

# Love as Seen through African-American Parents and Children Relationship in *Sula* by Toni Morrison: a Psychoanalytical Reading

Sènanckpon Raoul AHOANGANSI

Université d'Abomey-calavi / Bénin, Laboratoire du Groupe de Recherches sur l'Afrique et la Diaspora (GRAD)

**\*Corresponding Author:** Sènanckpon Raoul AHOANGANSI, Université d'Abomey-calavi / Bénin, Laboratoire du Groupe de Recherches sur l'Afrique et la Diaspora (GRAD)

**Abstract:** Socio-economic, cultural and political upheavals which shake Americans of all ages at given times always leave indelible marks as consequences on social constructs. When wars emasculate veterans, they consequently fail in their duties about house hold management. Women were thendoomed to play both roles of mothers and fathers with means within capacities in those well-known post-emancipation conditions, not favorable for expected prosperity for blacks and their families. Mothers achieve the main with fits and starts basing strongly on love demonstrations with particular facets towards their children. Banking on psychoanalytical criticism as a critical literary theory, this research-paper sets out to interpret characters' actions and reactions within the framework of mothers' unconditional love and related effects on children.

**Keywords:** love – family – mother – father – black Americans.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Apart from the issues of the institution of slavery, race and whiteness as social constructs, significant tumults came upon stage at specific time in the United States of America with pinpointed consequences which call for responsibilities to be fulfilled at every step of the American social fabric. Within the claws of socio-economic inequalities, enslaved African-American families happened to be diligently placed in front of hoe matters mainly caused by the phenomenon of emasculation which according to Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary, 9<sup>th</sup> Edition defines it as the act of making a man feel that he has lost his male role or qualities which render him less powerful and effective breadwinner. Household charges rest uniquely upon women's shoulders in a context of social disparities where racial disparities expose some circumstances which bond women to play roles of mother and father and more importantly demonstrate unconditional love towards children whose future especially depend on how they have been well-mannered by parents.

In *Sula* written by Toni Morrison, an emphasis is put on love, developed with the perspective of cause and consequence in household management in general and the case of African-American families in particular. The study aims at highlighting mother's love towards their children with insights into some unsuspected proofs of love manifestations in the concerned black America families addressed by the author. From traumatic effects of wars on black veterans to the recorded consequences on the later ones and from the disdain of female sexuality to complexities around mother-daughter connections, this research sets to interpret individual's actions and reactions with psychoanalytical criticism as scientific guide. This critical reading particularly tackles maternal love and presents facets in terms of advantages and fallouts when it lacks to be effectively proved and heartfully expressed.

## 2. STUDY IDENTIFICATION: CONTEXT, METHODOLOGY, LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL APPROACH

### 2.1. Socio-political context and Research methodology

In limelight, as it could be related to human societies, parent-child relationship plays undoubtedly crucial roles in the life of a child and may result in one way or the other in normal fallouts as well as the other way run. A very good quality relationship between parents and children influences positively

early attachment-relationships sustained by an emotional status on the child's side because every child has a vital need for genuine, loving connection with parents, especially with mothers. The later ones generally offer heart-felt, passionate and unconditional love to their kids when one refers to socio-political realities of the American post-emancipation period of time with Americans from African origin at stake for social and political full integration. Yet, charity begins at home with family-oriented prospects for good manners toward children under parents' genuine and masterful guidance

While exploring this novel, the main goal behind motivation is to demonstrate through Eva's unconditional love towards her children, the advantages of parental love and the recorded negative consequences when one lacks it. Being the elderly matriarch of the Peace family, an impressive, capable, and fiercely devoted mother and grandmother, this study also portrays ignorance about sacrifices required by parental love and educational values to be promoted within a given family with a special focus on a black-American family. Referring to African-Americans' socio-political life experiences with fatherless families in post-emancipation era, this paper seeks to analyse and appraise the writer's vision concerning African American parents' difficulties to raise their children and by the same time to demonstrate how traumatic events can affect people all their life-long with limitless consequences. In fact, primary and secondary sources serve as fundamental gems in providing means and procedures to frame and carry out mainstreams about this research paper.

