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Magical Realism in Twentieth Century Afro-American Literature

The Case of Toni Morrison's *Beloved*

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DEDICATION

I pleasurably dedicate my dissertation to my dearest parents, my brothers, and supportive friends.

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I have benefitted from the day-to-day support, supervision and the wisest guidance of a brilliant teacher, a generous lady and a most devoted person, Dr.Halima BENZOUKH, whose intellectual mentorship, encouragement, and patience made this project possible.

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Abstract

This research paper studies Magical Realism in the twentieth century Afro -American literature taking as a case study Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. American literature in the United States portrays the experience and the history of African Americans. In *Beloved*, Morrison shows the physical and psychological effects slavery has on an African- American woman. Morrison shows the real-life events from African- American history and gives special importance to the horrors and tortures of slavery. This study intends to show that Morrison tries to portray some social realities by using Magic Realism in her novel and give us a picture on how could African -American authors work with Magical Realism and apply it in their work. In *Beloved*, the writer focuses on the brutal aspects of slavery in order to affect the reader and the community since further slave history should not be forgotten. The author thinks that the horrible issues related to slavery are avoided and forgotten in the traditional slave narratives; therefore, she wants to emphasize the painful and forgotten aspects of slavery. Morrison's novel forces its reader to recognize the existence and conditions of slavery in a nation that would prefer to forget that such a crime was ever committed.

Key- words: Afro-American Literature, slavery, Magical Realism, Afro-American Woman.

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General Introduction

1. Background of the study

Literature can be defined as an artistic means of communication expressed through words that are parts of language components. It is as John Paul Sartre describes it “*Les Belles Letters*”; it speaks to the reader’s hearts, minds and souls, because it has a direct impact on their emotional and psychological perceptions (Sobhi, 2017). Writers are like painters, both of them use dreams and symbols to express their aesthetic world, and offer pleasure and enjoyments to their audiences. Painters use palettes, colors and shapes to attract their fans and Viewers, whereas, authors use words and metaphors to make the reader travel throughout endless journeys and unknown destinies.

The term “Magical Realism” was firstly introduced in painting, and later appeared in literature. This term is about opposing meanings within a word or phrase that creates an ostensible self-contradiction (Chalupsky, 2011). ‘Realism’ describes the real events in life, while ‘Magic’ consists of mystical, magical events and imagination (Chalupsky, 2011). Literature writer’s work with Magic because is considered as an energy that is acquired through studying books and also to depict their real life. They describe reality in a magical way and this what led us to encounter the world of Magical Realism (ibid). Indeed, the two opposing words of Magical Realism make us meet the world of art to depict reality in a magical way. However, Magical Realism is commonly associated with African -American Literature. Authors like Toni Morrison used magical realist techniques to represent the African- American literature to the front stage of the world literature.

Nowadays people introduced this term in lives quite widely Magical Realism is used everywhere, even in cinema. In Roh’s opinion, Magic Realism is “a way to uncover the mystery hidden in everyday reality” (Tecimoglu, 2008). Among this Toni Morrison is an African-American writer, whose fifth novel, *Beloved*, has been described as one of the most prominent texts to emerge out of the African-American literary tradition. She is concerned with the concept

of Blacks as marginalized and black literature as the non-canonical literature, and tries to redefine white/black hierarchy of mainstream discourse, a discourse which has always undermined Black's existence in the construction of American literature and culture (ibid).

Beloved is written from the marginal point of view of African-Americans who do not have social and political power. It is the story of Sethe, an ex-slave, who grieves the fact that she murdered her baby girl, in order to save her from a life of slavery. She has mourned so much bitterly that her grief becomes manifest into a body of a young woman named Beloved, A ghost in the beginning, beings the same age than Sethe's dead baby would have had if it had lived. The presence of two opposing discursive systems of Magic and Real in *Beloved* can reflect the tensions between the colonized and colonizer discourses in a postcolonial context (Mudrovic, 2012). Applying postcolonial terminology, Realism represents the hegemonic discourse of the colonizer, while Magic refers to the strategy of opposition and resistance used by the colonized. Magical realism can also provide a way to fill in the gaps of cultural representation in a postcolonial context, by recovering the fragments and voices of forgotten histories from the point of view of the colonized (Drouiche, 2016). In other words, Magical Realism may serve as the transformative decolonizing project of imaging alternative histories. The Magical Realism of Morrison's text address historical issues critically, and in so doing attempting to heal historical wounds, not only can reflect history, it may also seek to change it. Thus, *Beloved* can be read as a postcolonial historiography intervention, a strategic re-centering of American history in the lives of the African- Americans who are historically dispossessed.

African- American literature has become an inevitable part of American literature and culture. The strong presence of African- American literature has paved the way for the emergence of Native American, Asian American, and Chicano American streams of literatures (Sobhi, 2017). Before understanding the origin of African American literature, it is necessary to know the main problems of that period. The problem of race and tensions of color pushed

African- Americans use writing to establish a place for themselves in that community. The English contributed to the issue of segregation (Sobhi, 2017). They had developed the concept of inferiority and distinction through drawing on preconceptions rooted in images of blackness and physical differences between the two peoples. Those negative images were created by English adventurers and traders who visited the African Continent. The literature read at that time in England offered a negative portrayal of Africans and their ways of life (ibid). The Africans were described as ruthless and cruel, and even as ugly people. Early in the 18th century, laws excluded the testimony of the Blacks in court, particularly, in the South. In many colonies, the free Black, paid punitive taxation and were prohibited from having property. In Virginia, some Blacks lost the right to vote .African -Americans were given different names like ‘Colored’ ‘Negros’ ‘Black’ and ‘African Americans’ (ibid). In fact, African American literature embodies novels, poems and plays showing the status of race as a whole. The writers’ works reflect their identities.

African- American literature presents a wide range of writings from the colonial period to the present. It is related to different literary periods: The colonial period (1746-1800), antebellum period (1800-1865), the reconstruction period (1865-1900), the protest movement (1960-1969) and contemporary period (1970-present).Early in the 18th century, laws excluded the testimony of the Blacks in court, especially in the South (Sobhi, 2017). In several colonies, the free Blacks paid punitive taxation and were prohibited from owning property. In Virginia, some Blacks lost the right to vote. They were brought against their will, and many wives were separated from their husbands and were given to others.

Believing that nothing had given the right description of what this great community had endured, and as a way to show the miserable life that the Afro-Americans had experienced, and magical elements shows the role of the social struggles of the Blacks against the Whites. As the first Afro- American woman who won the Nobel Prize in literature and being influenced by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Morrison employ the Magical Realism style in her novel, *Beloved* (1987).

2. Research Motivation

The choice of Toni Morrison novel *Beloved* is made because of various reasons: Firstly, Morrison always tries to find a relationship between literary criticism and black writers these critiques and studies enable black literature to be heard. Secondly, she believes that black people have a rich culture of storytelling to draw upon and that their stories must be heard.

3. Statement of the Problem

The problems are stated as follows:

1. How can we define the Afro-American Literature?
2. How can we define the origins of Magical Realism?
3. How many African American famous writers apply Magical Realism in their work?

4. Aims of the study

On the account of this, the following aims of the research are done: first of all, to define the Afro- American Literature. Then, to define the origins of Magical Realism, at the end, to mention the famous African- American writers who apply the magical realism in their work (Toni Morrison).

5. Research Questions

1. How does Morrison use Magical Realism in *Beloved*?
2. How does Morrison base her Magical Realism according to the belief system of African- American culture in literature?

6. Research Hypotheses

1. Through the novel, the reader can answer how the writer portrays the Magic Realism in her novel.
2. Toni Morrison shows the suffering from race and slavery that Sethe use main character faces in her life.

7. Methodology

As an object of the research, the novel *Beloved* (1987) by Toni Morrison is selected for analyzing the Magic Realism in Afro- American literature. This book; chosen because of its tendency to describe the events through Magical, supernatural and mysterious elements.

Descriptive analysis is applied for presenting the concept of Magic Realism, and to determining the influencing factors for the writer to use Magic Realism in this novel. Furthermore, Content (textual) analysis is performed on the purpose to interpret the cases of Magic Realism and state the implication they hold in the novel.

Chapter one

African American -Literature

Introduction

1.1 Historical Background of African -American Literature

1.1.1 The Colonial Period (1746-1800)

1.1.2 The Antebellum Period (1800 -1865)

1.1.3 The Reconstruction Period (1865- 1900)

1.1.4 The Harlem Renaissance (1900 -1940)

1.1.5 The Protest Era (1940 – 1959)

1.1.6 The Contemporary Period (1960 – Present)

1.2 African American Women's Writings

1.2.1 Representatives of Afro- American women writers

1.2.2 Features of African-American Women's Literature

1.3 Historical Background of Contemporary African- American Literature

1.4 Contemporary Afro- American Women writers

Conclusion

Introduction

This research work deals with African -American literature. In America, precisely in the South, African slavery in America is a controversial subject in society and in history. It brings forth feelings of guilt in populations, in the West, whose ancestors hundreds of years ago, may have participated in the buying and selling of fellow human beings. These social and historical events pushed many African- Americans to be poets and writers. Their journey dates back from the colonial period till the present. They want to get social justice and freedom.

The first chapter of this research work provides a historical background, definitions and the main achievements of black writers from the colonial period till the present. Then, it focuses on famous African- American women writings of the period, their representatives and features.

1.1 Historical background of African- American literature

African-American literature has had a long trajectory since its first appearance in the 18th century. To this purpose, we would like to give an overall view of African- American literature, and the background of historical and political events that marked its development. It is substantial to identify the main important issues of that period. History is very important and for that reason any period should not be omitted. The English contributed to the issue of segregation (Sobhi, 2017). They had developed the concept of inferiority and distinction through drawing on preconceptions rooted in images of blackness and physical differences between the two peoples. Those negative images were created by English adventurers and traders who visited the African Continent. The literature read at that time in England offered a negative portrayal of Africans and their ways of living. The Africans were described as bad and ugly people (ibid).

Early in the 18th century, laws excluded the testimony of the Blacks in court, particularly, in the South (Drouiche, 2016). In many colonies, the free Blacks paid punitive taxation and were prohibited from having property. In Virginia, some blacks lost the right to vote. African-Americans were given different names like 'Colored' 'Negros' 'Black' and 'African-

American' (Drouiche, 2016). In fact, African -American literature embodies novels, poems and plays, showing the status of race as a whole. The writers' works reflect their identities (ibid).

