those places usually offered a kind of comfort, where people did not have to be cautious about white people, where black people could just enjoy themselves. During assimilation, people were at a loss of losing culture- the language, the customs, habits and the very comfort of being among their own people. They were trying to be connected while suffering the consequences of being disconnected. It was indeed a very complicated period as well as a reality that common African Americans went through. May, Bill Cosey's daughter-in-law initially became frantic out of the upheaval of the civil rights movements, but she underwent a change later on. Being confused, she started contradicting herself:

Once she had been merely another of the loud defenders of colored- owned business, the benefits of separate schools, hospitals with Negro wards and doctors, colored-owned banks, and the proud professions designed to service the race. Then she discovered that her convictions were no longer old-time racial uplift, but separatist, 'nationalistic.' Not sweet Booker T., but radical Malcolm X. In confusion she began to stutter, contradict herself. She forced agreement from the like-minded and quarreled endlessly with those who began to wonder about dancing by the sea while children blew apart in Sunday school; about holding up property laws while neighborhoods fell in flames. As the Movement swelled and funerals, marches, and riots was all the news there was, May, prophesying mass executions, cut herself off from normal people. Even guests who agreed began to avoid her and her warnings of doom. She saw rebellion in the waiters; weapons in the hands of the yard help (Morrison, *Love* 80-81).

Through her experiences of civil rights movement, we definitely get a glimpse of the experiences of the common people who went through it. Apart from that, *Love*, a multi-themed and multi-layered complicated story deals with African American people and how their lives are defined by different parameters of American culture. It explains the circumstances of their birth and of their colour that play an important role to place them in American society. In one of her soliloquies, L tries to define their position in society; It comforts everybody to think of all Negroes as dirt poor, and to regard those who were not, who earned good money and kept it, as some kind of shameful miracle. White people liked that idea

because Negroes with money and sense made them nervous" (Morrison, *Love* 103). *Love* also delves deep into the complicated human emotions. Bill Cosey, the central character of the story has been dead for twenty-five years. But he still has a very factual presence in the lives of the women who shared his life. During the 1940s he became a millionaire as the owner of Cosey's 'Hotel and Resort'. The women who live in Cosey's world are Heed, his second wife, the girl he married when she was eleven; Christine, his granddaughter, who was Heed's best friend until she married Cosey; May, Christine's mother, Cosey's daughter-in-law and widow of his only son Billy Boy; Vida, a former employee; Celestial, the mysterious woman, who was able to inspire his romantic love; Junior, a young girl, recently released from "Correctional" who manages to get a job as "assistant" to Heed. And there is the "humming" voice of L, the hotel's former cook whose words have got the wisdom, and who opens and closes the novel, staying with the readers *all through*. *The novel is set on the Atlantic coast in a town called Silk, where Bill Cosey owned a "Hotel and Resort" that once attracted black people and top black performers from all over America 'Casey's father, Daniel Robert Cosey, happened to be a miser who had been well paid by the white law enforcement as an informant and that is why he had been christened by the blacks, "Dark", which resembled his initial "DRC" . At his death, he left an estate of \$114,000, and his son Bill Cosey, decided to " use it on things Dark cursed: good times, good clothes, good food, good music, dancing till the sun came up in a hotel made for it all" (Morrison, Love 68). Cosey's resort thrived, and it increased Bill Cosey's fortune. But by the time he died in 1971, the resort itself was dying, in part because its clientele could now vacation in places that were once for whites only: "folks who bragged about Cosey vacations in the forties boasted in the sixties about Hyatts, Hiltons, cruises to the Bahamas and Ocho Rios" (Morrison, Love 8). At the time when the novel opens, the hotel is deserted and Cosey's home now has two inhabitants, Christine and Heed, who are stuck with everlasting animosity. Cosey remains remote though his compelling attractiveness is constantly asserted. He remains a character of glamour, an embodiment of black success in the white world.*

