

Perspectives of selfhood, in Jacqueline woodson's Mesmerizing Novel "*Brown Girl Dreaming*"

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Abstract: In this world if one is born under subjugation, then they are forced to lead a life of humiliation and degradation until death. Even after death it spreads like a disease generation after generation and spoils the name and fame even after reaching the zenith. The pain ,frustration,anguish anger, revolt felt by the oppressed section of the African society form the Afro-American writings. Jacqueline Woodson's "*Brown Girl Dreaming*" is largely about her early impulse towards narration with many of the painful aspects of her life. In her novel, the theme of segregation, racism and activismand Black power Movement is visible in and around.Woodson's choice to write in verse rather than prose reflects Jacqueline's early affinity for poems. Jacqueline's childhood dances between the North and the south' where both the areas were filled with slavery and mocked by the people. This paper clearly exposes the inner struggles faced by the author and how the cultural and social impact has been over challenged by the belief of hope and faith.

African American was under slavery for nearly of three hundred years. The slave narrative is a genre of literature that was written mostly between mid 1700's and late 1800's by African slaves in America The narratives were either written by slaves themselves or dictated by them to someone else who wrote their accounts. Negroes played an important part in American life, culture and history long before 1619.Africans came into new world by explorers. They explored New Mexico, and Arizona and travels through North America, then they settled in south America. Many slave narratives emerges and one among them are GustavasVassa, an African from Nigeria. The southern Africans who were under the clutches of slavery and the

free African from the North awakened the intellectual spirit of the nation. The narrative included many aspects of the slave's painful life journey. . They often spoke of the way they were captured in their homeland, Africa, The despicable conditions of the trade that transported like cattle to the Americas, their sale into slavery, their often atrocious treatment at the hands of their slave masters and finally, their escape from the evils of slavery whether legally or illegally, as runaways.

Afro-American Literature has been influenced by the African Diasporas heritage and got shaped it in American, and now, it has become a prominent body of literary tradition of American Literature. The diasporic person is at home either in another land or in their own land. So this can be termed as "Unhomed" in the most essential term. However, those who have been able to identify with their now host are blessed with a bi-cultural perception which enables them to write their autobiography with their wider angle. Their style and content of writings differ from which they adapt new country life and tend to write about the people and events they perceive. Writers of all ages highlight the need for the moralistic approach in literature. The primary intention of didactic writings is to teach and to read through morals or motifs. Ancient philosophers like plato and Horace gave significance to morals in literature. Didactic writers accentuate the value of ethics in their works.

American writings began with the work of English adventurers and colonists in the new world chiefly for the benefit of readers in the mother country. However, the early American writings were based on European models, treats on political and religious subjects including fiction and poetry. The two strong literary poets of the period is Anne Bradstreet and Edward, who wrote verse of high literary quality, and both were influenced by the English poets. European style of writings and its forms were often transferred as inferior, viewed by Critics. A genre of African American literature that developed in the middle of the Nineteenth century is slave narrative, about their own life. African-American history exhibits the emergency of the United States as an independent country, Late 18th and 19th century spiritual autobiographical writers emerged in writings were published by some authors such as James

Gronniosas, John Marrant and George White. These spiritual authors left out of the study of African American due to the hindrance of some scholars with historical or sociological

documents. The movement towards the abolition of slavery was born. Restriction of slave trading brought a change in 1840's and the spirit flowed to all parts of the world. In United States this brought a complications and leads to the long lasting war. Though the declaration of Independent proclaimed that "all men are all equal" the discrimination rises its head through the color of skin. In the early age of 19th century the African American literature tends to focus the role of Africans Americans within the larger American society and its issues such as racism, religion, culture freedom etc.

