

AYUDH

International Refereed Journal

UGC Approval No. 47772

35th Issue

April

Volume - 1&2

2018

Editor in Chief:

Dr. Nehal Kalavadiya

Peer Review Committee

1. Dr. Jiten J. Parmar (GES-II) – Department of Hindi
Bahauddin Arts College, Junagadh, Gujarat
2. Dr. Vishal R. Joshi (GES-II) - Department of History
Bahauddin Arts College, Junagadh, Gujarat
3. Dr. Jaysinh B. Zala – Associate Professor & Head, Department of Sociology
Bhakta Kavi Narsinh Maheta University, Junagadh, Gujarat
4. Prof. Dilip B. Kataliya (GES-II) - Department of English
Bahauddin Arts College, Junagadh, Gujarat
5. Dr. Hirji P. Sinch (GES-II) – Department of Gujarati
Government Arts & Commerce College, Ranavav, Gujarat
6. Dr. Madhuben B. Patel – Department of Commerce
Sir K. P. College of Commerce, Surat, Gujarat
7. Dr. Chetan Trivedi – Professor & Head, Department of English
Bhakta Kavi Narsinh Maheta University, Junagadh, Gujarat
8. Dr. Pravat Dangal – Department of Physics
St. Joseph's College, Darjeeling, West Bengal
9. Pri. Dr. Rajesh K. Dodiya (GES-II) - Department of Psychology
Government Arts & Commerce College, Vanthali, Gujarat
10. Dr. Arjun G. Dave - Department of Communication Skills
Marwadi Education Foundation, Rajkot, Gujarat
11. Dr. Jignasa Chavda – Department of Education
Government College of Education, Kachhal, Surat, Gujarat
12. Dr. Kapil Ghosiya (GES-II) - Department of Economics
Government Arts & Commerce College, Vanthali, Gujarat
- Legal Advisor
Mr. Manish N. Dhokadiya (LL.B., LL.M-HRIHL)

“अगर कभी झूठी ममता, दुर्बलता, किंकर्तव्यविमूढ़ता
व्यापा करती,
स्वयं कृष्ण भगवान प्रकट हो,
असंदिग्ध औ स्वतः सिद्धा स्वर में कहते,
युद्धस्व भारत !”

- हरिवंशराय बच्चन

Ayudh Publication

For -

Book Publish – ISBN

Ayudh Journal – ISSN 2321 : 2160 (Since May-2013)

Surabhi Journal – ISSN 2349 : 4557 (Since June-2014)

सहयोग राशि :

- * एक प्रति : 100/-
 - * व्यक्तिगत पंचवर्षीय : 5000/-
 - * संस्थागत पंचवर्षीय : 6000/-
-

संपादन/संचालन :

- पत्रिका अवैतनिक और अव्यावसायिक है ।
 - रचनाकार की रचनाएँ उसके अपने विचार है ।
 - संशोधन प्रपत्र व आलेखों से विशेषज्ञ समीक्षा समिति का सहमत होना अनिवार्य नहीं है ।
 - संशोधन प्रपत्र व आलेखों पर कोई आर्थिक मानदेय नहीं दिया जाता ।
 - लेखकों, सदस्यों एवम् मित्रों के आर्थिक सहयोग से पत्रिका प्रकाशित होती है ।
-

Contact :