Morrison captures the battles of class, and the struggles to define the position of African Americans in certain parts of American society where black people were allowed. In *Love*, people believed in "[...] Police-heads- dirty things with big hats who shoot up out of the ocean to harm loose women and eat disobedient children" (Morrison 5). L claims to see them in 1942, when "thunderclouds gathered" and some "hardheaded children" drowned. Among the incidents attributed to "Police-heads" : a "[...] Woman [...] furrowed in the sand with her neighbor's husband [...] suffered a stroke at the cannery" (Morrison, *Love* 5), the day after she committed adultery. In the 1950s " Police-heads" trolled Bill Cosey's " Hotel and Resort" when it was the "[...] best-known vacation spot for colored folk on the East Coast" (Morrison, *Love* 6). People came from as far away as New York and Michigan to hear: " Lil Green, Fatha Hines, T-Bone Walker, Jimmy Lunceford, the Drops of Joy[...]" (Morrison, *Love* 6). Nonetheless, in the 1960s, women complained about the fish smell of the " Up Beach" cannery in their clothes. L remembers: " A new generation of females complained about what it did to their dresses, their appetite, and their idea of romance. This was around the time the world decided perfume was the only smell the nose was meant for" (Morrison, *Love* 8). Cosey's daughter-in-law, May "[...] was convinced that civil rights destroyed her family and its business. By which she meant colored people were more interested in blowing up cities than dancing by the seashore" (Morrison, *Love* 8). It was the time when the resort started to decline.

Representation the Upper Class Black Society

Cosey's resort, which was exclusive, represents the upper class black society. Its black clientele was sophisticated, distinguished: "[...] when the band warmed up and the women appeared, dressed in moira and chiffon and trailing jasmine scent in their wake; when the men with beautiful shoes and perfect creases in their linen trousers held chairs for the women so they could sit knee to knee at the little tables [...]" (Morrison, *Love* 34). So, a distinct class division is evident within the black community. Local black folk were not invited, nor were they welcome at the hotel's tables or on its dance floor:

Cosey didn't mix with local people publicly, which is to say he employed them, joked with them, even rescued them from difficult situations, but other than at church picnics, none was truly welcome at

the hotel's tables or on its dance floor. Back in the forties, price kept most neighborhood people away, but even when a family collected enough money to celebrate a wedding there, they were refused [. . .] Definitely (Morrison, *Love* 41).

So, when a local girl, a poor child, dark-skinned, illiterate from a lower class family becomes Bill Cosey's second wife, it is the beginning of the end. L comments: " It was marrying Heed that laid the brickwork for ruination" (Morrison, *Love* 104).

Nevertheless, race, racism and class distinctions are concerns in *Love*. Morrison is interested in the face-off between the respectable and the not respectable, between the refined, orderly, responsible citizens of Silk and the irresponsible, unrefined neighbourhoods such as the "Settlement" and " Up Beach" . *Love* speaks to the human condition in search of its own voice. It is an exploration of African American culture from the 1940s to the 1990s, which means before, during and after the civil rights movement. But this is the background story. The characters are consequences of other people's actions as well as their own history. Cosey was a "race man", admired by this people for making it in the white man's world. Years later, he became "what some wing of the civil rights movement called bourgeois". People like Cosey had to defend themselves and suffered the consequences of the civil rights movements. Morrison notes, However, Morrison certainly does not mean to say that the movement was not necessary. She agrees that it was inevitable in terms of getting freedom, rights, jobs, health care and so on. She has just taken an interest in figuring out the price that black society had to pay for it. She somehow thinks that it would have been good to have black schools, black hospitals, black owned business and integration at the same time. She hates to see that people including many African Americans keep talking about the unfairness, which comes from the very people who invented it, i.e., the Euro-centric white Americans. So, instead of getting an increased freedom, the black people had been simply left with a one-way road, "[. . .] a road that had lost its citrus" (Morrison, *Love* 97).

The African American community had always been neglected by the government in American society. L thinks that forty years of government programmes have not helped them much. During the civil rights movement, people like Cosey, the " race traitors", were under obvious attack as they were considered to be the " Uncle Toms" . Heed remembers, " That city blacks have already invaded Up Beach, carrying lighter fluid, matches, Molotov cocktails; shouting, urging the locals to burn Cosey's Hotel and Resort to the ground and put the Uncle Toms, the sheriff's pal, the race traitor out of business" (Morrison, *Love* 80). Even if people were calling Cosey the " race traitor" , L has *something else to say*: "[. . .] Mr. Cosey [. . .] helped more colored people here than forty years of government programs" (Morrison, *Love* 9). L remembers that " Up Beach" drowned in a hurricane called Agnes; people suffered drought, lack of water and jobs, and finally they all had to apply for a two-percent " HUD mortgage" . She remarks, " Rainwater wasn't good enough for them anymore. Trouble, unemployment, hurricanes following droughts, marshland turned into mud cakes so dry even the mosquitoes quit-I saw all that as life simply being itself " (Morrison, *Love* 9).

