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**A PHOBIA IN EXISTENCE AND ABSENCE: "THE MEANING
OF MEANINGLESSNESS WITH EXPECTANT AND EXPECTED,
THE STRUGGLES OF UN-DEAD BELOVED"**

(Let the caged birds release!)

*VARLIK VE YOKLUK İÇİNDE KORKU: "BEKLEYEN VE BEKLENEN İLE
ANLAMSIZLIĞIN ANLAMI VE ÖLÜMSÜZ SEVİLEN"İN
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Abstract

In "A phobia in existence and absence: " The meaning of meaninglessness with expectant and expected, the struggles of un- dead Beloved ", the aim is to illuminate the inner psychology of blacks and their bad experiences that they have been exposed to. " The trafficking between the living and the dead, although not unfamiliar in the east or west, also is rooted in African religion, philosophy, art, and tradition" (Dipace,1994). Toni Morrison's *Beloved* is a significant work with various topics, including motherhood, the struggles of blacks-especially black women- and the bestial behaviour of white society on blacks. " The struggle for psychic wholeness is a continuous one in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, a novel situated in slavery and its aftermath" (Melus, 2001:1). " The essential aim of her works is to create and spread awareness in black community" (Depçi, Tanritanır 2013). In *Beloved* (1987), Toni Morrison powerfully deconstructs the master - slave narrative by speaking about two " unspeakable things unspoken " in the bulk of American literature and hitherto marginalized in American history: the horror of the Middle Passage and the horror of slavery (Dipace, 1994). But however Morrison behaves very careful on the issue of making all the whites bad and all the blacks wonderful. In this study, it has been tried to explain Morrison's views about slavery by help of black sezp-anhe baby, Beloved. " Sezp Anhe " means 'a living ceature' that is dead indeed in Egyptian and it is the name of a sfenk that it inhabited in the shape of half-man in Egypt. Beloved is a dead baby killed by her mother and comes from a true story belonging to Margaret Garner who killed her baby by a handsaw rather than seeing her child to be forced into the life of slavery as she was. But it is a salvation for Beloved, a liberation provided her for saying loudly ' ELEUTHERIA! ELEUTHERIA! ELEUTHERIA! '. "Eleutheria", as a French word, is to be used for freedom. The first tragic cause is rooted in the African diaspora. Historically known as the Middle Passage, the slave trade spanned the expansion of Europe from the sixteenth century, culminating in America in the late nineteenth century (Dipace,1994). In spite of bad experiences, this,

as Marley says; " love the life you live and live the life you love" must be said by all languished people who are exposure to- war, genocide, and slavery.

Key Words: Toni Morrison, Eternity, Black-Caged Bird Sethe, Venom, Eleutheria

Özet

Varlık ve yokluk içinde korku: " bekleyen ve beklenen ile anlamsızlığın anlamı ve ölümsüz Sevilen'in mücadeleleri " adlı bu çalışmada amaç siyah toplumun içsel psikolojilerini, aynı zamanda orijinali Margaret Garner 'a ait olan bu hikâyede siyahilerin yaşadıkları tecrübelerin zorluğunu Morrison'un *Beloved* adlı eseri aracılığıyla anlatmaktır. Sevilen karakteri aslında mecazen yaşayan ölü oluşu ile 'Sezp-anhe' adlandırılması ile dolaylı olarak ilişkilidir. ' Sezp-anhe ' yaşayan ölü anlamına gelen Mısır 'da bulunan yarı insan şeklindeki bir sfenke verilen addır. Sevilen karakteri tüm siyah toplumunun umudu, hasretle bekledikleri özgürlükleri adına bir hırs ve siyah gözyaşları silecek olan beyaz bir güvercin olarak kalplerde yer edinmiştir. Bu en sevilen eser ' Sevilen ' bir annenin bebeğinin kendisi gibi esaret hayatına maruz kalmasını ve acı dolu tecrübeler edinmesini engellemek amacıyla en sevilenini testere ile kendi elleriyle katledişini anlatır. Keşmekeşler ile dolu bu dünyada özünü korumak, sahiplenmek ve atılan oklara göğüs germek öyle zordur ki. İşte zenci edebiyatın kitap kurdu Morrison siyah Amerikalıların çektikleri eziyetleri ve hayata karşı duydukları kaygıları dillendirmek amacıyla bilhassa bu mühim konuyu ele alma çabası içine girmiştir. Çünkü siyahlar yaşamlarının her karesinde siyahtılar. Doğarken siyah, gülümserken siyah, korkunca siyah, ağlarken siyah ve ölümlerinde yine siyahtılar. İşte siyahlar bu kadar siyah dünyaları içinde bir parça rengi hayal kırıklıklarını da yanlarına alarak umut içinde beklerler. G. Bernard Shaw der ki; "hiç hayal kırıklığına uğramayanlar, hiç umut beslememiş olanlardır".

