

The Theme of Slavery in *Beloved*: An Annotated Bibliography

Mustafa Wshyar Abdullah AL-Ahmedi



Lecturer at Koya University – Koya, Erbil/ Iraq , E-mail-mustafa.wshyar@koyauniversity.org

Raynaud, Claudine. “The Poetics of Abjection in *Beloved*.” *Black Imagination and the Middle Passage*. MariaDiedrich, Henry Louis Gates and Carl Pederson(Eds.).Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999: 70-86.

The writer criticizes the narrator of the novel and thinks that the theme of slavery is not very effective because the novel becomes a kind of opinion writing rather than showing a picture of a real life to the readers. According to the writer, Sethe (the protagonist of the novel) used to know a language whichshe is not able to communicate with it anymore, but the narrator shows the reader that Sethe can still understand it. She says that Sethe and *Beloved*'s eyes were expressionless in the slave ship when they were trying to escape; this expressionlessness is shown as the result of the narrator's reality deviation.

The whole article seems to be an opinion of the writer. Other scholars' views about the narration in the novel cannot be recognized. It is worth reading to obtain some ideas for discussion, but it might not be very easy to use it to make a serious argument because there is no enough evidences. It can be argued that slavery theme cannot be less effective by adding some extra features to the characters' personalities.

Marks, Kathleen. *Toni Morrison's Beloved and the Apotropaic Imagination*. Columbia, USA: University of Missouri Press, 2003.

It shows how the novel relates to slavery in a short period before its publication and it makes a clear comparison between apotropaic and slavery by showing murdering a child as a result of a wish to protect him/her from slavery. The American slavery is the point of focus, but it also argues that the theme of slavery in the novel is being told by the novelist's point of view rather than reciting other people's view towards the issue. Sethe's characteristics are discussed in detail which it is shown that her characteristics would not be the result of slavery, but they would be a sense of love of a mother to a child.

It is very difficult to accept the case of a child who has been killed by her own mother to be protected from suffering. There is no strong theoretical evidence to support the writer's point of view which makes the arguments very weak.

Ryan, Tim A. *Calls and Responses: The American Novel of Slavery Since Gone with the Wind*. Los Angeles: LSU Press, 2008.

The book discusses the American slavery through different novels. *Beloved* is one of the frequently mentioned novels and plantation is shown as the main reason for the slavery theme in the novel. Slavery is shown as something which is not desired to be remembered, but it is a fact which should be known. The influence of racism on slavery is also explained.

The claims are supported by the arguments from other authors and some documents which are adopted from some valuable sources. It convinces the readers and helps them to have a clear understanding about slavery in the American novels generally and *Beloved* specifically.

Iyasere, Solomon O. and Marla W. Iyasere, eds. *Understanding Toni Morrison's Beloved and Sula: Selected Essays and Criticisms of the works by the Nobel Prize-winning author*. New York: Whitston Publishing, 2000.

The book explores Toni Morrison's life, works and achievements. The theme of slavery in *Beloved* is also analyzed in detail. The novelist's ideas are stated very clearly about black people and slavery through the book. It attempts to show the reader that black people usually are mentioned with slavery and sadness, but they are very lively and not boring people.

It quotes Toni Morrison's speeches in many places to support the arguments. A very clear aim towards slavery in the messages can be recognized and it gives enough detail to understand the theme of slavery.

Farshid, Sima. "Foucauldian Archaeology of Slavery in Morrison's *Beloved*." *The International Journal of Interdisciplinary Social Sciences* 5: 4 (2010): 303-10.

The article demonstrates the effect of the slavery theme and its relation to the real story of Margaret Garner (an African American slave who lived in 19th century). Shete's life from becoming a slave till her release from jail, after being arrested in accusation of murdering her daughter, is shown in detail. While those sad scenes are not desired to be remembered by most people, the writer explains how it would be important to tell people about what happened in the past. Generally, it unearths the history of slavery and shows its relation to *Beloved*.

Historical documents and Toni Morrison's speeches are used to make the article effective. It seems it is a clear article to understand the theme of slavery both in the novel and black history. A very realistic image is drawn by the writer which is reliable and lets readers understand the subject easily.

Krumholz, Linda. "The Ghosts of Slavery: Historical Recovery in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*." *African American Review* 26: 3 (1992): 395-408.

Toni Morrison, as a critic, is introduced in the article. It analyses slavery in *Beloved* towards Morrison's criticism to African-American slavery history. Then, it shows how slavery was the main issue in the few past centuries, especially in America. The memories of slavery are discussed in detail, and the guilt of killing a child by a mother is shown. It can be seen how a mother emotionally and mentally is enslaved by the past memories in spite of being free after eighteen years. Slavery is introduced as a very difficult situation; it is shown as it can lead some illogical actions like killing a child by her own mother. The paper claims that people should know about what happened in the past especially slavery.

