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Reading Toni Morison's *Beloved* as a Gothic Text

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Option: African-American Literature

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DEDICATION

*With great honor, I dedicate this work to the light of my life, my parents and my guardians
Mr. MESAOUUD and Mrs. FATIHA for their absolute support; May Allah protect them.*

To my beloved brothers OMAR and ABDELMALEK.

*To my dearest friends, especially SOUMIA AND IMANE whom I spent the best moments
with and who supported me along my studies.*

*To every person who helped me in completing this work, especially ROFEIDA, and to all the
people who respect and love me*

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Abstract

Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987) is widely considered a representative of gothic novel, since it involves the gothic elements under the background of slavery in the southern United States. Various genres are circulating in *Beloved* such as the gothic novel, and the ghost story. Both the ghost and its incarnation together offer Morrison the occasion to investigate the unspeakable truth of such potent sufferings inflicted upon Sethe and *Beloved* under the burden of slavery. In exploring the way Morrison manipulates the gothic elements, she unfolds a new realm of narration, in which the tale of the supernatural is revealed through disconnected time framework, and among disintegrated facts and images. To be more specific, the core of this novel exposes a theme about the impossibility of articulation, which deforms and disfigures slaves, and the eventual transformation of the horrible with the representation of the gothic elements. If the Gothic is often associated and represented with monstrous otherness, past horror and social injustice, then this exploration of the gothic elements in *Beloved* scrutinizes the Gothic and further concludes by seeing it with a perceptive presentation as a "subject," in which the selfhood seems to dwell. The aim of this thesis is to analyze the use of Gothic elements in Tony Morrison's novel *Beloved*. As a result, this study shows that Gothic elements contribute to Toni Morrison's stories in two ways. Firstly, they add to the depiction of minor characters, the setting, and the atmosphere of these stories. Secondly, they manifest themselves in the portrayal of the character of Seth herself. Thus, the use of Gothic elements enables Morrison to create suspenseful and surprising stories with a strikingly memorable African-American figure.

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General Introduction

Among the writers who use gothic fiction in their works Toni Morrison is one of the most well-known, especially for her book, *Beloved*. Most of her novels comprise of gothic elements. As an African-American writer, she mostly deals with the experiences of black people in America. Focusing on the lives of black people Morrison investigates their culture, history and life-styles. Her books are the reflections of African-American people who have been trying to keep their own culture alive in a white man's world. In her books the reader can find the unwritten history of black people, their sufferings, their beliefs, their fight to survive, their problems in a white dominated society. Yet, these are not the only things that the reader witnesses in Morrison's stories. He can also see ghosts, supernatural events, fantastic legends, myths and magical characters. In other words, in her literary works it is quite usual to see the real and the supernatural together side by side. On one hand Morrison narrates the realistic events that can be explained by reason and logic or events that really happened in the past. On the other hand she creates ghosts, unusual events and extraordinary people that are considered as a part of the African-American culture. Morrison has a mixed cultural background for her novels are products of both her American and African heritage. Blended in these two opposite cultures, Morrison presents stories that are both reflections of the rationalist and realist American culture and spiritual African culture.

This study examines the gothic fiction in literature and its reflections on Toni Morrison's novel *Beloved* as a case study. As an African-American writer whose aim is to represent the reality of black people in America, Morrison not only recounts about the realistic events and people but also about ghosts, magical characters and extraordinary events. Combining rational stories that are considered as the reflections of

her American heritage and magical ones that are derived from her African heritage, the author narrates the reality of African-Americans from different aspects.

Based on the background of the study defined above, this work seeks to answer the following questions: How does the gothic fiction contribute in characterizing the black's life in African-American literature? What are the major gothic elements that are applied in Morrison's *Beloved*?

As the topic of my study, I chose Toni Morrison's *Beloved* for several reasons. Firstly, *Beloved* is one of my favorite books and I was curious about the story. When I first watched the movie, I felt puzzled, and did not know how the obscure world could be depicted in such a magical image. Thence, I gradually realized that the more I thought about it the more I should understand about it. I grasped that I should discover and analyze the story from a literary view and see how the gothic fiction as a genre helped in showing the obscure life the blacks lived.

The purpose of this study is to suggest that the gothic fiction was suitable genre to characterize the life that the blacks lived in. Numerous articles and books have been written about the theme of gothic fiction in African-American literature.

Teresa Goddu, examines different strategies by which the Gothicism used to give voice to the horror of slavery. Firstly, she argues that "by signifying the event of slavery through narrative effects, the gothic both registers actual events and turns them into fiction" (132). This means that the horrific scenes of slavery can be compared to gothic tropes; in fact, on many occasions these events seem more to belong within the frame of a gothic tale than in the everyday world: vile masters whipping their slaves, mothers separated from their children, continual physical abuse, men treated worse than animals, and so on. All these instances of abuse and exploitation which were so wide spread under the slavery system seem to belong to a place beyond the real world. Because they escape logic, they need to be fictionalized in order to be mentally processed by those who have not been direct witnesses of these events.

Goddu also “explores the extent to which the gothic is able to rematerialize the ghosts of America's racial history and enable African-American writers to haunt back” (132).

However, as the popularity of the gothic rose, black authors began to write in the genre, thus reclaiming it, and subverting it in her entry racist and oppressive traditions. Charles Chesnutt’s *The Conjure Woman* (1899), Charles Johnson’s *Middle Passage* (1990), are two works written by African-American writers who use of the gothic and the supernatural to portray the horrors of slavery. These works share the characteristic of being narrated by black characters that despite being already free are still haunted by the atrocities of the slave system. *The Conjure Woman* is a collection of tales told by Uncle Julius, a former slave who despite being free still lives on the plantation to which he used to belong in his slave days. Julius uses the supernatural to narrate episodes from the times of slavery to John, a white man who is interested in buying the land where Julius lives and who serves as the skeptical frame narrator for Julius’s stories. By using the gothic and the supernatural, Julius places the injustices of the slave system in the realm of fiction.

In *Middle Passage*, Rutherford Calhoun, a young black man, was granted his freedom by his master at the time of the latter’s death. To escape the bonds of marriage, Calhoun embarks on the *Republic*, a slave ship which is on its way to Africa in search of African captives whose destiny is to be slave men in America. In this novel the gothic finds its way in through the terrifying descriptions of how the captives are treated on board and the terrible way in which their identity is erased while they become more commodities.

In the first part of the study, we explore the history and the meaning of gothic fiction in African-American literature.

The second part focuses on *Beloved* as an example and explores its appendix. In order to display the events that have been recorded or experienced and the supernatural characters, events and myths in Morrison's novels. Moreover, the narration of Morrison and the important themes in her novel are also emphasized.

Finally, the third part of the study shows how the elements of gothic fiction are applied in Morrison's *Beloved* and suggests that through gothic fiction the writer portrays the expanded reality of African-Americans that is not only realistic but also magical.

I.CHAPTER ONE: THE MEANING AND ORIGINS OF THE WORD 'GOTHIC' AND THE HISTORY OF GOTHIC FICTION

Introduction

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Introduction

Fiction has been popular among readers all over the world. It fascinates reader and provokes emotional appeal in many subject matters. One of the fiction styles that attracted the readers is gothic fiction .The elements that are contained in gothic fiction make this fiction more interesting. Before we start looking closely at the gothic as it exists in the United States, it is first necessary to explain the meanings and origins of its name and the cultural heritage it carries. It will help us understand the essence of the gothic itself as well as its unique role within the American culture and society as a whole.