Anahtar Kelimeler: Toni Morrison, Ölümsüzlük, Siyah Kafes Kuşu Sethe, Kin, Özgürlük

INTRODUCTION

In this study, it has been focused on the difficulties endured by blacks, particularly black women and little black girls. Racism and slavery are moral blindness. It must be known that each race is special. And if you are human, you must know that it is too bad "...to take the boy from his mother " (Stowe 6). Morrison's *Beloved* is a story of dark-skinned mothers, children and their ancestors and "...not a story to pass on " (Morrison 523). "...The 'dearly beloved,' those buried, burned, thrown overboard, who can not or should not be forgotten" (Jeanna, 2002:1). Morrison has dealt with the topics of slavery, rape and the blacks' disappointment well and "...questioning the impact of class differences, gender oppression and racism and also the differences of skin color which elevates the status of those light skinned blacks whereas aggravates the sufferings of the ones with the darker skins, both within the black community and within society as a whole is critical to understand the black women's positioning" (Depci, Tanritanır 2013:6). " The slave trade effected the death, deracination, and abduction of millions of Africans who, boarded like cattle on numerous slavers, were sold at various ports of call. Morrison mourns them in her first epigraph/epitaph: "Sixty million / and more." Sold, bought, and brought from their homelands to Europe, the Caribbean, and the Americas, many died *en route*"(Dipace,1994). Morrison has tried to defend her own land and this is the only purpose of her life. The novel begins with this description: " 124 WAS SPITEFUL! Full of a baby's venom" (Morrison 2). It can be seen that the novel is about a "...baby's venom" (Morrison 2). The house is full of a sinless baby's hatred. " Her hatred shows itself as suffers including blackness and the beauty, racism, violence and rape " (Tanritanır, 2012:4). Noting that there exists "no native

informant here," this "shared experience" will entail "rememory," reclaiming, loving..." (Dipace,1994). Sethe, the baby's mother, "...her tears were rolling down her face" (Grisham 2). "...Her past had been like her present--intolerable--" (Morrison 3). It is also about the dark life of black women, such as Sethe, grandmother Baby Sugs and especially the real character Margaret Garner. All slaves' presents were like their past. The slave girl lives always like her past "...lays in a pool of blood and beer " (Grisham 1). And noone speaks of her again. Noone helps her but however noone stops to whisper together about her. There are many black girls who are exposed to be "raped" by whites. What will they do these poor black girls, you know? "They threw them into the long grass at the edge of the woods" (Grisham 1). But why? Why are the black girls left alone at the edge of the woods? Why are they defenceless? Have you ever thought of this critical issue? Such as the rape of Tonya Hailey, like Celie, and like Sethe and others, there are so many black defenceless girls through the world. These black women and little black childs beg for attention and they tend to search their identity and right. "Remember that Hailey nigger" (Grisham 4).

Through *Beloved*, it is obvious that the rape and violence are the most painful themes of the novel. Sethe is attacked by the nephew of schoolteacher when her husband isn't at home. This brutish and bestial behaviour was made by inhumane white men. Sethe tells this experience Paul D such a pathetic speech: "They used cowhide on you? And they took my milk. They beat you and you was pregnant? And they took my milk!" (Morrison 20). "Every hour of every day, the victim thinks of the rape and asks herself a thousand questions. She relieves it, step by step, minute by minute, and it hurts just as badly" (Grisham 75). And let's think, "if this happens to a child? A ten-year-old child? Imagine you're a parent. How would you explain to your child why she was raped? How would you explain why she cannot have children?" (Grisham 75). Because of this, Sethe killed her little baby in case she did not experience the bad events that her mother had to bear up. "...Sethe's fear of slavery and its effect was so terrible that she did not want her children to experience the same difficulties" (Tanritanir, 2012:7). Through that Nobel-prized novel, Sethe represents a good motherhood. Because she has killed her baby because of the abuses on negroes and after this situation, she dedicated herself to her daughter Denver. Sethe always tries to protect Denver from the past and nothing scares Sethe anymore and says: "if you go there and stand in the place where it was it will happen again; it will be there for you, waiting for you. So Denver you can't never go there. Never. Because even though it's all over--over and done with. It's going to always be there waiting for you" (Morrison 44). The central traumatic episode of *Beloved* is a bloodshed scene. Sethe beheaded her baby with a handsaw not to allow her return to slavery. In my opinion the message of the novel is that " death is better than slavery" (Harriet Ann Jacob). The main questioning is done by Sethe about negroes. She says: "The gist being how do people lead their lives? How can we help them do it better? In every aspect of their lives, how can we lead them to their truth? First we must be lead to our own. Who are we? What do we stand for? What do we believe?" (Morrison 135). About fifty years ago, Dr.Martin Luther King made a speech under the title of "I Have A Dream" and defended all rights of black people. He was also black and dark-skinned man and wanted to save black people from whites' languishing. It was his only 'DREAM'. However negroes' life is still passing under the control of whole white men, they are still being worked as a slave. All poor blacks are still freezing to their marrow and maybe they are going to bed hungry.

