

Mayberry's book on portrayal of men in Toni Morrison's novels due in September

6/20/07

Dr. Susan N. Mayberry, professor of English at Alfred University, examines the role of black masculinity in Toni Morrison's acclaimed novels in a book due to be published in September by the University of Georgia Press. *Can't I Love What I Criticize: The Masculine and Morrison* will be "the first full-length study of Toni Morrison's male characters and the first systematic examination of black masculinity in the fiction of African American women." In his advance review of the work, Jeffrey B. Leak, author of *Racial Myths and Masculinity in African American Literature*, said Mayberry's book is "a timely and comprehensive exploration of Toni Morrison's novel to date as they relate to black masculinity," and called it a "major contribution to ongoing literary, historical and social discussions regarding African American gender relations and the formation of community." "Taking a close look at all the key male figures in Toni Morrison's eight novels, this book explores Morrison's admitted, but critically neglected, interest in the relationships between African American men and women and the 'axes' on which these relationships turn," according to the University of Georgia Press release on Mayberry's book. "The book also considers the barriers between black men and women thrown up by their participation in a larger, historically racist culture of competition, ownership, sexual repression, and fixed ideals about physical beauty and romantic love," the release says. Mayberry says that understanding Morrison's treatment of her male characters is critical to grasping her success in 'countering the damage done by a spectrum of sometimes misguided isms' - including white American feminism. She concludes that Morrison's version of masculinity suggests that black men "have successfully retained their special vitality in spite of white male resistance" and that "their connections to black women have saved their lives." A 1973 graduate of Meredith College with a B.A. degree in English, Mayberry completed her master's in English from North Carolina State University in 1975, and a Ph.D. degree in English from the University of Tennessee in 1982. She joined the Alfred University faculty in 1982, and has taught courses in English Renaissance literature; Shakespeare; American literature; literature of the American South; and African American literature, including Toni Morrison's work, as well as poetry courses. She is also a past director of Alfred University's interdisciplinary Women's Studies Program. Mayberry's book may be ordered by phoning 800.266.5842; faxing 706.425.3061 or e-mailing books@ugapress.uga.edu