1. The Traditional Gothic

1.1. Gothic Genre in Literature

The word ‘gothic’ can be defined in three ways. Firstly ‘a building such as a cathedral that has a style of architecture that is distinguished by all pillars, high vaulted ceiling and pointed arches.’ Secondly ‘Gothic’ is used to describe stories in which strange, mysterious and adventurous happen in dark and lonely places such as the ruins of a castle.’ Lastly the Gothic is ‘a style of printing or writing in which the letters are very ornate.’ (Punter)

The word Gothic is an architectural term. The style is best known for the pointed arch that was the feature of Gothic churches. Gothic architecture was prevalent in Western Europe between the 12th and 16th centuries

Gothic literature has little to do with Gothic architecture. The word Gothic literature refers to a mode of fiction dealing with supernatural or horrifying events. However Gothic literature is concerned with the supernatural and not all Gothic literature is horrifying. Rather the term Gothic as applied to literature refers to a kind of atmosphere or aesthetics that while it is hard to define, maybe understood at an instinctive level, in a way similar to that in which

Japanese terms such as 'wabi' and 'sabi'¹ are difficult to define, but are immediately evocative to someone with cultural background. (Punter 1)

The Gothic is termed in the dictionary with crudity. This definition coincides with gothic literature. Gothic literature explores the aggression between what we fear and what we long for. The setting of these Gothic stories were usually in some kind of castle or old building that showed human decay and created an atmosphere of mystery and suspense. Supernatural and unexplainable events are crucial to the plot of a Gothic story. Often they act as the backbone of plot and many of the circumstances and coincidences rest upon them. After reading John Goldsworthy's *Piece* and Bram Stokers *Dracula*, it is known that the setting the idea in a supernatural and explainable way is crucial. (Punter)

The Gothic literature dealing with demons and abnormal states of mind is not a phenomenon of only medievalism and romanticism, modernism and perversion, death and destruction resulting from political and social aberrations; the fantasy is also a part of the Gothic. According to contemporary American writer Joyce Carole Oates, who is clubbed together with Edgar Allan Poe as a Gothic writer, "Gothicism, whatever it is, is not a literary tradition so much as a fairly realistic assessment of modern life."

One of the key points in Gothicism is the idea that something is either extremely grotesque to the point of being ugly or that the idea so widely unaccepted that it is proclaimed as a sin against either humanity or the church. This statement separates man and God and indicates the fallen state of man. The dark Gothic style surrounds death. Sometimes, the Gothic is anti-human or anti-social. (Punter 2)

¹In traditional Japanese aesthetics, **wabi-sabi** (侘寂) is a world view centered on the acceptance of transience and imperfection. The aesthetic is sometimes described as one of beauty that is "imperfect, impermanent, and incomplete".

1.2. The Origins of Gothic Fiction

The words 'Goth' and 'Gothic' described the Germanic tribes (e.g. Goths, Visigoths or Ostrogoths) who sacked Rome and ravaged the rest of Europe in 3rd, 4th and 5th centuries. From this source, the word Gothic came to mean barbarous. By the 18th century in England, the Gothic had become synonymous with the Middle Ages, a period which was in disfavour because it was perceived as unenlightened and chaotic. The word Gothic first recorded in 1611 in a reference to the language of the Goths was extended in sense in several ways, meaning Germanic, medieval, barbarous and also an architectural style that was not Greek or Roman. Horace Walpole applied the word Gothic in his novel *The Castle of Otranto: a Gothic Story* (1765). From this novel filled with scenes of terror and gloom in a medieval setting descended a literary genre still popular today. The title of the novel gives us a clue to some of the essential elements of Gothic literature. The key word is 'castle.' Those ancient buildings may be viewed as symbolic of the unique atmosphere of Gothic literature; the writing style of gothic novel is as heavy as castle masonry and as gloomy as the maze-like corridors of such a medieval building. (Hogle 1)

However, Gothic literature was said to be born in 1764. It originated in the 18th century, flourished in the 19th century and continues to thrive even today. In literature especially in Gothicism the setting is greatly influential. It not only evokes the atmosphere of horror and dread, but also portrays the deterioration of its world. The decaying, ruined scenery implies that at one time the abbey, castle, or landscape was something treasured and appreciated. Now all that lasts is the decaying shell of a once thriving dwelling. The Gothic hero becomes a sort of archetype as we find that there is a pattern to their characterization. There is always the protagonist, usually isolated either voluntarily or involuntarily. Then there is the villain who is the epitome of evil, either by his own fall from grace or by some implicit malevolence. Setting in a castle the action takes place in and around an old castle, sometimes seemingly

abandoned, sometimes occupied. The castle often contains secret passages, trapdoors, secret rooms, dark or hidden staircases, and possibly ruined sections. The castle may be near or connected to caves, which lend their own haunting flavor with their branching, claustrophobia and mystery. (Hogle 1)

An atmosphere of mystery and suspense is one of the Gothic elements. The work is pervaded by a threatening feeling, a fear enhanced by the unknown. Often the plot itself is built around a mystery, such as unknown parentage, a disappearance or some other inexplicable element. An ancient prophecy is connected with the castle or its inhabitants. The prophecy is usually obscure, partial or confusing. What could it mean in modern examples may amount to merely a legend. Omens, portents, visions are Gothic elements. A character may have a disturbing dream vision or some phenomenon maybe seen as a portent of coming events. For example, if the statue of the lord of the manor falls over, it may portend his death. In modern fiction a character might see something and think that it was a dream. This might be thought of as an imitation vision. (Pykett 195)

Supernatural or otherwise inexplicable events are the Gothic elements of literature. Dramatic, amazing events occur, such as ghosts or giants walking or inanimate objects coming to life. In some works the events are ultimately given a natural explanation, while in others, the events are truly supernatural. High, even overwrought emotion that is the narration may be highly sentimental and the characters are often overcome by anger, sorrow, surprise and especially terror. Characters suffer from raw nerves and a feeling of impending doom.

The motivations might be the same, but the desired ends can be different. Blood drinking can be solitary between two people or in a group whereas cutting oneself is almost always solitary. The main difference between the two is that the focus is more on the blood than the pain with drinking. Blood has historically been powerful symbol in literature signifying both life and death. The vampire imitation symbolizes the bloodletting. Vampires

were once represented as demons and creatures of the devil in folklore. They were surrounded by superstitions concerning garlic, holy water and crosses. The vampire is no longer the murderous demon, but a symbol of what humanity wishes it could be fearless, immortal, indulgent and powerful. Teenagers especially tend to find the vampire symbol attractive when they feel very powerless, restricted, uncertain and anxious. This category consists of people who find pleasure in imitating the vampire lifestyle. Some take it fairly seriously indeed. They do not kill to get blood, but they will drink from themselves or any willing donors using controlled cutting techniques. Curiosity and experimentation represents bloodletting. It makes people to see what it tastes like, how it feels, how blood flows, what it looks like. The killers, religious cults, fanatics are some people that are extremists who practice blood-letting and blood drinking for entirely different motivations than all of the aforementioned categories. These groups might kill a human or animal to get blood. They might drink it out of a glass. They may offer bloodshed as a religious offering and sacrifice. They may drink or let blood as part of a ceremonial ritual. These extremists often believe that blood is a powerful agent that it can help gain immortality. They use it to worship deity. Bloodletting or drinking may rarely be also a motivation for murder. (Pykett 195)

Depression and sadness is an abnormality that must be suppressed or cured. Adolescence is a time of depression for many individuals. Yet those individuals may feel pressure from family, friends or teachers to be perfect. These young people may feel incredible pain, but do not show it for fear of being derided as if they are abnormal. Depression is one emotion that typifies Goth best. Gothic is an exaggerated personification. While Goths are capable of feeling extreme sadness, they are also capable of experiencing great joy. Most are able to maintain balance in their lives. Women are threatened by a powerful, impulsive, tyrannical male. One or more male characters have the power, as king, lord of the manor, father or guardian to demand that one or more of the female characters do

something intolerable. The woman may be commanded to marry someone she does not love or commit a crime. The metonymy of gloom and horror are the Gothic elements of literature. Metonymy is a subtype of metaphor, in which something is used to stand for something else like sorrow. Some metonymies for doom and gloom all suggest some element of mystery, danger or the supernatural. For example, howling wind, blowing rain, doors grating on rusty hinges, eerie sounds, footsteps approaching, clanking chains, lights in abandoned rooms, gusts of winds blowing out lights, doors suddenly slamming shut, characters trapped in a room, ruins of buildings and crazed laughter. (Stevens 9)

Death fixation is one of the most stereotypes. Surrounding Goth is the subculture's fixation on death. Much of the symbolism and the look seem to connote as the very least an interest in the topic. The depth of this interest would vary with each individual, as always. In general, Goths are an exaggeration of the darker side of the human psyche. They represent outwardly the thought that linger in the back of everyone's mind. Goths tend to make their feelings about a little more open than the rest of the world. Death in literature, in life and in religion has always been a monumental driving force in many of humanities. All of humanity is fixed on death in a more subtle way. Gothic represents acceptance of the inevitability of death and the existence of the darker sides of life. (Stevens 9)

2. The Gothic Elements

Gothic aspects could be employed to be the elements in gothic fiction. The latter include the following elements: the strange and distorted events, the characteristics of abnormal human, monsters, ghosts, exaggerated, supernatural, magic, uncanny, ugly, horrible, absurd, estrange, fantastic, and the bizarre. The gothic elements that are mostly employed in literature can be stated in details as follows:

2.1. Abnormal Human

The abnormal human is not quite human. It is something that loses the human being or becomes not itself. It is outcast. The abnormal human characterizes could present through the physical and mental. The abnormal physical human are presented as monster creatures for example snake woman, vampire, dog man. Besides, the abnormal mental human are presented through strange behaviours such as madness, crazy, drunk and addicted. The abnormal human is the creative of frightening, fantastic and horror. (Hurley)

2.2. Ghost

According to Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle, ghost is fundamental to our thinking about the human, to be human is to have a spirit, a soul. But the common sense of ghost involves the idea of spectre, an apparition of dead, and revenant. Ghosts disturb our sense of the separation of the living from the dead that why they can be so frightening and uncanny.