## 2.2. Literature Review and Theoretical Approach

Grown up in a family that possessed an intense love and appreciation for Black culture, storytelling, songs, and folktales constitute a deeply formative part of Toni Morrison's childhood with effective commitment along with her literary productions. Her first book, *The Bluest Eye* (1970), is a novel of initiation concerning a victimized adolescent Black girl, been obsessed by white standards of beauty and who longs to have blue eyes for cultural imitation. Exploring conflicts of race, class, sexism and family-based perspectives for a well-balanced living standards for national development, *Song of Solomon* (1977) is told by a male narrator in search of his own and quite proper identity in a country which stands as an inestimable miscellaneous of cultural backgrounds. *Sula*, the novel under study examines other dynamics that nourish the American community in her ups and downs regarding the building up of a society where race and its related but intrinsic fallouts characterize relations among peoples. Morrison's use of fantasy, her sinuous poetic style and rich interweaving of the mythic illustrate in any regards the issue of love as developed in the novel. Intellectuals of diverse majors voice out about the issue of love fundamentally about its correlation regarding children and parents. The following excerpts illustrate much more the idea, backing up Toni Morrison in her regard about love:

"The authentic love of parents and members of a local church, synagogue or parish will help children develop an identity as a person loved by God and others. And in turn, children will see themselves as one who has the capacity and responsibility to share that love with others (Danny Huerta, *psychologist and clinical social worker, author of 7 traits of effective parenting*)

"Every individual's life is shaped by personal relationship they have with others. The mother and child relationship greatly affects the identity development in the kid". (Brandon Johnson, *Associate professor in psychology*)

"Attachment is the theory that describes the relationship between the parent and the child. If the child doesn't get enough affection or attention or love then that impacts the child and as they grow up, their adulthood. Ideally the parent provides a safe loving environment but if it doesn't then the child learns to take this working idea and applies it to the wider world as it grows." (Sarah Lee, *author and clinical Psychologist*)

According to Jacques Lacan, a twentieth century psychoanalyst and literary critic (1901-1981), a true understanding of the relationship between mothers and children could be discerned by investigating what he termed the 'existential break' between the child and the mother in the early life of the child. Moreover, Stephen Mitchell and Margaret Black highlights in their article entitled *A History of Modern Psychoanalytic Thought* that in the beginning stages of autonomy of the child, she undergoes a 'powerful transformative experience when she notices and then becomes captivated by her own image in a mirror (Mitchell and Black,1996). Still in the same vein, Carl Rogers, one of the most eminent thinkers in psychology to come addresses the issue affirming that : ' *Simply loving our children wasn't enough. We have to love them unconditionally*' and as for Frank Hu, Chair of a department of nutrition and a creative writer, adds: '*Children who are not shown affection in their early years end up suffering negative consequences because of it*'. In one way or the other, love has definitely been a subject that attracts specialists of diverse fields to voice the part with quite relevant viewpoints which match quite well with the way the subject-matter under study is presented by Toni Morrison. Mentioning that adulthood depends on the way childhood is proffered, the unconditional love of parents is also well shaped through the novel with the case of Eva toward her children Plum and Hannah along with sacrifices to the detriment of her happiness and her personality as well.

Because the topic under study stems from societal but factual grounds and man to man interrelationships, a series of approaches is used to analyze this literary work. Among the are Feminist criticism, postcolonial criticism and psychoanalytic criticism with the later one as the main to help denote and decode the gist about analysis and interpretations. Although this theory is used to analyze human beings' behaviors but not literary characters, it can surely help to psychoanalyze desires, motives and conflicts of characters in the novel under study *Sula*.

### **3. LOVE AS DIFFERENTLY MANIFESTED THROUGH THE NOVEL**

#### **3.1. Love as related to Sex and the motherly one**

Banking on the Ancient Greeks knowledge, this kind of love known as "Eros" is designed as a passionate and intense love that arouses romantic feelings among human beings endowed with full sense physical and mental reactions. It is an emotional love fully manifested for physiological but worthy needs. In the novel, sexual love is fully noticed and experienced through certain kinds of relationships among which are : Sula and the men of the Bottom, Ajax and the women of the Bottom and finally between Sula and Ajax.

Away from home for a good deal of time, Sula she became pariah for folks, as a pillar in Medallion community where she spent her childhood with little parents and child connection to help face life tumults. Instead, she refuses to get married and prefers sleeping with the men of the Bottom just like the way her mother is used to. Defending that she has no interest in getting married, a conversation between her and her grand-mother illustrates as follow, realities which binds her blindly to such a behavior regardless to what her living environment:

Eva: "when you gone to get married? You need to have some babies. It settles you."