African- American literature has submitted a wide range of writings from the colonial period to the present. It has relations with different literary periods: The colonial period (1746-1800), antebellum period (1800-1865), the reconstruction period (1865-1900), the protest movement (1960-1969) and contemporary period (1970-present) (Drouiche, 2016).

1.1.1 The Colonial Period (1746-1800)

A hundred years later, African –American literature shows as a tide of emigration swept from Africa to America who was obliged to go to colonial America (Sobhi, 2017). They were lost between their home land and their new identity. Some of them survived and the others died because of the suffering from many diseases and suicide (Sobhi, 2017). This orientation, differentiated by powerful and diverse motivations, shaped the character and destiny of a continent. One of the major famous slaves, who were moved to colonial America, was Wheatley. In her writings, she focuses on the contrast between slavery and freedom (ibid).

Many African-American writings were not accepted as real works such as Frederick Douglass and Harriet Jacobs, because of segregation problem (Drouiche, 2016). Through poetry, sermons, letters and slave narratives, African- American literature of the colonial period was a means of breaking the bonds of slavery. In New England, those slaves who were close with their masters' families exchanged stories and experiences with the others. They described their lives before slavery in Africa and their daily activities. Those stories suggest a kind of awareness of the problems of slavery (Drouiche, 2016).

The revolutionary war and all those problems that slavery faced led to the increase of African- American writings. Their poems and letters reflect the African- Americans misery.

1.1.2 The Antebellum Period (1800-1865)

During this period, literature is considered as a tool to abolish slavery. Many black slaves concentrated on the narration of their life and experiences to show the injustice of slavery such as Harriet Jacobs, Frederick Douglass, and William Well Brown (Sobhi, 2017). Alongside slave narration, according to some western abolitionist writers through their novels and poems stood against slavery and asked for the freedom of African slaves. The Antebellum Period in American history is characterized by the development of abolition, and the gradual polarization of the country between abolitionists and supporters of slavery (Sobhi, 2017).

The Antebellum period offered an opportunity for feminist writers to participate in the fight against slavery alongside black men writers (Drouiche, 2016). Smith & Jones argue that The Antebellum period represents the mixture between written and oral tradition in African-American literature, which represents the slaves' desire for freedom. Moreover, it opens the door for women writers to participate in the fight against slavery with black men writers. Many writers believed in the influence of songs in literature. For instance, Frederick Douglass shows the importance of oral tradition in African-American literature.

1.1.3 The Reconstruction Period (1865-1900)

In the reconstruction period, the focus was on giving black slaves more social, economic, and political freedom, "President Lincoln issued his to begin with announcement of absolution and reproduction. It was called the ten percent arrange. This was expressed that southern states may reenter the union on the off chance that 10 percent of their populace took a dependability pledge to the U.S. government. Each state must moreover concur to ban subjugation. Lincoln's Remaking arrange was exceptionally simple on the south. His major objective was, to conclusion the gracious war as rapidly as conceivable and bring southerners back into the union" (Worth, 2006). However, the black slaves were illiterate. In this case, many schools were founded to promote education and literacy among blacks, and thus, enable them to write and read (Sedrini, 2019).

Many African- Americans put their touch by defending blacks' political freedom. African -American oral tradition was embodied in speeches, sermons, stories, and spiritual songs. As an example, one can cite Henry Mc Neal Turner's sermon "How Long? How Long? O Heaven?" This sermon represents an important aspect of the oral tradition in African- American literature. It addresses racial violence in Southern (Smith& Jones, 2000). In fact, many African- American writers attempted to integrate the written traditions by incorporating black dialects in their literature. For instance, Paul Laurence Dunbar is a poet who wrote *Sympathy* (1899), which focuses on the African- American struggle for dignity and equality (Drouiche, 2016, p.17).

In this period, the feminist movement and the vital role of African- American women on the American work after the civil war appeared (Drouiche, 2016). They asked for equality and their right to live. Due to the institution of slavery, women had to work alongside men. Black female writers such as Anna Julia Cooper, Pauline Hopkins and B. Wells Barnett tackled the role of women in the American society (ibid).

African- American slaves got their freedom got their education and owned land during reconstruction (Drouiche, 2016). However, the reconstruction period ended at the end of the 19th century. These rights were violated with the emergence of the Jim Crow Laws.

1.1.4 Harlem Renaissance (1900-1940)

The Harlem Renaissance was a cultural, social, and artistic explosion, a flowering in African-American life, and African-American intellectual reawakening in the 1920s, which began in the New York district of Harlem and ended with the Great Depression in the early 1930s; it was viewed primarily as a literary movement centered in Harlem as the premier black metropolis in the United State (Sobhi, 2017). The Harlem Renaissance was inspired by the Great Migration. During the twentieth century African – Americans faced many factors such as great racist violence, suppression, natural disasters, and very few job opportunities. That made them leaves the South and move toward the North. Migration into Northern urban cities like Chicago,

Detroit, Philadelphia, or Washington opened up new economic opportunities, and more cultural possibilities for those “who wanted to make the African-American voice heard” (as cited in Gray, 2012, p 476).

The Harlem Renaissance was also closely associated with the New Negro Movement which was as much concerned with the creation of a fresh American identity (Sedrini, 2019). “What made Harlem special was not that it was bawdy and tended to epitomize the most sordid aspects of the Jazz Age” Huggins Nathan Irvin in his book *Harlem Renaissance*(2007). (Sedrini, 2019, p.15).

African-American culture contributed greatly to the rise of jazz in the 1920s, what came to be called the Jazz Age, or the “Roaring Twenties.”Smith& Jones state that in the extreme popularity of jazz music. “It is a movement in music, art, literature and politics from the early 1900’s to 1940’s, emphasized the importance of freedom political, economic, social and artistic - for African-Americans”.

During the period between 1900 and 1940, the demand for human right increased. African- American soldiers risked their lives in the First World War (1914-1918), for the sake of freedom after their return, many African Americans called for the civil rights. Harlem Renaissance ended with the start of the Great Depression in the early 1930s, which questioned the importance and centrality of culture, unrelated to economic and social realities. (Sobhi, 2017).

1.1.5 The Protest Era (1940-1959)

“Protest Movement literature focuses on major events, movements, and people in relation to the racial issues of the time period. African- American authors focused on the “black experience,” and gave voice to protest against segregation and the reality of racial injustices. This literature focuses on the conditional aspect of equality and the factors of race, gender, and

ethnicity in eliminating racism and the accompanying social inequity” O’Rourke, in his book *African American Literature* (2005).

Throughout this period, there was a great emphasis on the economic issues. According to Smith and Jones (2000), “Literature that had protest as a purpose was especially distasteful to white readers who were not ready to face the realities of racism” (Smith and Jones, 2000, p.469).

The protests of this period were non-violent. Most of them were organized by the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). Other protests were made by African - American publications such as *The Atlanta Daily World*, *The Norfolk Journal Guide* and *The Chicago Defender* (p.469). In addition, many articles in African-American press helped to end racial discrimination in the armed forces (Smith&Jones, 2000, p.469).

Moreover, in 1935 Mary McLeod Bethune established the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) to tackle the concerns of black woman. These organizations called for the human and civil rights. The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) fought to end longstanding political, social, economic, and legal practices that discriminated against black Americans (Drouiche, 2016).

1.1.6 The Contemporary Period (1960- Present)

The period lasting from 1960 to 1969 is known for the appearance of many different movements such as, the Black aesthetics Movement “the Black Art Movement”, Civil Rights Movement, the Black Nationalism Movement, and the Feminism “Women’s movement”. This period was known as “Black Power Movement”. During this period, the black artist’s wants to make change in society by using multiple genres (Drouiche, 2016).

The student movement was the next major social change movement to develop in the 1960s. Black students asked for education relevant to their history of racial oppression. The proponents of the Black Studies Movement of the 1960’s and 1970’s claimed that the American educational institution had to be transformed (Sobhi, 2017).

The contemporary women’s movement began in the late 1960s. It is a diverse social movement addressing economic, social, and cultural inequalities. It is also recognized as the “second wave” of the larger Feminist Movement. Jennie L. Mouton, leader of the National

Association of Colored Women (NACW), claims that “for 43 years the organization that grew out of this call, has been working for the uplift of the race generally, and for the advancement of the race in particular”(Drouiche,2016,p.23).

Although, there had been conflict among African American women at the political level over the strategies of resistance, black women’s organization carried out. It contains solidarity on wide range of issues across class, color, poor and working class. Black American women joined white American women for the sake of ending discrimination (Drouiche, 2016, p. 23).

The most visible of this newer movement, is the rise of black feminist literature. ; many women writers emerged such as Toni Morison (Pulitzer and Nobel Prize winner), Alice Walker (Pulitzer Prize winner), Paule Marshall (MacArthur Prize winner), Octavia E. Butler (MacArthur Prize winner), Rita Dove (Pulitzer Prize winner), Gloria Naylor, Ntozake Shange, Toni Cade Bambara, Gayl Jones, and a host of others with their keen methods in demonstrating the correlation between race, gender, and class in a range of literary forms (Sobhi, 2017).

From 1970 till now, the American society has changed. In this period, black literature has become an important part of university curriculum. Also, African- American women’s voices began to be heard as a result of the women’s movement and Civil Right Movement. The most prominent writers were: Du Bois, Charles Chesnutt, Pauline Hopkins, Paul Laurence Dunbar, Sutton Griggs and James Weldon Johnson (ibid).

1.2 African- American Women’s Writings

African -American literature can be defined as the writings by people of African descent, living in the United States. In the beginning, African- American writers used oral forms later on; they were explored in written forms of slave narratives in order to illustrate their culture and state of mind. Themes and motifs explored in African- American literature such as racism, social inequality, slavery, abuse and incest demonstrate the difficult position of black people in mainly white- American society and are mostly used to change white people’s attitude toward black people (Kovacjurkovie, 2016).

Early 1980s criticism of and by African- American women writers concentrated on recuperating the silenced writers of the past, and spoke out against racism and sexism. Issues of determining specific African- American women's language and expression were also central. A very common theme was that of suffering and silencing, the 'triple burden' of which Zora Neale Hurston speaks (1986 [1937]) and a task for writers and critics alike was to rediscover hidden foremothers, their own, and their literary foremothers, in order to trace relationships and developments in African- American women's writing (Wisker, 2000).

The necessity for the rediscovery, common in all women's critical writing of the seventies and eighties, has largely been superseded by an interest in exploring the work of well-established women writers such as Alice Walker and Toni Morrison, considering the forms of a Black feminist criticism and the angles and discourse this might develop, and relating some of the concerns of African- American women, in their writing, with those of post-colonial women writers (Wisker, 2000).

