

Usage of love in "song of solomon" by toni morrison essay sample

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Usage of Love in “ Song of Solomon” by Toni Morrison Essay Sample

The main goal for an author is to grab the reader’s attention and keep them interested in what they are reading. This pushes the author to write with a theme that all readers can relate with. The usage of love is a perfect example. It allows readers of all ages to relate on a personal level and become intimate with the novel. Different pieces of literature do this in various ways. In Toni Morrison’s Song of Solomon, love was used to accelerate and progress the plot of the story. Guitar’s love for his race, Hagar’s obsession for Milkman, and Milkman’s love of his ancestors are ways that Morrison was able to use the theme of love in her novel.

As a child Guitar develops a violent dislike for sugary foods when he is given divinity by a white woman after his father’s death in a sawmill accident. This early experience leads Guitar to become a member of the “ Seven Days,” whose mission is to kill selected white people in the distinct way in which black men were killed. The Seven Days claim that their actions are justified because their reasoning is one greater than anyone could understand: the love of the black race. When Milkman questions this love by suggesting that their retaliation will only increase the general white hostility toward blacks, Guitar asks: “ What good is a man’s life if he can’t choose what to die for?...It is about love. What else but love?” (Song of Solomon pg. 223) By saying this, Guitar is explaining how everything he does is for love, and for the love of his people. He is telling Milkman that what he is doing this for the big picture. He is killing, but he is killing so that the black race can continue without being

over-run or destroyed. Guitar loves his race, and to him that is all that matters. (www. angelfire. com)

Even before Milkman finds out about Guitar and his eerie way of love, Milkman's life is threatened by a different, but equally misguided love. At age twelve, Milkman and his cousin, Hagar, get sexually involved. Milkman's love becomes vitally important to Hagar, but then he breaks off their relationship one Christmas by sending her money and a thank-you note.

"...that sent Hagar spinning into a bright blue place where the air was thin and it was silent all the time, and where people spoke in whispers or did not make sounds at all, and where everything was frozen except for an occasional burst of fire in her chest." (pg. 99)

Hagar draws her very existence from Milkman, and can only love herself in the reflected light of his false love. When Milkman breaks up with Hagar, it causes her world to be thrown upside down, and her love mutates into an impotent rage that rules her body and soul. Hagar feels so hurt that she is determined to kill Milkman because if she cannot have him, then no one could. Luckily, Hagar was never able to follow through with the killing. When Milkman leaves, Hagar turns the attention onto herself and eventually dies of heartbreak when she realizes that Milkman is, "...never going to like my hair." (pg. 316) (www. sparknotes. com)

Milkman's love and desire to fly mirrors one of the foremost fantasies of any child or dreamer. The child's yearning to fly is expressed when Milkman (as a young child) loses all interest in himself when he realizes that he cannot fly.

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Milkman quickly regains his confidence when he unlocks the mystery of his grandfather and recognizes that a he was able to fly, " and he began to whoop and dive and splash and turn.'He could fly! You hear me? My great-granddaddy could fly! Goddam!' He whipped the water with his fists, then jumped straight up as though he too could take off." (pg. 328) For Milkman, knowing his great- grandfather could fly made him ecstatic. The purpose of his trip had been fulfilled even though he did not find the gold, but learning that his great-grandfather could fly was gold in itself. Through those moments of happiness, Milkman realized and felt his true roots, and even if it was for that short moment all of his questions had been answered and he loved his great-grandfather, and he loved the fact that he could fly. (www.sparknotes.com)

Milkman had begun his journey in a three-piece beige suit, and had left without worry for his belongings. He had found satisfaction in life, his history, his family connection, and love. He had literally lost almost everything he started his trip with, but had figuratively gained so much. Guitar continued his hunt for Milkman, Hagar had died of a broken heart, and Milkman had finally found his roots and learned that his great-grandfather could fly. These three factors had such a big role in the novel as Toni Morrison used the theme of love to depict and portray the hardships and celebrations along Milkman's journey.