

Public Abstract

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Title:The Caul Theme in Tina McElroy Ansa's Novels

This thesis examines Tina McElroy Ansa's cultural validation of the caul and its aesthetic application as literary device in her novels *Baby of the Family* (1989), *The Hand I Fan With* (1996), *You Know Better* (2002), and *Ugly Ways* (1993). The projects argues for Ansa's ability to create a reality consisting of the natural and the supernatural realms. It puts forth that the interactions of the supernatural world with the caulbearer in the natural world will complicate the caulbearer's understanding of self, reality, and identity. Overall, it offers a cohesive and close critique of Ansa's four novels, as mentioned above.

The caulbearer is the protagonist in *Baby of the Family*, *The Hand I Fan With*, and *You Know Better* who was born with a caul and is considered a gifted child in terms of clairvoyance, etc. To bridge the gap of a missing caulbearer in *Ugly Ways*, this paper introduces the concept of a caulbeaer-by-proxy. The discussion drives on interweaving aspects of folklore and literature.