

Tribhuvan University

Racial Passing in Toni Morrison's *God Help the Child*

**A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts in English**

By

Roshani Shah

Roll No.6144

T.U. Regd. No: 6-2-605-314-2010

Central Department of English

Kirtipur Kathmandu

May 2019

Tribhuvan University
Central Department of English

Letter of Approval

This Thesis entitled "Racial Passing in Toni Morrison's *God Help the Child*"
Submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Roshani
Shah has been approved by the undersigned member of the Research Committee:

Members of the Research Committee

Internal Examiner

External Examiner

Head

Central Department of English

Date: _____

Acknowledgements

First of all, I would like express my gratitude to Mr. Sarbagya Raj Kafle, my supervisor and Lecturer at the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, for suggestion and valuable instruction from the very beginning to the completion of this thesis. Without his regular co-operation and guidance, this research work would have never had the shape of its present form. I consider myself very fortunate to carry out this research under his command and guidance. So, I would like to extend my sincere and hearty gratitude to him.

I am very much thankful to Prof. Dr. Anirudhra Thapa, Head of the Central Department of English, for his invaluable suggestion and direction to carry out this thesis. Likewise my gratitude goes to the members of my thesis viva committee. I am very much grateful to the faculty members of the Central Department of English for their valuable suggestion and guidance during their lectures.

I would like to remember my parents Chandra Bahadur Shah and Janaki Shah for their encouragement, support, love and blessing to complete my M.A in English and generously supporting me throughout my study. I would like to thank my sisters Ruby Shah, Shitashma Shah and brother Sunil Shah for their valuable support and courage for me. I would also like to express my gratefulness to all my friends who directly and indirectly helped me while bringing this thesis in its current form.

May 2019

Roshani Shah

Abstract

This thesis examines the racial passing in Toni Morrison's God Help the Child. The central objective of this thesis is to observe the stories of five characters who turn to be narrators themselves. Their stories revolve around the process of veiling and unveiling their racial identity. Sweetness herself is a daughter of black parents but she considers herself white because she has got lighter skin, which gives her confidence to reject her own daughter, Bride who is very black. Including these kinds of stories regarding racial minority and color as sense of insecurity, Morrison gives pictorial view of the modern American society. To analyze issue of racial passing in Morrison's God Help The Child, theoretical ideas are taken from Richard Alba's Blurring The Color Line, Gayle Wald's Crossing the Line, Allyson Hobb's A Chosen Exile, Henry Louis Gates's The Signifying Monkey, and Steven J. Belluscio's To be Suddenly White. Though the text begins with the sense of being black is a curse, it ends with the theme of blackness is beautiful. To be black is not to be marginalized and minorized anymore.

Keywords: Colorism, Racial passing, Materialism, Commodification