

Beloved by toni
morrison character
anaylisis essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

By cutting her child's throat, she is in an effort of taking and putting her children where they would be safe in such a society where he slavery was in practice. For her, this is the only and ultimate way of expressing her deep inner feelings as a subaltern but the question of who hears her voice arises on the oppressor's pare This paper will focus on the two important characters of Beloved by Toni Morrison and their behaviors from the perspective of post colonialism. Toni Morrison, born in 1931 , in Loraine, Ohio, is the first African-American novelist to win a Nobel Prize and Pulitzer Prize.

Her novels are well known for their themes about racial tension between whites and Africans, sexism and desire, violence, oppression and giggly detailed black characters which we will be studying deeper (Besotted, 1).

The story of Margaret Garner 1856 has an important role in building the plot of Beloved. Margaret Garner was a slave African-American woman in the years before the American Civil War in Kentucky. She, with her husband Robert Garner and her children, tried to flee.

They successfully crossed the frozen River of Ohio near Cincinnati in very cold temperatures but a group of slave owners found the family and before these slave holders captured them, Margaret killed her daughter with a butcher's knife and she also tried to kill ere other children but she was unsuccessful to do so. Since she was subject to the terms of Fugitive Slave Law of 1 850, which required that all escaped slaves were to be returned to their masters and all the officials and citizens of free states had to cooperate in this law, Margaret, upon being captured, was given back to her owner.

But her willingness to kill her own children to prevent from being returned to a life as a slave gained national attention in those years.

So, building the book on a real story brought success to *Beloved* and Toni Morrison (Dolores, 1). The story in the book is all about Sethe and her life through the years of plantation. It starts with her early childhood when she sees her own mother hanged. So, she is introduced to the cold face of the real world when she witnesses her own mother's being hanged.

At that time she is too young to realize what it means to be a slave and she could never imagine how much worse to be a women slave.

Then she is sold to Mr. and Mrs. Garner who behave their slaves as if they were their own children.

Slavery in their home is different from other slave holders. We can say it was symbolic by looking at their being so kind as to let Sethe wear a wedding dress and a kind of wedding organization in her wedding to one of the slaves called Whale. Everything goes fine until when Mr. Garner dies and Mrs.

. Granger's brother, the schoolteacher, comes to Sweet Home.

Actually it is when the inhuman face of slavery started showing itself in Granger's "Sweet Home". So the days started to be nightmare with the schoolteacher because of his inhumane racist attitudes towards slaves, and especially towards Sethe.

Although she is pregnant, one day she escapes from home after she is raped, sucked and whipped by the school teacher and his nephews. Now Seethe is to a little girl but a grown woman and she now realizes being a female is even more deepens the situation in this life as Speak says: “.. As you are poor, black, and female, you get it three ways” (294).

On her way to Baby Jugs, her mother-in-law, she passes the river just after when she gives birth and a white girl called Denver helps her so Seethe names the baby after Denver. In Denver, we see a different example of racism which is more humanly when compared with schoolteacher. She uses the term “ foal” for Seethe while helping which exemplifies even when helping you can see the traces of Denver, a white, seeing Seethe as inferior. When she reaches Baby Jugs, she spends 21 wonderful happy days with her children until when schoolteacher came to take her back to Sweet Home.

But she quickly takes her children to a hub near the house and tries to kill them all but she could only kill her daughter whom she calls Beloved by cutting her throat. Upon seeing this scene, schoolteacher calls her “ animal” which is another vivid example of Shiva’s thought of seeing the world through the discourse of the male leaders and Western world. In this case, it is the schoolteacher who symbolizes the West or Subject or oppressor and Seethe symbolizing the object, the subaltern or the oppressed. Then later on, Paul D who is an ex- slave that Seethe knows from plantation years comes and starts to live with Seethe.

And one day they find Beloved just in front of their house when they return from the town and Sethe sympathizes her and Beloved also starts living with them.

The story ends with Paul Ad's leaving Sethe upon learning about Settee's killing her own child and Beloveds going into the forest and not returning back and Denier's starting to work in Bodkin's service. As can be seen the very quick summary of the plot, calling a home "sweet" does not mean that this old Kentucky house is a livable place for slaves. For these colored people who live in Mr..

Granger's home, life is bondage and longing. They are like living deaths separated by color and class which can clearly be seen in the schoolteacher's racist attitudes. In this sweet home, as a colored slave you can be rented or loaned to other slave owners or be brought up, brought back, worn, stolen like a commodity or even seized, raped and whipped. Those who think themselves as the Subject to oppress the others, who are not like them in color and physical appearance, see themselves to have the right to perform all those cruelties and inhumanities on these subaltern objects.

So in her novel Morrison is trying to give a voice to the poor Sethe, whom Speak refers to in her essay, by narrating the traumatic and complex experiences of a black mother. As stated in the very beginning, this paper will study these concepts through the two important characters and their behaviors. Sethe How can we define Sethe? A black slave mother? Does

this summarize everything we are going to say about her? Of course these are never enough. As being a slave, she was beaten and raped many times.