We are likely to be most familiar with African- American women's writing largely due to its availability, and its relatively long history (Wisker, 2000). Anne Lucy Terry, who wrote 'Bars Fight' in 1746, was the first African-American woman to be published, and only the second woman published in America. She was followed by Phillis Wheatley, also a Black female slave, just nine when she arrived in America, who produced her first volume of poetry in 1773. In 1861 Harriet Jacobs authored *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, the first slave narrative by a woman. This followed several Christian testimonies to the struggles of womanhood by free- born African- Americans, notably by Jarena Lee and Zilpha Law. Jacobs' slave narrative is a record of injustices experienced by women under slavery. The slave narrative's first-person account ensures realism and authenticity, and for these reasons later African- American women writers have adopted the form (Wisker, 2000).

The end of the American Civil War and slavery marked the beginning of the post-slavery era when most of African- American writers produced non-fiction works describing the situation

of black people in the United States. Foster and Davis state that “African- American women’s literature reflects this national preoccupation with defining freedom and citizenship and the connections between these ideas of the burgeoning American identity shaping those definitions in relation to African -American identity” (Kovacjurkovie, 2016).

According to Dana A. Williams, “contemporary African- American literature by African - American women writers offers full expressions of the complexity of contemporary African - American life, particularly as this life relates to the black woman” (Kovacjurkovie, 2016). In the 1970s African -American women writings, one of the dominant issues is a “suggestion that the community is a major threat to the survival of an empowerment of women” (Kovacjurkovie, 2016, p.8).

After the American Civil Rights movement, African- American literature becomes a part of the mainstream as literary works by African -American writers constantly attain the best-selling and award-winning status. African -American literature has begun to be defined, analyzed and accepted by the academic world as an acclaimed genre of American literature. That period has introduced many prolific authors and their multiple award-winning works, which has had a great impact not only on American society but worldwide (ibid).

1.2.1 Representatives Of Afro -American Women Writers

The earliest period of African- American Literature created few important black American women writers. As it has been written above, the first African- American female, who wrote and published their creative works, was Lucy Terry and Phillips Wheatley. Another significant Black woman writer is Harriet Wilson, who wrote *Our Nig* (1859), which was the first novel published in the United States. The novel portrays the difficult life of free blacks in the North (African - American Literature) (Berrehouma & Zekkour, 2018).

It has been argued that Harriet Jacobs, who wrote *Incident in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861), can be considered as a notable female writer. It is an autobiography by an absconder

young mother slave who illustrates her slavery life, as well as the way she became free with her children (Berrehouma & Zekkour, 2018).

Many other writers who had been introduced during the Civil Rights Movement authors such as Maria, W (Kovacjurkovic, 2016). Stewart wrote a collection of religious writings, and Gwendolyn Brooks, who is considered the first black to win the Pulitzer Prize for her work *Amnie Allen*. She wrote about issues of racial segregation and Black Nationalism (Berrehouma & Zekkour, 2018).

It has commonly been assumed that Alice Walker and Toni Morrison became the most prominent black females' writers from 1970s to today. They influenced Americans, as well as World's literature. Both of them won the Pulitzer Prize, and their works turned into movies. Also, Morrison took the Nobel Prize in literature; she was the first black American Woman author to get that honor (Berrehouma & Zekkour, 2018).

1.2.2 Features Of African- American Women's Writing

Many black women writers have incorporated the experiences and ways of life into their works, as Smith Foster argues "African -American Women Writers have used the word as both a tool and a weapon to correct, to create, and to confirm their visions of life as it was and as it could become". That is why their works seem to be as a stereotypical, but discussing the same themes of gender, sisterhood and many other different issues of black American society. In addition to Communication, it was considered as an important characteristic of African-American female writing as well as the theme of freedom (Kovacjurkovic, 2016).

1.3 Historical Background of Contemporary African -American Literature

African- American literature has seen a great expansion during the last three decades of the twentieth century related the achievement of many black American women writers, including the growing number of authors that can write in more than one genre. The works of African -American writers and authors appear more frequently as bestsellers. African -American writing

has become more legitimized in the United States, and African -American studies' departments have emerged in many universities around the country (Sobhi, 2017).

From the famous and the first books of the contemporary renaissance of African-American Literature, there was Alex Haley's *Roots* (1976). It was considered as one of the greatest African- American writing coups of the late twentieth century. According to this book, many black Americans have the desire to know about their own origins and roots. Since then, many other different books exploring the history of African- Americans in the American West, the South, and the North have been published and eagerly received by African –Americans (Sobhi, 2017). African- American literature progressively developed from Numerous African-American women writers by their writings such as Phillis Wheatley, the first Afro- American poet (Sedrini, 2019). Moreover, a new generation of black women writer appeared, wrote in response to the black Arts Movement to express their own unique voices they were the first African- American writers to produce Works in the post- Civil Rights era. For instance, Toni Morrison, Maya Anglou, Alice Walker, Walter Mosley, Paule Marshall and Gloria Naylor, they considered as the most famous and the best contemporary black writers (Kovacjurkovie, 2016). There were also other African- American early writers who helped black American writings to grow. Among these writers was Fredrick Douglass, an escaped slave, who became one of the prominent leaders of the abolitionist Movement (Sedrini, 2019).

African- American women writers were the first leaders of the publishing industry, in quality as well as quantity of work, since 1980s (Sobhi, 2017). In addition to other prominent women novelists we may include Edwidge Danticat, Gwendolyn Parker, Jamaica Kincaid, Lucinda Roy, Marita Golden, Bernice McFadden, Toni Cade Bambara, Diane McKinney-Whetstone, Helen Lee, Yolanda Joe, Dawn Turner Trice, Pearl Cleage, and Barbara Chase-Riboud. While Afro -American male writers are in larger number rather than black female writers ,through famous contemporary Afro- American male novelists are Ernest Gaines, Ishmael Reed, Walter Mosley, John Edgar Wide man, Albert French, E. Lynn Harris, Colson

Whitehead, Darryl Pinckney, Brian Keith Jackson, Trey Ellis, Brent Wade, and Clarence Major. Many African-American novelists face problems of identity issues, that's why they offer interpretations of womanhood and manhood (Sobhi, 2017).

During the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, Afro- American writing is considered as an autobiography. Memoirs and autobiographies have become a popular tool of expression, especially for non-professional writers, entertainers, athletes, educators, ministers, civil rights leaders, politicians, physicians, attorneys, motivational speakers, and relatives of celebrities have written their life stories (Sobhi, 2017).

Contemporary African American literature is characterized by tension.

we should think of contemporary African American literature not in terms of how texts do or do not conform to one aesthetic; rather, we should consider how the African American literary tradition is characterized by multiple aesthetics accompanied by varied and diverse, rather than monolithic, strategies for grappling with questions of race, gender, identity and tradition (Sobhi,2017,p.69).

In other terms, contemporary African- American writers treat subjects in a multiple ways for expressing criticism and producing debate (ibid).

1.4 Contemporary Afro American Women Writers

African American literature has viewed a great expansion through many different significant Movements such as the Harlem Renaissance, Civil Rights and black Art Movements. Many well-known black women writers appeared such as: Glorvya Naylor, Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, and Maya Anglou, Toni cade Bambara, Shirley Anne Williams and Gayl Jones. They portrayed the segregation and racism of black Americans in their works and wrote about their personal experiences. They used their fiction and poetry to end the suffering and misery of black Americans, and called for justice and social equality (Sedrini, 2019).

Conclusion

African- American literature developed, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The twentieth century marked the most productive period in African- American literary genres since black authors have created remarkable fiction. They won some literary prizes in the United

States and in the world. In addition, this period saw the development of African- American literature that became an institutionalized field within the area of historical and literary studies. African American- literature is widely known. By 1990, African -American fiction became famous through Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (1983) and Morrison's *Beloved* (1987). During this period, African- American fiction had the chance to be read and appreciated.

Chapter Two

Magical Realism

Introduction

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Conclusion

Introduction

Magical Realism is a literary term used by various writers around the world. As an international phenomenon, it refers to a kind of fiction which presents Magical happenings in a matter-of-fact way. By combining real life and dreamlike elements; this technique offers a rich story to the reader in a realistic tone (Tecimoglu, 2008). Due to its complicated history and multiple characteristics, it is hard to find an exact definition of the term. However, Magical Realism hides a clue about its meaning in its name.

This chapter examines the history of Magical Realism in each period and how the term developed into its present state. Then, it presents the main relations of the term with other literary movement, and the Magical Realism in contemporary afro -American writing. The second chapter of this research work will include functions of Magical Realism and show the main characteristics of the term with its literary techniques.

2.1 History of Magic (AL) Realism

In order to understand the aim and the characteristics of Magical Realism, we have to focus on when and how the term appeared, and how it developed into its present state. It is hard to find the Origins of the term. Yet, many critics have different ideas about the history of Magical Realism. For instance, the critic Bowers in her book *Magic (al) Realism* (2004) claims that the term Magical Realism was born in Germany. According to her, as we find Magical Realism mostly in Latin American works presently, it is naturally assumed that the Movement emerged from the same place. However as Bowers (2004), mentions the term emerged, quite unexpectedly, in the not-so-distant Germany of the 1920's. In her book, she focuses on the development of the term and states that there are three important periods during which Magical Realism evolved throughout history:

The first period is set in Germany in the 1920s, the second period in Central America in the 1940s, and the third period, beginning in 1955 in Latin America, continues internationally to this day. All these periods are linked by literary and artistic figures

whose works spread the influence of Magic (AL) Realism around Europe, from Europe to Latin America, and from Latin America to the rest of the world. The key figures in the development of the term are the German art critic Franz Roh best known for his work in the 1920s, the mid – twentieth – century Cuban writer Alejo Carpentier, the Italian writer Massimo Bontempelli from the 1920s and 1930s, the mid- twentieth – century Latin American literary critic Angel Flores and the late twentieth- century Latin American novelist Gabriel Gracia Marquez (Bowers, 2004, p. 8).

According to what is mentioned above, we can understand that the artistic concept of Magical Realism is a peculiar phenomenon which is, undoubtedly, even nowadays difficult to define properly. There is a string of reasons of which the genre remains ambiguous, not only for the literary world. As it will be discussed later on, there are various sources that have shaped the style. The sources do not include only narrative modes, but also the pictorial art from the beginning of the twentieth century which, actually, allows Magical Realism to thrive.

