

## **Dismemberment in the Fiction of Toni Morrison**

Jaleel Akhtar



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Dismemberment in the Fiction of Toni Morrison is a multifaceted study of Toni Morrison s fiction. It investigates racism and the concomitant experiences of dismemberment in Morrison s fiction from multiple perspectives, including history, psychology, and culture. Looking at dismemberment from multiple perspectives, rather than the more generic and abstract expression of fragmentation, likens the impact of racism on individuals to the splitting of bodies, amputation, phantom limbs and traumatic memories, and in more concrete and visceral terms. Morrison s art of story-telling involves an interactive conversation from multiple perspectives, demanding more attentive participation from her readers in deconstructing the meaning of her narratives. Studying her fiction from multiple perspectives suggests various ways of examining the pernicious impact of racism which produces various forms of dismemberment in her characters. This investigation does this without giving prominence to one perspective at the expense of other equally relevant modes of interpretation. Morrison s depiction of the trauma of racism on the psyche of her characters and the concomitant experiences of dismemberment has its roots in the historical and social realities of African Americans. The psychological impact of racism on Morrison s characters requires viewing through the lens of the historical and social realities that play a significant role. Morrison enacts racial alienation and dismemberment as complex processes; it is consequently important to look at her project from multiple perspectives. Examining the lived reality of African Americans from only one perspective ignores dismemberment in the light of the socio-political and historical realities of African American experience in the United States, and entails reconsideration of the physical, historical, social and psychological realities. This investigation argues for the importance of combining these historical and psychological, as well as sociocultural, analyses of Morrison s fiction in order to acquire a more rounded understanding of racism and its debilitating effects on the psyche. By situating Morrison s fiction within a variety of discourses, this study offers a multifaceted, highly interdisciplinary framework for a more rewarding analysis of her fiction.

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