When the government houses went up, they initially catered to the Vietnam veterans and retired whites. It was only when people who were out of jobs started moving into the " Oceanside" , the Church and the Affirmative Action staff came forward to help the common people out with jobs. Now people have jobs, hospitals, pretty houses, malls, " movieplexes" and it seems that they have forgotten those terrible days, even the memory of the " Police-heads" .

However, Morrison shows that the "Settlement" life is no better than ghettos, as establishments like these have always been ignored by the government. Morrison notes:

"The State Troopers know it well, however, and a few people who used to work in the old Relief Office have heard of it, but the new employees of the County Welfare Office have not" (Love 53). The history of the " Settlement" people goes way back to 1912, when the jute mill was abandoned and those who could leave and did not have any prospect had settled on the slope of the mountain, which is called the " Settlement" after World War I. Morrison gives a vivid picture of the initial life of the settlement people that shows us how

difficult life was for them:

They built their own houses from other people's scraps, or they added on to the workers' cabins left by the jute company: a shed here, a room there, to the cluster of little two-room-and-a-stove huts that wavered on the lope or sat in the valley. They used stream and rain water, drank cow's milk or home brew; ate game, eggs, domestic plants, and if they hired out in a field or a kitchen, they spent the earnings on sugar, salt, cooking oil, soda pop, cornflakes, flour, dried beans, and rice. If there were no earnings, they stole (*Love* 54).

Junior, the girl who has "[...] the unnerving look of an underfed child" (Morrison, *Love* 23) is from "The Settlement", a community of the desperately poor on a nearby mountain slope. Its inhabitants, generations of truants and troublemakers, are called "Rurals" For the "District Ten" school, the "Rurals" are the most unreachable children around. The settlement parents are predictably never serious about their children's study, as they have been apprehensive about the white people outside the settlement area. The "Rurals" were not active students, but passive observers without any voice of their own: "Rurals sat in class for a few months, sharing textbooks, borrowing paper and pencils, but purposefully silent as though they were there to test, not acquire, education; to witness, not supply, information" (Morrison, *Love* 53). The only crime in the settlement was to leave it, to get out of that place. Junior had to escape her abusive uncles, half brothers, and cousins who were responsible for her crippled foot. They pretended she was the victim of a hit-and-run driver, and she did not contradict them. It shows the disconnection of the African American people who live in a society, which is divided by class. With Junior Viviane, we go to the house of the two hate-filled old women. One is Christine, and the other is Heed. Christine and Heed spent their whole lives hating each other. According to May, it was Heed who brought bad luck for the family.

A Symbol of A Bourgeois Class Structure

To interpret the Cosey household as a symbol of a bourgeois class structure, *Love* as certainly called into question the idea of equality in African American society. We see a distinct class division within the Cosey family, which represents the dominant upper class black bourgeois over the lower class poor blacks. May and Christine could not accept a poor girl from the ditch, taking over as the mistress of the house. Even Heed suffers from this inferiority complex within herself, which makes her wonder: "How, she wondered, how had it happened that she, who had never picked a crab, handled crawfish or conch, ended up with hands more deformed than those of the factory workers who had" (Morrison, *Love* 71). She presumes that people have a bad impression about her and they do not hesitate to talk about it with others. While hiring Junior as her assistant, she thought it would be a good reason for the Sandier's boy Romen to stay at one monarch street for a longer period of time, so that Heed could make him do some other works for her. But she could not help thinking, "He was so tight around the mouth. yes, ma'am. No ma'am. No thank you, I have to be home by streetlights.' What had Vida and Sandier told him about her?" (Morrison, *Love* 72). Even if she was the Ms.Cosey, people did not bother to give her proper respect and she had never been taken seriously, just because she was from the poorest class of society, which made her eventually a bitter old woman with an astute heart. Heed thinks:

Her insight was polished to blazing by a lifetime of being underestimated

Only Papa knew better, had picked her out of all he could have

chosen. [...] everybody else thought she could be run over.