2.1.1 The First Period in 1920

Magic (al) Realism traced shortly after the First World War in Europe. To be specific, it grew up in the Weimar Republic in the 1920s (Chalupsky, 2011). The fragile Germany, heavily defeated and coping with political violence and extreme economic difficulties, is undergoing an unstable period. The country was suffering from destruction of the economic system. Furthermore, the post- war situation burdens the Republic with demands for reparation. The desolated era experiencing a constant anxiety makes an effort to find a new meaning of the unfortunate reality. The German art is reinforced by Magic Realism which refers to a new form of painting. The term is said to be presented by Franz Roh (1890-1965), an art critic, who brings the idea of art attempting “to produce a clear depiction of reality that includes a presentation of the mysterious elements of everyday life” (Bowers, 2004). More specifically, the Magic Realist painting established in a precise portrayal of a concrete object which is not, nevertheless, released from the mysterious intangible aspects of life. It is obvious that the word Realism refers to the realistic depiction of an object, whereas, the term magic refers to the eeriness within the human being.

However, the inter-war period gives ample scope for new ideas apart from Roh's Magic realism, which is ultimately a source of confusion pervasively related to it. German Magic Realism emerges simultaneously with surrealism (Chalupsky, 2011). The styles have some characteristics in common which lead to the fact that pieces of work of several later artists are greatly influenced by both the magic realism and the surrealist style. Moreover, there is even an opinion that one art movement is a branch of the other (ibid). Magic Realism naturally does not remain in the place of its German territory and pushes forward the frontiers of its activity across Europe.

It is quite obvious that Roh describes a new kind of art that appeared after Expressionism, by focusing on the differences between Expressionism and the new art (Chalupsky, 2011). However, he does not use the term Magic Realism very often in his article. Instead of Magic Realism, he prefers the term post-Expressionism to identify the new art that came into being in Germany after the World War I. It is true that Roh uses the term to identify a new kind of painting that was a return to Realism after the abstract style of Expressionism (ibid). Yet, it is not fair to say that Magical Realism was born in Germany since there were other critics and writers who believed that the origins of Magical Realism were not found in Germany.

A distinct influence can be traced in Italy, where the Italian writer Massimo Bontempelli (1878-1960) transfers the thoughts from pictorial art to literature (Chalupsky, 2011). It is at the time of Mussolini fascist ruler that Bontempelli, applies the ideas to writing, attempts to look at reality from a different angle. By means of literature he endeavours to arouse the collective consciousness and stir up the Italian society. Massimo's act is undoubtedly a turning point in the development of Magic (al) Realism which fortifies its position within the literary world and makes it accessible for other artists all over Europe (ibid).

2.1.2 Marvelous Realism (The Second Period 1940)

Magic Realism conquers not only European countries, but also traverses the ocean and gets to Latin America (Chalupsky, 2011). A French-Russian Cuban writer Alejo Carpentier (1904-80), who comes across a variety of artistic Movements thanks to his temporary stay in France until 1930, brings it to the American continent (Chalupsky, 2011). In his book “*Marvelous Real in America*” Carpentier (1995), assures that Magical Realism is closely linked with Latin America rather than Europe. He uses the term Marvelous Realism instead of Magical Realism in order to identify a form of Magical Realism that is unique to Latin America. In *Marvelous Real in America*, Carpentier describes Marvelous as “everything strange, everything amazing, and everything including established norms” (Carpentier, 1995, p. 104). Then, he argues that Marvelous in America and Marvelous in Europe are different from each other. According to him, the Marvelous in Europe is an infertile and a manufactured style of the West. He wants to prove that Marvelous in European literature can only be a literary use, whereas, the history of Latin America is full of marvelous events and characters (Tecimoglu, 2008).

Carpentier (1995) keeps repeating that the true Marvelous can be found in his continent, his history and his people. Besides, he supports the idea that the Marvelous in Europe is a fake one whereas, the Marvelous in Latin America is natural and pure because the strange, the Magic, the mysterious has always existed as a part of common life in his continent (Tecimoglu, 2008). He defends this statement in his book *On the Marvelous Real in America* and says that “the Marvelous Real that I defend and that is our own Marvelous Real is encountered in its raw state, latent and omnipresent, in all that is Latin American” (Carpentier, 1995, p.104). In his essay Carpentier (1995) also writes that away from the rational and industrial Europe, true Marvelous Real has always been an integral part of the everyday of Latin America. He concludes that due to its history and its cultural diversity the Marvelous of Latin America is not a creation of its writers, it is a reflection of the real life itself:

Because of the virginity of the land, our upbringing, our ontology, the Faustian presence of the Indian and the black man, the revelation constituted by its recent discovery, its fecund racial mixing, America is far from using up its wealth of

mythologies. After all, what is the entire history of America if not a chronicle of the Marvelous Real? (Carpentier, 1995, p.88).

Consequently, Carpentier (1995) explains Magical Realism by distinguishing the Marvelous Real of Latin America from European definition of Magic Realism which is a poverty of imagination for him. In his discussion, his entire aim is to present Magical Realism or in his term Marvelous Real, as a part of Latin American culture rather than European culture.

Another person who observes that Magical Realism belonged to Latin America is the Angel Flores (1955). In his essay «*Magical Realism in Spanish American Fiction* in which a critic knew the term, Magic Realism, and Marvelous Realism appeared .Flores talks about the history of Magical Realism in Latin America and says that Jorge Luis Borges was the first Magic Realist in the continent. Flores determines 1935, the year when Borges published his collection “*Historia Universal de la Infamia*” (*A Universal History of Infamy*), as the milestone for Magical Realism. He adds that it was Borges who directed other Latin American authors to Magical Realism.

According to Bowers (2004), among these writers and critics who have written their ideas about the term Magical Realism including its history and meaning, Carpentier, Roh and Flores play important roles in the development of the term. In her book *Magical Realism* Bowers (2004) claims that Roh’s Magic Realism, Carpentier’s Marvelous Realism, and, Flores’ Magical Realism contributed to the development of today’s Magical Realism that aims at exposing the common world and the mystery behind it. Furthermore, she writes that especially after the Cuban Revolution in 1959, ‘Magical Realism has developed into a style that is defined as the “matter-of-fact depiction of Magical happenings” (Bowers, 2004, p. 18).

2.1.3 The Third Period in 1955

The last of the three, which is, at the same time, the youngest critical idiom of them all, Magical Realism wends its way in the opposite direction (Chalupsky, 2011). In other words, renewing the European sources brought earlier to Latin America; it appears there shortly after the Cuban Revolution at the end of the 1950s and expands progressively all over the globe (ibid).

It is obvious that the historical context features in the development of the genre, since it brings a strong wave of euphoria that desires to strengthen the collective consciousness and to build its own modern Latin American literature (ibid).

Like Bowers, Philip Swanson (1990) in his book *Latin American Fiction* also believes that the Cuban Revolution has an essential role in the development of the term Magical Realism. However, contrary to Bowers, Swanson explains the importance of 1960s in the history of Magical Realism in his book *Latin American Fiction*. For him, in 1960s, during the Boom, Magical Realism gained an important role in the literature of the continent. He explains that throughout this era, more books were published and read, Latin American literature became known for the first time, in the international arena. He also mentions that after the Cuban Revolution, the literature and the culture of the continent took interest and Latin American fiction took its place in the world market. According to Swanson (1990), a magazine that was concerned with the New Novel of Latin America, called *Mundo Nuevo (New World)* helped the Latin American fiction take attention during the Boom. Besides, Swanson reminds that many great writers wrote their great novels in this period. Among them Swanson who points out to the most famous ones are called Big-Four: Fuentes, Vargas Llosa, Garcia Marquez and Julio Cortazar. Although there isn't an exact event that ended the Boom, Swanson mentions that "the suspension of that prize" (Swanson, 1990, p.69) ended the period. In short, Swanson observes that the Boom period in Latin American literature supported the growth of Magical Realism in Latin America. Regarding the information that we get from Swanson's book we can conclude that during 1960s, Latin American writers were seeking for new ways to interpret Latin American experience not only to their own people, but to the whole world. So, Magical Realism became one of the favorite narrative modes they used. Unifying the realist fiction and fantasy, Magical Realism was an opportunity for the writers whose purpose was to rediscover Latin American reality. During this time, many important writers such as Marquez and Carpentier produced their Magical Realist works and their books supplied Magical Realism that became

more mature in Latin America and that became more well-known through Latin American fiction.

Whereas Swanson suggests that in 1960s, great writers like Marquez, Llosa wrote their masterpieces and contributed the development of Magical Realism in Latin America; Dr. Jorge Paredes claims that without the Sacred Book of the Maya Quiche *POPOL VUH* Magical Realism (2007) would not have survived in Latin America. In his paper *Post-Colonial writing in Latin America: 500 Years of Tradition* Paredes discovers that in books of the famous Latin-American writers the influences of *POPOL VUH* are apparent:

Critics from both within and without Latin America have applauded the literature, produced in the continent...especially, the master narratives published in the 1960s and 1970s. Unfortunately, both groups have failed to acknowledge that a great percentage of the narrative resources and literary techniques used by the master narrators (Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Miguel Angel Asturias, Alejo Carpentier), and the new generation of the post-modern novelists (Manlio Argueta, Gioconda Belli Sergio Ramirez, Luis Sepulveda) of Latin America is a borrowing from the Sacred Book of the Maya Quiché (Christenson, 2007, P. 7).

For Paredes, *POPOL VUH* has become a model for Latin American writers and many Magical Realists borrowed their techniques or sources from that book. In other words, Paredes believes that the great Magical Realist writers of Latin America owe their success to *POPOL VUH* a book that was written in 1550 by Maya Quiché people “in order to keep alive their language, their culture, their religion and their worldview”(Christenson,2007,p.4). In short, Paredes makes us look at the term Magical Realism from a different point of view as he claims that the roots of Magical Realism go back to Maya Quiché people of Guatemala.

It is quite difficult to talk about the history and development of Magical Realism in certain terms because the critics and writers who study Magical Realism have different discoveries and ideas about the term. However, Bowers in her book *Magical Realism*(2004) examines the growth of Magical Realism and concludes that at the beginning the term was labeled as Magic Realism in the Weimar Republic, in order to refer a kind of painting that “tried to capture the mystery of life behind the surface reality” (Bowers,2004,p.2).

