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Blood Meridian

Cormac McCarthy’s novel ‘Blood Meridian’ conveys the themes of violence and darker reality of the west by portraying the nameless boy who escapes from home at the age of fourteen. The fiction provides a re-enactment of history that expresses the tragedy of the people of the west. The kid after leaving his home reaches Texas where he meets the judge who sets the life course for his future years. the kid plays the role of a protagonist who is thin, pale and wears ragged clothing. His encounter with Judge Holden allows him to see the darker side of the world. The judge, on the other hand, believes that the strong must survive but the weak must be killed without mercy. The tragedy of the kid becomes more discernible when at the end of the story the judge attempts to kill him. The character of the judge represents the powerful Americans who believe that there is no place for kindness or remorse.

The complex terms used by McCarthy in the fiction include bondage, wounded medusa, martyr mules, abrogate, abutment, acolyte and legion of horrible. To understand the terms I searched the meanings of the terms in the dictionary. Bondage means a state of impoverishment and deprivation. The author has used Bondage for reflecting on the historical context of slavery experienced by the blacks. The search on the term revealed that bondage was also known as “chattel slavery”. The people who came to America from Africa remained inferior to the whites. It suggests the need for understanding mechanisms that reproduce racial inequalities. The more clear meaning of the term depends on the element of white privileges and how they influences power. Bondage emphasizes on the construction of race and shifts in the analytical attentions taking people towards individuals and groups. In discussing the term the focus of the philosophers is on revealing social processes involved in the process of constructing race. Bondage in the fiction is also referring to the slave trade that influenced the lives of blacks in America.

Martyr mules refer to the death resulting from an adhering belief. The term is discernible where the gang members shot the muleteers. The term is used for transmitting the themes of physical violence and shootings. The author has used martyr mules for capturing the violence and gunfights prevalent in the west. A martyr is a person who is willing to sacrifice himself for a noble cause.

A legion of horrible is another complex term that I searched in the dictionary. It was difficult to understand the meaning immediately because it refers to something deeper. The legion of horrible is used to portraying the themes of a dark and troubled land. This refers to the injustice and inequality encountered by the Africans and Mexicans in America.

Wounded medusa symbolized a monster of snakes. The Medusa represents negative energy in the fiction. The term is used for warding off evilness because it represents a feminine head with snakes. Acolyte states provision of assistance to persist minister and adduce means evidence in advance. These terms are used in the fiction for building relevance with the history of bondage and slavery.

Abrogate means revoking formally from an action. I searched the term for understanding its relevance in the story. The term becomes apparent when the kid encounters a man with a bottle. In the fiction McCarthy mentions, "he sang with the bottle and the kid ducked and he swung again and the kid stepped back" (McCarthy 8). The kid had to abrogate for adopting a precautionary strategy. This reflects his intentions of saving himself from the bottle. The term is used for explaining the survival strategy adopted by the kid for standing against the man with a bottle.

The author in the fiction illustrates violence in relation to the culture. McCarthy mentions, “Toadvine pulled the bloody head around and looked at it and let of flop to the floor and he rose and kicked the man himself” (McCarthy 12). The events thus transmit the history of violence that prevailed in America for centuries. The novel transmits the history of massive brutality encountered by the people of the west in America. The character of the kid is established to criticize the injustices and violence that deteriorated the lives of many young Americans. it also explains that humans unwittingly reinforced violence that undermined the concepts of freedom and kindness. The people of the west continued to serve as bondage for the powerful Americans. Ethnicities emphasize on comparing different races such as Africans, Chinese, Japanese and Latinos. It is more about categorizing differences between the people of a different race. While the more concerning question is does a black American behave in the same way as white American.

McCarthy in the novel exhibit historical aspects of violence encountered by the people of the west. The judge's complexity and power reflect the philosophy of inequality and injustice. Violence remains a profound question in fiction. The judge denies the right of a witness to the boy. The character of Capitan White also convey the themes of racism who justifies his acts of Mexico by claiming them as barbarians. The actual motives of Capitan White are to plunder for profits. The fiction reveals that Americans are ethnic that also leads to the conclusion that ‘everyone is ethnic’. Though several views exist on the race and ethnicities the sociologists agree on the point that racial identities remain a significant predictor of behaviours, attitudes, and beliefs of the people. The author mentions, "Galton walked past him and opened the door. The inside of the coach was splintered up with new wood and a dead man" (McCarthy 102). This reflects that the author used violence throughout the fiction for conveying the brutal history encountered by the ethnic populations in America.

McCarthy exhibited the dismantled settings of the west that reflects historical themes of centrality. American ethnic minorities pose greater risks of combining phenomenological experiences linked to emergent identities that shape the self-concept. The centrality of racial-ethnic identity remains one of the relevant concepts for understanding the ideology of ethnicity in the American context. It indicates the influence of race and ethnicity on individual identity. The concept depicts the perceptions that individual develop due to their connections with racial-ethnic backgrounds. Centrality holds great significance in understanding how race or ethnicity influence the feelings of an individual. The common example of centrality is the feelings of rejection exhibited by an African American boy. The evidence suggests that people that encounter greater adversities of ethnic identities exhibit high centrality. It also reflects that individuals suffering from racism will accept the existence of ethnicity identities and racism. The results obtained from a survey between black and white adolescents revealed that black Americans recognized racial-ethnicities more compared to the whites. The levels of centrality associated with racial-ethnicities vary between groups. Self-esteem is one of the factors remaining closely associated with racial-ethnicity. The way Mexican-Americans assign meaning to ethnic identity is different from whites. Racial-ethnic identity leads to another orientation building relevance with colorblindness. In a colorblind society, racial-ethnic centrality transmits the belief that all people are part of the human race. Racial-ethnic models also result in the formation of colorblind ideologies and development of statuses. In the case of ethnic minorities colorblindness has different meanings compared to whites.

The fiction also conveys the historical aspects of ethnicities in which people of minority population remained victims of race and discrimination. The race also operates to associate different value and privilege with the characteristics of people. The political, economic and cultural threat also poses threats to certain groups and people. Justification of the exploitation and prejudice towards other groups also represents the race. Ethnicity represents a dynamic set of beliefs and practices allowing people to determine groupings of people under the influence of assumptions. Racial ghettos do not allow choices as in world war II the powerful groups managed to maintain privileges and claimed inferiority for the subordinate groups. The comparisons between race and ethnicity also depict the role of the powerful groups that tried to oppress the inferior groups.

The fiction transmits the themes of violence and darker reality of the west by portraying the nameless boy who escapes at youth and later chooses a criminal lifestyle. The character of the kid portrays the connection of fiction with the historical aspects of bondage and violence. The minority ethnic populations suffered the consequences of race and discrimination. Bondage is one of the prominent issues encountered by blacks in America. The dismantling of the west depicts that white Americans used their power for exploiting the people at borders. Bondage means a state of impoverishment and deprivation. The author has used Bondage for reflecting on the historical context of slavery experienced by the blacks. The people from non-American backgrounds failed to acquire freedom and equal rights.

Work Cited

McCarthy, Cormac. Blood Meridian. Penguin Random House LLC, 1985.