Ayudh Publication, Bhavnagar, Gujarat

ayudh2013@gmail.com

www.ayudhpublication.com

9428 34 36 35 / 91069 42482

| | | |
|-----|--|----|
| 14. | Amish Tripathi's Shiva Trilogy and Modern Science Anilkumar Rameshbhai Patel, Ph.D. Scholar..... | 43 |
| 15. | Portrayal of Supernatural Elements in Select Short Stories of Ruskin Bond Mr. Yatharth N. Vaidya, Government Polytechnic, Rajkot..... | 47 |
| 16. | वेदोमां निरूपित जवनकला डॉ. बी. ज. पटेल, श्री तेजेन्द्रप्रसादजी स्वामिनारायण आर्ट्स कोलेज, कोठंबा..... | 50 |
| 17. | A Pre & Post Impact of Merger and Acquisitions on Financial Performance of Pharmaceutical Industry: A Case study of Sun Pharmaceutical and Ranbaxy Laboratories Gaurang Prajapati, GLS University, Ahmedabad..... | 53 |
| 18. | श्री रामदरश मिश्र के उपन्यास 'पानी के प्राचीर' में वर्णित लोकगीत एवं लोकनृत्य हेतलबहन व्यास..... | 57 |
| 19. | Myth in Indian English Dramas Dr. Jignesh S. Upadhyay & Dr. Arjun G. Dave..... | 60 |
| 20. | Toni Morrison's Home as rhetoric of Black Woman's "involuntary sterilization" and a "hidden history" of Medical Experimentations Rajvi G. Desai & Dr. Deepkumar J. Trivedi | 64 |
| 21. | जवेल वार्तासंग्रहनी नारी प्रतिभा प्रा. शशीकांत आर. पटेल, पी.एच.डी. स्कोलर..... | 68 |
| 22. | स्तोत्रोंमें शिव (स्तोत्रेषु शिवः) Prin. U. K. Gangurde, Govt. Arts & Commerce College, Meghraj..... | 71 |
| 23. | झांसी को बचानेवाली झांसी की रानी लक्ष्मीबाई नहीं बल्की झलकारीबाई Aprita Mekwan, M.K. Bhavnagar University, Bhavnagar..... | 75 |
| 24. | The Main for Qualities are Important for Successful Performance in Most Sports Dr. Dineshbhai K. Parmar, Shree Vani Vinayak College, Bhachau..... | 77 |
| 25. | Data Collection Methods Manisha B. Gohil, M.Com., G-SET..... | 80 |
| 26. | A study of social values reflected in shikshpatri Nehal K. Shingala, Ph. D. Scholar..... | 85 |
| 27. | Infinity, Universe and Antinomies Parth S. Sharma, Research Scholar, Saurashtra University, Rajkot..... | 87 |
| 28. | Business Communication Tushar Jayantilal Prajapati, Shree Vani Vinayak College, Bhachau..... | 89 |
| 29. | A Study of Emotional Development as Presented by R. K. Narayan in his Literary Works Dr. Sagar S. Vyas, I/c Principal, Smt. R. B. Patel College, Sanand..... | 92 |

**Toni Morrison's *Home* as rhetoric of Black Woman's
"involuntary sterilization" and a "hidden history" of
Medical Experimentations**

Rajvi G. Desai
Research Scholar,
Rai University,
Dholka, Ahmedabad

Dr. Deepkumar J. Trivedi
Associate Professor of English,
Indian Institute of Teacher
Education, Gandhinagar

Abstract: The history of United States is full of gloomy chapters like the institution of Slavery, barbarity committed during various wars and devastation of Native American population. These events of history are familiar to any average person of America. However, the knowledge concerning to the eugenics program and the medical experimentations that prevailed during 1950s in the United States is often limited. There is a great similarity between the medical experimentation that occurred during the Second World War and the savagery that was prevailing in the United States during 1950s. Toni Morrison in her novel *Home* (2012) effectively presents some examples of those medical experimentations through her characters. The protagonist of the novel Ycidra (Cee) becomes the victim of those medical experimentation largely duty her race. Eventually, the medical experiments ruin Cee's capacity of reproduction and make her infertile.

Keywords: eugenics, sterilization, black women, medical experimentation

Introduction: Toni Morrison is a Nobel Prize winning author and also one of the most exceptional and accomplished artists of both American and African American literature. Her works emerge out of her extensive imagination. Morrison has been writing about the reality of black families while focusing

majorly on black women. In her novels one finds a convergence of two narrative strategies: first the oral tradition of storytelling, second appropriation of bourgeois tradition of novel by including people who have been removed from the history. Her Pulitzer Prize winning novel *Beloved* (1987) was called the best work of American fiction of past twenty five years by the New York Times. Her present novel *Home* (2012) depicts the era of 1950s, a time of great racial oppression in American history.

Discussion: Toni Morrison in her interview with Google Talks said that 1950s were understood to be, "...nice, comfortable, American Dream stuff (1:30)...but what was underneath there was something that was being silenced or ignored. One was the Korean War which nobody ever talked about...(1:40) the other thing was [that] there was a lot of medical experimentation on helpless people... (2:32)". By Morrison's words it can be identified how through her narrative she has connected the reader to various issues which are often silenced in the history. In *Home*, Morrison evokes a fresh feel of what was then happening in 1950s United States. The paper focuses on how Toni Morrison has presented the hidden reality of human experimentation which was a prevalent affliction during post war 1950s era. Through her characters Cee and Dr.

Beauregard Scott, Morrison effectively delineates the reality of medical experimentation on human beings.