2.3. Setting

Frequently, place is the first element that leads readers to feel gothic of the story. They are cathedral, castle, building, and house. The places might be ruined or haunted or not. Besides, the dungeons, underground passages, crypts, and catacombs which, in modern houses, become spooky basement or attics. Ruined building which are sinister or which arouse a pleasing melancholy. The castle was the main place in the novel. It was very large and full of the gothic corvine oration.

2.3. Time

Many stories in gothic fictions are relating in the past. The horror is always presented through place's history or people history. Besides, night time is the favourite time to show in the story.

2.4. Atmosphere

Atmosphere can arouse readers feeling such as shadows, a beam of moonlight in the darkness, a flickering candle, or the only source of light failing such as a candle blown out, or electric failure .Light displays its duty to raise the readers interest .Light is the medium of supernatural performance colour differences are employed to describe the feeling and mood of the story. Odour and sound are also present grotesquely atmosphere for instance, screaming displays madness or horror.

2. 5. Events

Writers illustrate the events in their gothic writing with many kinds of event. Supernatural event is the most popular to event. Supernatural is presented through many aspects such as omens, ancestral curses, magic and supernatural manifestation. Besides, some stories show horrifying or terrifying events.

3. The Purposes of Using The Gothic Elements in Fiction

Thomson (Online), divides the purposes of using gothic elements in fiction to fives items. There are; aggressiveness and alienation, the psychological effect, tension, resolvability, playfulness and the unintentional gothic.

3.1. Aggressiveness and Alienation

Gothic fiction always uses aggressive weapons because they create a sudden shock to readers. The weapons could be found in satirical, parody, burlesque contexts and in pure invective .another effect of gothic elements is alienation. Alienation is something that looks familiar and trusting but suddenly made strange and disturbing.

3.2. The Psychological Effect

It is hard to specify the psychological effect of the reader because gothic fiction contains many facets. Readers have different feeling such as exciting, afraid and scared.

The laughter at the gothic is not free since the reader is in the amusement moment but suddenly will be replaced by the horrifying and disgusting aspects, the guffaw becomes grimace.

3.3. Tension and Unresolvability

The gothic affects the psychological tension of the reader. According to the nature of conflicting elements in gothic, readers are confused with the tone of the novel. The comic elements, hysteria and spontaneous reaction to the drastically gothic can both free and defend the feeling of the laughter.

3.4. Playfulness

The writers employ gothic to their endless imagination. They can create things without frame of realism. The writers perform as the artists that do art works. At the same time, it looks like nonsense too.

The purpose of the writer is only to entertain readers' example of the playfulness novel are Alice's adventure in wonderland, Harry Potter and some of the fairy tales.

3.5. The Unintentional Gothic

Sometimes, gothic writers may not express anything in their writing but they do gothic work because it is a popular style .Even, the reader may think that gothic means nothing for them.

The purposes of using gothic elements in fiction are to shock , arouse and provoke feeling of readers, to make believe, and to play. Hurly explains that gothic fiction can generate five symptoms to readers that are the uncanny, abjection, hysteria and pleasure. Because of the nature of conflicting elements in gothic, readers are confused with the tone of the novel. The comic elements, hysteria and spontaneous reaction to the drastically gothic can both free and defend the feeling of the laughter. Moreover, writers employ gothic to their endless imagination. In contrast, the gothic may be purposeless. Some writers may not

express anything in their write by they do gothic work because it is a popular style. Even, the reader may think that gothic means nothing for them.(Hurley, qtd in Thomson)

Conclusion

To conclude, the style of gothic fiction achieves these transgressions by creating luminal heroes and heroines; it establishes spaces that represent different values and has the heroes cross the borders between them. Moreover, it also on another level uses various literary techniques to increase the tension in order to evoke in the reader emotions similar that the characters may experience on their adventures. Besides, the gothic elements are powerful tools to use in order to tell the racial differences to the readers. The writers want to wake the society to look after these issues.

II . CHAPTER TWO: A STUDY OF MORRISON’S *BELOVED*

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II. 1. Summary of *Beloved*

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II. 3.1. Sethe

II. 3.2. Paul D

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II. 3.5. Baby Suggs

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II. 4. Majors Themes

II. 4.1. Loss

II. 4.2. Loss of Death

II. 4.3. Loss by Flight

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II. 5. Motherhood

II. 5.1. Practical Aspects

II. 5.2. Sacrifice

Conclusion

Introduction

“*Sixty Million and more,*” is the inscription at the beginning of the novel *Beloved* written by Toni Morrison.¹ Morrison devoted *Beloved* to the roughly sixty million people who died during the slave trade and who never experienced slavery.² These victims never experienced the long disturbing and psychologically painful period that Africans and generations thereafter had to endure. Although the book is dedicated to those who died in the Atlantic trade, however, its story serves to memorialize the institution of slavery itself as it existed in the United States. Morrison says that:

There is a necessity for remembering the horror, but of course there's a necessity for remembering it in a manner in which it can be digested, in a manner in which the memory is not destructive. The act of writing the book, in a way, is a way of confronting it and making it possible to remember. (Aki 1,2003)

In other words, Morrison argues that overcoming the trauma of slavery entails remembering rather than forgetting. In contemporary American culture the institution of slavery has been largely forgotten. But Morrison tries to show that the past never ends.³

II. 1. SUMMARY OF *BELOVED*⁴

Beloved based on true story of a slave, Margaret Garner. It is Morrison's fifth novel, which she wrote in 1987. The story discloses the heritage of African Americans. The novel is set after the Civil War whereas the characters struggle with pain while they reconstruct themselves and families after the devastation of slavery. The narrative style of this novel is similar to patchwork quilts. Readers have to piece them together.

¹Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (New York: Everyman's Library, 2006), 3.

²Heerak Christian Kim, *Toni Morrison's Beloved as African-American Scripture & Other Articles on History and Canon* (New Jersey: Hermit Kingdom Press, 2006), 35.

³Kader Aki. *It's Not Over - Rememories of a Haunting Past in Toni Morrison's "Beloved"* (München: GRIN Verlag, 2003), 1.

⁴Wikipedia

The story begins in 1873 in Cincinnati, Ohio. At 124 Bluestone Road, Sethe who was a former slave lives with her eighteen years old daughter, Denver. Sethe's mother in law, Baby Suggs lives with them until her death. Just before Baby Suggs's death, Sethe's two sons, Howard and Buglar run away. Sethe believes that they fled because of the malevolent presence of an abusive ghost that haunts their house. However, Denver likes the ghost which everyone believes that the spirit is her death sister.

Paul D stops by Sethe's house. They do not see each other for very long time since they worked together on Mr. Garner's Sweet Home. His presence makes Sethe think about the past. Sethe was born in the South. When she was thirteen, she was sold to the Garners, who own Sweet Home. There are men slaves interested. They are Sixo, Paul D, Paul A, Paul F, and Halle. Sethe chooses to marry Halle because he buys his mother freedom by hiring himself out on weekend. They have two sons, Howard and Buglar and a baby daughter. After the death of Mr. Garner, schoolteacher helps Mrs. Garner to run the farm. He oppresses all the slaves. Slaves decide to run away. Sethe also has run away and at that time she was pregnant with a fourth child. Schoolteacher and his nephews anticipate the slaves' escape. Schoolteacher kills Sixo and Paul D back to Sweet Home. Paul D sees Sethe running to send her children to her mother in law's house. Schoolteacher's nephews seize Sethe in the barn and violate her. They steal her milk which is storing for her infant daughter. Halle is watching the event from a loft above her, where he lies frozen with horror. Paul D sees him goes mad. Halle sitting by a churn with butter slathered all over his face. Paul D is forced to suffer the indignity of wearing an iron bit in his mouth. Finally, Sethe can run away and her baby born in the boat with the help of Amy Denver. Sethe names her second daughter Denver after Amy Denver.

