

Vidhigya Challenger Series
Daily Practice Sheet 28
Logical Reasoning

Toni Morrison has often expressed disappointment with critical analyses of her art. In an interview with Thomas LeClair she said, "I have yet to read criticism that understands my work or is prepared to understand it. I don't care if the critic likes or dislikes it. I would just like to feel less isolated. It's like having a linguist who doesn't understand your language tell you what you're saying". To my reasoning, Morrison is calling for an analysis that complements the art, one that is grounded in the artist's culture, language, worldview, and milieu. My goal with this essay is to attempt to address Morrison's critical challenge by using an Africana theoretical perspective centered on a force called Àjé to interpret the intricacies of the mother-daughter relationship in *Beloved*.

Àjé is a Yoruba word and concept that describes a spiritual force that is thought to be inherent in Africana women; additionally, spiritually empowered humans are called Àjé. The stately and reserved women of Àjé are feared and revered in Yoruba society. Commonly and erroneously defined as witches, Àjé are astrally-inclined human beings who enforce earthly and cosmic laws, and they keep society balanced by ensuring that human beings follow those laws or are punished for their transgressions. These women, honored as "our mothers", "my mother", and the elders of the night, are recognized as the owners and controllers of everything on Earth. Àjé's suzerainty comes from the fact that it is considered the origin of all earthly existence, and women of Àjé are euphemistically called "Earth".

(Source: Toni Morrison's *Beloved* by Teresa N Washington)

1. Which of the following can be inferred from the passage?

- (a) African society is matriarchal.
- (b) Toni Morrison is an uptight woman.
- (c) Literary Criticism world is bereft of competent critics.
- (d) Supernatural is a part of African culture and perceptions.

2. Identify the assumption in the passage.

- (a) Morrison is calling for an analysis that complements her art, one that is grounded in the artist's culture, language, worldview, and milieu.
- (b) Using an African theoretical perspective centered on a force called Àjé is the only way to conduct a competent critical analysis of Morrison's work.
- (c) By using an Africana theoretical perspective centered on a force called Àjé, the author will be able to do a competent critical analysis of Morrison's work.
- (d) The author will definitely be able to fulfill his goal of a competent analysis of Morrison's art.

3. Which of the following figure of speech has been used in the passage?

- (a) Analogy
- (b) Antithesis
- (c) Metaphor
- (d) Onomatopoeia

4. Which of the following is NOT true about Àjé?

- (a) It is a spiritual force.
- (b) It is used to describe necromancers.
- (c) It is used to describe spiritually inclined human beings.
- (d) Àjé are women

5. Which of the following could be a logical continuation of the passage?

- (a) The author would discuss Àjé's wider cultural significance across African nations.
- (b) The author would discuss some of Morrison's other disappointments with the critics of her art and would address the same.
- (c) The author would discuss the relation of daughters with women perceived as Àjé.
- (d) The author would talk about other symbols related to Àjé.

Answers & Explanations

1. Ans. (d)

Sol. The answer is option (d) as the concept of Àjé talks about a spiritual force, witches and spiritually powered humans. All these can come under the umbrella of supernatural. Option (a) cannot be conclusively inferred. Option (b) is irrelevant.

2. Ans. (c)

Sol. The answer is option (c), as, if this were not true, why would the author attempt to do an analysis based on the African theoretical concept of Àjé. Option (a) is not an assumption because it is a restatement. Option (b) is wrong as 'only' makes it too particular. Option (d) is wrong as the author herself/himself states that she/he is attempting an analysis and success is bound to follow. It is partially correct as it is missing on the major use of the spiritual force Àjé that forms the base of his analysis. Hence (d).

3. Ans. (a)

Sol. The answer is option (a). Refer to the line by Morrison: "It's like having a linguist who doesn't understand your language tell you what you're saying".

4. Ans. (b)

Sol. The answer is option (b) as in the passage it says, "Àjé is erroneously used to describe witches."

5. Ans. (c)

Sol. The answer is option (c) as the author in the passage explicitly mentions his purpose behind writing this essay: "My goal with this essay is to attempt to address Morrison's critical challenge by using an Africana theoretical perspective centered on a force called Àjé to interpret the intricacies of the mother-daughter relationship in Beloved."