Later on, it occurred as Marvelous Realism in Latin America to signify the “expression of the mixture of Realist and Magical views of life in the context of the various and complex cultures of Latin America, expressed through art and literature” (Bowers, 2004, p.2). Finally, Magical Realism emerged in Latin American fiction in 1950s and since then, it has been used as a term that indicates all kind of fiction that “includes Magical happenings in a Realist matter-of-fact narrative (Bowers, 2004).

According to Ann Bowers (2004), although these three terms are related to each other, they also have some distinguishing features. For her, Magic Realism focuses on the description of reality that includes mysterious elements and it is mostly connected to art of 1920’s Germany. Marvelous Realism grew up as a literary term in Latin America. The last term Magical Realism is an international term that is used for the works representing a kind of reality that narrates the unusual and realistic events together in the same matter-of-fact tone.

It is also important to mention the reasons why Magical Realism boomed in this continent. In the book *Magic Realism Volume 5* that was edited by Joan Mellen (2000), a quotation of Garcia Marquez explains why Latin America became a home for Magical Realism:

I suddenly realized that I wasn’t inventing anything at all, but simply capturing and recounting a world of omens, premonitions, cures and superstitions that are authentically ours, truly Latin American. Remember those men in Colombia who get worms out of cow’s ears by saying prayers, for example. Our day-to-day life in Latin America is full of this kind of thing.

I was able to write *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, simply by looking at reality, our reality, without the limitations which rationalists and Stalinists through the ages, have tried to impose on it to make it easier for them to understand. (As cited by Mellen, 2000, p. 4).

The Critics have different ideas about the history of Magical Realism. Some of them suggest that Magical Realism prospered in Latin America due to its oral culture and folklore though its roots can be found in 1920s German art. The others claim that Magical Realism is peculiar to Latin America. Although it is hard to trace Magical Realism back to its history, it is certain that today Magical Realism is adopted by many writers from various parts around the world. Among these authors the Indian writer Salman Rushdie, the Egyptian writer Naguib

Mahfouz, African-American Toni Morrison, Angela Carter, William Kennedy and Ben Okri are the famous ones.

2.2 Magical Realism and Other Literary Movements

As a movement, magical realism has relationships with other literary movements, and the critics mostly compare this genre with surrealism, fantastic literature, realism and post-modernism. Although Magical Realism shares some narrative strategies with these genres, it has many subversive strategies that differentiate it from other Movements (Tecimoglu, 2008). The famous critic Luis Leal (1967) point out how is Magical Realism differing from other genres in his essay, “Magical Realism in Spanish American Literature”. He states that Magical Realist texts are not a copy of the exterior world, like the Realist works. They are neither a reflection of an Imaginary world like Fantastic literature is. Nor do they have psychological explanations for the actions or characters like Psychological novels, and they do not favor dreams as Surrealism does:

Magical realism cannot be identified either with Fantastic literature, or with Psychological literature, or with [...] Surrealist, or Hermetic literature [...] Unlike super -Realism, Magic Realism does not use dream motifs; neither does it distort reality, or create imagined worlds, as writers of Fantastic literature or, science fiction do; nor does it emphasize psychological analysis of characters, since it doesn't try to find reasons for their actions or their inability to express themselves(Leal,1967,P. 120).

As Leal points (1967), out Surrealism and Magical Realism are two genres that are frequently confused with each other because both of them were fostered in 1920s. In the Penguin's *Dictionary of Literary Terms*, Surrealism is defined as a Movement originated in France in1920s, as a development of Dadaism. Surrealism was a Movement which began in the 1920s, of writers and artists (including Salvador Dalí (1904-1989) and René Magritte (1898-1961), who experimented ways of unleashing the subconscious imagination (Tecimoglu, 2008). French poet and theorist André Breton (1896-1966), launched this Movement in Paris in 1924. It became an international Movement including British Surrealism, which was formed in 1936 (Tecimoglu, 2008). They were strongly influenced by Sigmund Freud (the founder of

psychoanalysis) and his theories about the unconscious (ibid). The aim of Surrealism was to reveal the unconscious and reconcile it with the rational. In defining Surrealism, the French theorist Breton wrote in his book entitled “Manifesto of Surrealism (1924):

“I believe in the future resolution of these two states outwardly so contradictory which are dream and reality, into a sort of absolute reality, a surreality, so to speak, I am aiming for its conquest, certain that I myself shall not attain it, but too indifferent to my death not to calculate the joys of such possession” (Breton, 1924, p.11).

From the above quote, we can notice that Breton spoke about the Surrealists as being the artists that seek to bind the real with the unreal, to make it look different. Yet, in literature Surrealism seems as a bridge linking reality with imagination, the aim could be the desire to create stories from the real and the unreal aspects of life. Thus, the use of images and metaphors help the readers to think deeply about the context, and then analyze and interpret what they find in a freeway. In this content, writers use dreamlike and fantastic stories that often reject logic for the wish of revealing the contradictions of the everyday life and also to create an endless flow of thoughts (Tecimoglu, 2008).

Maggie Ann Bowers in her book *Magical Realism* (2004) explores the differences between Magical Realism and Surrealism, and discovers that although the two genres focus on irrational, unpredictable experiences, they have many differences. In her book, she claims that relying on the idea of Freud, who had faith in the effects of unconscious mind in everyday life and the power of dreams, Surrealism, as a narrative mode of fiction, combines reality and dreams in order to find an absolute reality. For her, the purpose of Magical Realism is similar; by uniting the Real and the Magical, it enlightens the real and the Fantastic aspects of reality. That is to say, it aims to discover a reality which is both familiar and strange.

According to Bowers (2004), in spite of the fact that Surrealism and Magical Realism have common features, they differ from each other. She claims that in Surrealism, the human mind, dreams, and psychoanalysis are essential to go beyond the knowledge of the given. Besides, she adds that Surrealists use the abstract; whereas Magical Realists focus on material things. Bowers also suggests that in Magical Realist fiction, dreams are not seen as tools to

portray the supernatural elements because that would harm the reality of the scene and the novel. Consequently, the supernatural in Magical Realism is not present “in the form of a dream or psychological experience because to do so takes the Magic out of recognizable material world and places it in the world of imagination “(Bowers, 2004, p.38).

Another Movement that is confused with Magical Realism is the Fantastic. The etymological origin of the word “Fantastic” is mentioned by Rosemary Jackson (1924) in her book *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion*. She mentions that the word “Fantastic” derives from the Latin, *phantasticus*, which in turn from a Greek word, meaning that which is made visible, visionary, unreal (Tecimoglu,2008). Fantastic elements in Magical Realism can cause a misunderstanding that Magical Realism can belong to Fantastic literature. Ignoring those unrealistic elements in Magical Realism are not abnormal for those who have really experienced them in their lives or those whose culture embraces Magical events ,or people, Magical Realism considered as part of Fantastic literature (Tecimoglu,2008). However, Magical Realism differs from Fantastic one because of its use of Fantastic elements. Thus, it is important to look at the relation between the Fantastic and Magical Realism.

Rosemary Jackson (1981), in her book *Fantasy: The Literature of subversion* observes that both Magical Realism and Fantastic literature are free from traditions of Realism. Instead of concentrating on a single observation of reality, or depending on the unity of time, space and character, Fantastic literature and Magical Realism offer an alternative reality by combining the contradictions such as living and non-living things or the real and the unreal.

Literary fantasies have appeared to be free from many of the conventions and restraints of more realistic texts: they have refused to observe unities of time, space and character, doing away with chronology, three-dimentionalities and with rigid distinctions between animate and inanimate objects, self and other, life and death (Jackson, 1981, p.2).

For Jackson (1981), Fantasy and Magical Realism delineate happenings that do not take place in the routine of everyday. These Fantastical elements are like pauses in the circulation of ordinary life, since they disturb the accepted order of the everyday. Yet, their role is different in

these two familiar Movements. Jackson also observes that in Fantastic texts, supernatural reigns over the entire novel as characters can exist as monsters from beginning to the end of the novel, or the setting can be a utopia.

In her book, Jackson (1981) declares that Fantastic literature does not favor realistic representation or descriptions of the probable since it refuses the requests of realism. In Fantastic novels, extraordinary characters or eccentric events are common. However, this is not possible in a magical realist narration. Fantastical elements appear and go quickly so that the reader returns quickly to the material world. In Fantastic literature, the supernatural descends to the familiar world, where logic is dominant. On the contrary, in Magical Realism there is mystery that breathes behind the real world. That is to say, Magical Realism is not an escapist mode of narration. It does not carry the reader to a Fantastic world where he can forget the pain of the material world. It is true that the Fantastic is closer to the unreal, improbable, fanciful dream world. However, Magical Realism does not create imaginary characters or places: it explores the mysterious relationship between man and his surroundings (Tecimoglu, 2008).

Todorov (1975) defined the Fantastic as the Tension between the possibility of a rational explanation and the disquieting acceptance of the supernatural the unsettling prospect that the “laws of nature” have been violated, thereby compromising the reader’s sense of certainty and understanding of the world. To promote this Tension, it is best if the narrator has a skeptical, scientific mind, such as that of a detective, who is constantly engaging in deductive reasoning and looking for clues that may lead to a rational explanation. Todorov In his book (1975) *The Fantastic: a Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* clarifies that in Fantastic texts, when the characters come across supernatural events, they have two options to explain the situation. They can conclude that this extraordinary situation is “an illusion of the senses, or a product of their imagination”, or they can believe that what they are experiencing is really happening (Tecimoglu, 2008).

Todorov (1975), adds that if the supernatural is explained by regarding logic and reality, or if “the laws of reality remain intact”, the fantastic becomes the uncanny (Tecimoglu, 2008). But, if “new laws of nature must be entertained”, the Fantastic becomes a Marvelous .Therefore, hesitation that is caused by uncertainty is a crucial aspect of Fantastic literature and the characters and the reader feels this hesitation which dominates the Fantastic texts. Unlike Fantastic literature, in Magical Realism neither the reader nor the characters face such a hesitation. Relying on the matter-of-fact narration, the narrator never makes an explanation for the supernatural in Magical Realist texts. Instead, he presents them as natural events and the reader perceives the extraordinary as real. Even though it is hard for First World countries to accept the reality of Fantastical elements, the detailed objective narrative style of Magical Realism makes them believe that the bizarre events are actually happening. In short, the reader or the characters never question the reality of what is being narrated (ibid).

Another important Movement that should be compared with Magical Realism is Realism. Bowers (2004), in her book *Magical Realism* defines realism as the representation of life, the everyday, the common. For her, it is the exact documentation of the external world and its facts. Based on the idea that the external world is real, realism supposes that reality can be perceived by the individual through his senses. Therefore, as Bowers (2004) states, the realist novel is interested in the observation of the daily life, ordinary people and their relations with the environment. Using the everyday language, realist texts document reality with all its details in a declarative voice. It is obvious that Realism is an objective view of reality, a kind of response to the immediate environment.

