ABSTRACT

An Analysis of the Selected Works of Toni Morrison: A Black Feminist Perspective

The study is an attempt to examine Morrison’s novels from the radical feminist viewpoint, and the Black American Aesthetical frame. Morrison has given authenticity and voice to the interior life of the most complex black and female experience in white America.

Race discrimination based on skin colour is not a new problem. A number of novelists, both black and white, have expressed this problem through their writings. Toni Morrison is one of the Afro-American novelists who has a deep insight into the racial problems.

As an African-American writer, Toni Morrison realizes that black women have to face a kind of dilemma in the process of pursuing individuality. In her novels, Morrison specifically writes about black women and their experience under the dominant power. Black women in Morrison’s novels experience different kinds of difficulties that come from sexual and racial discrimination. They suffer a lot on different levels and are tortured physically and emotionally. In almost all
Morrison’s novels written so far, the black women are understood in contrast to the Euro-American-white women.

The present thesis focuses on feminist features in four novels of Toni Morrison namely *The Bluest Eye, Sula, Beloved* and *Song of Solomon*. The thesis consists of six chapters:

**Chapter One:** The first chapter is the Introduction chapter, which introduces the study and explains the theory of feminism. It is an overview of the literary movements, objectives of the study, Toni Morrison’s life history and review of the related literature.

As an ideology, Feminism is seeking equality for women. It was a welcome stance to most black women. They openly and honestly rejected the women’s movement when they discovered the white women fashioned the movement for their own desired ends. Since then women of colour have fought independently and more evidently within the context of racial and economic justice.

Feminism articulated by black women recognizes the complexity of interrelations between patriarchy, racism and class. It gives rise to a multiplicity of definitions of black womanhood that decanter the white American feminist categories of oppression and resistance. Feminism questions not only gender hierarchies but also racial and economic hierarchies while their experiences are culture specific.
Chapter Two: This chapter is an attempt to have a critical analysis of Toni Morrison’s first novel *The Bluest Eye*. This novel explores the child protagonist Pecola’s quest for beauty and acceptance in the white world through blue eyes, probing the myth of white’s definition of beauty that ironically corresponds to black girl’s psychological oppression. The novel will be analyzed according to feminist features on the part of race, gender, class, female characters’ psyche etc.

Chapter Three: In the third chapter, we will deal with the analysis of *Sula*. *Sula* parallels Morrison’s focus on female individualization in Sula’s search for her identity. Morrison explores the black female stereotype that is harmful to Sula’s definition of herself that is persistently threatened by the predominant patriarchy in a community called “Bottom”. This part examines feminist features on the part of race, gender, class and female characters’ psyche at different levels.

Chapter Four: Chapter four attempts to analyze *Beloved* critically from feminist approach and it studies the novel at different levels; themes like motherhood, comparison between female characters etc.

Chapter Five: Chapter five is concerned with the evaluation of *Song of Solomon*. It examines the novel based on race, gender, class and male and female characters’ psyche.

Chapter Six: This is the final chapter and gives a conclusion to the thesis. It re-examines, re-evaluates the main idea of the research and
summarizes the results of the analytical procedures. It can be concluded that Toni Morrison is much more than a feminist writer. She considers both men and women in her writings. In other words, she cares about humans and emphasizes on humanism. She condemns racism and continuously expresses her objections towards racial discrimination.

Morrison’s writings are contextualized in the history of Afro-American past, present and take a tentative leap towards the future. They operate from within the framework of slavery, reconstruction, feminist movements, civil rights etc.