Stamp Paid helps Sethe by rows her across the Ohio River to Baby Suggs's house. Sethe spends wonderful time in Cincinnati until schoolteacher came. Schoolteacher

comes to take Sethe and her children back to Sweet Home. Sethe tries to flee her children from slavery by killing them. Only her older daughter dies, her throat having been cut with handsaw. Sethe arranges for baby's headstone to be carved with the word "Beloved". The sheriff takes Sethe and Denver to jail but the Bodwins fight for her release. They return to the house. The community shuns the house and the family continues to live in isolation.

Paul D and Sethe plan to have future together. One day, on their way home from a carnival, they meet a strange young woman sleeping near the steps of the house. She calls herself Beloved. She is the embodied spirit of Sethe's daughter. Paul D and Beloved hate each other. Beloved controls Paul D by moving him around the house and sleep with him. Paul D leaves Sethe after he learns that Sethe kills her child. Denver leaves home in order to seek help from her teacher. The community provides the family with food and help Sethe to escape from Beloved. Beloved disappears from the house. Paul D comes back to Sethe.

II. 2. Analysis of *Beloved*

Beloved is derived from the name of the young woman, *Beloved*, who arrives at 124¹ one day. Sethe and Denver believe that *Beloved* is their long dead daughter and sister respectively. However, the character of *Beloved* can also be viewed as an embodiment of three generations of slavery (baby Suggs, Sethe and her children) and is a symbol of the ghost of the more general historical past of slavery. Just as the history of slavery continues to haunt the lives of her mother, Denver, and anyone else who comes in contact with the family in 124, Bluestone Road she forces the character in the novel, most notably her mother, to first recognize the pain from her past before she can begin to work through it and her presence causes all of the characters to come to terms with themselves before she leaves. *Beloved*, as a symbolic character, offers a chance to unearth and make peace with the past before

¹A house named 124

looking to the future as well as the supernatural possibility of rebirth into a new and better world. From the moment she is already a symbol as she is newly reborn and childlike, she forces the character to understand their history and through this we may see how *Beloved* represents three generations of slavery and horrible historical impact of slavery from baby Suggs and her grandmother, whom Sethe barely remembers, to her own mother to herself and her sibling. (*Beloved*)

II. 3. Characters Study¹

II. 3. 1. Sethe

Sethe is the protagonist of the novel. She is a freed slave from a plantation called Sweet Home. The protagonist of the novel lives in the house named 124, a house on 124 bluestone rd. But referred to only as 124 which is believed to be haunted because she killed her infant child. Her two sons have fled because of the haunting and she resides in the house with her daughter Denver. She is motherly and will do anything to protect her children from suffering the same abuses she had as a slave. Sethe is greatly influenced by her repression of the trauma she endured; she lives with a tree on her back, scars from being whipped. Her character is flexible, yet defined by her traumatic past.

II. 3. 2. Paul D

Paul D retains his slave name. All the male slaves at Sweet Home were named Paul, yet he also retains many painful memories of his time as a slave and being forced to live in a chain gang. It is said that his heart is kept in a tobacco tin, as he continuously represses his painful memories. Many years after their time together at Sweet Home, Paul and Sethe reunite and begin a romantic relationship.

II. 3. 3. Denver

Denver is the only child of Sethe who is truly present in the novel. She is isolated by

¹ Wikipedia

other young girls in the community because they fear the haunting of her house .over the course of the novel Denver fights for her personal independence.

II. 3. 4. Beloved

Beloved is a bodily ghost of Sethe's baby. Having died at the age of two, her throat cut with a handsaw by Sethe, she reappears as a woman of twenty. She calls herself *Beloved*, the only word carved on her tombstone. She is eager to listen to Sethe's stories, demands her attention, and accuses Sethe of forsaking her. She disappears with the sinning of thirty women in the community.

II. 3. 5. Baby Suggs

Baby Suggs is the elderly mother of Halle .Halle works to buy her freedom, after which she travels to Cincinnati and establishes herself as a respected leader in the community. She lived in 124 where the majority of the novel takes place in the present time. After Sethe's act of infanticide baby Suggs retires to her death bed where she develops an obsession with colors and Sethe inherits the house after her death.

II. 3. 6. Halle

Halle is the son of baby Suggs, the husband of Sethe and father of her children. He and Sethe were married in Sweet Home, yet they got separated during her escape. He is not in the present of the novel, but is mentioned in flashbacks. Paul D was the last to see Halle, churning butter at Sweet Home. It is presumed he went mad after seeing residents of Sweet Home violating Sethe and raping her of her breast milk.

II. 3. 7. Schoolteacher

Schoolteacher is the primary discipliner of the slaves in Sweet Home. His name is intentionally not capitalized throughout the novel he is the most violent and abusive to the slaves at Sweet Home and eventually comes after Sethe following her escape but is unsuccessful in his attempt to recapture her and her children.

II. 3. 8. Amy Denver

Amy Denver is a compassionate young white girl. She finds Sethe desperately trying to make her way to safety after her escape from Sweet Home. Sethe is extremely pregnant at the time, and her feet are bleeding badly from the travel. Amy saves Sethe's life nurturing her back to health. Later, Amy delivers Sethe's daughter on a small boat, and Sethe names the child Denver after her.

II. 4. Major Themes

II. 4 .1. Loss

During the slavery days, loss was a common thing for women and slaves in general. According to slavery historian Peter Kolchin, coercive detachment of families was the most terrible intrusion in the lives of slaves.¹ Detachment of families was common in the South.

*Good intentions alone proved insufficient to protect slaves against the dictates of economic interest, anger, or plain thoughtlessness; there were simply too many instances when it makes sense or was necessary for masters with the best of intentions to separate their slaves. Most slave owners may have disliked the idea of separating their people – and some refused to do so under normal circumstances – but when push came to shove, few put their slaves' happiness above their own self-interest.*²(Kolchin 125,2003)

Mostly through sale were slaves separated from each other.³ According to historian Michael Tadman, “in the upper South about one first marriage in three was broken by forced separation and close to half of all children were separated from at least one parent.”⁴ Suggs, who was very sick and died, Sethe's two sons, Howard and Buglar, because they ran away from home, Sethe's husband Halle, her own mother and her baby girl *Beloved*. Though,

¹ Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery: 1619-1877* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2003), 125.

²Ibid., 125.

³Ibid., 125.

⁴Ibid., 126.

Sethe's loss is different from what Kolchin and Tadman are relating to. They are talking about sale and forced separation during slavery. What Sethe experiences is death and estrangement during freedom. This is also one of the main differences between slave narratives and the novel *Beloved* discussed in this chapter.

In this chapter, three different themes related to loss will be taken into account, namely: loss by death, loss by flight and loss by sale.

II. 4. 2. Loss by Death

Separation between parents and children is a theme that resonates in the novel *Beloved*. Sethe first experienced the death of her own mother. Her mother was hanged by her master when Sethe was still very young, so she never really experienced the love from her mother.¹ This is the reason why the love for her own children was so "thick."² Since Sethe escaped from slavery she could love her children immensely, nobody owned them anymore. But then she finds out that her old master tries to make her return to slavery, so she kills her daughter. The death of her babygirl, is Sethe's main loss. According to Sethe she had no choice; she killed her because she did not want to see her daughter taken back into slavery and lead a slave life like she had.³

Baby Suggs also encountered many losses. She lost all of her children, besides Halle. "*Sad as it was that she did not know where her children were buried or what they looked like if alive.*"⁴ Her children were taken away from her when they were still at a young age, so she could not really remember them anymore.

Professor Elizabeth Ann Beaulieu said that: "Enslaved women, when they were allowed to keep their children in close proximity, faced the problem of providing proper child care and forming maternal bonds with them because the system made no suitable provision for

¹Aki, *It's Not Over*, 2.

²Morrison, *Beloved*, xiv.

³Aki, *It's Not Over*, 2.

⁴Morrison, *Beloved*, 163.

either.”¹ So due to the institution of slavery, Baby Suggs did not want to make an effort in looking at her babies’ characteristics.

II. 4. 3. Loss by Flight

Loss due to estrangement and flight is another theme that Morrison alludes to in *Beloved*. For example, Sethe’s children Howard and Buglar ran away from home, and she never saw them again after that. This loss was not due to forced separation, but because of free will. Sethe thought it was probably because of the baby ghost in the house,² but Denver knew it had something to do with her mother being a murderer.³ Denver had no siblings anymore, except for her baby sister, who was a ghost. But then also she was gone. Denver had been furious and deeply agitated with Paul D when he scared away the baby ghost. The baby ghost was the only thing that kept Denver company, besides her mother, and now it was gone. “Now her mother was upstairs with the man who had gotten rid of the only other company she had.”⁴ However, the baby ghost came back; this time transformed into a real human being, a girl named *Beloved*. Denver got obsessed with this girl, whom she knew was her sister.

