

Beloved analysis essay sample



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Morrison uses the multifaceted and ghostly character of Beloved as a means of revealing the many facets of other characters – and providing insights into their personas and their trepidations. With the corporeal manifestation of Beloved's ghost, Morrison is able to intertwine the present happenings of Sethe, Denver and Paul D, with past events, and by doing so, Beloved becomes a catalyst in their changes and transitions.

Physically and contradictorily, Beloved appears both young and old, and weak and strong. She possesses “ new skin, lineless and smooth, including the knuckles of her hands,” (50) and “ her feet are like her hands, soft and new.”(52)

Like a child she loves sweet things and “ sugar could always be counted on to please her.” (55) Conversely, although young, she moves like an “ older one, holding on to furniture, resting her head in the palm of her hand as though it was too heavy for a neck alone.” (56)' Appearing weak with “ a hateful sickness if ever there was one,”(53) and hardly able to ‘ walk without holding on to something,” (56) she is seen by Paul D. picking “ up the rocker with one hand.”(56) Morrison uses these paradoxical facets of Beloved to expose different facets of others.

Prior to Beloved's physical appearance as a woman who “ walked out of the water” (49) and into the their lives, Sethe, Denver and Paul D, had all been living in a state of struggle . Sethe in denial of her past as a slave and her guilt for killing her baby Beloved, Denver immature, selfish, fearful of her mother, lonely and afraid to leave her own backyard even though she is eighteen years old, and Paul D. struggling to hold back his memories in a “

tobacco tin buried in his chest where a red heart used to be. It's lid rusted shut," (72) and " nothing in this world could pry it open." (114) Beloved's arrival at 124 however, changes their lives.

Beloved is obsessed with Sethe and needs her with a terrifying passion. She claims " I am Beloved and she is mine."(214) She sees herself as one with her mother and when she sees her face coming to her she claims " it was my face too." (214) Using childish naivety, and as " a ridiculously dependent child," (58) Beloved is able to speak inappropriate truths, which are able to break down Sethe's barriers to the past and she begins to work on her angst of killing her child and being a slave for most of her life, but she becomes completely trapped in the past, constantly reiterating her reasons for what she did and reliving the pain of slavery. Eventually, Beloved is able to overpower Sethe physically and cripple her emotionally.

Beloved hates Paul D. and after various maneuvers she uses sex to conquer him. He has endured slavery and incarceration but he is unable to resist when she tells him " I want you to touch me on the inside part," (116) and ' he didn't hear the whisper that the flakes of rust made either as they fell away from the seams of his tobacco tin." (117) Beloved has opened him to his feelings and the past, and he wonders if he should have lost his mind when Sixo did."

Just as beloved is obsessed with Sethe, Denver is obsessed with Beloved and consumes her own identity with that of Beloved. She " felt a little hurt ... that she was not the main reason for Beloved's return," (76) her " skin dissolved under" Beloved's stare, and she " floated near but outside her own body."

(118) When she thinks Beloved has disappeared, she cries “ because she has no self.” (123) Later however, Denver transcends from a timid, awkward girl, losing her Self in Beloved, to a self reliant woman, wherein she is able to reach out to the community for help and she remains to take care of her mother.

Morrison very cleverly manipulates the characters, invoking a sense that all are in reality reactions to the past and never really living in the present. She achieves this by intertwining different facets of their lives and those of Beloved. Each is comparable to a link in a chain but Beloved and her many facets, is analogous to the clasp that has the capacity open and fasten the links together.