The Civil war and the Harlem Renaissance brought new attention to African -American Literature. Among them is the poet of Langston Hughes first received poetry collection in the 1922 poetry collection *The book of American Negro poetry* and Hurston the most influencial writer during the period and there exist a number of well-known writers such as Jean Toomer, Dorothy West, Countee Cullen, Wallace Thurman, etc. The Large migration was began during world war I, raised its high points in world war II, During this period, migrated settled in Northern cities like Chicago were they found factories to work and other sector of economy. This migration produced a free air of experience of independence as well as writings. The prominent writer of Afro-American writings are James Baldwin who is best known for his novel *Go Tell it on the mountain* Gwendolyn Brooks who won the first Pulitzer prize for *Annie Allen*. Among this Jacqueline Woodson is an award-winning author of young adult books was born on Feburary 12, 1963 in Columbus, Ohio. She was raised and educated in Greenville, South Carolina, and Brooklyn, New York. Woodson graduated with B.A. in English and worked in Newyork City as a drama therapist for runaways and homeless children. Woodson often writes about characters that feel out of place and the difficulties that young people face. She lives in Brooklyn with her Partner and two children.

Ms. Woodson knew she wanted to become a writer when she began reading and writing, and she loved to tell stories with her friends and family. She has written 32 books varying in genre over the years. The most genre of her writings are general fiction, realistic fiction, historical fiction, verse novel, and multicultural picture books. She received many laurel by awards such as coretta Scott King Award, The Newberry Medal, National Book Award, ALA Best Book prize etc. She addresses the importance of Multicultural diversity and how important it is for us. After completing her graduation she went to work for Kirchoff-Wohlberg, a children

packaging company. She helped to write the California standardized reading test and caught the attention of a Liza Pulizer-voges, a children book agent at the same company. Although the partnership did not work out, it did get her first manuscript out of a drawer. She then enrolled in Bully Gable's children's book writing class at the New school, where Bene Willoughby, an editor at Delacorte, heard a reading from Last Summer with Maizan and requested the manuscript. Delacorte bought the manuscript, but Willoughby left the company before editing it and So Wendy Lamb took over and saw Woodson's first six books published.

Woodson's youth was split between South Carolina and Brooklyn. In her with Jennifer M. Brown she remembered, The south was so lush and so slow moving and so much about community. The city was thriving and fast-moving and electric. Brooklyn was so much more diverse: on the block where she grew up, there were German people, people from the Dominican Republic, people from Puerto Rico, African-Americans from the south, Caribbean Americans, Asians. When asked to her about the literary influences in an interview with journalist Hazel Rochman, Woodson responded:

Two major writers for me are James Baldwin and Virginia Hamilton. It blew me away to find out Virginia Hamilton was a sister like me. Later Nikki Giovanni had a similar effect on me. I feel that I learned how to write from Baldwin. He was onto some future stuff, writing about race and gender long before people were comfortable with those dialogues. He would cross class lines all over the place, and each of his characters was remarkably believable. I still pull him down from my shelf when I feel stuck.

Other early influences included are Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye and Sula, and the work of Rosa Guy as well as her high school English teacher, Mr. Miller, Louise Meriwether too. Jacqueline woodson has in turn, influenced many other writers, including Anna, who credits her as being her first writing teacher. she also teaches teens at the National Book Foundation's summer writing camp where she co-exist the annual anthology of their combined work.

Jacqueline had published more than thirty novels and won many medals and awards. Her stories often told through poems, confront issues like sexual identity, sexual abuse, faith, race, drug, segregation etc. Her latest book *brown girl dreaming* is a memoir in free verse. Here

Woodson sketches a thoughtful portrait of herself as a girl. When Woodson writes her history, she broadens her scope, her family history is America history. Woodson's book manages to tie in so many events in African-American history. Woodson doesn't skirt issues that others might want to avoid and also she grew up in pivotal times for the country, and in places where she experienced a kind of passive aggressive racism that exist even today. Slowly the writer Jacqueline Woodson develops with a love of words hinting at the person.