Bowers (2004) also notes that realists’ main duty is to interpret the things which are happening and Magical Realism is not less real than Realism. Concerned with the familiar, Magical Realism also reflects the everyday of ordinary people. Similar to Realism, Magical Realism is concerned with the political, historical and social changes in the society. As Bowers (2004), mentions these two Movements agree on the idea that it is better to narrate the stories of

average people in a recognizable setting in an objective point of view. In Magical Realist and realist novels, it is quite usual to come across people, historical or political events that are parts of common knowledge (Tecimoglu, 2008).

According to Bowers (2004), the main difference between Realism and Magical Realism is that realists are based on a single reality. For them, everything that can be explained rationally is real and all the bizarre events that are irrational are unreal. Seeking for a scientific or logical explanation in all the things in life, their reality becomes narrow and so do their works. Unlike realists, as Bowers (2004) implies, Magical Realists present an alternative reality, a reality that includes all elements of life whether they are verifiable or not. Both the reasonable and illogical facts are parts of reality in Magical Realist texts. In the light of this contrast between Realists and Magical Realists, it is obvious that reality of Realist writers serves communities governed by scientific rules, such as industrialized societies.

I think the Realist version of reality is limited since it neglects the societies whose culture and reality involve Fantastic experiences (Tecimoglu, 2008). On the contrary, Magical Realist works provide a complete presentation of reality welcoming all the versions of reality. A Magical Realist attitude combines the reality of all societies without classifying them as rational or irrational (ibid). In other words, the realistic narration fails to speak for all the countries in the world and to reveal the complete reality.

However, Magical Realist writers present reality that does not leave their culture outside and depict a more expansive reality. In short, Realism and Magical Realism introduce different kinds of reality to the reader. Realism observes reality from one point of view that is rational, whereas Magical Realism detects reality in various aspects (Bowers, 2004).

2.3 Magical Realism in Contemporary Afro- American Writings

The African- Americans in the United States have a common slave history that dates back to the seventeenth century (Mudrovic, 2012). Slaves were brought to the American grounds from many different African tribes and villages by the Dutch, Danish, Portuguese, and British.

Slaves' number was growing up into millions by the nineteenth century (Mudrovic, 2012). They were used as cheap and dispensable labor force at rice, tobacco, indigo, sugar cane, and cotton plantations. The notion of coercive acculturation was found throughout slavery (ibid). It exercised practices that systematically stripped slaves of their African heritage. Slaves were punished for speaking their native language and were forced to acquire a taste for whites' food, religion, clothing, and values. This was a way of "taming" a dangerous enemy from within, to root out their language, culture, and any sense of historical identification (Mudrovic, 2012).

However, not all blacks in America were slaves. There were free blacks who lived mostly in urban areas. After the Civil War and abolishment of slavery many of the black Americans started to migrate to the urban North, where the segregation was not as accentuated as in the South (Mudrovic, 2012). The larger northern cities like Detroit, Philadelphia or Chicago became magnets for the African Americans. The blacks have still not achieved the same level of assimilation as other immigrant or ethnic groups in America. Yet, their culture has flourished nonetheless. Slavery and its aftermath had a profound effect on their beliefs, moods, myths, facts and fancy their culture, both then and now (ibid).

The majority novel of contemporary Afro- American literature deals with the famous subject of racism, freedom, slavery, identity and black community. The African- American writing has had a great past. The early African- American fiction originates from the slave narratives (Mudrovic, 2012). Apart from the mostly oral storytelling which was common among the African slaves who were brought to the American grounds, and which usually dealt with their traditional and cultural knowledge and folktales, the early written stories were mostly imaginative and did not really portray the authors, or the community and history (ibid).

After World War I, the term "Negro Renaissance" appeared (Mudrovic, 2012). The factors that influenced it were the Great Migration of the former slaves from the rural South and the Caribbean to Northern cities, new intellectual currents concerned with cultural pluralism and anti-racism, dramatic growth of the black middle class and of literacy and the transformation of

the American culture industry after 1915 (Mudrovic, 2012). The Civil Rights and Black Power Movements of the 1960's and 1970's influenced and enabled many black authors to start writing about cultural pride and community building. Their aim was to raise the awareness of the black history and community. The movements brought changes like the proliferation of publishing industry, and new courses in colleges like Black Studies. "In the 1970's and 1980's, Literature aimed at black readers, was mostly restricted to specialty publishing houses, such as Holloway House and black-owned publishers, and to the occasional African- American writer at a major publishing house" ((Mudrovic, 2012,p.32).

At the beginning of the twentieth century, W. E. B. Dubois coined the term "double-consciousness" to describe the bicultural identity of black Americans (Mudrovic, 2012). This term is used to characterize African- American experience of double vision as the product of the historical dialectic between black and white cultures. The black Americans were facing a constant dilemma whether to join Western society and its culture, or to reject it. For the Africans transported to the New World as slaves, the double vision became a way of survival and a way of adapting to Western cultural systems while still trying to preserve some of their African heritage (ibid). In her novel, *Beloved* Toni Morrison strives for a fusion of the binary opposites of the spiritual and material world, and the most appropriate way to do that is by using Magical Realism.

2.4 Characteristics of Magical Realism

In *Ordinary Enchantments: Magical Realism and the Remystification of Narrative* (2004), Faris suggests that there are five primary characteristics of Magical Realism.

2.4.1 The Irreducible Elements of Magic

Faris (2004) describes the irreducible element as "something we cannot explain according to the laws of the universe as they have been formulated in Western empirically based discourse, that is, according to logic, familiar knowledge, or received belief"(Faris,2004,p.7). Irreducible element can be presented in the form of person or thing that has either extraordinary appearance

or Magical power. Irreducible element is accepted as something that really exists in the story, even though it cannot be explained by logic, common knowledge, or received belief. The irreducible element has a function to serve the 'Magical' element in the Magical realist fiction.

2.4.2 Unsettling Doubts

Faris (2004) notes that "Some time recently categorizing the irreducible, the peruse may falter between two conflicting understandings of occasions, and subsequently involvement a few unsettling questions" (Faris, 2004, p.17). This confusion relates to the Magical events in the story. The reader doubts the Magical event that occurs as character's dream or hallucination, or whether it happens as a miracle.

2.4.3 The Phenomenal World

Faris (2004) explains that "realistic descriptions create a fictional world that resembles the one we live in, often by extensive use of detail" (Faris, 2004, p.14). In Magical realist text, the narrator provides detail explanation about the world in which characters live that similar with readers' world and contains magical events that are presented within objective facts, such as places, historical events, and political system (Kembryte,2018). Even irreducible element of Magic can be said as component in the phenomenal world.

2.4.4 Merging Realms

The readers may experience the closeness or near merging of different realms or worlds. It is the combination of Magical and Ordinary that causing the near-merging realms. The different realms that are used can be between the world of human and the world of animal, between the traditional and modern, between the ordinary people and the witch, etc (Kemberyte,2018). The combination between these different realms also shows that in Magical Realism, the boundary between fact and fiction is blurring.

2.4.5 Disruptions of Time, Space and Identity

Faris (2004) states, “in addition to merging different worlds, these fictions disturb received idea about time, space, and identity” (Faris, 2004, p.23). The cultural hybridity of Magical Realism does not only interrupt time and space, but also the identity of the characters in the story.

2.5 Literary Techniques of Magical Realism

Hegerfeldt (2005) in her book *Lies that Tell the truth: Magic Realism seen through contemporary fiction from Britain* explains that there are five basic of literary techniques that used in Magical realist text.

2.5.1 The Adaptation of Other Genres and Modes

The first technique to be dealt is Magical Realism adaptation of other genres. In Magical Realism, the aspect of hybridity focuses on the Western tradition. Hegerfeldt states that “not surprisingly, in Magical realist fiction from Britain and other Western English-speaking countries, the reliance on non-Western traditions is not as pronounced as in many postcolonial literatures” (Hegerfeldt,2005,p.71). The most well-known Western traditions are literary realism and literary fantastic. So, this technique focuses on Magical Realism’s adaptation of some literary genres and modes in Western traditions (Kembryte, 2018):

- a. *Installment and subversion*: magical realist fiction installs realism to make reader believe that it is the world which reflecting the reality. However, the presence of magical elements in the story has subverted the law of realism. This subversion technique is also the aspect that distinguished magical realist fiction with realist fiction.
- b. *Playing on the fantastic*: Hegerfeldt(2005) notes that “magical realist fiction uses hesitation in order to actively question that world-view from a meta-level, suggesting that reality cannot be reduced to the empirically observable or rationally explicable, but that so-called fiction need to be taken into accounts as

well". It can be said that reader hesitation is used in magical realist fiction to understand the world from another side.

2.5.2 Magical Realist Focalizer

In Magical realist text, the writer uses ex-centric focalizer. Hegerfeldt (2005) concludes the ex-centric focalizer as presentation of non-dominant worldview by the characters in marginalized position whose perspective is told (Hegerfeldt, 2005). Magical Realism gives writers a room to express different world-view and also challenge the dominant powers and cultural centers through character's perspective.

2.5.3 Paradigms of Knowledge

This technique relates to how Magical realist fiction concerns with the issue of knowledge and knowledge production by questioning whether the story is fiction or fact. Hegerfeldt (2005) states that "violating the norms of the literary system and the dominant world-view at every turn, Magical Realism unsettles received notions and conventions in order to re-evaluate human strategies of knowing and explaining the world" (Hegerfeldt,2005,P.157). By using this technique, the writers of Magical realist fiction try to make use of both of mythos and logos in order to explain the world. In Magical realist fiction, mythos and logos are treated fairly as a tool to understand how human mind works and how they try to make sense of their world.

2.5.4 Strategies of Destabilization

In this technique, the writers of Magical realist fiction will present the real as Fantastic and the Fantastic as Real (Gaiman, 2021). This technique requires two ways, naturalization of the Fantastic and Super naturalization of the extra textual world. Naturalization means that the Fantastic is described as something ordinary and usual, while super naturalization means that the ordinary is presented as odd, incredible, and unreal. It can be said that this technique does not only depend on the readers' familiarity with realist conventions, but also their knowledge of empirical reality.