Sula:" I don't want to make somebody else. I want to make myself."

Eva:" Selfish. Ain't no woman got no business floatin' around without no man"

Sula: "You did".

Eva: "Not by choice".

Sula:" Mamma did".

Eva: "Not by choice. I said. It isn't right for you to want to stay off by yourself. You need .... I'm a tell you what you need".(*Sula*,102)

Without being fully aware of realities which bound both her mum and her grand-mother to live alone with their children, she minces no words to reply to them because upset and minded, young-like way. There were definitely reasons for such real facts but society-based realities could lead to and other social circumstances may oblige people to go on the same when on recall fallouts that the absence of men or their lost consciousness impose of household requirements from parents. The later ones being women abandoned for the sake of their own sense of responsibility with their mere means in hands, insufficient to achieve great things or at least meet basic needs. Highly advised to duly get married and not to always stay alone, she still sticks to the men of the Bottom, stubborn to her own way of life. Toni Morrison presents the situation this way:

She (Sula) was pariah, then, and knew it. She knew that they despised her and believe that they framed their hatred as disgust for the easy way she lay with men. Which was true. She went to bed with men as frequently as she could. It was the only place where she can find what she was looking for.... Love making seemed to her, at first, the creation of special kind of joy. She thought she liked the sootiness of sex and its comedy; she laughed a great deal during the raucous beginnings, and rejected those lovers who regarded sex as healthy or beautiful.(*Sula*,134)

Just like Sula, Ajax also likes having sex with women in the Bottom. Being the oldest of his mothers' seven sons and an enigmatic character of the novel under study *Sula*, he does not agree with the idea of marriage. The only energized motivation of his is to be dating ladies in the Bottom and having sexual intercourses with them without expecting to marry them one day. Great womanizer of his kind and a typically idle man, the author instructs readers as follows:

Ajax was very nice to women. His women of course, knew it and it provoked them into murderous over him in the streets brawling thick-thighed women with their bloodletting and attracted whooping crowds on such occasions Ajax stood along with the crowd, and viewed the fighters with the same eyes indifference with which he watches old men playing checkers.(*Sula*,137)

Sharing the same viewpoint about marriage, Ajax and Sula are two characters in the novel with a particular love story. Aged respectively twenty-one and thirty eight, they see life as specifically related to sexual enjoyment with no further valuable aim to reach, worthy of sense and responsibility expected from adults. To the best of their knowing, sexual satisfaction tops over any other issue that requires meeting needs and proffering patience, sacrifice and seriousness. Morrison describes the scene between the two as they get together once and about what attracts or traps Sula the most to be so connected to Ajax:

“Ajax came in and headed straight for the kitchen, Sula followed slowly. By the time she got to the door, he had undone the complicated wire cap and letting the cold milk run into his mouth. Sula watched him or rather the rhythm in his throat with growing interest. When he had enough, he poured the rest into the sink-rinsed the bottle out and presented it to her. She took the bottle with one hand and his wrist with the other and pulled him into the pantry. There was no need to go there, for not a soul was in the house. But gestures came to Hannah's daughter naturally. There is in the pantry, empty row of flour sack void of row upon row of canned goods, free forever of strings of tiny-green peppers holding the wet milk bottle tight in her arm, she stood wide-legged against the wall and pulled from his trac-lean hips all the pleasure her thighs could hold. He came regularly then, bearing gifts ...”(*Sula*,136)

Written by Toni Morrison, a black-American author whose works usually portray, depict, analyze and interpret socio-economic, cultural and political ups and downs about black communities, the novel *Sula* comes up in fact to reveal some insights about a hard period of time regarding American history. *Sula* specifically refers a time where most families were raised in the absence of fathers: the main backbones about family-based satisfaction of needs. Women were then bound to face responsibilities, strive to meet needs of diverse sorts but still within capacities. Failure to provide adequate solutions brought about negative behaviors from kids' side and even mothers couldn't help seizing opportunities whatsoever. Yet, for a motherly love to be manifested in due time and requirements, no sacrifice stands as a limit to prevent from reaching a target worth for family well-being. The motherly love could be viewed as a strong and deep affection a mother feels towards her children with the desire and the will to love and protect them their whole life long. It is in other words, a complex set of emotions, behavior and beliefs associated with strong feeling of affection, protectiveness and courage or commitment. All these qualities are heart-warmly shown in the novel through mother-daughter relationship in many instances always related to activities which consist in protecting and raising children with well manners. In the novel, mothers developed unconditional love and a strong affection toward their beloved children despite hardships they constantly face every single day. The Peace and Wright families witness the case of mothers who happened to raise their children without the help of anybody mainly in the absence of the remarkable presence of men as bread-winners that could significantly help. Mothers as Toni Morrison picture here develop acceptance, affection support and dedication toward their children for better and agreeable future in their life under shelter of trauma or any other kind of mental disorder.

