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## Analyzing discrimination of gender identity in *Tar Baby* written by Toni Morrison

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### Abstract

One's self identity is as important as the requirement of food to survive. Without the identity the person stand nowhere either in the society or in the world. As the world is changing and women have also believed in having their own identity apart from being a mother, sister, and an obeying daughter. For centuries world run on the belief of dominating patriarchal society. We cannot just say that patriarchal domination ran only in the comparatively underdeveloped countries like India and other subcontinent states. This patriarchal domination and gender discrimination was also there in the so-called developed societies of that time in the Europe and other western countries. Social evils like caste discrimination, gender discrimination and caste and color discrimination was present with the beginning and the evolution of the human societies. Patriarchal societies have given least importance to the woman's identity.

**Keywords:** gender discrimination, women's identity, patriarchal domination

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### Introduction

The story of the novel *Tar Baby* explores the problems, oppressions, and discrimination in the lives of Black people. Though these Black people are living in the advanced countries like America, England, and some parts of Europe but they have to live with the narrow mindedness of the White people. The writer of the novel, Toni Morrison, herself comes from the Black family who is living in America. She has raised the color and gender discrimination issues symbolically in her novels. Her different style of writing and bringing out the social issues stand her out from the league of this genre. There are many diaspora writers who wrote about all these issues with their self experiences. Tar as a bond material keeps the things bounded together. In the novel, the protagonist, Jadine works like a tar to keep the family together. The phrase *Tar Baby* is also symbolically used by the White people for the children of the Black family. Jadine, the protagonist, is a Black female with attractive features. She is a model and tries have her own identity in the society. She loves the boy named Son who also comes from the Black family. The story reveals the struggle and pain of Jadine and Son who come to America in search of living a good life together.

Son in the beginning behaves badly with Jadine. He tries to come near to Jadine and smells her hair. Jadine feels offended with the behavior of Son and feels that smelling someone like this is the behavior of animals. This behavior reflects the patriarchal dominant behavior of a man towards a woman.

Ahmed Seif Eddine Nefnouf, Ph.D. candidate, reveals in his research posted in IJELLH that "*When Jadine is in her room laying in the fur coat, she thinks about her blackness she finds the black men standing in her room. After a long conversation about clothes and jewelry he wants to do sexual action with her, but she refuses and says: She stood with her back to him, rubbing her wrists. She said: "I'll have to tell Valerian."*(TB, ch4, p93) Thus, means that she controlled by white male the owner of the house Jadine wants to tell him about everything that Son did with him. She is a woman and cannot control

*herself because of her social position in this house unlike Paris."*

This indecent behavior of the character Son reveals that male-dominated society takes women as an object of sexual gratification only. Plus the reaction of Jadine reflects that how a woman feels in the adverse situation. Though she feels offended but she could not take action by herself and tells Son that she will complain about this behavior to her master who is White. So this thought reflects that she cannot take action by herself.

There are many incidents which reflect the oppression of Blacks, especially women. As the story progresses, Son and Jadine spend time together and slowly get attracted to each other and fell in love. They decide to get back to America seeking a love life and living together. When they come to America, Son notices prostitutes in one of the streets and most of them are Black. He feels ashamed of this sight as he is also Black. Women get into selling their body just get bread and butter for them and their family members. Though Jadine comes to America to lead a happy life with Son but still there is a hitch and confusion in her mind as she was leaving her own country and identity to live with someone.

### Conclusion

The writer of the novel explores the pain and agony of a Black women. Being an African Black woman, Toni herself experienced the oppressions done to the Black people. Black women live in the state of fear of being treated badly. They also have to face the sexual misbehavior even by their own community. Despite all these odds, a woman wants to have her own identity in the society she lives in. Jadine loves a man and wants to spend her life with him but still she does not want to sacrifice her self-identity. She cannot compromise with the identity she own in the society. The story also reveals that if a woman decides to fight against the oppression and the evils of the society, she can do anything. They also have the right to live with proud and self respect.

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