Furthermore, Sethe also lost her husband. She lost him while they were at Sweet Home. She thought he was dead, that he was caught while trying to escape with her. “He wasn’t there. He wasn’t where he said he would be.”⁵ So Sethe escaped alone to the free North. What Sethe did not know, and later found out through Paul D., was that Halle was so affected by the rape of his wife. He could not handle it.

The loss of a partner is a prevalent theme in female slave literature, such as in Harriet Jacobs’ account of her life in bondage. Harriet Jacobs, who wrote *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, also lost the man she loved. He was not her partner, for her master did not allow

¹Elizabeth A. Beaulieu ed., *The Toni Morrison Encyclopedia* (Westport,CT: Greenwood Press, 2003), 60.

²Morrison, *Beloved*, 121.

³*Ibid.*,123.

⁴Morrison, *Beloved*, 28.

⁵*Ibid.*, 82.

her to marry the free Negro man, but they wanted to.¹ Jacobs made the decision to let her lover go, since she, and their children would be forever owned by her master, which would cause misery to him.² So Jacobs put her own dreams aside to save the one she loved.

At the end of the novel *Beloved*, Sethe encounters yet again the loss of her daughter *Beloved*. The girl only had eyes for Sethe. She needed the attention of Sethe, because she felt lonely and abandoned. However, when Denver found out that *Beloved* sucked the life out of her mother, she looked for help to get rid of her. And it worked the whole community came to assist her in getting *Beloved* to move out of the house. This loss was for the first time good for both Sethe and Denver. They both dealt with their problems. *Beloved* stood for the problem of slavery and all the negative consequences that came along with it. Mostly Sethe remembered how slavery was for her with the appearance of the girl, and by getting rid of *Beloved*; she was getting rid of the problem. In other words: Sethe would never forget what happened in the past, and she would remember it forever, however she was on the path of overcoming the trauma of slavery.

II. 4. 4. Loss by Sale

A prevalent theme in female slave narratives is the loss of a dear one by sale or forced detachment. An example of this can be seen in Elizabeth Keckley's slave narrative *Behind the Scenes; or, Thirty Years a Slave and Four Years in the White House*. Keckley writes about the sale of a boy, which she can recall clearly.³

Another example of loss by forced separation is in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Volume 2. This novel, written by the abolitionist Harriet Beecher Stowe, is fiction, compared to Keckley's non-fiction slave narrative. However, Stowe's novel is based on the history of slavery, and fact is that in history books, just like slave narratives, the main theme are based on loss by

¹ Lydia Maria Child, ed., *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl. Written By Herself* (Boston: Published for the Author, 1861), 58.

² *Ibid.*, 65.

³ Jennifer Fleischnner, *Mastering Slavery: Memory, Family, and Identity in Women's Slave Narratives* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 107.

sale. In *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, there is a story about Cassy, a slave woman who also lost her children. Cassy, who was not only in love with Henry, a white man, she also had two children with him. However, when Henry needed money, he exchanged Cassy and their children for money.¹ Cassy's cruel new master told her that her children were being purchased by someone else and "[...] whether I ever saw their faces again, depended on him; and that, if I wasn't quiet, they should smart for it. Well, you can do anything with a woman, when you've got her children. He made me submit; he made me be peaceable [...]"²

What is remarkable in the history of slavery is that the 'loss by sale' is a main theme. You can see this thread running through history books, such as the ones from Kolchin and Tadman, but also in female slave narratives, like Keckley's. *Beloved* distinguishes itself from such books. Morrison symbolizes loss in a different way. She focuses more on the sacrifice a female slave has to make to live in freedom and what the effects of the slave experience do to them.

II. 5. Motherhood

The most frightening thing for slave parents was, once they did have children, the detachment of their family. According to historian Brenda Stevenson, slave masters tried to avoid the separation of families, however when things got a little pressed many slave owners first thought about their personal advantages before they thought about the prosperity of their slaves.³ Baby Suggs experienced an encounter similar to this. She "coupled with a straw boss for four months in exchange for keeping her third child, a boy, with her – only to have him traded for lumber in the spring of the next year and to find herself pregnant by the man who promised not to and did."⁴

¹ Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin: Or, Life Among the Lowly. Volume Two* (Boston: John P. Jewett & Company, 1852), 206.

² Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, 208.

³ Brenda E. Stevenson, *Life in Black & White: Family and Community in the Slave South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 125.

⁴ Mitchell, *The Freedom to Remember*, 96.

Motherhood was something dangerous for slaves. It was “understood to be an obstruction to escape and no protection against sexual abuse.”¹ This is why many slave women chose infanticide, abortion or ran away.²

In this chapter, the practical aspects of motherhood and the sacrifices slave women had to endure are being mentioned.

II. 5. 1. Practical Aspects

Once women slaves got pregnant, they certainly could not stop working. While their children were still babies they either breast-fed them themselves while working, or they relied on support from other slave women, such as the aged women on the plantations.³

The fact that Sethe was traumatized by the milk-stealing incident was not very strange.

As mentioned before, she felt very privileged to breast-feed her own children, since many female slaves could not. It was customary that one female slave breast-fed all the children; blacks and whites. In *Beloved* this job belonged to Nan. Nan took care of all the children, including the young Sethe.⁴ In the book *The Freedom to Remember*, Deborah Gray White wrote an analysis that maternity was very important for women in Africa. Their main task was to support their families. They were the heart and the basis of the family, however these women had rights and these were being secured. So, compared to African American women slaves, the lives of African women were very much different from them.⁵ Due to lack of security and rights, slaves had no authority over themselves, and neither over their children. As Baby Suggs said: “the nastiness of life was the shock she received upon learning that nobody stopped playing checkers just because the pieces included her children.”⁶ This is why many female slaves did not want to get close to their children, so that when they were

¹ Fleischner, *Mastering Slavery*, 179.

² *Ibid.*, 179.

³ Paul Finkelman, ed., *Articles on American Slavery. Women and the Family in a Slave Society* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1989), 393.

⁴ Mitchell, *The Freedom to Remember*, 98.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁶ Morrison, *Beloved*, 32.

separated or died it might not hurt as much. But it mostly did anyways. They still wanted the best for their children, even though they did not know beforehand what the fate of their child would be. According to Morrison, women slaves

*Are people who hardly dare love their children because they may be sold tomorrow; who will not love, or reluctantly partly love, children fathered by white masters; who do not know, as human beings need to know, who are their ancestors, where they come from. they are people who own nothing, and are themselves owned.*¹(Morrison 32)

As human beings need to know who are their ancestors and where they come from. They are people who own nothing, and are themselves owned.²

II. 5. 2. Sacrifice

Many slave mothers tried to sacrifice their lives for their kids, even though they knew it was probably ineffective. There are accounts of women who did anything for their children, such as Jacobs in *Incidents*. Jacobs hides for several years, in order for her children to become free. Though, the ultimate sacrifice a woman can make for her child is to free them from bondage. In *Beloved*, Sethe killed her baby girl out of love. But to what extent can this be justified? According to Toni Morrison it is accepted under the circumstances, however it is extreme.³ “It’s an excess of maternal feeling, a total surrender to that commitment, and, you know, such excesses are not good. She has stepped across the line, so to speak.”⁴

When Sethe fled to the North to live with Baby Suggs and her children, she thought she was finally free from bondage, however then Schoolteacher appeared at their house. With Schoolteacher’s appearance, Sethe felt endangered and cornered. She knew that the only way

¹Ibid., xiv.

²Ibid., xiv.

³ Taylor-Guthrie, *Conversations*, 252.

⁴Ibid., 252.

to combat him was to kill her children, to “put her babies where they’d be safe,”¹ because she was not willing to give up her freedom and the freedom of her children, to a life in bondage. She could not allow “that anybody white could take your whole self for anything that came to mind. Not just work, kill, or maim you, but dirty you. Dirty you so bad you couldn’t like yourself anymore.”² So, Sethe killed her baby daughter with a handsaw and tried to harm the other ones too, but they were grabbed by their neighbor, Stamp Paid.³

The ultimate sacrifice Sethe made was not uncommon for slave women. Sethe’s killing of her baby happened while she was free, but in *Beloved* there are other examples of mothers ‘killing’ their children, however this occurred during slavery. One example is Ella, the women in the novel who contributed to the Underground Railroad in cooperation with Stamp Paid. She became pregnant after being sexually assaulted. When her child was born she did not want to look after him, so the consequence was that the baby died.⁴ Also, Sethe’s mother left all her children behind who were conceived by whites after being sexually abused, except for Sethe, since she was contrived by a black man.⁵ Such accounts can also be seen in other fictions, such as in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. Cassy, the slave women who is mentioned in an earlier chapter about the loss of her children, became pregnant again, however this time she killed her baby.

