

## 4. Black Community Voice Echoes on Eradicate of Identity in Toni Morrison's Novel *Home*

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### **Abstract:**

*This present paper discusses Black Community Voice Echoes on Eradicate of Identity in Toni Morrison's Novel Home. While exploring the twenty-first-century work Home we find the voices, which indicates the voice of the colonised people. A deep study of this novel exposes the events and happenings at the time of colonisation. It also exposes their emotions and feelings. In Home, Frank is the protagonist of the novel, who confronts several difficulties while travelling from Korean War to Lotus. Lotus is a home station of Frank and Frank had worked as an (integrated Army) in Korean War. He travels towards Lotus to rescue his abused sister Cee. It exposes the voice of the native African Americans. Through the character of Frank, Morrison speaks the emotions of the colonised people. There was a fear that each and every thing belonging to them were being abandoned by the coloniser and it could not be recognised by the black people. They want to erect their own identity back in their state. Morrison brings out Frank to exposes the inequality situation of their life in America during the colonised period. The people suffered a lot to walk freely in their land. They were insisted and forced to recognise the culture of the other settlers. Settlers made rules to protect themselves from the aborigines. They made the colonies according to the situation and their convenience.*

### **Keywords:**

*Community; Identity; Language; Colour; Inequality; Freedom*

**Vol. 5 No. 1 (2017)**

**Issue- March**

**ISSN 2347-6869 (E) & ISSN 2347-2146 (P)**

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DOI: 10.5958/2347-6869.2017.00004.8



## Black Community Voice Echoes on Eradicate of Identity in Toni Morrison’s Novel *Home*

Identity plays a major role in human life. Everyone in the world wants to show their identity in various aspects of life. Identity gets varied according to its environment. Sometimes, identity is exposed through the cultural, economic, racial, language, social and personal life of the person. All these facets of identity occur in every human life, which could not be hidden. At certain times identity is eradicated forcefully by implementing certain strange cultures. The strange cultures are harmful to persons who lead a traditional way of life.

Among the different stages of human, children frequently face the problem of “personal identity”. Taylor Gibbs, who describes herself as black from a mixed-race background says; “They find it difficult to call themselves black. The parents often bring them up with what I consider to be unrealistic attitudes. They tell them, you are citizens of the world. You are God’s children” (Itabarinjeri).

A variety of strange cultures is exposed in Morrison’s novels *Home*. This novel brings out one of the major aspect “identity”. Further, in this novel, one could find an economic identity, language identity, colour identity, eradication of the identity of a particular community.

In *Home* Morrison tries to show what happens to black individuals when they have lost ties with the past and their black communities. Living in a rather alienated atmosphere Frank and Cee have to experience both the alienation of white society and loss of past. The writer places her characters in complicated situations to show what it means for a black person to be deprived of her historical past and black identity and live in present society, and how they manage or fail in developing these black identities, either they assimilate with mainstream society or take extreme means to regain their black self-consciousness. *Home* reveals that the problem of identity or rather lack of it is of double complexity to African Americans. When black people are deprived of their freedom, cultural heritage and community ties, it inevitably leads them to experience the condition of split identity.

In Morrison’s *Home*, she introduces two siblings to highlight the theme of identity. She uses the fairy-tale method to expose the theme of identity and other narrative images, motifs, characterization, structures and even plots. In fact, as Willson writes about Atwood’s fiction, fairytale interests are much more than allusions in *Home* “frame narratives, echo inner narrative’s images, motifs, themes, characterizations, structures, and even plots, self-consciously reflecting and reflecting upon interests” (Sharon 3-4). Thus, Morrison projects her idea of black identity in this novel by using fairy tales.

In the initial part of the novel *Home*, Morrison focuses on the strange culture and there is no reality in this strange culture. She also asks a question, why? related to the strange environment. The strange cultural environment is induced to eradicate the traditional culture. It means the real identity existing in this place is nullified. “This house is strange / It shadows lie / Say, tell me, why does its lock fit my key?” (Home 1).

Life is not pleasant with the new cultural movements, there is a pain, due to the implementation of new signs. Each and every sign implemented in Georgia, Lotus, is different to the native identity. New signs have only brought out the terrible fear of the abolishment of identity. “Like most farmland outside Lotus, Georgia, this one here had plenty of scary warning signs” (Home 3). It tells about the black identity. In Georgia, only black community lived. The strange culture made deep wounds in the hearts of Georgians. It reveals the fact about the abolishment of black identity.

