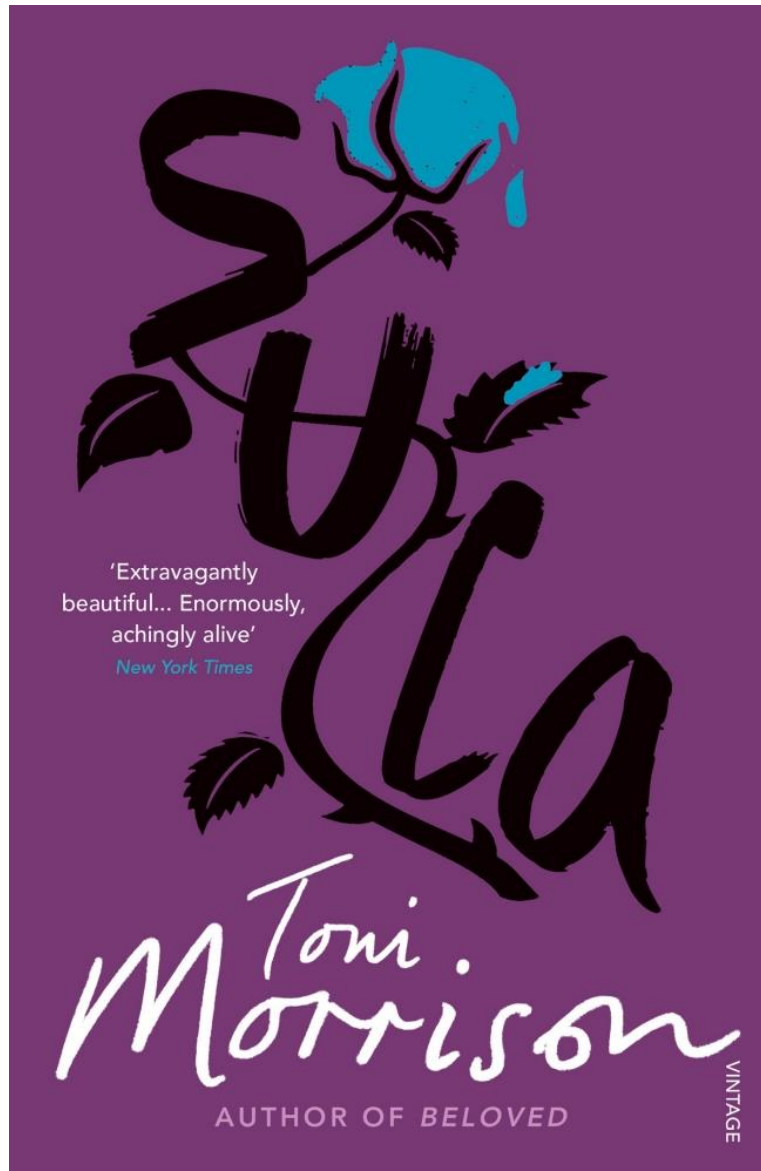


Motherhood and Double Roles in Toni Morrison's *Sula*

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Courtesy: <https://www.penguin.co.uk/books/1038503/sula/>

Abstract

The present paper deals with the major themes of motherhood and double role in the novel of *Sula* by Toni Morrison. The novelist Toni Morrison discussed the racial sufferings through her works. This is a novel about ambiguity. This work deals about both the good and evil side of life. In the novel *Sula*, white people make meaning of lives filled with conflicts over race, Gender, idiosyncratic points of view. The character Sula resists easy answers, demonstrating the ambiguity, beauty and terror of life in both its triumphs and horrors. The present paper addresses the confusing mysteries of human emotions and relationships.



Toni Morrison

Courtesy:

<http://coursesite.uhcl.edu/HS/Whitec/LITR/5439utopia/lectures/lect12paradiseetc.htm>

Sula

Sula is packed with formal moves against social structures like Racism. The characters Nel and Sula were closest friends from childhood. The character Nel is the main protagonist of this novel. These characters were not given equal mind. They both have different opinions; they have no similar character, along with different interpretation about world views. In this novel *Sula*, these two characters were shown as believable characters.

The novel *Sula*, through its overall narration, try to bring in balancing binary oppositions. *Sula* includes also various expressions about motherhood in strong statements. At the opening of the novel, the novelist Morrison who is an Afro-American writer establishes the complexity of women in relation to Male domination, sexual harassment etc. The novelist Morrison discusses the multi-dimensional perspectives in this novel. This paper shows the complexity of race relations, which often mean subordination one by another.

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In this novel, the novelist introduces four generations of female characters in Nel's family. Nel was born to the family of "Creole Whore". After Nel was born, she became more spiritual or religious. These were an effort as precaution to save Helene from her mother's "Wild Blood". The novelist employs this theme of motherhood. The two characters Helene and Nel return to New Orleans, where Rochelle, Helene's birth mother lived.

From this novelist Morrison begins to challenge the conventional notion of motherhood. She also strengthens the significance of the extended black family structure. When the characters Rochelle and Helene meet, there is no familiar connection between the two characters and also there is no bond to speak of, because Helene's grandmother, Cecile stands as a mother figure. Cecile was the primary caretaker.

The character Eva, who is *Sula's* grandmother, operates a boarding house. It is about the business of her own version of mothering, directing the lives of her children, friends, strangers, and constant stream of boarders. Expressions of motherhood exists colourful, but Sula is on the side of unconventional.

The novel *Sula* shows the relationship between mothers and daughters. It does not seem to give first preference to shared affection with each other, and it is a duty to protect one's children. This is the reason to give the Motherhood theme in this novel. Hannah, Sula's mother is overheard in conversation with her friends, "You love her like I love Sula, I just don't like her. That the difference" (54)

Hannah's comment does gesture toward a sense of duty but differs from Jacob's as it implies an absence of a desire to be a mother. When Hannah challenges her mother Eva about expressions of love toward her, Eva responds by reminding Hannah of the sacrifices that she has made for her. Love and mothering to Eva is about sacrifice and self-preservation of her character. "...what you talking about did I love you girl I stayed alive for you can't you get that through your thick head or what is that between your ears, heifer?" (74) The novel *Sula* demonstrates various doubles or parallels between each character in the novel. "Sula and Eva both kill men {Sula kills Chicken Little, Eva kills Plum}. The death of Chicken Little results in a closed casket funeral" (89). Likewise, for Hannah, "The casket had to be kept closed at the funeral" (105). Chicken died by water, Hannah died by fire. Nel watches Chicken die by drowning, according to Eva at the later scene in the nursing home (116). Sula watches Hannah die in flames" (120).

Both Plum and Hannah were brother and sister. They both die by fire. Plum is burned to death by Eva, Hannah dies from her injuries after catching fire by accident. This is shown as the theme of motherhood as well as the theme of double roles. In this present paper, we discussed about the themes of Motherhood and Double Roles. This is the major theme in the work *Sula*.

Works Cited

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