Captain Stuart was very kind to me; he had a splendid plantation and took me to it. In the course of a year, I had a son born. O, that child! – How I loved it! How just like my poor Henry the little thing looked! But I had made up my mind, - yes, I had. I would never again let a child live to grow up! I took the little fellow in my arms, when he was two weeks old, and kissed him, and cried over him; and then I gave him laudanum, and held him close to my bosom,

¹ Mitchell, *The Freedom to Remember*, 98.

² Ibid., 98.

³ Ibid., 98.

⁴ Kim, *Toni Morrison’s Beloved*, 22.

⁵ Ibid., 23.

*while he slept to death. How I mourned and cried over it! And who ever dreamed that it was anything but a mistake, which had made me give it the laudanum? But it's one of the few thing that I'm glad of, now. I am not sorry, to this day; he, at least, is out of pain. What better than death could I give him, poor child!*¹(Stow 210)

That infanticide was a 'common' thing for slave women while living in bondage, can be supported by Charlotte Brooks' slave narrative *The House of Bondage*. The only difference between *The House of Bondage* and *Beloved* is that Sethe killed her child while being free, however both committed infanticide to not let their children experience slavery. Aunt Charlotte also thought that death was better for her children than living in bondage.

They died for want of attention. I used to leave them alone half of the time. Sometimes old mistress would have someone to mind them till they got so they could walk, but after that they would have to paddle for themselves. I was glad the Lord took them, for I know they were better off with my blessed Jesus than with me."²(Rogers 14,1890)

It is certainly outrageous that one can kill her child; however the greatest cruelty in the novel *Beloved* is the institution of slavery. Sethe did not want her child to experience slavery the way she experienced it, so she thought this was the best option. According to Stamp Paid Sethe was not crazy. "She loves those children. She was trying to out-hurt the hurter."³ However, Paul D believed that you should limit your love if you are a slave.⁴

According to Paul D, Sethe's "love was too thick."⁵ He thought, "For a used-to-be-slave slave woman to love anything that much was dangerous, especially if it was her children

¹ Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, 210.

² Octavia V. Rogers Albert, ed., *The House of Bondage: or Charlotte Brooks and Other Slaves* (New York: Hunt & Eaton, 1890), 14.

³ Kim, *Toni Morrison's Beloved*, 27.

⁴ Morrison, *Beloved*, xiv.

⁵ Ibid., 191.

she had settled on to love. The best thing, he knew, was to love just a little bit; everything, just a little bit, so when they broke its back, or shoved it in a croaker sack, well, maybe you'd have a little love left over for the next on .¹

According to Sethe "Love is or it ain't. Thin love ain't love at all,"² and according to Morrison, "we have to try. Not trying is so poor for the self. It's so poor for the mind, it's so uninteresting to live without love."³ So, Sethe legitimized her act by saying that bondage itself would have been more severe than death.

Sethe is emotionally and physically hurt by her killing her baby. She is afraid to nurture another child. Sethe replies to Paul D's question of wanting a baby from her: "needing to be good enough, alert enough, strong enough, that caring – again. Having to stay alive just that much longer. O Lord, she thought, delivers me. Unless carefree, mother love was a killer."⁴

Motherhood during slavery was very complex as can be seen in the narratives of *The House of Bondage* and *Incidents*. Overall, women during slavery did not have the chance to really get to know their own children. In the novel *Beloved* on the other hand, Sethe could really acknowledge and love her kids, since they were living together in freedom. However, with the experience of slavery in the back of Sethe's mind, and the sight of her old master trying to get them back, Sethe committed infanticide. She said it was a terrible thing to do, however it was inevitable. She just wanted to keep her children out of slavery, coincided by all the other women slaves. The institution of slavery had such an effect on women, that nothing else seemed a better option for their children.

¹Ibid., 57.

²Ibid., 191.

³ Taylor-Guthrie, *Conversations*, 268.

⁴Ibid., 154.

Conclusion

While comparing the novel *Beloved*, with several slave narratives, it becomes clear that Toni Morrison does a good job with making people “understand African-American history.”¹ Of course, Morrison’s book is based on a true story, Margaret Garner’s story, though *Beloved* is still fiction. Nevertheless, it can be seen as a good reference for what happened during the period of slavery in the United States and thereafter. The themes used, such as, loss, and motherhood are reoccurring themes in many female slave narratives. One can say that all these themes are related to one another, such as the loss of family members through death, or through the master’s decision of selling them. Loss by selling or forced separation is a theme which is not alluded to in *Beloved*, even though this is a reoccurring theme in the history of slavery and in slave narratives. To make an end to the difficult lives of women slaves, some tried to escape. To conclude, the fictional account of *Beloved* gives a good reconstruction of the lives of female slaves, compared to female slave narratives and what historians have written about it.

¹ Aki, *It’s Not Over*, 1.

III. CHAPTER THREE: ANALYSIS OF THE GOTHIC ELEMENTS **IN *BELOVED***

Introduction

1. Gothic Elements

III.1.1. Ghosts

III.1.2. Characterizations

III.1.3. Setting

III.1.4. Time

III.1.5. Atmosphere

III.1.6. Event

III. 2. Subsurface Message

III.2.1. Slavery

III.2.2. .Liberation

III.2.3. Community Identity

Conclusion

Introduction

This chapter is an analysis the gothic elements presented in *Beloved*. The chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section will be examination of gothic elements in the story. The second one will be the examination of the subsurface messages that Morrison wants to imply through the story.

III.1. GOTHIC ELEMENTS

III. 1. 1. Ghosts

There are two kinds of ghosts in this novel. The first one is an invisible ghost, which is the baby's spirit that haunted Sethe's house. There is no image of the baby but it appears in phenomena, such as shaking the housebreaking things in the house, and moving things. Another kind of ghost is the human ghost, which means the ghost disguised to be human. *Beloved* is the second kind of ghost, and *Beloved* is a revive Sethe's child. She is Sethe's dead daughter because there are many things that Sethe had sung to her, the crystal ears rings that Sethe had shown her when she was alive. The second reason is her behavior that was childlike. She cannot walk steadily. She likes to listen to a story and sweet as children like. Her voice and the way she speaks sound like children too. Her skin looks fresh and not calloused. The third reason is that she has the scar around her neck, which looks like the mark of a throat cut of that baby. The last reason is her name and a place she came from. Her name is *Beloved*, which is the word at her headstone. She comes from a small and very dark place, which means a grave. As, appeared the conversation between Denver and *Beloved* below:

III.1.2. CHARACTERIZATIONS

"Why you call yourself *Beloved*"

Beloved closed her eyes. "In the dark, my name is *Beloved*."

Denver scooted a little closer. "What's it like over there, where you were before? Can you tell me?"

"Dark", said Beloved. "I'm small in that place .I'm like this here."

Beloved curled tighter and shook her "hot. Nothing to breath down there and no room to move in."(Morrison 92,2004)

Beloved is the spirit of Seth's daughter from grave. She comes back because she wants to come to revenge Seth. The man characters in this story believe that there are ghosts in the world such as baby Suggs, Sethe, Denver and Paul d. Baby Suggs state that there are ghost everywhere when Sethe suggests that they move from this house .Baby Suggs's words as shown in the following:

"What'd be the point? 'AskedBabySuggs'"Not a house in the country aint' pack to its refers with some dead Negro's grief .we lucky this ghost is a baby; my husband's spirit was to come back here? Or yours?" (Morisson6,2004)

From Baby Suggs's point of view above, death is a normal thing for black people . Many black people are killed and their relatives have to face with this problem too .Some families lose their father, mother, son, and daughter.