But here she was and where were they?

May in the ground, Christine penniless in the kitchen, L

haunting Up Beach. [...] She had fought them all, won, and was still

winning. Her bank account was fatter than ever. (Morrison, *Love* 72-73).

However, May was ready to accept Heed only as her daughter's lower class friend, but not as her father-in-law's child bride. Heed recalls: "Both of them, mother and daughter, went wild just thinking about his choice of an Up Beach girl for his bride. A girl [...] Who slept on the floor and bathed on Saturday in a washtub full of the murky water left by her sisters. Who might never get rid of the cannery

fish smell" (Morrison, *Love* 75). Heed is gifted with a flawless memory and she remembers all the humiliations she had to endure, because of her poor class background. It was not only inside the house of Bill Cosey that she had to fight with all these odds; but the upper class society people, especially women who used to come to the hotel, had been equally mean to her. Heed still remembers them saying, "How could he marry her? Protection? [. . .] She's not bad- looking. Good figure. Way past good; she could be in the Cotton Club. Except for her color. [. . .] Tell me about it. So, why'd he pick her? [. . .] I don't know; she's sort of physical. (Long laughter.) Meaning? You know jungle-y" (Morrison, *Love* 75). Heed has horrible memories regarding her marriage, a marriage she did not choose to get into, which left a permanent scar on her heart. She had literally been sold to Bill Cosey by her parents, and they were not allowed to attend her wedding ceremony. May and Christine were there to burn her with relentless criticisms: "her speech, hygiene, table manners, and thousands of things Heed didn't know. What endorse a check' meant; how to dress abed; how to dispose of sanitary napkins; how to set a table; how to estimate supplies" (Morrison, *Love* 76).

Unquestionably, Heed is an ideal victim of class conflict, which exists within the black community. She was grateful to Bill Cosey, as she had been under the impression that he had supported her all through, but ironically enough she was completely unable to understand that Cosey had simply patronized her. He showed off his greatness to society, being superior to others, by accepting a poor girl, but not her family. Cosey had openly rejected her family in a taken-for-granted manner, and by doing so, he had drawn a distinct line between the two classes. He made it quite clear that he belonged to the upper class of society and he could afford to uplift a poor girl, but not her family, let alone the black race. Ironically enough this sort of social hypocrisy has always been accepted in society. Even Heed herself was completely unaware of it: "Heed had not thought much about it at the time, but she took it for granted that her husband would be generous with her. He had already paid for her brothers' funerals; gave her mother a present and put a grateful smile on her father's face" (Morrison, *Love* 76). She was ashamed of her family when she came to know that they kept asking for help from Cosey. Cosey was predictably infuriated with their pestering nature and finally asked them to stay away from his house. Cosey the great, a successful role model for the black community, did not have time to be bothered by the poor blacks, even if unfortunately they were his in-laws or relatives. Heed, the black Cinderella, simply tried to shy away from her family and be submissive to her domineering husband's command.

Christine's Class-Consciousness

*May and Christine's class-consciousness was evident in every way they treated Heed or looked down on her. It was there on the sub-conscious level of their mind and they were entangled into it. Even all those dreadful experiences Christine had gone through at the different phases of her life, had failed to get her out of such class consciousness, where she was completely unable to forget that she was a Cosey: a real one; not a fake like Heed. She thought that she was the real Cosey and that was why she owned the house. We hear Christine shouting out of desperation at Gwendolyn East, Attorney-at-Law, " 'If you don't know the differences between property and a home you need to be kicked in the face, you stupid, you dumb, you cannery trash!" ' (Morrison, *Love* 95).*

Class-consciousness became an everyday part of the Cosey household and it took its place in almost everything: maintaining Cosey status, keeping a distance from the locals, and above all pointing out Heed's each and every mistake, which in a way kept reminding her that she was from a lower class poor coloured family: a Johnson. As L" remembers," It was worrisome for sure, but there was more to it than age. May's new mother-in-law was not just a child, she was a Johnson. In no wild dream could she have invented a family that scared her more" (Morrison, *Love* 138). Heed's parents, the Johnsons, were trying to recover from the loss of their two sons, when they got this chance to sell their child to a fifty-two-year old millionaire. As L puts it, "So why not let their youngest girl marry a fifty-two-year old man for who knew how much money changed hands" (Morrison, *Love* 138). The Johnson story went so far that May even did not hesitate to suspect her sexual capabilities, when she was just an eleven-year-old child with a flat chest. For May:

The Johnsons were not just poor and trifling their girls were thought to be mighty quick in the skirt-raising department. [...] Before May had even begun instruction about menstruation, or thought of sheltering Christine from unsuitable boys, her home was throbbing with girl flesh made sexy, an atmosphere that Christine might soak up faster than a fruitcake soaks up rum (Morrison, *Love* 138-139).