### 3.2. Fraternal Love and the one Attached to Friendship

Among sisters and brothers as well as friends, sentiments of reciprocal consideration, support and closeness appear plain to be noticed. Regularly circumstances occur to help prove such a state of thing which illustrates warmth and humanistic attitudes and behaviors towards neighbors, friends and brothers. Two cases of love manifestations happen in *Sula*, between Plum and Hannah Peace: Firstly when Plum was burnt to death and secondly, Hannah's attitudes toward her mum right after, followed by her own death by burning.

At first, when Plum was burning, Hannah was the one who realizes that Plum's room was in fire and she spontaneously started shouting with the children. So, she quickly ran to Eva's room to inform her about the bad news and didn't hesitate to go ahead for help in order to stop the fire but in vain. The unwished situation occurs with sadness, cries and uncontrollable lamentations:

Just as she (Eva) got to the third landing she could hear Hannah and some child's voice... by the time, she got to her bed someone was bounding up the stairs after her. Hannah opened the door." Plum! Plum! He's burning. Mamma! 'Eva looked into Hannah's eyes "Is my baby Burning?" The two women did not speak for eyes of each were enough for the other. Then Hannah closed hers and ran toward the voices of neighbors calling for water. (*Sula*, 56-7)

Hannah was ready to help her brother, doing everything possible within capacity. She loves her brother Plum and proves her attachment to him with full devotion as should be expected from a sister. She could have saved her senior brother she would do it. But unfortunately, she cannot do anything against the death of her brother. Deplorable was the situation in a context of parental love with proof and full-minded attachment to be demonstrated by loved-ones.

Secondly, after the death of Plum, Hannah went to question her mother about her junior brother's case of death. The answer she got from Eva terrified her and consequently affected her so much. Next and few days following the day they discussed, Hannah also passed away like her brother still by burning. The passage below is explaining the way Hannah died:



She rolled up to the widow and it as then she saw Hannah burning. The flames from the yard were licking the blue cotton dress, making her dance. Eva knew there was time for nothing in this world other than the time it took to get there and cover her daughter's body with her own. She lifted her heavy frame up on her good leg, and with fists and arms smashed the windowpane. Using her stump as a support on the window sill, her good leg as a lever, she threw herself out of the window. Cut and bleeding she clawed the air trying to aim her body toward the flaming, dancing figure. She missed and came crashing down some twelve feet from Hannah's smoke. Stunned but still conscious, Eva dragged herself toward her firstborn, but Hannah; her senses lost, went flying out of the yard gesturing and bobbing like a sprung jack-in-the-box. (*Sula*86,87,88)

According to Oxford advanced learner's dictionary Ninth edition (2018), love is defined as a strong feeling of deep affection for something or somebody, especially a member of one's family or a friend. As people generally come around their interests, regular contacts with one another could provoke in one way or the other such a kind of reciprocal affection. In this respect, friends usually develop a lovely relationships that procures more positivity than hardship. In this novel this kind of love is pretty well noticed through the two main characters. Grown up in the same area but coming from two different families with even not the same lifestyles, they do love one another, taking profit from the long absence of their parents and against their will to weave on more about their common desire. For instance, Nel's father deserts household and Sula died when they are still both very young. Their meeting has been the fortunate thing that happened to them because they find good and pleasant their company and the very time. Destiny makes it happen in a circumstance which projects to compensate holes that they suffer separately. Toni Morrison writes pictures that case in these lines:

Their (Sula and Nel) meeting was fortunate, for it let them to use each other to grow on. Daughters of distant mothers and incomprehensible fathers (Sula's because he was dead; Nel's because he wasn't), they found in each other's eyes the intimacy they were looking for...Their friendship was intense as it was sudden. They found relief in each other's personality. (*Sula*,61)