All right, have you ever thought about them, about their hardships, about their dead mother and father and their dead baby? Have you ever been exposed to all bad conditions that all negroes had to put up with? In *Beloved*, Denver says:

Grandma Baby said people look down on her because she had eight children with different men. Colored people and white people both look down on her for that. Slaves not supposed to have pleasurable feelings on their own; their bodies not supposed to be like that, but they have to have as many children as they can to please whoever owned them. Still, they were not supposed to have pleasure deep down. She said for me not to listen to all that. That I should always listen to my body and love it. (Morrison 400).

Let's think it is time to empathy; you are a negro and your mother is raped by some inhumane men, your brothers are being despised by them and also your father is being beaten by these cruel men and all your relatives are being killed by them and you can not see them anymore. Then your life will be worse than an animal:

Bleak, dark, and piercing cold, it was a night for the well-housed and fed to draw round the bright fire and thank God they were at home; and for the homeless, starving wretch to lay him down and die. Many hunger worn outcasts close their eyes in our bare streets, at such times, who, let their crimes have been what they may, can hardly open them in a more bitter world. (Dickens 259)

In the preface of Marjorie Spiegel's *The Dreaded Comparison: Human and Animal Slavery*, Alice Walker writes: "The animals of the world exist for their own reasons. They were not made for humans any more than black people were made for whites or women for men". As Martin Luther King said:

But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languished in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land. And so we've come here today to dramatize a shameful condition. (Luther King, *I Have A Dream*, 2004).

Now again let's think; while a negro is living on a lonely island of 'POVERTY' (my emp.), you are living on an island of 'PROPERTY' (my emp.). A bad life of a negro is able to being pictured by these seven words " p-o-v-e-r-t-y". What is poverty? Poverty means that people are extremely poor. Poverty means that the income is low and people are in need of help. In the island of Ohio and Missisipi, poverty means that a baby is crying because of starving and "...it's growing worse and worse: flesh and blood can not bear it any longer" (Stove 17). If you are poor, you do not have the right of saying something. If you are a poor negro, you are being worked as carrier in all hours a day and you will say "I am an invisible man. I am a man of substance, of flesh and bone, fiber and liquids - and I might even be said to possess a mind. I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me." (Ellison 3). You are " being born is like being kidnapped and then sold into slavery" (W.Shakespeare). And moreover, you are being killed by an inhumane man, not by your fate. Because you are black, because you are the daughter of a black woman and you are the grandchild of a black man. In *Beloved*, Denver starts to cry in front of Paul D and Sethe because of loneliness and despises of white society: "I can't live here. I don't know where to go or what to do. I can't live here. Nobody speaks to us. Nobody comes by. Boys don't like me. Girls don't either... It's not ! It's not the house. It's us ! And It's you!"(Morrison 17). But don't be afraid little black girl. As Ellison says; " when you discover who you are, you will be free " (Ellison 243). The same warning is done by Baby Suggs in the *Beloved*:

She is a "Here," she said, "in this here place, we flesh; flesh that weeps, laughs; flesh that dances on bare feet in grass. Love it. Love it hard. Yonder they do not love your flesh. They despise it. They don't love your eyes; they'd just as soon pick em out. No more do they love the skin on your back. Yonder they flay it. And O my people they do not love your hands. Those they only use, tie, bind, chop off and leave empty. Love your hands! Love them. Raise them up and kiss them. Touch others with them, pat them together, stroke them on your face 'cause they don't love that either. You got to love it, you ! And no, they ain't in love with your mouth...O my people, out yonder, hear me, they do not love your neck unnoosed and straight. So love your neck. (Morrison 170)

You are a flower that blossomed through the snows in winter season and your soul will not die. Dear Dead Baby Beloved, only hope can set you free. "You are my face; I am you. Why did you leave me. Who are you? I will never leave you again. Don't ever leave me again" (Morrison 413). The "Eleutheria !" (freedom) must be your last word. "If I could have convinced more slaves that they were slaves, I could have freed thousands more" (Tubman, an interview). Emancipatory means that live in a freedom and equality. It is an equal right and duty to set all slaves free. Let the caged birds release!