2.5.5 Techniques of Literalization

Todorov (1975) write in *The Fantastic* that “the supernatural often appears because we take a figurative sense literally” (Hegerfeldt, 2005, P. 235). Hegerfeldt (2005) in her book *lies that Tell the Truth: Magic Realism seen Through Contemporary Fiction from Britain* agrees that this case also occurred in magical realist fiction. She notes that “through methods of literalization, enchanted realist fiction puts the insignificant on a standard with observational reality: invested with fabric presence, allegories, and recollections, concepts and feelings are appeared to be as vital as the fabric world” (Hegerfeldt, 2005, p.236). This technique focuses on the use of language such as figurative and metaphor that are used in the text and how they are taken in literal sense.

Conclusion

The term Magical Realism was introduced in the theoretical part of the dissertation which aimed to expose the causes that led to the ambiguity of this narrative mode. It revealed the various origins which had formed the current concept of the term. Furthermore, it tried to delimit the term. But above all, it foreshadowed that the concepts of magical realism could differ according to diverse influences and cultural backgrounds of particular writers. The principle aim of the essential part of the dissertation was to define and explain the term with its characteristics.

Chapter Three

The Implementation of Magical Realism in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*

Introduction

3.1 Morrison's *Beloved*: A Critical Review

3.1.1 Toni Morrison's Themes and Style

3.1.2 *Beloved*

3.2 Toni Morrison's *Beloved* and Magical Realism

3.3 The Magic and The Real Events in *Beloved*

3.4 Time, Space, and Identity in *Beloved*

3.5 The Presence of Gothic elements in *Beloved*

Conclusion

Introduction

In literature, writers work with Magic. For them, Magic is considered as an energy that is acquired through studying books. To depict their real life, they describe reality in a Magical way and this what led the reader the world of Magical Realism. Indeed, the two opposing words of Magical Realism make us meet the world to depict reality in a Magical way. Authors like Gabriel Garcia Marquez (1927-2014) of Columbia and the Afro American writer Toni Morrison used Magical Realist techniques in their writings.

Morrison's narrative in *Beloved* takes the advantage of both realism and magic to challenge the assumptions of the authoritative colonialist attitude, and this can be considered as a powerful and efficient method to project the postcolonial experience of African-American ex-slaves in the Unites States.

The objective of this chapter is to examine how Toni Morrison uses Magical Realism and where we could find the Real and the Magic events in her novel. This chapter includes the portrayal of Magical Realism characteristics and explores the presence of gothic elements that speak of the unspeakable, incredible things like the presence of ghost and its manifestation in *Beloved* (1987).

3.1 Morrison's *Beloved*: A Critical Review

As a literary movement, Magic Realism incorporates Magical or supernatural events into Realistic narratives (chahrazed, 2013). This fusion of Fact and Fantasy makes the lived experience appear extraordinary; Magical Realist writers contribute to visualize the Latin-American culture as vibrant and complex. There are numerous writers whose work falls into the Magical Realism genre like the Afro American writer Toni Morrison *Beloved* (1987).

3.1.1 Toni Morrison's Themes and Style

Chloe Anthony Wofford who adopted the alias of Toni Morrison was born in Lorain, Ohio in 1931(Kembryte, 2018). Her parents are African-American Southerners, who migrated to the North in the early part of this century (Kembryte, 2018). Chloe grew up in the close-knit family

consisting of three generations. As African-American family they were tend to believe in a mystical object as it is deeply rooted in their folklore. African-Americans tend to believe that a person could not die as long as the living ones remember him. Toni Morrison's family used to read and tell her various ghost stories, animal tales, yarns of Magical happenings (ibid). Reading became Chloe's passion from childhood and she could read before starting first grade.

Many literary critics describes Morrison's works as challengeable for the reader, one phenomenon in her novel can hold a number of meanings. While reading her works it is necessary to suspend personal believes, pay attention to the separate pieces and reread the text for the sake of deeper understanding. Her unique writing style encourages many researches to be done. Much of Toni Morrison's works has a tendency to a musical quality and there are many references to songs and rhythm which also could be explained by her African-American nature (Kembryte, 2018).

The main theme which could be found in Morrison's novels is slavery and how the enslaved characters respond to that experience and racism which is a sensitive theme for African-American community (Kembryte, 2018) surely; her works contain lots of other philosophical ideas, for instance, African-American experiences in America. She portrays this appearance not from the margins of society but from the center of it. However, it does not mean that black people are described only positively, thus, they live, feelings and concerns are taken into consideration. Another theme which is widely explored in her novels is mother-child relationship, the desire of belonging and acceptance.

In one of her interviews, Toni Morrison states that: "I want my writing to reflect the imaginative combination of the real world, the very practical, shrewd, day to day functioning that black people must do, while at the same time they encompass some great supernatural element" (Kembryte, 2018). Although she refuses the label of Magic Realist, she states that: "We are very practical people, very down-to-earth, even shrewd people. But within that practicality we also

accepted what I suppose could be called Superstition and Magic, which is another way of knowing things” (Kembryte, 2018, p.14).

3.1.2 *Beloved*: An overview

No one could doubt Toni Morrison’s power as a literary artist. *Paradise* (1998) once more confirmed her eminence at story-telling and as a prose stylist. The author herself has stated that the proper guidelines for reading and analyzing her creation must be found primarily in African-American women writers (Kembryte, 2018). Toni Morrison could be compared with Faulkner and Cormac McCarthy taking into consideration the rhetorical techniques their works are rich in. Similar as Virginia Woolf, Morrison is a mythological and historical fantasist. *Beloved* (1987) appears to be a true history of African American slavery (Kembryte, 2018).

Before becoming a writer, Toni Morrison was a senior editor at Random House Publishers and was particularly interested in black fiction. While she was editing a project called *The Black Book* (1974), a collection of memoirs embodying 300 years of black history, Morrison came across the story about Margaret Garner. According to a newspaper article that Morrison had found, in 1851 Margaret Garner, a former slave, escaped from Kentucky to Ohio along with her children. When her owner and the U.S. marshal found her, Garner threatened to kill her children shouting out, “Before any of my children will be taken back into Kentucky, I will kill every one of them” (Kembryte, 2018, p.15). Before being captivated Garner cut the throat of her three-year-old daughter and eventually returned to Kentucky under the federal Fugitive Slave Law of 1850. Inspired by this story, Morrison used Margaret Garner as a starting line for her story and character of Sethe, but she decided not to perform any further researches on the Garner case, allowing Sethe to develop as a fully-fiction character (Kembryte, 2018).

The critic Stanley Crouch (1987), contravened Morrison’s version of history, and called *Beloved* a soap opera of the Black Holocaust (Kembryte, 2018). There are some similarities between those two one of the most tragic events in world history of six million Jews or of the “sixty million” African Americans to whom Morrison dedicates *Beloved* (p.15). A vast majority

of events described in the novel comprehends rape, a mother cutting her baby's throat, whippings, dreadful prison treatment on chain gangs, starvation and a lot of other atrocities which a human psychic automatically seeks to ignore. However, concealed by indirect style and the appearance of magic, this abundance of torments may daze any reader's sensibilities.

Toni Morrison herself believed that *Beloved*, her fifth novel, would gain the least attention from the readers of all of her books (Kembryte, 2018). She had a reason for believing it called "national amnesia" that surrounds the history and details of slavery which people are tend to forget and not to think of. She felt conflicted to involve herself in the subject, yet she was pressed to finish the book. To her astound, *Beloved* appeared on the New York Times bestseller list the same week it appeared in bookshelves (Kembryte, 2018).

3.2 Toni Morrison's *Beloved* and Magical Realism

As an Afro American writer who believed that nothing has given the right description of what this great community has endured and as a way to show the miserable life that the Afro-Americans have experienced, writers used myth and magic to mirror their sufferings to the world (Naimi, 2017). The integration of mythical and magical elements shows the role of the social struggles of the blacks against the whites. As a first Afro American woman who won the Nobel Prize in literature and being influenced by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Morrison employed the Magical Realism style in her novel *Beloved* (1987).

The novel depicts the impacts of the civil war on the Afro Americans; it is about a slave woman named Sythe who escaped from Ohio with her kids before the end of the civil war (Naimi, 2017). Under the fugitive Slave Act which punished the slaves who flee their owners, Sythe's owners came after her and her kids before slavery was abolished. Horrified by the capture of her children Sythe decided to kill them, she starts by killing her two years old daughter who calls her beloved and attempts to kill the other three.

After one year of the end of the civil war, a young girl around the age of beloved shows around the door of family's house, Sythe believes that her daughter has returned and called her beloved and after she noticed that her daughter's ghost came back to reclaim her past. The traumatic experience of slavery enables the Afro-American community to be given a voice and use it louder through different narrative structures in which magical moments were regarded as main sophisticated weapons used against racism and discrimination and become part of the experiences that slave people left behind (Naimi, 2017).

Through the use of Magical Realism that Morrison describes as a way to provide another way of knowing things (Naimi, 2017). This other way is established by the blending of two worlds of practicality or reality and magic together, this, allowing the story to be expressed against what the history from a European American perspective claim. Also, allows the expression of African American Myths that was not a part of the European American culture, to make them as a meaningful approach for the African Americans in a modern context. The aim behind this is to construct narratives of African American history with a cultural memory. Only to remember what past achievements, they had to have a sense of realization of how they become who they are today (Naimi, 2017). This creation of cultural memory is made up by using aspects of African American culture and myths that evolved during the time of slavery. Here, these aspects are mixed with the real experience of slaves and their suffering to give a strong impact in a magical dimension (ibid).

3.3 The Magic and the Real Events in *Beloved*

The presence of two opposing discursive systems of Magic and Real in the novel, written from the point of view of African Americans who do not have social and political power, can reflect the tensions between the colonized and the colonizer discourses in a postcolonial context(Chahrazed ,2013). In postcolonial terms, Realism represents the discourse of the colonizer while Magic is a reference to the strategy of opposition and resistance used by the

colonized (Chahrazed ,2013). In another sense, it can determine a full cultural representation that discovers the forgotten voices of histories.

Beloved is surrounded by this idea of giving a voice to the female character. Explain its own experience in its own point of view that's what Ramzi and Jamali (2012) view. Where, Realism is depicted as, the circumstances or the fact of slavery and oppression determined by the whites. In which, black men are only used for labor with no right. And black women, are abused physically and sexually. The Magic, on the other hand, is the images and symbols used as a clarification or proof that stands against this oppression and demand rights and freedom. Like the hard image of Sethe murdering her own baby girl to save her from slavery. While *Beloved's* appearance allows the community to see the pain Sethe is experiencing, the singing women recognized Sethe at once and surprised themselves by their absence of fear when they saw what stood next to her.