Home personifies the racist nature of U.S Public Health System and the self-hatred that the American society instills in poor black people. Morrison exposes the reality of how eugenics programs were conducted by white doctors and the medical experimentation they performed on poor black women without their consent. 1950s was "the time of the McCarthy hearings and a lot of medical apartheid, the license of [eugenics practitioners] preying on black women, the syphilis trials on black men" (Shea: Online). Morrison turns to investigate unspeakable struggles of the people of the same era. By doing this she challenges and overturns the rationalist discourse which sanctions racism against blacks. To expose the reality of the medical experimentation and eugenics programs of mid 20th century, Morrison introduces two characters. An African American girl named Cee who falls prey to a white doctor's medical experimentations. Another character is Dr. Beauregard Scott who is as introduced by his wife, "...more than a doctor; he is a scientist and conducts very important experiments. His inventions help people. He's no Dr. Frankenstein". (Morrison 60)

During the post war era clinical research was conducted on prisoners, children, blacks and more vulnerable people of the society. Blacks were chosen to be the subjects of more dangerous human experiments. In those cases the black victims were often unaware about their status of research subject. In *Home*, Cee is also a black woman who is unaware about Dr. Beauregard's intentions. After spending a childhood almost as an orphan under the observance of her step grandmother and suffering the betrayal of her husband Prince, Cee searches to earn something for herself. But due to the lack of education and knowledge, Cee gets very impressed by Dr. Scott, his house and his soft-spoken wife. She gets ready to work as an assistant to Dr. Scott. On the contrary, Dr. Beauregard Scott hires young black childless women to perform medical experiments.

Therefore, Cee, a poor, black, uneducated girl becomes the best target of attack for Dr. Scott.

During her visit to Dr. Scott's home and clinic, Cee comes across his bookshelves which initially thrill her. Some of the books include *Out Of The Night* by Herman Muller, an exponent of eugenics, *The Passing Of the Great Race* and *Heredity* by American eugenicist Madison Grant and *Heredity, Race and Society* by Theodosius Dobzhansky, a geneticist and biologist who was also one of the attester of eugenics program. Although, Cee might be impressed by the books of Dr. Beauregard, Morrison makes it clear to her readers that Dr. Scott is also a practitioner of the eugenics program. The term *eugenics* was supposedly coined by Frances Galton, a cousin of Charles Darwin. Galton believed that the superior heredity of the English ruling class was the cause behind their excellence. The main concern behind eugenics program was to boost healthiest people to have children. The English eugenics build up by Galton was involved in increasing positive traits in people. On the contrary, eugenics movement in America soon started concentrating on wiping out negative traits from people which included poor, minority and even blacks. "This hereditarian belief, coupled with the reform approach of the Progressive Era, fueled a campaign to remedy America's social problems by stemming biological degeneracy". (Roberts 134) To stop the 'undesired' people from increasing quickly the eugenicists even took the assistance of legislation for forced 'sterilization' - "a procedure to eliminate the ability of a person or animal to produce offspring" (thefreedictionary.com) Although the Greek root of the word *eugenics* means "well-born", the eugenics program throughout the world aimed at racial elimination. Often as a part of the eugenics program many doctors performed medical experimentation on prisoners, women and children during the time of widespread destruction.

Eugenics movement was more empowered by racial issues in the United States. In the 1930s, the movement turned its focus

from undesirable immigrants to the black population of the South. The 20th century eugenicists proposed programs to reduce black birthrate. Moreover, during the same time there was an alliance between the eugenicists and the birth control reformers. The so-called "birth control" campaign was being promoted in the non-colored communities of the world and also in the black communities of the United States. However, what the advocates of the movement referred to as "birth control" was nothing but a method of surgical genocide. The worst case of this movement was forced sterilization of people. Margaret Sanger, one of the activists of women's reproduction rights once said in a radio talk approving sterilization that, "Morons, mental defectives, epileptics, illiterates, paupers, unemployables, criminals, prostitutes and dope fiends" ought to be surgically sterilized"(qtd in Davies.) Although sterilization was a chief method of birth control in the United States, its use was only concerned with the black women. There was more frequency in the sterilization of poor and uneducated black women. With the mandatory sterilization laws, black women became victims to involuntary sterilization at the hands of government-paid doctors. It was in an attempt to control black population in the United States as Dorothy Roberts rightly puts it in her book *Killing The Black Body, Race: reproduction, and the meaning of liberty*, "America has always viewed unregulated Black reproduction as dangerous. For three centuries, Black mothers have been thought to pass down to their offspring the traits that marked them as inferior to any white person. Along with this biological impairment, it is believed that Black mothers transfer a deviant lifestyle to their children that dooms each succeeding generation to a life of poverty, delinquency, and despair. A persistent objective of American social policy has been to monitor and restrain this corrupting tendency of Black motherhood" (Roberts 22). These ideas of eugenics program were perfectly suitable for the ideological requirement of capitalism. The state legislatures had passed forced sterilization laws by which

thousands of people were sterilized and prevented from reproduction.