Because they found relief in each other due to their social conditions, they design prospects of help, assistance and fight against common odds. The two girls feel safe in each other's company and they complement each other till they don't find this kind of protection, understanding and equality in their relationships with men. They did design to find shelter with each other, an appropriate means to relieve their emotional pain and the pressure of their mothers. Though they present different physically shapes and lifestyles they become like sisters with the desire to protect and support each other in situations that may jeopardize in their life. A good illustration refers to the case when while coming back from school, they took the shortest lead as unusual to reach home. While walking, they have been stopped by a group of four boys who occasionally use to harass Black schoolchildren. They have once frightened Nel by pushing her from hand to hand. On the spot, Sula harshly shows her attachment to Nel in a way that proves resistance and inflexible protest. In fact, as a sign of determination to defend her friend by all means, she brings out a knife and cuts her forefinger in order to aware the boys if they don't leave them alone. Morrison exposes the scene in this passage:

When the girls were three feet in front of the boys, Sula reached into her coat pocket and pulled out Eva's paring knife. The boys stopped short exchange looks and dropped all pretense of innocence...Sula squatted down in the dirt road and put everything down on the ground: her lunch pail, her reader, her mittens, her slate. Holding the knife in her right hand, she pulled the slate toward her and pressed her

left forefinger down hard on its edge. Her aim was determined but accurate. She slashed off only the tip of her finger. The four boys stared open-mouthed at the wound and the scrap of flesh like a button mushroom, curling in the cherry blood that ran into the corners of the slate. Sula raised her eyes to them. Her voice was quiet “If I can do that to myself; what you suppose I’ll do to you? “The shifting dirt was the only way Nel knew that they were moving away; she was looking at Sula’s face which seemed miles mile away.(*Sula*,63-4)

Through this passage, Sula pretends to protect Nel from any harm coming from the boys standing on their common path back home. She shows up with a strong determination to keep Nel safe from harmful disturbances. This adventure being just a part of what binds both girls together with faithfulness and loyalty regarding each other. Secrecy remains the other cement that links Sula to her friend Nel. A tangible example of illustration is the case of the small boy nicknamed Chicken Little’s who passed away, drown in a river water in front of the two girls. In fact one day, they walk up and go down to a river. While Sula was swinging the boy in circles, she unconsciously accidentally abandons his hands. As a consequence, he goes flying into the water and gets drown. Judging out from that dangerous and heart-breaking news, the two girls got resolved to keep the secret undisclosed then and forever. Unfortunately, this secret shapes the rest of their lives since nature reckons everything in due time. Furthermore and unexpectedly, their friendship breaks after ten years because Sula happened to betray her best friend Nel with her husband Jude Greene.

#### 4. HIGHLIGHTS ON PARENTAL LOVE MANIFESTATIONS: CASE STUDY OF MOTHERS

##### 4.1. Eva’s Parental Love: A full sense of sacrifices

In *Sula*, the author Toni Morrison mentions, underlines and manifestly illustrates how women definitely strove to assure diligent households even in the absence of husbands who were mostly absent. Cases of evidence appear many and diverse in fields of devotion, determination and inflexible or far-fetched ways and means to meet challenges by women for the sake of children bringing-up. The parental love in question here highly focusses on mothers’ abilities or capacities to couple both father and mother’s roles despite the diverse socio-economic hardships they face every single day. Marriage dislocations, household pitfalls, conscious or unconscious misgivings and jeopardize the atmosphere of social constructs in fields of good manners and responsibility fulfilment. Here comes in fact a proof of negligence and unconsciousness stressed by the author about a supposed bread-winner, Eva’s husband:

“After five years of a sad and disgruntled marriage BoyBoy took off. During the time they were together he was very much preoccupied with other women and not home much. He did whatever he could that he liked, and he liked womanizing best, drinking second, and abusing Eva third.”(*Sula*;40).

A series of particular conditions even though difficult to back regularly happen with unmeasurable drawbacks which, instead of flexing mothers from the main about their families, reinforce them in their strength or demonstration to take care children: caregivers and daily bread provider. Let’s cast a focus on the following excerpts as evidences of negligence and sense of irresponsibility about husbands of the three women Hannah and Helène and Nel as narrated by the author:

Hannah married a laughing man named Rekus who died when their daughter Sula was about three years old, at which time Hannah moved back into her mother’s big house prepared to take care of it and her mother forever”(*Sula* ;49)

His long absences were quite bearable for Helene Wright, especially when, after some nine years of marriage, her daughter was born” (Sula,25) a “But they have been down

on all fours naked, not touching except they lips right down there on the floor... And finally you just got up and started putting on your clothes and your privates were hanging down, so soft, and you buckled your pants belt but forgot to button the fly and she was sitting on the bed not even bothering to put on her clothes because actually she didn't need to because somehow she didn't look naked to me" (*Sula*; 115).