When the topic comes to slavery, it is impossible not to remember Agathe Christie's the best '*Ten Little Niggers*' or with other saying, "*And There Were None*". There were no negroes in Missisipi, in Ohio and etc. There were no negro childs running outside their tiny cabins any longer. Who did it ? Who caused to destroy their life?:

Ten little negro (my emphasize) boys went out to dine; One choked his little self and then there were Nine. Nine little negro boys sat up very late; One overslept himself and then there were Eight. Eight little negro boys traveling in Devon; One said he'd stay there and then there were Seven. Seven little negro boys chopping up sticks; One chopped himself in halves and then there were Six. Six little negro boys playing with a hive; A bumblebee stung one and then there were Five. Five little negro boys going in for law; One got into Chancery and then there were Four. Four little negro boys going out to sea; A red herring swallowed one and then there were Three.

Three little negro boys walking in the Zoo; A big bear hugged one and then there were Two. Two Little negro boys playing with a gun; One shot the other and then there was one. One little negro boy left all alone; He went out and hanged himself and then there were NONE (my emp). (Christie, *Ten Little Niggers*)

One day will be a happy day negro baby' Beloved 'and you will say "...and now we are reaching out for the daybreak of freedom and justice and equality. (Luther King, in public speech). Be yourself, do not be afraid and walk through in spite of the strong rain. Even if the rain may give you some trouble, you must know that the flowers that come afterward are beautiful. In spite of inhumane men, you will reach freedom and equality that you deserve: "Men often hate each other because they fear each other; they fear each other because they do not know each other; they do not know each other because they can not communicate; they can not communicate because they are separated" (Luther King, in public speech). Look at Oronooko! He was hung by inhumane men but however his name and his picture were known by everyone and he was defended by all strugglists; such as Blake, Wright, Baldwin, Morrison, Walker, Angelou and etc. Do not be afraid dead baby Beloved you are also being defended by so many humanists. And only think of your happy death. You are dieing in happiness. Believe in brotherhood and rest in peace like Tod Clifton. "His name was Tod Clifton, he believed in Brotherhood, he aroused your hopes and he died" (Ellison 459). Your death is "*La Mort*

heureuse" (happy death). And you, you are beloved!, you are "L'Homme révolté"! (a revolting human) and you will say that loudly:

But I'm here to say to you this morning that some things are right and some things are wrong. Eternally so, absolutely so. It's wrong to hate. It always has been wrong and it always will be wrong. It's wrong in America, it's wrong in Germany, it's wrong in Russia, it's wrong in China. It was wrong in 2000 B.C., and it's wrong in 1954 A.D. It always has been wrong, and it always will be wrong. It's wrong to throw our lives away in riotous living. No matter if everybody in Detroit is doing it, it's wrong. It always will be wrong, and it always has been wrong. It's wrong in every age and it's wrong in every nation. Some things are right and some things are wrong, no matter if everybody is doing the contrary. (Luther, an interview)

At the end of the novel, Morrison forces the reader not to forget the history of negroes:

By and by all trace is gone, and what is forgotten is not only the footprints but the water too and what it is down there. The rest is weather. Not the breath of the disremembered and unaccounted for, but wind in the eaves, or spring ice thawing too quickly. Just weather. Certainly no clamor for a kiss. Beloved. (Morrison 525)

CONCLUSION

Throughout this study, It has been tried to focus on blacks' disappointments, a baby's venom, the black-coloured eyedrops of black mothers and their ancestors and the most important one-'motherhood'. Beloved, who was "...the dream and the hope of the slave " (Angelou, *Still I Rise*), came from the WOMB and went to the TOMB. The life finished with her and her eyes were different kind of consciousness any longer. A supernatural and well-adjusted true story of a black mother (Margaret Garner) has been given in a good style by Morrison and has been adapted in an absolute tune. The struggle of life was too harsh for her and made her little baby killed. As long as brutish people exist, racism will remain as a moral blindness and the caged-birds can not taste 'the sense of liberty'. As Morrison says; " Black people are victims of an enormous amount of violence. None of those things can take place without the complicity of the people who run the schools and the city". Baldwin says: " there must be known that the only source of authors' inspiration is their own life with good and bad sides". Morrison's *Beloved* reflects the historical period of slave life. Negroes are finished with slavery but however they proceed suffering. Throughout this study it has been tried to give the oppressed class's, particularly black women and their childs', unfortunate life. " Morrison wanted to create an awareness regarding the discrimination in society, emphasizing the ignorant conditions of oppressed and the violated." (Depçi, Tanrıtanır 2013) The only thing was hatred taught them. The slave race cleans the fish, washes spavined, looks after the white babies, cleans streets or being worked in a restaurant's kitchen by being hidened in case the whites do not see them. But the only remained is desire of liberty.

The black caged-bird! Rest in peace!

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