III.1.3. setting

The first place that is presented in the story is a haunted house, which is Sethe's house.124 is a house haunted by the spirit of Sethe's daughter.Seth killed her. The people in this house are victims.Sethe's two sons run away from 124 because they cannot stand the dreadful house .Besides, they face with the ghost's power as shown in the following:

124 was spiteful. Full of a baby venom. The women in the house know it and so did the children... Howard and Buglar had run away by the time they were thirteen years old as soon as merely looking in a mirror shattered it (that was the signal for Buglar);as soon as two tiny hand prints appeared in the cake (that was it for Howard). Neither boy wait to see more; another kettleful of

chickpeas smoking in the heap on the floor; soda crackers crumbled and strewn in alien next to the doorsill. (Morrison 1,2004)

Morrison depicts the power of ghosts in the house .She states the baby ghost's power influence the people in the house .She illustrates the scene with two tiny hand prints on cake without doing by child and everything in the house are moving by themselves . From text, the ghost haunts the people in this house because it wants everybody to leave Sethe .It wants to punish her .Another idea is the baby ghost wants everyone to remember it, so she often reappears in this house as Sethe expressed in the following:

Some things go. Pass on. Some things just stay. I used to think it was my memory you know. Some things you forget .Other things you never do. Nevertheless, it is not. Places, places are still there. If a house burns down, it is gone, but the place the memory of it stays, and not just in my memory but out there, in the world. (Morrison 35,2004)

The ghost can also imply the blackness, slavery or racism. It does not often appear but people know, and believe that it is still there. Besides, racism and slavery still haunt the society.

The second place that shows the gothic element is Sweet Home. Sweet Home is Mrs. Garner's house .It is the reminder of slave experience. Before Mrs. Garner dies, Sweet Home is a peaceful place Mr. Garner calls mal slave man, which is different from his neighbor that calls his mal slave boy. He treats his slaves very well .After Mr. Garner dies, Sweet Home is not sweet any more. Schoolteacher runs Sweet Home because Mr. Garner is ill and cannot run it by herself .Schoolteacher treated the slaves like animal and abuses them .Sweet Home is not sweet any more. Slaves want to escape from Sweet Home. Sethe plans to escape smoothly to see Halle, her husband somewhere. They miss the place and Sethe is captured by schoolteacher and his nephews .They nurse her milk and punish her when they find out that Sethe tells this story to Mr. Garner , as she tells to Paul D *Beloved*:

"After I left you, those boys came in there and took my milk. That's what they came in there for .held me down and took it. I told MRS .Garner .she had that em.Schoolteacher mad one open up my back, and when it closed it made a tree . It grow there still. "

"They used cowhide on you?"

"And they took my milk"

They beat you and you was pregnant?"

"And they took my milk". (Morrison 20,2004)

The name Sweet Home is contrasted with its situation .When Sethe and Paul D talk about Sweet Home , they should talk about their happiness but the suffering instead. Actually, Sweet Home is the haunted place too because that place is full of scary, horror, murder and blood. The memory of Sweet Home still haunts the slaves .The name of sweet home should be changed to the better home.

III. 1.4. Time

Morrison employs the flashback technique to develop this story. Therefore, there are two different period. First period shows the history of Sethe and the house. There were many important situations happen in the past such as Sethe's life as a slave in Sweet Home, the violence in Sweet Home, and Sethe crime in her house. All those situations come back to haunt Sethe and others in the present period .Morrison portrays the story in the past through memorization or dream of Sethe and Paul D .Things in the past have disclosed during the present time.

III. 1. 5. Atmosphere

The atmosphere in this story always present through color red. The color red can be implied to various things .For Amy Denver, the red velvet is an image of hope and brighter future. The red image refers to life and death too .For example, the red roses at the fence

along the road to the carnival refer to Sethe, Denver and Paul D's new life together. In contrast, the red pool seen by Paul D represents death. Red pool is the symbol of blood of the children that were killed in this house as seen below:

Paul D tied his shoes together, hung them over his shoulder and followed her through the door straight into a pool of red and undulating light that locked him where he stood.

"You got company?" he whispered, frowning.

"Off and on," Said Sethe.

"Good Good." He backed out the door onto the porch. "What kind of evil you got here?"

"It's not evil, just sad. Come on. Just step through." (Morrison 10, 2004)

According to the *Beloved* movie, this scene shows that while Paul D walking through the door, the picture of Sethe fully of blood of her child is appearing to him and it appears together with red pool and red light. So, red pool is the blood of a child.

III. 1. 6. Events

There are two kinds of events shown in this story. The first kind of the event is supernatural event. The first example of the supernatural event is the appearing of handprints on cake and the sudden happen of colored in the house. The second supernatural event happens with Paul D when he realizes that *Beloved* is moving him around the house and is forced by her cursed.

The second kind of event in the story is the violence event. The violence events first happen with slaves in Sweet Home when schoolteacher and his nephews they are as animals abuse them. Sethe replies her story to Paul D presented in the following dialogue:

"After I left you, those boys came in there and took my milk. That's what they came in there for. Held me down and took it. I told MRS. Garner on em. She had that lump and couldn't speak but her eyes rolled out tears. them boys

found out I told on em. Schoolteacher mad one open up my back , and when it closed it made a tree . It grows there stills. "

"They use cow hide on you?"

"And they took my milk."

"They beat you and you was pregnant?"

"And they took my milk."(Morrison 20,2004)

Schoolteacher's nephews rape Sethe. She is preoccupied with their theft of her breast milk. She privileges her children's needs over her own. Morrison also expresses the abnormal sex behavior of men slaves in Sweet Home. This behavior is the same behavior as in hamlet. It shows strange behavior of human .as shown in the following text *"all in their twenties, minus women, fucking cows, dreaming of rape, thrashing on pallets, rubbing their things and waiting for the new girl".* (Morrison 13,2004)

Another violence event happens in 124, Seth's house when Schoolteacher comes to take Sethe and her children back to Sweet Home. Sethe resists schoolteacher's power by killing her children to let them free from slavery. The bloody and horror event presents through the following text:

Inside, two boys bled in the sawdust and dirt at the feet of a nigger woman holding a blood-soaked child to her chest with one hand and an infant by the heels in the other. She did not look at them; she simply swung the baby toward the wall planks, missed and tried to connect a second time... two were lying open-eyed in sawdust; a third pumped blood down the dress of the main one... little nigger- boy eyes open in sawdust; little nigger-girl eyes staring between the wet fingers that held her head wouldn't fall off; little nigger- baby eyes crinkling up to cry in the arm of the old nigger whose own eyes were nothing but silvers looking down at his feet.(Morrison 183-185,2004)

This scene is the turning point and it shakes the reader's feeling most. It presents the power of love and liberation. Morrison portrays the violence of Black people through Sethe's infanticide.

III.2. Subsurface Message

III.2.1.slavery

Slavery is the main matter of this novel presented through Sethe, Paul D and others slaves at Sweet Home. Sethe's slave life was clearly presented in the following:

'After I left you those boys cam in there and took my milk .That's what they came in therefore .Held me down and took it. I told.Mrs.Garner on em .She had lump and couldn't speak but her eyes rolled out tears .them boy found out I told on em .Schoolteacher mad one open up my back, and when it closed it made a tree .it grow there still.

"They used cowhide on you?"

" And they took my milk"

" They beat you and you was pregnant?"

"And they took my milk". (Morrison 20,2004)

Sethe is treated as an animal by schoolteacher's nephews.After she is punished by schoolteacher beating her and makes the scar look like the chokecherry tree at her back .Amy Denver explains its figure to her below:

It is a tree, Lu. a chokecherry tree . See , here's the trunk-it's red and split wide open ,full of sap , and this here's the parting for the branches . You got a mighty lot of branches. Leaves, too like, and darn if these ain't blossoms...(Morrison 97,2005)

From Amy Denver's explanation that figure looks very beautiful tree but it's not because it is the marks from beating in human body. From her experience, she learns that slavery is terrible and destructive. Thus, she cannot stand if her children will have that memory like her. Therefore, she has to kill her children to save them from being slaves when schoolteacher came to take them. Because of her limitation as a black woman, she has no choice. Slavery is scarier than death. It is a destructive thing in their life. African American slave family never completed, some are motherless, fatherless and some lose their children. The slaves are sub-humans, as they cannot have any freedom or identity. They are the property of the white people. They are abused and sold by their masters who treated them badly.

Mister was allowed to be and stay what he was ... but was not no way I'd ever be Paul D again, living or dead. Schoolteacher changed me. I was something else and that something was less than a chicken sitting in the sun on a tub.
(Morrison 72, 2005)

Morrison employs gothic elements to present slavery and its inhumanity. It is the cleaver idea to tell slavery through violence, horror and supernatural. Readers are surprised and shocked with the situations in the story and are provoked by man's cruelty to one another.