Eva had \$1.65, five eggs, three beets and no idea of what or how to feel. The children needed her; she needed money; and needed to get on with her life... In this way, things went on until near December." ... Two days later she left all of her children with Mrs. Suggs, saying she would be back the next day. Eighteen months later she swept down from a wagon with two crutches a new black pocketbook, and one leg. First, she reclaimed her children, next she gave the surprised Mrs. Suggs a ten-dollar bill, later she started building a house on Carpenter's Road, sixty feet from Boy Boy's one-room cabin, which she rented out. (*Sula*; 43)

Mothers like Eva shows via everyday undertaking, an intensive love toward her children no matter situations may be, she doesn't hesitate to go in adventure to grab a job, ask for food from neighbors, sacrificing time and energy for way out from her socio-economic difficulties. Eva couldn't see with her eyes or witness in any case those terrible sufferings her own children are daily and variously submitted to. Among many cases of illustrations, the particular situation of Plum leaves indelible marks in the mind of Eva. Being her last child and also her only son (her beloved child) she provides him with care and any other kind of attention a mother should prove toward her children. Plum did participate in the World War I 1917 and returned to the United States in 1919 but did not get back to Medallion until 1920 as a drug addict person. Once back to Medallion, he appeared emotionally and physically different. He was no more that child of Eva's care and permanent devotion. The following passage describes Plum in catching details when he gets back home:

'Eva's child, Plum, to whom she hopped to bequeath everything, floated in a constant swaddle of love and affection, until 1917 when he went to war. He returned to the states in 1919 but did not get back to Medallion until 1920. He wrote letters from New York, Washington... Finally some or three days after Christmas, he arrived with just the shadow of this old dip-down walk. His hair had been neither cut nor combed in months, his clothes were pointless and he had no sock...' (*Sula*; 53)

Eva sees her many sacrifices onto her child end in smoke when she apprehends the kind of person his son became. Impossible for her to understand and accept or support the abnormal person he became, the situation really happened to be unbearable because quite well uncontrollable because Plum return provokes more damage than happiness and hope. Eva couldn't accept seeing his beloved child in such a terrifying situation, she constantly thinks over the adequate way out able to stop his pain forever. She finally sets her mind at putting an end to his life in order to allow his soul to rest in peace because pains she suffers grow higher and higher, unbearable than ever. Morrison describes in these lines, the painful visit she pays to his child "*Eva swung over to the bed and propped her crutches at its foot. She sat down and gathered Plum into her arms. He woke, but only slightly... Eva held him closer and began to rock. Back and forth she rocked him, her eyes wandering around his room.*" (*Sula*; 54-55). After that visit which exposes nothing different or better than Plum's mental illness, Eva feels once more disappointed and radically decides to let her son die like a man rather than a dog. Then she puts fire to the room and puts an end to the suffering life of her beloved son:



Eva stepped back from the bed and let the crutches rest under her arms. She rolled a bit newspaper into a tight stick about six inches long, lit it and threw it onto the bed where the kerosene-soaked Plum lay in snug delight. Quickly, as the woosh of flames engulfed him, she shut the door and made her slow and painful journey back to the top of the house. (*Sula*;56)

This decision has definitely been the most difficult and painful to take. Still both reveals the intensive and unconditional parental love from a mother like Eva and may prove at the same time in the eyes of many an ambiguous way of love or affection proving. The unconditional love of a mother could largely escape limits of human imagination or perspectives as the case of Eva widely exposes: death is better than addiction. From childhood to adulthood it can promptly be viewed as hard as one could imagine, the heart-felt pressure and tension a mother could suffer with her son in such a state of mind. The passage below largely explains Eva's mind about the death of her son in the known conditions when her daughter Hannah asks her why she killed her brother:

