



**HYBRID SUBJECTS IN MORRISONIAN UNIVERSE: THE
RECONSTRUCTION OF BLACK IDENTITY IN
TONI MORRISON'S *A MERCY AND JAZZ***



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ABSTRACT

The concept of identity has been over the years influenced by several ideas and movements which have contributed in creating the perception people have on identity. According to Stuart Hall in Identiteetti, some of these movements include the “Reformation and Protestantism” where individual conscience was separated from the church institutions and placed under the direct gaze of God, and “Renaissance Humanism” which placed humans at the center of the universe (30-31). However, the main influences for the change were Charles Darwin’s biological classification of human beings (33-34) which is traceable in contemporary definitions of the term. Quoting Hall in Questions of Cultural Identity, Lawrence Grossberg holds that identity “is a structured representation which only

*achieves its positive through the narrow eye of the negative. It has to go through the eye of the needle of the other before it can construct itself” (89). This argument indicates that identity construction is built on fundamental differences rather than on what the similarities between individuals are. It is within this framework that this paper sets out to investigate the construction of black identity in Toni Morrison’s *A Mercy and Jazz*. While using psychoanalysis as theoretical framework, the paper concludes that Morrisonian identity construction is communal and oppositional to the white community.*

KEYWORDS

construction, identity, hybrid, black