Further, Morrison focuses that the family is a major role of identity. Especially, the environment of growing children in a family is also an identity of the family in future. The children are the pillars of tomorrow’s nation. Therefore, the family plays a major role in creating and maintaining the identity. Moreover, the identity passes on from the parental culture to the next generation as well as to the community. She highlights that the family does not give importance to the caring and nurturing of children. “Because Mama and Pap worked from before sunrise until dark, they never knew that Miss Lenore poured water instead of milk over the shredded wheat Cee and her brother ate for breakfast” (Home 43-44).

Frank recollects the past incident which happened two days earlier while he was handcuffed in the backseat of a patrol car. The area he crossed was entirely unknown and new to him. He never saw such type of identification earlier during the past days. “He had never been in this neighborhood. . . huge yard sign for a tiny church: AME Zion” (Home 9). Frank in crazy ward thinks to escape from the area to rescue his sister Cee. Here, Morrison brings out the identity of Christianity in America.

Then Morrison highlights the identity of home. Frank walks out or escapes from the “nuthouse”, while he is badly hurt on being barefoot. He feels a lot of pain and faces difficulties during this journey. Everywhere ice is spread over up to the steps of the house. But the house is full of darkness and it is locked. “The steps to the porch were thoroughly cleared of snow, but the house was dark” (Home 11). It symbolises that the black identity have been abolished by the white and only certain black is existing but they are in lock. It shows loss of identity in the home.

Frank sits in the last seat of the bus very obediently although very few passengers were there on the bus. He looks outside the bus, where he finds the landscape fully covered with fur of snow, making the land becomes more questionable. But at the same time, the sunlight is fully bright. It was sad and mournful that the houses on the landscape were reshaped by the snow. Except for the function of the truck, everything had been struck off. Only the movement of shifting of children from one place to another place on the truck was alive. Even though, the speech right was curtailed by the dominant culture of white. The loss of

the speech rights is being exposed through the loss of leaves on the tree tops. Morrison exposes it through the characters that only shifting of child workers is in progress and all the other native identity had been lost. White people's dominant culture and their population only existed. This incident also carries the loss of black identity. "... the landscape became more melancholy when the sun successfully brightened the quiet trees, unable to speak without their leaves. The lonesome-looking houses reshaped the snow... (Home 19).

Then, Frank speaks about the eternal outward movements, all were changed nothing was there to remind of things. Therefore, everything looked like the black-and-white picture. There was no particular identity. The original colour of the country had disappeared. The originality of the black community had been abolished and abandoned. The mix-up community only existed. "All color disappeared and the world became a black-and-white movie screen...." (Home 23). It also highlights the incident of loss of original identity of the country.

Frank came out of the street and in front of the bus station he was hurt a lot. Owing to that the white colour spread over the street and burnt him by the sunlight. "Out in the street in front of the bus station the sun hurt him" (Home 24). He searched to accommodate himself with his co-colour. But, he couldn't get it. Such incident created anger in him. This was a situation where he was not allowed to make any kind of sound or shout or crush anything. There was no place for him to mingle with the society, even in the bus station. Everywhere he found the fade of original colour. So, Frank seeks a place to hide out from the strange colour. "... his shame and its fury exploded. Now, if the signs of draining color gave notice, he would have time to hurry up and hide." (Home 24). It also evokes the idea of loss of identity of the native community in America.

Morrison focuses on the character of Cee, the identity of the native-born women of Georgia. Cee's step-grandmother always neglected Cee. Lenore always used to call her as "gutter child". It means one who was given birth under the roof of the sky that is outside the home. Here, Morrison brings out that, in native land there is no home for the natives even to deliver their children. "Lenore took it as a very bad sign for Cee's future that she was born on the road. Decent women she, said, delivered babies at home...." (Home 44).

Cee's grandparent's house was too big. It was enough for two or three but Lenore wanted to show herself superior to other in Lotus. "Lenore's house was big enough for two, maybe three... Lenore, who believed herself superior to everybody else in Lotus, chose to focus her resentment on the little girl born "in the street" (Home 44-45). There is no place for Cee even to take birth. Native landers give her name "gutter child" (Home 45). She has no identity of her own remains to tell. Only the identity of "gutter child" remains. Thus Morrison exposes that the native African-American lost her own land and their identity.

In this novel, each character searches to erect their self-presentation which involves African, Native American, European and mixed-race's presentations. In parallel, the expression of self-identity is found by the respective characters, African, Native American, European and mixed-race's identities. And, self-identity is to be related to self-knowledge which supposes that an individual is conscious of his thoughts, his feelings and his beliefs.

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**Cite this article:**

Black Community Voice Echoes on Eradicate of Identity in Toni Morrison's Novel Home

**Citation Format: APA**

Vincent, P. (2017). Black Community Voice Echoes on Eradicate of Identity in Toni Morrison's Novel Home. *SOCRATES*, 5(1), 27-32. Retrieved from <http://socratesjournal.com/index.php/socrates/article/view/284>

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