As if it was Heed who chased and seduced Cosey, and trapped him into marriage. This way Heed is a real tragic figure who has always been blamed by others for something, which was simply imposed upon her and, in many cases, was beyond her perception. *Love* deals with the mysteries of human relationships too. It talks about the secrets and the lies that are kept in the past, which can suddenly come out of the ground and affect the present. Hatred plays an important role in *Love*. The hate spreads, when women fight for affection, and later on, for the legacy of Bill Cosey. Cosey, the founder of Cosey's "Hotel and Resort", is a larger than life character, a commanding, charming man, a successful entrepreneur and a role model for the African Americans. He is known for his wide hospitality, professional attitude, and for his good work in the community. When we first hear about him, he seems almost extraordinarily benevolent, but as we read on, a pattern of smudged behaviour emerges out of the power structure of the Cosey family, which brings a shameful family secret to light. The revelations explain the hatred that turned Bill Cosey, "[...] surrendering to feuding women, letting them ruin all he had built" (Morrison, *Love* 36). Christine and Heed's troubled relationship is finally resolved, but they had to pay for it a lot, in fact, all their lives have been spent on it. Their reconciliation, though quite sudden, is very moving. At last, two bitter old women remember their long forgotten love. Indeed, there is a beauty and revelation in their love. Finally they do not know whom to blame:

"They both had expected a quarrel. Who's to blame? [...] Whose fault is it they are abandoned seven miles from humanity with nobody knowing they are there or caring even if they do know? No one is praying for them and they have never prayed for themselves" (Morrison, *Love* 184). They did not choose to get into this enmity on their own. Cosey married Heed by giving her father two hundred dollars and a pocketbook to her mother, which made her step into a relationship, where she felt good only having a box of candied popcorn. She wanted to be with Christine who meant the world to her. She confesses, "I wanted to be with you. Married to him, I thought I would be" (Morrison, *Love* 193) On the other hand, May was the one who inflamed their animosity. She even did not consider Heed a human being: "[...] little Heed with a man's undershirt for a dress looked to her like the end of all that-a bottle of lylet in through the door, already buzzing at the food table and, if it settled on Christine, bound to smear her with garbage it was born in" (Morrison, *Love* 136). Christine recalls, "hating you was the only thing my mother liked about me" (Morrison, *Love* 193).

Both Christine and Heed have lots of complaints against their respective families. Christine complains, "You know May wasn't much of a mother to me. [...] she gave me away" (Morrison, *Love* 184). Heed, on the other hand, accuses her parents for literally selling her off to Cosey. "At least she didn't sell you" (Morrison, *Love* 184). Two young little children, mistreated by the adults in their family and that way by the society, ultimately failed to support each other with their true love. They badly wanted to depend on each other, but the circumstances did not let them do so. They were so detached from each other that they could not even share their mutual shame. Christine saw her grandfather masturbating, standing beside the open window of her own bedroom, the veryday he touched Heed's "[...] nipple, or rather the place under her swimsuit where a nipple will be if the circled dot on her chest ever changes" (Morrison, *Love* 191). They could not share the individual shame of their own, because they thought "[...] that this particular shame was different and could not tolerate speech-not even in the language they had invented for secrets" (Morrison, *Love* 192).