In June 2015 Woodson was named as the young people's poet Laureate by the Poetry foundation. She started her career as a writer when she was chosen to be the literary editor of a magazine in the fifth grade, eventually three books helped her to make her to writer, *The Bluesteye* by Toni Morrison, *Daddy was a Number Runner* by Louise Meriwether, and *Ruby* by Rose Guy. Before reading these, her featuring books in the perspective is that only the works by William Shakespeare constituted valid literature. By reading these three books, Woodson saw parts of herself and her life and realized that books could be about people like her and she wanted to write them. Black women do not limit their vision as a writer. It enhances their vision and enlarges the view of the world. They have the ability to understand the weakness and the complexities and potential of its humanity. They view the world with the inner vision as Toni Morrison in *Beloved* says, "Their knowing is deep. Black women are the touchstone by which all that is human can be measured". (10)

Jacqueline Woodson's novel *Brown girl Dreaming* was an autobiography of an author written in verse. Her writings made her fame throughout the world by receiving the National Book Award. Each and every poem in the novel is both emotionally charged as she searches a place in this world. It begins with the entrance of the author into the world, in the chaotic background (ie) On August 28, 1963 the March on Washington took place and nearly 200,000 people both black and white in protest, and on this particular day the famous leader Martin Luther Jr gave his famous speech "I Have a dream". The novel clearly exposes that Jacqueline was born on February 12, 1963 in Columbus, Ohio, just six months before.

I am born on Tuesday at University Hospital
Columbus, Ohio,
USA...
A country caught

Between Black and White. (1)

Jacqueline Woodson was fully aware of racial divisions even from her childhood . An important thread of the writing is the exploration of how Jacqueline's relationship to memory changes as she grows up. It focuses on the experience of growing up as an African-American child during 1960's and early 1970a period of intense energy and organization surrounding questions of race and racial justice the 60s were a turning point for race in America.

I am born brown-skinned, black-haired
and wide-eyed.

I am born Negro her and colored there(3)

. The writer's great grandparent was under the custody of white people and worked hard from dawn till dusk. There mind was suppressed by the whites, obeying the orders, sacrificing the feeling , emotions, suppressing the desire of freedom. With pain, she recalls the ancestryof her family. "The woodsons are one of the few Black families"(5). Racial Prejudice and legacy of slavery also result in economic disadvantages for woodson's family. For example, when MaryAnn must go back to work, the only job available to her as a black woman is only to do the cleaning in the house of whites and it is one of the menial job which will not be paid well. She remembers the work done by her ancestors too:

my great-great-grandparents
worked the deep rich land
unfree
dawn till dusk (1)

Her ancestors were slaves from south Carolina, where the Civil Rights Movements where all across the south. Jacqueline's parents Ann Irby and Jack Austin Woodson both are black. At that time Martin Luther King Jr, is preparing for a march on Washington. John F Kennedy was the president of America. Malcolm X is a talk all over the country. With in the context of a greater African-American history and struggle she had experienced the slavery and racism along with her family members

In Birmingham, Alabama, Martin Luther King Jr.

Is planning a march on Washington, where

John F. Kennedy is president.

In Harlem, Malcolm X is standing on a soapbox

talking about a revolution.(3)

Mary Ann, mother of Jacqueline speaks not only of the appearance but of anything that may make Jackie different from everyone else. In a family full of doctors, lawyers and Professionals, Jackie wants to become a writer, something different from everyone. Baby Jacqueline's hands "curl into fists" shows symbolically that she is able to change the entire situation of the world. Nelsonville is a primarily black community in Greenville, Mary Ann reminds Jackie that her ancestor William Woodson, was the only black child in all whiteclass and that Jackie will too face a similar situation. Like Martin Luther and Malcolm X she too have a deep faith over her country.

Deep in my heart, I do believe

That we shall overcome someday (4)

Jacqueline's grandfather tells them that people are marching in the south because they were supposed to be free in 1863. When slavery ended, it never ends in south Carolina, she says "Where brown people still aren't allowed to sit"(72). Their grandfather says that Africans Americans must be ready to die on all occasions. All the siblings imagine the horror of death. She believes that people from different circumstances and backgrounds can co-exist, and that will be especially possible in the future when more people can comfortably interact and intermarry. She had a concept that colors should be kept separate. Also, Jacqueline's mother leaves all the three siblings under the care of grandparents she moves towards Newyork,city, Hope, Odella, and Jacqueline's only consolation is having trust with God.

