

The Jaguar and the Wound:

Materialism as a Dissociative Shield in Toni Morrison's *God Help the Child*

Joshiha Bell J. B.

Research Scholar, Department of English & Comparative Literature,

Madurai Kamaraj University.

Email: belljoshiha@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This research paper examines how Toni Morrison's final book, *God Help the Child*, explores the relationship between childhood trauma and materialism in the twenty-first century. The study highlights Bride's character and examines whether her material success compensates for her psychological healing or erases the pain that she experienced in childhood. The present research employs Somatic Trauma Theory to comprehend Bride's 21st-century physical and psychological struggles, as the theory focuses on the somatic arrest that Bride felt while navigating through the present. This acts as a dissociative buffer for the current culture and explains the materialistic limitations in the healing process. It also takes a step forward to know that Bride's actual bodily shrinkage in the novel is a magical device or a biological protest cognitive avoidance.

Keywords: Somatic truth, Dissociative shield, Materialism, Psychology, Healing, Identity.

\*\*\*\*\*