As being a mother, he was not given her own right to feed her children.

As being a black woman, she was pushed into the loneliness by her husband in this male dominated colonized black society. She is a symbol of desperate mother who is stuck in slavery. After the schoolteacher came to "sweet" home, life became impossible to cope with and Seethe started to seek a way out.

When the schoolteacher and his nephews raped her and sucked her milk, even though she was pregnant, fleeing from the Granger's home seemed to be the only solution. She was beaten like an animal. She had no right to preserve her milk for her children.

She even was not capable of being a mother under slavery. Even her body was not hers.

The powerful oppressor saw her body as something to be exploited. Seethe was there to serve to the slave-owner's need in every sense. After she escaped and came to Baby Jugs home, she experienced 21 wonderful days with her children. So in a world where there is no slavery, she has a chance to be an individual. It was the only time when Seethe was happy and satisfied as a mother.

Then the schoolteacher with the slave catchers came to take her back.

And this was the time when Sethe practiced infanticide rather than giving her children to the slavery. Here we see Sethe is not only a commodity to take back as a servant but she is a female body which will give birth to new slaves. The Subject never sees her as a mother but like a machine which produces new slaves. And as a mother, this was what Sethe objected and she did not let her body to be used for such a purpose. In other words, Sethe is a victim of slavery but by not letting her children live and be subject to slavery, she tries not to become victimizer.

On the other hand, after she cut her daughter's neck with a handsaw, she was taken to prison for 6 months and we see that the very first thing she did after he was released was to sleep with a mason for engraving the word "Beloved" on the gravestone of her daughter. It is known that the world of oppressor sees her body like a commodity but here we witness her selling her own body. This "ten minutes for seven letters" trade of her body shows how hard to be poor and black and mother under slavery (Changeovers, 4). She gives up her body for the sake of her motherhood feelings.

Schoolteacher Schoolteacher is the ultimate example Of a Western Subject representing the voice of the Resurrection white in the novel.

As Speak states in her essay "Can the subaltern speak? Schoolteacher has an "interested desire to conserve the subject of the West or the west as the Subject" (66). He is cold, sadistic and racist. He never realizes the slaves are also human beings but rather he behaves them as if they are "animals". He is an educated mechanical man giving lessons to his nephews on the animal

characteristics of the slaves. He is the embodiment of the Resurrection view of the Other.

The Negro is animal, the Negro is bad, the Negro is mean, the Negro is ugly” (Companionable, 2). Especially the scenes in which the schoolteacher treats Seethe as subhuman show his racist acts of violence. By asking her nephews to describe her human characteristics, he is degrading and dehumanizing the black people. He says “ No. No.

That’s not the way. Told you to put her human characteristics on the left, her animal ones on the right” (Morrison, 228). So he reduces Seethe and slaves in general to sub-humans. He thinks himself as a scientist who investigates another species.

And for him, slaves can not be human beings but animals at best, as an inferior species. Another example is the one in which he uses his string to measure her body parts. Seethe says “ Schoolteacher’s wrap that string all over my head, cross my nose, around my behind. Number my teeth” (Morrison, 226). Of course this act of physical measurement becomes a form of oppression. Here the Subject sees the Object as an experimental animal to be observed, examined and understood.

Although these are the examples of white seeing the black as racial other, here we have an example of their seeing the black as sexual other also.

The schoolteacher orders his nephews to rape Seethe and he watches this whole dehumanizing scene. Years after Seethe remembers this by “ I am full God damn of two boys with mossy teeth, one sucking on my breast, the

other holding me down, their book reading teacher watching and writing it up" Morrison, 83). By observing this scene, schoolteacher is exploiting her sexuality and the nephews holding her down like an animal to be captured and their sucking her milk like an animal is a very similar act Of Shiva's objecting the white scholars' effort to study the subaltern from their perspective.

Just like Western scholars, the schoolteacher is observing the rape and taking notes to bring a kind of identification to her reactions to redefine her. Conclusion and Speak Speak refers to oppressors or the Subjects as " those who act and speak" (Speak, 66).

When they act, they degrade, euthanize and exploit the weak ones whom she calls " subaltern" in different ways. Sometimes they do these in a very direct way just like in Settee's case. And Sometimes they find some other pretty discourses which Speak argues these attempts as " white man trying to save brown woman from brown man" just as in the example of Sati tradition.

What we are talking about here is Seethe, the subaltern. She is the one who acts and struggle despite the Subject. She puts her body forward since it is the only thing which she has or has not in most Of the cases.

AH doing this, she is trying to make her voice heard. So now, did Seethe speak Speak, she could not but what I think is yes, she did speak. And was she heard? Yes, she was heard. But the problem is, this time, those who act speak are the mute ones. They do not want to hear what Seethe, the subs is saying.