

Toni morrison's recitatif

Literature



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The protagonist, Twyla and her friend Roberta, a black and a white respectively, recall their younger days in an orphanage named St. Bonny. But now they have been transported to a new social position where they plunge into the racial society. They both remember the friendly relation they experienced between the blacks and the whites in their orphanage. Both the whites and the blacks roamed together then: students, musicians, lovers, protesters (Morrison). But amidst these the racial consciousness was there. The incident of Maggie's fall was not in the mind of Twyla but when Roberta said that Maggie was not accidentally fallen but she was pushed down by the gar girls in St. Bonny, the racial discrimination factor came as the undercurrent in the story, even though, Maggie was presented as not that much black. In addition to this, the experience she has with the other women protesters in front of the school expands the experience further. The story which runs through the life of Twyla from her early days to womanhood details the development of a black lady in the white-dominated society. The story depicts how the whites look at the blacks and vice versa. The narrator recalls the visit of the mothers of Roberta and herself when they were in St. Bonny. When Roberta came to introduce Twyla and her mother, to her mother the behavior of the mother of Roberta was peculiar. She didn't greet others and as the narrator recalls, " She didn't say anything, just grabbed Roberta with her Bible- free hand and stepped out of line, walking quickly to the rear of it" (Morrison 5). The reaction of Mary, mother of Twyla by calling the mother of Roberta with " That bitch" is the racial response of each community. Further, the meeting of both these girls at the Howard Johnson's, the social positions, and the way of the attitude of Roberta is afflicting the racial differences in the mind of Twyla and she feels to be an outsider in the

<https://assignbuster.com/toni-morrison's-recitatif/>

educated, rich life of Roberta. The story depicts the married life and family of both the white and the black. The life of Roberta is seen as distorted whereas the family bond of Twyla is seen as strong and confirmative. So the story is the overall outlook on the racial elements that dominate in America. The short story depicts several other elements of these two communities. As Lucille P. Fultz puts, " In its concern with identity politics, this short story is self- reflexive." And further, the writer steps forward and speaks, " It deliberately foregrounds, obfuscates, and collapses difference" (Fultz 22). The two characters represent their race even though the race is not mentioned up in the story. Race is attributed to them and they carry with them the elements of race. It is through the lives of these characters the characteristics of both races are dealt with in the story. Both of these at their motherhood make the readers understand the attitudes of the mothers to their children which again is circled on the race in which they belong. So the short story is the traveling of one's racial elements from childhood to adulthood. Toni Morrison, through her short story, ' Recitatif,' expanded the Afro- American writing in dealing with ' differences' involved with the union of the white and the black. The encounter of the main characters, Twyla and Roberta, depicts differences involved with the white and the black races in America. Being a writer focusing on the condition of the black in America, Toni Morrison has contributed much to the studies of Afro American through this short story. Even though no racial remarks are on the major characters, it is evident that it is the racism that pushes the story to move forward. So the story, ' Recitatif' carries the racial differences and racial elements through the main characters, Twyla and Roberta, and further enables the readers to involve with the Afro American racial studies.