"In time

Maybe

Every thing will fade to gray"(293)

The final two poems of the book represents the climax of the the story, it focuses the empowering herself to make strong choices based on the varied influences in her life.

"I believe in the city and the south"(317)

Oppression and sexual exploitation was caused to the black slaves especially to the female characters. The slaves are unable to talk back for fear of physical harm that she is indeed owned by her husband. Both use their fright of sexuality to pry themselves from their situation. Even if they are free of the chains of slavery, but still are affected by the stigmas attached to slavery. Black men and women are viewed as lowly beings, and often treated as beastly act and

isolated like a caged animal in their own suffering and guilt. Even the husband treats the black women with inhuman making to do all the housework

Ms. Woodson writes with a sure understanding of the thoughts of young people, offering a poetic, eloquent narrative that is not simply a story . . . but a mature exploration of grown-up issues and self-discovery. The writer's passion for stories and storytelling permeates the memoir, explicitly addressed in her early attempts to write books and implicitly conveyed through her sharp images and poignant observations seen through the eyes of a child. Woodson's ability to listen and glean meaning from what she hears lead to an acute understanding of her surroundings, friends, and family and her perspective on the volatile era in which she grew up is thoughtfully expressed in powerfully effective verse. With exquisite metaphorical verse Woodson gives a patchwork of her life experience that covers readers with warmth and sensitivity no child should miss. This should be on every library shelf.

Jacqueline places black history, racism and African-American children and young adult literature in wider American context: by revisiting African-American history from its dawn modern times throughout the novel, exposing the importance and their values of the black people. Through her story-telling the writer creates vital historical link between present and black generations. In doing so the writer offers black people a possibility to have mingle with the society and to realize themselves. Woodson cherishes her memories and shares them with a graceful lyricism; her lovingly wrought vignettes of country and city streets will linger long after the page is turned. *brown girl dreaming* received 2016 National Book Award for young people's literature. It weaves together Woodson's memories of a childhood split between North and South, city and country, the world of her Jehovah's Witness upbringing, and her secular surroundings. The Civil Rights movement provides the backdrop to Woodson's patchwork of images, offering readers a child's perspective on what it means to grow up black in America.

The novel clearly exposes the suppression made by the whites in the life of the young minds. The loss of the young ones and being alone in among the cruel society and looking after the siblings is an adventure for the thirteen old year young Adult and how the inner conflict prick at her. The entire writings of the author clearly mention about the life of immigrants who live in the other countries and places become a victim of the color discrimination or racial discrimination. It moves in describing the modern movement of “Existentialism “and “humanism”. African American is explored and the crucial aspect of Jacqueline Woodson

literary representation is the conceptual portrayal of history .The chapter explains how the writer achieves her artistic quest and how she acts as a true representative of American reality. The chapter ends with the note of African American literature need to be viewed in the light of psychoanalytical perspective.

Woodson also explores the social etymology of the term the chapter implores the details of justifiable imperatives of human values. Woodson's description of class and occupational stratification within the black community was marvelous. What is the view of the Latin American towards the young Adult?. How the European countries and United States had freed themselves.The history of slavery and the import of Africans as slaves to America in relation to the circumstances that paved the way for the emergence of African American writersdiscussed in the novel. Jacqueline Woodson penned with the fulfilled psyche of hope. All the protagonists though suffers and struggles throughout the novel, provides the fresh air in life and feels comforted by hope-because hope is all around.

African culture is portrayed as a period of transformation .Critical evaluation of the theme is illustrated by the textual references. The artistic journey of the protagonist was everlasting inspiration and encouragement. This dissertation of white paper clearly willing to explain the conflicts or the problem of the young adult, to tackle the situation, to overcome problems in the light of Post colonial literature, it also ready to emphasis on the current condition and its value and to evaluate, promote and support the most widespread availability possible of this literature to American youth.

“Things may Change” is an expectation that most Afro-Americans believe for the past years. “One day the sun will shine brightly” is the hope which the people expects daily. This paper is also an example for the youngsters to dream for the better world and to overcome the challenges in life. Not only dreams but also strive which will lead oneself to a successful path.

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