It is a very well organized and logical article. The analysis seems very realistic and understandable. The book helps the readers to understand the American slave history in the past easily. Its influences can be felt through the depth analysis of *Sethe*, *Beloved* and Toni Morrison's speeches.

Malmgren, Carl D. "Mixed genres and the logic of slavery in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*." *Critique* 36: 2 (1995): 96-106.

The author mainly talks about the mixed genres of the novel. He also shows the effects of slavery on *Sethe* and her family's life after a long time of being free. It shows how the family collapses after the ghost of *Beloved* hunts *Sweet Home*. Through *Beloved* character, a tragic end of a baby as a result of slavery is shown, and now *Sethe*'s two sons escape at home because of the ghost's disturbance which she asks about the reason of her murdering. The theme of love is mentioned which keeps its parallelism with slavery theme since the beginning of the novel.

There is a good analysis for the novel and the themes. The slavery theme is explained and its relation with themes such as capitalism is shown. On the other hand, it seems the writer has a very sharp point of view by thinking *Sethe* is her own best thing. It should not be easy to forget someone's past deeds for whatever reason.

Durkin, Anita. "Object Written, Written Object: Slavery, Scarring, and Complications of Authorship in *Beloved*." *African American Review* 41: 3 (2007): 541-556.

The article is an evaluative and analytical piece of writing which deals with Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, especially the enslavement theme. Some of the main characters are discussed in detail and their roles, in the novel and delivering the writer's message, are shown. Their past behaviors as slaves are explained and criticized. The effects of the past on the present can be felt through the main character's life that their memories are still alive and they cannot leave their past beyond easily.

It is a worthy critical article which a reader can obtain many new ideas through reading it, but it seems the author dominates the writing because other critics' criticism can be seen rarely. In such a critical piece of writing, it would be better to mention other scholars' thoughts to make a comparison among ranges of possible views.

Wyman, Sarah. "Imaging Separation in Tom Feelings' The Middle Passage: White Ships / Black Cargo and Toni Morrison's Beloved." *Comparative American Studies* 7: 4 (2009): 298-318.

The article explores the theme of slavery and historical facts in Tom Feelings' *The Middle Passage: White Ships / Black Cargo* and Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. Both slave narrators are discussed as a very important people in introducing slavery to the world. Their roles are shown through a coherent discussion. Almost all the reasons of slavery are clarified to let readers get familiarity about what happened in the past especially in America regarding the slave trades. In short, the paper invites the readers to take a moral stand in reaction to slavery which was one of the main issues in the past few centuries.

It seems that the theme of slavery is represented realistically and logically. Taking two Black Atlantic narrators is a good idea to show the reader the best possible realistic slavery picture. The reader can see a clear image of slavery in the past in America; the imagined picture becomes clearer through some few pictures which are taken from Tom Feelings' *The Middle Passage: White Ships / Black Cargo*.

Eckstein, Lars. *Re-Membering the Black Atlantic: On the Poetics and Politics of Literary Memory*. New York: Rodopi, 2006.

Toni Morrison's *Beloved* is discussed in the book. It describes the true story which the novel is based on: the story which is adopted from a black slave woman in America. Sweet Home is mentioned in many passages which can be seen as a central point of the slavery theme in the novel. The writer focuses on the slave characters and the slave owners; their relation to each other is also shown. A general overview of slavery in the novel is given.

It is a clear and knowledgeable book for the readers especially those who are searching for information about slavery in *Beloved*. The book is very descriptive and it might be useful for those who would like to obtain some information about slavery rather than searching for arguments or critical thoughts.

Capuano, Peter J. "Truth in timbre: Morrison's extension of slave Narrative song in *Beloved*" *African American Review* 37: 1 (2003):95-9.

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on<http://web.archive.org/web/20091022055942re_/geocities.com/tarbaby2007/beloved19.html>

The article mentions the importance of slave songs which concentrate on slavery in the novels. It is shown that readers might memorize or recognize events easier through the slave songs by the narrators. The adaptation of the songs by Morrison is explored and the reasons for using those songs are mentioned. It is mentioned that the song at the end of the novel is to

re-establish sethe's humanity. It can be seen that songs are used in *Beloved* to show the personalities of the slavecharacters.

It is a clear article, and the using songs in *Beloved* are described successfully. It explains for the readers how songs in the novel are important to deliver the message about slavery; the songs influence readers' emotion. A good number of sources are used to support the claims.