

Abstract

In six of Toni Morrison's eleven novels the protagonists are females. Research on these select novels reveals an interesting fact of the "Incomplete Transformation" of these female protagonists. In the sixteenth and seventeenth century setting, some of Toni Morrison's women are traded from Africa to the New World. These traded women are brutally exploited by the white colonizers, imperialists and capitalists in the New World. These women of Morrison suffer at the hands of colonizers and are not allowed even to raise a family. They are not owners of their own children. The traded women of Morrison are the mothers of the 'later victims' of Morrison in the New World. These women have endured slavery, racism and patriarchy. These women are the 'real victims' of Morrison, who are physically and sexually abused. They are not owners of their own body and self. Some have lost their psychological well-being; some of them have lost their lives. Then there was a long period of American Civil War and protest from the black community that was widespread. The abolition of slavery came about only in the nineteenth century. It was only after the abolition of slavery there was some degree of freedom and space for the African women to exist and breathe in America. The victimized women of Morrison are the mothers of the emancipated women of the post-slavery period in America. Now these women are free from bondage to a considerable extent. However, they become the victims of white idealism, racism and patriarchy. Some of the victims of white idealism have lost their sanity and some have lost their identity. Though the predator has changed, the prey is the same. To start with, the predator was colonialism, capitalism and patriarchy which evolved into slavery, which in turn gave birth to racism

and white idealism. However, the prey was constantly just the poor black women. The emancipated women of Toni Morrison have some freedom in what they are doing. They have some boldness and strength that is inculcated in their minds. However, the emancipated women of Morrison could not reach a state of empowerment nor could produce a generation of empowered Afro-Americans. The emancipated women of Morrison have failed to give proper importance to the ancestral values. The fault on their side is that they have neglected the African heritage and culture. They have absorbed white culture in the transit of emancipation thereby neglecting traditional values which leave them stranded without empowerment. The phenomenon of “Incomplete Transformation” or “Fragmentary Metamorphosis” of the female protagonists of Toni Morrison’s select novels is imperative and has to be well-understood to foresee any form of empowerment in the lives of black women and thereby black community.

Note:

The researcher wishes to make a note of the use of tense as found in the thesis. The researcher has resorted to the use of present tense, when there is a reference to the content of the stories and in the critical appraisals of the stories. When referring to historical events, the researcher has resorted to the use of past tense.