



Negotiating Black Motherhood in Toni Morrison's Beloved and a Mercy: Reading the Slave/Neo-Slave Narratives

By Hasnahana Gogoi

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An attempt to explore the negative aspect of black motherhood in slave and neo-slave narratives, the book concentrates on Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987) and *A Mercy* (2008). In order to free their children from the clutches of the 'demon' slavery slave mothers showed a negative attitude towards motherhood; some of them even killed their own children. This indicates a duality of selves in them resulting in ambiguity regarding their motherhood. Sethe in *Beloved* and Florens' mother in *A Mercy* are such slave mothers projecting this ambivalent nature. They act as protectors and at the same time as destroyers. In both ways, we see resistance on the part of the mothers towards their masters. They act against the institution through their denial of black lives although standing on an ambiguous position as mothers. However, this aspect is to be observed in the context of the ante-bellum era, dominated by the inhuman system of slavery which indeed is to be blamed for such a negative turn in the black mothers.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Born on February 28, 1985 at Naharkatia, a small town in upper Assam, India, Hasnahana Gogoi did her MA and MPhil in English Literature from Gauhati University. She taught English at Tinsukia College and presently working as a Project Fellow at the Department of English and Foreign Languages, Tezpur University, Assam.

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