May deliberately tore them apart and in doing so, she put them into eternal animosity, which eventually took them nowhere other than a bluer hostility. L notes: "If Heed and Christine had ideas about being friends and behaving like sisters just because a reckless old reprobate had a whim, May put a stop to

them" (Morrison, *Love* 136). However, May should have understood that they were nothing but children who were predictably out of the complexities of the world, uncomplicated and innocent. L regrets: "Pity. They were just little girls. In a year they would be bleeding-hard. Skin clear and death-defying they had no business in that business" (Morrison, *Love* 136-137). However, they were destined to return to their friendship, the closeness and the shared life. Finally they realized that they needed each other to survive, and they could have lived hand in hand. Finally, it is with Heed singing in that dark attic, Christine feels at home:

Drawing a ribbon of breath, she blocks any tears that may be lurking like memories behind her eyelids. But the forget-me-nots roaming the wallpaper are more vivid in this deliberate dark than they ever were in daylight and she wonders what it was that made her want it so. Horne, she thinks. When I stepped in the door, I thought I was home (Morrison, *Love* 183).

Time seems to stop for them when they are simply wondering, whom to blame. –There was no past, no future for them; it was only the true friendship, which eventually exists in the dark attic. They are finally able to see their true self: "The future is disintegrating along with the past. The landscape beyond this room is without color. Just a bleak ridge of stone and no one to imagine it otherwise, because that is the way it is-as, deep down, everyone knows" (Morrison, *Love* 184).

Conclusion

Morrison celebrates the friendship between women or female bond in most of her books. She views black women as both the explorers and nurturers. Her female characters have got the right to exist for themselves. Most of her female characters support each other during a crisis period. Certainly, after all the shared animosity, Christine and Heed had to come back to each other, which shows the power of their relationship. Both of them together complete a whole character. Morrison gives importance to the preoccupation of restoring intimacy across social chasms. *Love* traces such rifts between not only friends, but also groups. Morrison is all for humanity, when even the question of gender does not come into a friendship. Within such friendships, people are able to see the truth. As L defines Christine and Heed's friendship with her natural power of wisdom: "If such children find each other before they know their own sex, [. . .] before they know color from no color, kin from stranger, then they have found a mix of surrender and mutiny they can never live without. Heed and Christine found such a one" (Morrison, *Love* 199).

It is L, who always believed that Heed "[. . .] belonged to Christine and Christine belonged to her" (Morrison, *Love* 105). However, *Love's* concerns are American and universal at the same time, including the spiteful games that men, women and mixed social classes play with their people and with each other. Bill Cosey gains a legendary status, as he has been seen through the memories of different members of the community. He is the guardian, husband, father figure, lover, Saviour and abuser at the same time. L was deeply moved by the sight of Cosey, holding his first wife Julia in his arms, "She lifted an arm, touched his shoulder. He turned her to his chest and carried her ashore. I believe then it was the sunlight that brought those tears to my eyes-not the sight of all that tenderness coming out of the sea" (Morrison, *Love* 64), which eventually made her run all the way to Cosey's door when he needed a house help. L criticizes him for his negative qualities, but she sounds absolutely humane, while defining Cosey as a person: "You could call him a good bad man, or a bad good man. [. . .] I tend to mix them. [. . .] I don't care what you think. [. . .] He was an ordinary man ripped, like the rest of us, by wrath and love" (Morrison, *Love* 200). Vida, Sandier's wife, is also in the same league with L when it comes to Bill Cosey. She reminds her husband: "'He paid us good money, Sandier, and taught us too. Things {never would have known about if I'd kept on living over a swamp in a stilt house. You know what my mother's hands looked like. Because of Bill Cosey, none of us had to keep doing that kind of work" ' (Morrison, *Love* 17-18). Junior, the needy girl beset by poverty and cruelty, is hypnotized by his portrait and becomes almost possessed by him, years after his death: "The face hanging over her new boss's bed must have started it. A handsome man with a G.I. Joe chin and a reassuring smile that pledged endless days of hot, tasty food; kind eyes that promised to hold a girl steady on his shoulder while she robbed apples from the highest branch"

(Morrison, *Love* 30). Morrison indeed transforms the so-called " Uncle Torn" into a man who could be a great comfort to his race.

Love speaks of the human condition and explores African American life and culture: the connections and disconnections that exist between children and parents, men and women, in a racially divided society in which they live. Through *Love*, Morrison represents late twentieth century African American society by introducing an enclave of people who react to each other and reflect on their stories: friendships and cold battles. Men and women cry out and sing their strengths, weaknesses, desires and desperation in revolving perspectives: "Bottle-green clouds sweep in, pushing the rain inland where palm trees pretend to be shocked by the wind. Women scatter shielding their hair and men bend low holding the women's shoulders against their chests" (Morrison, *Love* 64).

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