‘ He give me such a time. Such a time. Look like he didn't even want to be born. But he comes out. Boys is hard to bear. You wouldn't know that but they is. It was such a carryin' on to get him born and keep him alive. Just to keep his little heart beating and hid little old lungs cleared and look like when he came back from that war he wanted to get back in. After all that carryin' on, just getting' him and keepin' him alive, he wanted to crawl back in my womb and well...I done everything I could to make him leave me and go on and live and be a man but he wouldn't and I had to keep him out so I just thought of a way he could die like a man not all scrunched up inside my womb, but like a man.’ (*Sula*; 81-82)

Consistent is the explanation of Eva but her elder daughter sees hard to support the harshness of the act and more importantly, interpreting as a proof of love. Hannah is not yet mother and consequently couldn't figure out the sense it would make from her mother to behave so. As Eva explains all this to her elder daughter, Hannah turns and leaves the room without voicing out a word. The explanation affects her so much and she consequently becomes ill because of the death of her brother. She willingly decided to join him for the sake of brotherhood and sign or proof of love. Another hard challenge comes then to stand on the way of Eva with her oldest child's intention to follow her brother. To the question of Hannah to her mother “*Mamma did you ever love us?*” (*Sula*;77). Eva answers : “*You settin' here with your healthy-ass self and ax me did I love you? Then big old eyes in your head would a been two hole full of maggots if I hadn't*”. (*Sula*;78)

Eva once more reminds Hannah that she never hates them as children of hers and if this had been the case they would have already passed away. One day after the strange conversation between Hannah and her mother, another far-fetched thing happened and once again, Eva's sense of love for her children is on stage. Eva, a one-legged person throws herself out of her window to save Hannah whose dress catches fire in the yard. Eva's goal in behaving so is to cover her daughter's body with her own whatever it may cost her. Yet, she fails to meet the point for the price of her usual sacrifice. Toni Morrison describes the tragic scene in the passage below:

She rolled up to the widow and it as then she saw Hannah burning. The flames from the yard were licking the blue cotton dress, making her dance. Eva knew there was time for nothing in this world other than the time it took to get there and cover her daughter's body with her own. She lifted her heavy frame up on her good leg, and with fists and arms smashed the windowpane. Using her stump as a support on the window sill, her good leg as a lever, she

threw herself out of the window. Cut and bleeding she clawed the air trying to aim her body toward the flaming, dancing figure. She missed and came crashing down some twelve feet from Hannah's smoke. Stunned but still conscious, Eva dragged herself toward her firstborn, but Hannah; her senses lost, went flying out of the yard gesturing and bobbing like a sprung jack-in-the-box. (*Sula*; 86,87,88)

This action of Eva testifies once again and furthermore her attachment to her children. Not only does she sacrifice her left leg but also, she takes a great risk by throwing herself out of the window to save her daughter. No condition is enough to make her prove resentful in front of risky attempts to save her children from confused difficulties no matter how they appear, losing her own life would never be enough. With Hannah, she is quite meant to dedicate her life to get her out of that giant and deadly trouble with no care about her on death.

### 5. LACK OF PARENTAL LOVE: IMPACTS AND UNSUSPECTED CONSEQUENCES

It has commonly been admitted that parents' love manifestations toward their children seriously shape in many ways the latter ones' life in every field whether socially, culturally, economically and others as well. Mothers as significantly approached in the novel *Sula* by author Toni Morrison demonstrate without resentment an unconditional love towards their children. The lack of this permanent and inflexible manifestation of love from parents towards their own kids could not only prevent the whole family from fulfilling dreams of hope and success and also jeopardize the development of a nation. With that specifically racist community within which this story refers to and seeing those recorded consequences, intertwining close ties between parents and children could be apprehended as the leitmotiv of every family. Yet, it is still doubtful to believe in the eyes of Hannah, her mother's highly determined fight for the well-being of her children. A harsh dialogue between Eva and Hannah illustrate the issue as follows:

**Hannah:** "Mamma did you ever love us?" (*Sula*; 77)

**Eva:** "You settin' here with your healthy-ass self and ax me did I love you? Them big eyes in your head would a been two holes full of maggots if I hadn't" (*Sula*; 78).

