

Decoding the Construction of Identity and Struggle for Self-Assertion in Toni Morrison and Selected Indian Authors

Authors : Madhuri Goswami

Abstract : The matrix of power establishes the hegemonic dominance and supremacy of one group through exercising repression and relegation upon the other. However, the injustice done to any race, ethnicity, or caste has instigated the protest and resistance through various modes -social campaigns, political movements, literary expression and so on. Consequently, the search for identity, the means of claiming it and strive for recognition have evolved as the persistent phenomena all through the world. In the discourse of protest and minority literature, these two discourses -African American and Indian Dalit-surprisingly, share wrath and anger, hope and aspiration, and quest for identity and struggle for self-assertion. African American and Indian Dalit are two geographically and culturally apart communities that stand together on a single platform. This paper has sought to comprehend the form and investigate the formation of identity in general and in the literary work of Toni Morrison and Indian Dalit writing, particular, i.e., Black identity and Dalit identity. The study has speculated two types of identity, namely, individual or self and social or collective identity in the literary province of these marginalized literature. Morrison's work outsources that self-identity is not merely a reflection of an inner essence; it is constructed through social circumstances and relations. Likewise, Dalit writings too have a fair record of discovery of self-hood and formation of identity, which connects to the realization of self-assertion and worthiness of their culture among Dalit writers. Bama, Pawar, Limbale, Pawde, and Kamble investigate their true self concealed amid societal alienation. The study has found that the struggle for recognition is, in fact, the striving to become the definer, instead of just being defined; and, this striving eventually, leads to the introspection among them. To conclude, Morrison as well as Indian marginalized authors, despite being set quite distant, communicate the relation between individual and community in the context of self-consciousness, self-identification and (self) introspection. This research opens a scope for further research to find out similar phenomena and trace an analogy in other world literatures.

Keywords : identity, introspection, self-access, struggle for recognition

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