In *Home*, there are various forces which exploit the protagonist Cee since her early childhood. Her family is driven out of their home in Bandera County which leads to Cee's birth on a road without any shelter. She is considered a "gutter child". (Morrison 45) She runs away from home at the age of fourteen and gets married to a guy called Prince. Cee suffers even in her relationship as Prince marries her only for her step grandmother's car. These memories instill a sense of inferiority in Cee. Apart from these oppressions, Cee suffers the worst oppression and exploitation at the hands of Dr. Beauregard Scott, as a research subject of medical experimentation. Initially, Cee feels that Dr. Beauregard is a kind man who believes in charity. She believes that the doctor particularly helps women and girls because his own daughters are victims of "Cephalitis" (encephalitis) (Morrison 63). Cee hardly knows what is about to happen to her. She is advised by the doctor to be prepared "...for the reality of medicine: sometimes blood, sometimes pain... [and] to be steady and calm. Always" (Morrison 64). Dr. Beau's instructions make it clear that Cee is going to be his subject of experimentation; for eugenics procedures and also possibly to find treatment for his daughters' Encephalitis. This incident in Cee's life represents the reality of 1950s where black women were used as "medical testing ground for the white middle class"(Beale 118).

Dr. Beauregard, who puts himself to be an inventor, is interested in wombs in general. He constructs instruments to see farther into them. On the contrary, Cee starts losing weight, suffers from fatigue and longer periods as the doctor has done something to her which he himself doesn't know. In fact, Dr. Beauregard is a kind of a doctor who "gave shots, had his patients drink medicines he made up himself, and occasionally performed abortions on society ladies"(Morrison 112). In the story, Dr. Beauregard was highly passionate about the value of his experimentation. Cee on the other hand never knew

his intentions and believed the blood and pain that followed to be a menstrual problem. Ironically, when Cee is rescued by her brother Frank from the evils of Dr. Beau, and cured by the black community women, she comes to know that her "womb can't never bear fruit" (Morrison 128). And she would never be able to have children to care for and the status of motherhood too.

Morrison through Cee's account also seems to be referring to the Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment that was conducted by the U.S Public Health Service between 1932 and 1972. The study included hundreds of poor African American men who suffered Syphilis but didn't know anything about it. The African American men were recruited for the study under the disguise of receiving free medical care. "In order to track the disease's full progression, researchers provided no effective care as the men died, went blind or insane or experienced other severe health problems due to their untreated syphilis". (Nix: Online) These were some of the major tactics carried out on the black population by the ruling class elite to keep themselves in a controlling position. Such inhuman Nazi-like procedures on the part of medical researchers were but another revelation of the totally immoral and dehumanizing brutality that the capitalist system inflicted on Black people. **Conclusion:** Black people were dreadfully used by the colonialist exploiter, "the United States, as a huge experimental laboratory for medical research..." (Beale 117). The Black women were often used as human guinea

pigs to evaluate the effects and efficiency of various medical experimentations. And a large number of black women also became a victim of mandatory or involuntary sterilization. Morrison's novel *Home*, exposes terrors of those events of the past which were often repressed in the dominant discourses. Hence, *Home* turns out to be a discourse that unmasks the reality of the rationalized eugenics programs and the era of medical apartheid in the United States during mid 20th century.

Works Cited:

- Beale, Frances. "Double Jeopardy: To Be Black and Female." *The Black Woman: an Anthology*. Ed. Toni Cade Bambara. Washington Square Press, 2005. PDF file.
- Davies, Angela Y. *Women, Race & Class*. First ed., Vintage, 1983. EPUB file.
- Morrison, Toni. *Home*. Vintage, 2013.
- Nix, Elizabeth. "Tuskegee Experiment: The Infamous Syphilis Study." *History.com*, A&E Television Networks, 16 May 2017, www.history.com/news/the-infamous-40-year-tuskegee-study. (28/03/2018)
- Roberts, Dorothy E. *Killing the black body: Race, reproduction, and the meaning of liberty*. Vintage, 1999. EPUB file.
- Shea, Lisa. "Georgia on Her Mind." *ELLE*, ELLE, 9 Oct. 2017, www.elle.com/culture/books/interviews/a14216/toni-morrison-on-home-655249/. (26/03/2018)
- "Sterilization" *The Free Dictionary*, Farlex, www.thefreedictionary.com/sterilization. (29/03/2018)

Rajvi G. Desai
Research Scholar,
Rai University,
Dholka, Ahmedabad

Dr. Deepkumar J. Trivedi
Associate Professor of English,
Indian Institute of Teacher
Education, Gandhinagar