

A slavery was a very  
harsh and horrible



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

A former President of the United States, Abraham Lincoln, once said “ I think that slavery is wrong, morally, socially and politically. I desire that it should be no further spread in these United States, and I should not object if it should gradually terminate in the whole Union”( “ Abraham Lincoln Quotes”).

A Nobel Prize winner, Toni Morrison, wrote a famous novel called *Beloved*. One of the major subjects throughout this novel was slavery. There are many things that occurred throughout this novel that are very unsettling, most of which had to deal with the treatment of African Americans.

In chapter one, Mr. Garner, a former slave owner, told his fellow slave owners, “ ‘ Y’all got boys,’ he told them. ‘ Young boys, old boys, picky boys, stropin boys. Now at Sweet Home, my niggers is men every one of em. Bought em thataway, raised em thataway’ ” (12). This statement shows how slaves were treated. Mr. Garner buys these slaves and owns them as his property.

Toni Morrison talked about how slaves were treated throughout the novel. For example, they were chained together during slave trades. The passage where Morrison described the way the slaves “ chain-danced over the fields” symbolizes that slavery was a very harsh and horrible way to live, and living in chains without freedom dehumanized the way a regular human should be treated (Morrison 128). Slavery was a very harsh and horrible way to live, and living in chains degraded African Americans from humans. They were not treated with any respect, or any proper care.

The slaves were chained together for most of their life. In the novel, “ forty-six slaves would be yanked by the chain that bound them and no telling who

or how many would be killed”(Morrison 128-129). They were treated like animals without emotions, living day-by-day without knowing when it is going to be their last. The dehumanization of these slaves did not happen by accident. The system of slavery could not produce any other results.

These slaves lived a constrained life lacking in free will. After being chained and being treated like animals for their entire lives, they inevitably begin to lose what makes them a human. This is also because the masters believed them to be close to animals in the first place. They would be chained together like cattle is whenever they are being transported. In the eyes of the slave owners, the slaves were not as human as they were. Not only is this how the slave owners thought, but after a long period of time the slaves began to believe it themselves. As they chain-danced across the field, they started singing a variety of songs.

According to the novel, some of the songs they sang were “ the women they knew; the children they had been...lovingly of graveyards and sisters long gone” (Morrison 128). Singing and trying to have a positive energy even though they were treated like animals symbolizes how badly they wanted to act and be treated like actual human beings. They wanted to live a normal life with their families instead of being a slave. The singing of music also represented emotions, passion, and memories. The singing of these songs was a way to express their true feelings.

Nevertheless, they could not express themselves the way they really wanted to. They had to “ garble the words so they could not be understood; tricking the words so their syllables yielded up other meanings” (128). They sang

these songs because it humanized them. They get the feeling of a normal human being. However, if they were to get caught by their master singing these songs they could be killed, being whipped brutally or forced to do extra work out in the field.

They would again be treated like animals. There was no care for their health; they walked for miles in the hot sun and lived in rough huts sleeping on a dirt floor. These slaves had enough of living in chains and being treated unfairly their entire life. Therefore, the main character in the novel, Sethe, kills her own children.

Sethe is not willing to let her children end up re-enslaved and would rather see them dead. Sethe believes that if she kills her children, they would have a better life living in heaven than living in the earthly hell of being slaves. That is how dehumanized the slaves felt after being treated like animals all their lives. Even if Sethe wanted to keep her daughter, baby Suggs, she would not be the perfect role model for her kid because in the novel, there is no such thing as a family.

The slaves cannot be married nor are they allowed to be mothers or fathers to their children. Families were split up and slaves had no control and they could not protect the ones that they loved. Slave masters enforced this rule because it helps dehumanize the slaves. If they were to have a lovely and happy family they would feel more human and that's something the slave masters did not want. Furthermore, the slaves adopted a way that prevented them from being hurt by the breaking up of families. They learned to form a protective barrier against it and the barrier they created is to not

get close or expect to be able to protect the ones they love. In addition, the roots of slavery are carried over to modern America in some African Americans families.

Some African American families still have problems with family structure and slavery can be held accountable for this because of the way they were treated and the splitting of families as slaves. In conclusion, they were many key points about slavery in the novel. It brings to light many things that are not well known. The novel also helps to show the roots of African Americans and how those roots still affect African American lives today. The novel indicated the cruelties inherent in slavery, how they were being treated like animals and being dehumanized as a person.

They lived in chains without freedom for their entire lives. They had to work majority of the day in blazing sun hot, barely getting any food. This was dehumanizing the slaves and that is not how a regular human should be treated.