TONI MORRISON: A QUEEN OF QUEENS: A STUDY OF HER SELECT WORKS

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DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.24327/ijrsr.2020.1108.5490

INTRODUCTION

This introduction gives us the important subjects of culture, slavery, concept of freedom and equality, conflict between the blacks and the whites, racial discrimination, self-destruction, self-defeat, familial relationship in all her select African American works in a unique way.

Toni Morrison

The Noble Prize Winning Toni Morrison is an American scholar, author, editor and well-known Professor in English literature. And, to winning the Nobel Prize in 1993, she was also awarded the Pulitzer Prize for her novel *Beloved* in 1987. She is the best known for writing novels with characters, epic themes with brilliant dialogues. A lot of her novels dealt with black women, defining their roles and striving to survive in a male dominated Afro-American society. Morrison’s novels are also often influenced by her inheritance of the African American culture related to the Afro-American society.

The study of *The Bluest Eye*:

**Quest for violence and oppression in The Bluest Eye**

*The Bluest Eye* examines the guilt, and the sense of hopelessness of Breedlove in an interesting and impressive way. The author remarks: “…that of all hope, fear, lust, love and grief, nothing remains but Pecola and the unyielding earth.” (*Beloved*, p.9). The rape of a daughter by her own father reveals violence and oppression, self-disgust and self-hatred that expresses and seeks liberation for the young girl, Pecola Breedlove. Yet the real violence and oppression remains unchanged in the community.
Quest for violence and oppression in Sula

Violence is dangerous within the community. Many critics have enumerated its consequences. Moreover, violence among the blacks leads not only to the form of direct suffering but sometimes to accept the culture values in the community.

Quest for violence and sacrifice in Song of Solomon

In Song of Solomon violence is portrayed less active than in other works. Violence develops in the white community and sometimes the blacks forsake their social and cultural values in the society without expecting any benefits. Violence leads to sacrifice, Pilate, is unable to defend and becomes the victim and punished for the wrong doing of others in the society.

Quest for violence and cultural discrimination in Tar Baby

Tar Baby of Toni Morrison examines the physical violence, child abuse, depravity and racial discrimination in detail. This novel, Tar Baby, evaluates cultural violence and racial discrimination of the whites and the blacks in details.

Quest for freedom and equality in Beloved

The dominant Whites violates, denies freedom to the black people and they suffer enormously in the community. Toni Morrison remarked: “human characteristics on the left, animal ones on the right.” (Beloved, p.193). Freedom and equality are denied to the black people in the United States and this is examined by Toni Morrison with reference to the novel, Beloved.

Quest for the concept of racial discrimination in Beloved

Toni Morrison’s novels creates interest among the readers. G.Lakshmanarasaiyah observes: “Her novels reveals vicious genocide effects of racism.”(IJAS, p.7). The mind of African American is clearly examined by Toni Morrison with her conspicuous writing of ability and skill.

Blackness is connected with racial discrimination and violence. It is effectively presented by Toni Morrison in his novel Beloved. The search for blackness is a dominant character in which it leads to women’s oppression over the blacks and by the whites. It reveals the whites domination over the blacks time and again. Peach says: “With each novel Morrison has retained the capacity to take us by surprise.”(CCE, p.22).

Quest for the study of slavery in Beloved

The quest for the study of slavery is examined by Toni Morrison in Beloved. The slave women were considered inferior to the whites during the postmodern period in America. Their position and status in the community is very low and they have to face many problems in the society. Morrison ends the novel with a word in Beloved suggesting: “the past is lasting presence, wanting to be resurrected.”(K.Davis, Postmodern, p.251).

The brutality of slavery and the division of black female and male characters leads to confusion and chaos in the community. Morrison examines this situation: “Unspreakable thoughts to be left unspoken”(Beloved, p.235). The women characters in Beloved are treated as a mother, daughter, and sister in the community. These women characters are considered: “The voiceless black subaltern back into the history.”(K.S Kwang, p.154). The black women have no freedom, equality, and human rights in the African American community. The novel, Beloved presents cruelty and barbarism often meted out by the slaves. They were treated as animals in the community.

Quest for the study of Women

The novel, Tar Baby, gives us a microcosm of the black, white women relationship in African American society with rich white people, hardworking black people, a woman torn between both worlds. In Tar Baby, Toni Morrison gives us women in different classes, education levels, and colors who interact with each other according to their roles in society.

All the select works of Toni Morrison examines interesting perspectives with an excellent narrative techniques and style. Breedlove is discriminated from her own community because she is very poor; Sula’s family is neglected because they lack money and class; Deads is look down upon other who has less money. This social status and class divisions are examined by Toni Morrison in all her select works in a remarkable way.

The Bluest Eye gives us a girl possessed with the ‘Western ideal beauty’; Sula shows women ‘incomplete’ with each other; Song of Solomon incorporates both ideas into two disturbing women, Ruth and Hagar. Toni Morrison’s search for the black women young and old are capable of self-destruction and self-defeat. The self - destruction is apparent from the beginning of The Bluest Eye opens with Dick and Jane story. The passing down of self-destruction from mother to daughter is a continuous process and still happen, until the women realize they are destroying themselves and their community and met their consequences in society. Jazz is a self-destructive woman. Jazz is an extension of Beloved which deals with African American movements of slavery between the blacks and the whites in a unique way.

CONCLUSION

Toni Morrison’s select works examines the themes of equality and freedom, culture, racism, slavery, self-destruction, self-defeat in detail. She has been considered one of the most prominent writers of 20th Century and has been acknowledged as a Queen of Queens, for getting reputation in writing African American works in English literature.

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How to cite this article:

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