III. 2. 2. Liberation

Liberation is the supreme hope of slaves. However, it is hard to obtain because they do not have power. However, Sethe sees the short cut to maintain freedom for her children through death, which is the best way to free them from slavery.

III. 2. 3. Community Identity

The community of black people is very great as seen in the part of the novel. The black people in the community gather again when they know that *Beloved* was the spirit of Sethe's daughter and Sethe was ill because of ghost venom. Therefore, they parade to Sethe's house to dislodge that spirit from the house. Every black woman holds the cross of Jesus Christ in their

hands and prayed altogether in front of Sethe's house. The following citation reconfirms this agreement:

...When they caught up with each other, all thirty, and arrived at 1240, the first thing they saw was not Denver sitting on the steps, but themselves. Younger, stronger, even as still girls lying in the grass asleep. Catfish was popping grease in the pan and they saw themselves scoop German potato salad . . . the fence they had leaned on and climbed over was gone. The stump of the butternut had split like a fan. But there they were, young and happy, playing in Baby Suggs' yard, not feeling the envy that surfaced the next day. Denver heard mumbling and looked to the left. She stood when she saw them. They grouped, murmuring and whispering ... (Morrison 317,2005)

From this text, the community crosses the border of the detesting which symbol by fence of Sethe's house. In the part, all of them used to join their activities with Baby Suggs in this place. However, after Sethe murdered her child, people in the community abandon her because they think that her behavior looks like an animal and they do not want to associate with the ghost spirit in the house. From this situation in the text, it rouses them to gather and come back to her again to save Sethe from the ghost. It shows that black people have very strong community and they can achieve everything if they group together.

Conclusion

To conclude, Morrison makes use of gothic elements to tell the story to provoke the readers' attention about how tensile slavery was to the black people, and why a black mother has to kill her own child to save her from being a slave, and get her punishment eventually.

General Conclusion

Toni Morrison is an influential writer who devoted her literary works writing about the history of her people and identity. She wrote about American history in her most influential book *Beloved*. Through this work, she restored the forgotten history of slavery and unveiled the plight of African Americans. In reading them, we find ourselves reading about the complete black history of slavery. Morrison succeeded to delve deeper in this watershed of American history through her fictions. Morrison, via the gothic fiction, depicted all the horrors and atrocities that the African Americans faced as slaves. In *Beloved*, we feel that Morrison's characters are real people with factual story because she transformed story into history. That is to say, she fictionalized history and historicized fiction. According to the finding, the readers are reassured that the gothic elements are significantly employed by Morrison to provoke the horror, mystery, supernatural, satire, comedy and tragedy at the same time to make them understand the devastative impacts of slavery. Gothic elements are various but they are related with the definitions provided. Moreover, gothic fiction is not a supernatural story. On the subsurface it is like a ghost story, but underneath it is a serious message. The readers have to read the underlying meanings more carefully to find out. Since gothic are powerful tools to provoke the readers' awareness of some specific problems and makes changes.

Toni Morrison employs gothic elements in her novel, the first novel, *Beloved*. The underlying meaning of this novel is slavery. She shows the supernatural events through the ghost child who got the effect from slavery. Her slave narrative, underpins the story of slavery and the white people. The ghost in the story is the reminder of slavery and black people. They are invisible among white people in the society. Another element is a haunted house. The real haunted house is 124 that is Sethe's house. The latter was haunted by a child's spirit. Another house is Sweet Home which haunts Seth's memory. Seth and other slaves experience slavery

in that place. The name sweet home is satirical and very contrast with the real situation. This house is full of blood, murder and slave abuse. The colours are repeatedly presented in this novel. The most expressed is the red colour. Red refers to blood and death, especially the red colour in the perception of Seth and *Beloved*. There are some associated points in this novel. For instance, love is very important in black community. But the result of love presented in this novel is death. It is the real element of gothic because it expresses the tragedy and is very powerful for it arouses the reader's emotion.

Another point is motherhood that was presented through the novel as it is an important part of life. Morrison illustrates Black mother sacrifices and endurance. The gothic elements employed here help reflect the power of Black women in the critical situations. The last point is community identity of Black people. Black people community is very strong. They can achieve their goal if only they are united in the community.

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الملخص

تعتبر رواية توني موريسون المحبوبة (1987) على نطاق واسع ممثلاً للرواية القوطية ، حيث انها تشتمل على العناصر القوطية تحت خلفية العبودية في جنوب الولايات المتحدة. تستخدم رواية موريسون المحبوبة الظهورات كربط رمزي للعبودية ، ومع ذلك فقد تم التقليل من مجموع التجسيد التمثيلي لمحبوبة من قبل النقاد. تنتشر أنواع مختلفة في رواية المحبوبة: الواقعية السحرية ، الرواية التاريخية ، الرواية القوطية ، وقصة الأشباح. كل من الشبح وتجسيده معا يمنحان موريسون الفرصة للتحقيق في الحقيقة التي لا توصف من هذه المعاناة القوية التي لحقت على سيث والمحبوبة تحت عبء العبودية. عند استكشاف الطريقة التي تتلاعب بها موريسون بالعناصر القوطية ، فإنها تفتح عالماً جديداً من السرد ، حيث يتم الكشف عن قصة الما فوق الطبيعة من خلال إطار زمني متقطع ، وبين الحقائق والصور المتشقة. ولكي نكون أكثر تحديداً ، فإن جوهر هذه الرواية يفتح موضوعاً حول استحالة التعبير ، الذي يشوه العبيد ، والتحول النهائي الفظيع مع تمثيل العناصر القوطية. إذا كان القوطي غالباً مرتبطاً وامتثلاً بأخر وحشي ، رعباً سابقاً وظلم اجتماعي ، فإن هذا الاستكشاف للعناصر القوطية في المحبوبة يتفحص القوطية ويختم أكثر برؤيتها مع عرض إدراكي كـ "موضوع" ، حيث تبدو فيه ان الانانية تسكن. الهدف من هذه الرسالة هو تحليل استخدام العناصر القوطية في رواية توني موريسون المحبوبة. نتيجة لذلك ، تُظهر هذه الدراسة أن العناصر القوطية تساهم في قصص توني موريسون بطريقتين. أولاً ، تضيف العناصر القوطية إلى تصوير الشخصيات البسيطة ، والإعداد ، وجو هذه القصص. وثانياً ، تظهر هذه العناصر في تصوير شخصية سيث نفسها. وهكذا ، فإن استخدام العناصر القوطية يُمكن موريسون من إنشاء قصص مشوقة ومثيرة للدهشة مع شخصية أمريكية إفريقية لا تنسى.

Résumé

Beloved (1987) de Toni Morrison est largement considéré comme un représentant du roman gothique, car il concerne les éléments gothiques de l'esclavage dans le sud des États-Unis. La bien-aimée de Morrison utilise les apparitions comme association symbolique de l'esclavage, mais la totalité de ce que l'incarnation de la représentation bien-aimée a été minimisée par les critiques. Différents genres circulent dans *Beloved*: le réalisme magique, le roman historique, le roman gothique et l'histoire des fantômes. Le fantôme et son incarnation offrent à Morrison l'occasion d'enquêter sur l'innommable vérité des souffrances si puissantes infligées à Seth et *Beloved* sous le fardeau de l'esclavage. En explorant la façon dont Morrison manipule les éléments gothiques, elle dévoile un nouveau domaine de narration, dans lequel le récit du surnaturel est révélé à travers un cadre temporel déconnecté et entre des faits et des images désintégrés. Pour être plus précis, le cœur de ce roman expose un thème sur l'impossibilité de l'articulation, qui déforme et défigure les esclaves, et la transformation éventuelle de l'horrible avec la représentation des éléments gothiques. Si le gothique est souvent associé et représenté avec une altérité monstrueuse, une horreur passée et une injustice sociale, alors cette exploration des éléments gothiques de *Beloved* scrute le gothique et conclut en la considérant avec une présentation perceptive comme un 'sujet' dans lequel l'individualité semble demeurer. Le but de cette thèse est d'analyser l'utilisation des éléments gothiques dans le roman de Toni Morrison, *Beloved*. En conséquence, cette étude montre que les éléments gothiques contribuent aux histoires de Toni Morrison de deux manières. Tout d'abord, ils ajoutent à la représentation des personnages mineurs, au cadre et à l'atmosphère de ces histoires. Deuxièmement, ils se manifestent dans la représentation du personnage de Seth elle-même. Ainsi, l'utilisation d'éléments gothiques permet à Morrison de créer des histoires suspensives et surprenantes avec une figure afro-américaine remarquablement mémorable.