**Hanna:** "I didn't mean that, Mamma. I know you fed us and all. I was talkin' about something else. Like. Like. Playin' with us? Did you ever, you know play with us?" (*Sula*, 78)

Socio-economic conditions and other particular experiences help to appreciate situations related to interactions among people in general and the one between parents and children in particular. The deteriorating relationship between Hannah and Eva Peace affects their mother-daughter tie and Hannah consequently chooses to raise her child her own basing on what she thought right to be achieved between mother and kids. The denial of love between Hannah and Sula Peace forces Sula to find someone else to lean on, Nel, and change her ways to her mother and society's expectations. Eva's drastic measures were repeated by Sula an act of survival and denial of powerlessness and vulnerability. Nel and Sula are regularly picked on by the same group of boys. Sula finally realizes that she has to fight against her own vulnerability and establish her identity, hereby following her grandmother Eva's example. Parental love ramifies in every aspect of social environment with family life as the right center of community welfare and nation development. Though the Peace family and the Wright family differ in terms of class and status, similarities stand right on the way connecting other members of both families. Some specific elements or characteristics lead to grasp each situation with care and know-how because from grass-roots, they nourish, depict and even expose in one way or the other, characters and all their possible behavioral features. Referring to Helen, let's get insight into these notes on her so as to deduce that kind of impact she suffers, deprived of paternal affection and care:

“Helene was born behind those shutters, daughter of a creole whore who worked there. The grandmother took Helene away from the soft lights and flowered carpets of the Sundown House and raised her ...for any sign of her mother’s wild blood” (*Sula*;25)

Helene Wright was an impressive woman, at least in Medallion she was. Heavy hair in a bun, dark eyes arched in a perpetual query about other people’s manners.... The people of the Bottom refused to say Helene. They called her Helen and left it at that.”(*Sula*, 26)

Generally called Helen Wright by people of her living environment, she feels the need to flee from her hometown and marry an outsider out of her community. Once settled in the Bottom, Helene lives up to the expectations her grandmother inflicted on her as a woman who won all social battles with presence and a conviction of the legitimacy of her authority. This being part and parcel of her own character as a lady whose life missed at a given time that precious love from parents who in fact are meant to provide the main about care and affection which follow children’s all their life long. Not only does Helene take on many different responsibilities, she also manipulates her family and husband as well for particular purposes. By doing this, Helene can escape feelings of disgrace with hopeful projections to live an ethical life despite worries and challenges to face in her daily life. Helene’s relationship with her mother influences her own character through her different behaviors and socializing attitudes towards others which empower her daughter’s life much more than her own. Miscommunication between Eva and Hannah Peace could exactly be noticed with Helene and Nel Wright with drawbacks all along with connections with others whether with parents, friends and unknown people.

Pushing herself up to live above normal standards in her city, social realities as related to racism and collateral consequences handicap in many ways parents and children connections and likewise impact the community as a whole. Lack of permanent communication, well-mannered attitudes and behaviors in a structured household under the genuine control of parents fertilize and enriches enormously an excellent mood in a family and favors familiar interconnectedness. Failure to assure this, leads ineluctably to disconnection among members of the same family, dislocation of cement that ties community people together and next will follow a series of discordances with a cortège of uncontrollable consequence.

## 6. CONCLUSION

The fictional literary production *Sula* written by Toni Morrison apprehends by decoding the ups and downs about mother-child interconnectedness in terms of love through its manifestations by mothers to their children mainly in the absence of fathers, the real bread-winners within families. Through a certain number of characters like Eva and Hannah Peace, Sula and Hannah Peace, and finally Helene and Nel Wright relationships in the novel; the expression of emasculation evidence is widely felt and related consequences on both mothers and children are clearly exposed. Love unconditionally demonstrated by parents to their children stands as an inflexible pillar in the life of the latter ones in the present time and the future as well.

The intense maternal love of Eva which even leads her to kill one of her children on account of love that she judges appropriate to manifest in such a way reveals to what extent parents are able to prove unconditional affection towards their kids. Fully aware that mothers’ attitudes and behaviours in line with family care-taking and with regards to children raising, matter so much in building human identity, the author stresses the unsuspected sacrifices that they entail. Failure to establish that mother-child interconnectedness in such socio-cultural and even economic contexts would on the one hand, handicap ties among members of the same family and on the other hand lead not to assure well-mannered traits and behaviours to children. Reference to the relationship between Eva and Hannah exemplifies the case above-mentioned with Hannah’s enormous difficulties to later on raise Sula because Eva didn’t stand as a model-mother to look upon. Emasculation creates havoc in household management with heavy wings for mothers which prevent them from meeting their dreams with flying colours both for the benefit of their families and the nation as well.

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