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Good Touch and Bad Touch: The Relevance of the Tactile in Toni Morrison’s ‘Love’

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Abstract

The concern with the different kinds of touches to sensitize people especially children has been a discussion in recent times. The importance of identifying the nature of a touch and deriving meaning out of it is essential to respond to it. This response can affect an individual’s understanding of oneself and things around. Hence, it can arguably be considered as life-defining.

The attempt of this study is to explore the impact and relevance of the tactile in the personal journey of the characters in Toni Morrison’s novel ‘Love’. The focus is on the main characters ‘Heed’ and ‘Christine’ and the moment of ‘touch’ that redefined their relationship. The character of Junior, a wild and modern girl, is also a victim of touch and ironically is healed towards the end by Romen’s caring touch of her wounded heel. Touch, therefore, becomes a weapon of power, exploitation, abuse, sexual harassment and sometimes assurance in the novel. The effort is to build a case for the characters in failing or succeeding to empower themselves as a result of the perennial impact of the touches they had experienced in the past and the present.

Keywords:

Touch, exploitation, sensitize, perennial impact, empower

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