Thus, Magical realism that is introduced by the other in a non-logical and non-scientific account to attack the assumptions of dominant culture- as formal realistic, logical western discourse- through literary texts, that claims of having a logical truth. This challenge in *Beloved* lies in the fact that once the reader finds that the category of the real is not definite, the truth becomes vague. More specifically, in *Beloved* the setting is real, but the fiction employed in questioning the reality make it less certain. Where, in *Beloved*, for instance, there is no distinction between the spirit and material world, between living and dead, between past, present and future. The family starts to accept the presence of a child ghost and live in the house with no fear. (Ramzi& Jamali, 2012). *Magical Realism as postcolonial device in Toni Morrison's Beloved: International journal of humanities and social science* (Ramzi& Jamali, 2012, P.113).

The last sentence denotes that the supernatural- ghost- in this case does not a simple matter, but rather is an ordinary matter that happens every day. The Magic is considered normal in a Magical realism narrative and the supernatural phenomena becomes a part of everyday reality (Ramzi and Jamali, 2012). In *Beloved*, the characters take *Beloved* presence for granted,

and never question awkward appearances. For instance, Sethe and Denver always wage —a perfunctory battle against the outrageous behavior of that place; they understood the source of the outrage as well as they knew the source of light Beloved. Moreover, they expressed this ordinary and irrational phenomena by the manner in which Seth and Denver push the sideboard moved by the ghost back to its original place. It was an ordinary household task. Also, other women in the community speak about Beloved's return as a natural thing before exorcism:

"Ella. What's all this I'm hearing about Sethe?"
"Tell me it's in there with her. That's all I know."
"The daughter? The killed one?"
"That's what they tell me."
"How they know that's her?"
"It's sitting there. Sleeps, eats and raises hell. Whipping Sethe every day."
"I'll be. A baby?"
"No. Grown. The age it would have been had it lived."
"You talking about flesh?"
"I'm talking about flesh." (Morrison, 2004, p.134).

On the other hand, Aldea (2011) in her book *Magical realism and Deleuze: The Indiscernibility of Difference in Postcolonial Literature*, offers an interesting interpretation of what is meant by the Magic and Real in Magical realism found in the story of *Beloved*. She asserts that Morrison indicates in her writings to speak the unspeakable that is interpreted as the character of Beloved; considering the Magic of the novel as a way to reveal the horrors that have been repressed. However, by taking Sethe's memory of her sexual and physical abuse that she experienced in her life, to be as realistic episodes. The character of Beloved seems more significant, and it takes its identity a repressed memory through the realization of those realities in Sethe's life including her horror when she killed her own daughter. Moreover, the memories of Sethe and Paul D are included in the story of *Beloved* as passages of Realism with physical presence. These memories are the legacy of slavery that seems persistent like the scars on Sethe's back (Aldea, 2011). Indeed, the frame narrative of the novel is real adding the family, the domestic setting, the black neighborhood in Cincinnati, and the third person narration of this setting. All these establish the voice of realism.

According to Bowers (2004), one of the techniques adopted by Morrison is the oral storytelling technique that is explained in a way where the storyteller, who can alter the story each time it is told, can be asked questions by the listener who thereby guides the storyteller. This method of call and response story telling technique maintains fact understood that there is no one correct interpretation of the story, but rather many. In *Beloved* where the lines between the Real and the Magical have already been broken, the use of the storytelling technique denotes multiple versions of the story. In the case of *Beloved*, it allows the possibility of expressing multiple perspectives in the text. That creates a radical position that Magical Realism resists the basic assumptions made by the dominant discourse. In *Beloved*, each question asked is directed to reveal the truth about the past of the black experience in general and discuss the black female struggle in every aspect possible.

In another perspective, Lobodziec (2012) in her article, Toni Morrison's Discredited Magic-Magical Realism in *Beloved* Revisited, offers an attempt to estimate the extent to which Toni Morrison's *Beloved* is representative of magical realism. She presents a more complex and diverse treatment to the connection between *Beloved* and Magical Realism. In general, she attributes the magic in *Beloved* to the extraordinary depiction of African Americans to their oppressive reality based on real scientific and philosophical concepts of race.

She asserts that Morrison stresses the distinction between African American folk culture and Latin America Magical Realism. The difference between both expressions is their different origins. She prefers to translate her interpretation of Magic Realism, where the black people in order to identify their history, had to invent their Magic in the middle of a new American reality. For her, this makes a huge difference from that of the Latin American writers, who understood the reference of their Magic. Slavery gives a multidimensional aspect to the Magic in the novel. Black people are day to day survival is what makes their status Magical. As a result, Morrison made the supernatural seems Real and ordinary, and at the same time, uses the characteristics of Magical Realism to picture the Real as Magical in a miraculous way (Lobodziec,2012). For

example, in *Beloved*, when a white girl sees Sethe's swollen feet and compares them to those of a dead man she saw while fishing, then she does the Magic: lifted Sethe's feet and legs and massaged them until she cried salt tears (*Beloved*, p.19). This statement calls for several moments of Magic. Another moment is when Sethe calls for baby Suggs' fingers that brought Sethe's numb body back to life.

In the same sense, Denver's birth is portrayed as Magical:" Where her favorite is the Magic of her birth" (*Beloved* p.16). In fact, it is Sethe's powerful story imagination that saves her and her body. Evoked by her imagination, she calls for a white girl, who helps her to deliver the baby. Here, the role of imagination is an important characteristic of Magical Realism. Lobodzick (2012) view that the use of imagination to supplement reality by heightening its distinctive elements through ideal imagination the essence and not necessarily the vehicle. Another Magical motif in Toni Morrison's novel is the character's response to reality with extreme violence such as in Sethe's case, she was ready to kill her own child to save her, and is this an ultimate act of resistance: for one hand, to confront a new reality in the new world and the other hand, to redefine, their existence and humanity (Lobodzick, 2012). Thus, Magic for Morrison is used in various manners, mainly to question the ideological justification of the dehumanization of enslaved blacks by western science and philosophy.

Furthermore, the characters response to this harshness has an emotional dimension as an emphasis on the inner reality of the characters lives as another characteristic of Magical Realism (Lobodzick, 2012). In the novel, the feelings of Sethe after she finds out that, the school teacher has told her students to analyze her animal characteristics. Sethe responded emotionally to her past terrors as in the case, when she cried while explaining her actions to Beloved. In this way, Morrison through the discriminating notes written by the school teacher attempts to reveal the injustice of the documented history on the enslaved people in one community.

This role of community is another significant role of Magical Realism. Magic is communal. Most Magic realist texts encode the strength of communities more than the

individual struggle (Lobodziec, 2012). Black people, through their experience, responded collectively to the modern world's cruelty, by raising a sense of resistance and black community. In *Beloved*, the communal power is present where the black women gathered in front of 124 transform themselves by the sound of their singing into a powerful black church that liberates Denver and Sethe from the oppressive spiritual presence of Beloved. This shared bonding is due to shared dramatic experience and history that enabled them to recall terror.

3.4 Time, Space and Identity in *Beloved*

Lobodziec (2012), in her article; brought attention to the questioning of time, space and identity as other characteristics of Magical Realism in *Beloved*. First, the time shifting in the novel helps to mix the lines between the present and the past. The present is outlined at the very beginning of the novel by describing the house at 124, Where the residence is unconsciously a reminder of the haunted past of painful and undesirable memories of slavery, although they seek to escape it, and erase it from their consciousness, they find themselves forced to remember where the past and present overlap. In the novel, clearly, Sethe describes this shaken sense of time:

I was talking about time. It's so hard for me to believe in it. Some things go. Pass on. Some things just stay. I used to think it was my rememory. You know. Some things you forget. Other things you never do. But it's not. Places, places are still there. If a house burns down, it's gone, but the place – the picture of it – stays, and not just in my rememory, but out there, in the world (*Beloved*, p.20).

Here, this statement is fictional in a way that serves one dimension of magical realism, where the capacities of mind are a magical power of fiction itself. Sethe and other character's rememory is what shape the narrative and the overlapping of past and present. This sense of time, in *Beloved*, originates from the traumatic experience of the past that keeps returning to the present to produce a tortured psyche.

Second, in Morrison's *Beloved* is there a sense of the lack of a place of their own. For instance, in the house, Paul D cannot find a comfortable place when Beloved appears. His condition has the sense of feeling dislocated in his own house: It went on that way and might have stayed that way but one evening, after supper, after Sethe, he came downstairs, lay in Baby

Suggs'bed and didn't want to be there (*Beloved*, p.62). He moved from one place to another physically, but also psychologically. For instance, when—Sethe speaks of her imprisonment for infanticide, Paul D does not continue the conversation although he wants to know more about Sethe's experience. He refrains because his memory of his imprisonment in Alfred, Georgia, returns. To escape this memory, he changes the subject (Lobodziec, 2012). This space is also evoked with an inability to predict the following in the sitting. This is connected to the condition of the enslaved that live without knowing where they are going to be the following hour or day since anyone at any time can send them away or sell them anywhere.

Finally, the literary space results in an ambiguity to know the identity of Beloved; where the reader is forced to speculate about it throughout the narrative. In the novel, the memories of the past, as a result, lead to Beloved appearance in the novel. Although it is not easy to explain it, it is estimated that Sethe's struggle with her memories evoked this magical character emergence with no real status. It is the ghost of Sethe's murdered baby, a runaway slave, or the depiction of the mother daughter bond where guilt come alive. *Beloved* tends to evoke each possibility with the lines of realism –actual events- in the novel (Lobidziec, 2012). As a consequence, Aldea (2011) argues that Beloved has no identity of her own. For example, at one point in the novel she tends to become Sethe where" she imitated Sethe, talked the way she did, laughed her laugh and used her body the same way down to the walk, the way Sethe moved her hands, sighed through her nose, held her head. Sometimes [...] it was difficult for Denver to tell who was who" (*Beloved*, p.283).

3.5 The Presence of Gothic Elements in *Beloved*

The term Gothicism is not new in literature. It is a genre that creates terror and suspense for readers (Prasad Bhatt, 2018). Elements of gothic literature include gloomy atmosphere, supernatural beings or monsters (ghosts, vampires, zombies, giants), romance, a castle or mansion, distress, intense emotions, horror and terror, an unlikely hero, a sinister villain, murder or death, decay, and isolation. Gothic elements work together to create a setting showing a fallen

world, one where traditional elements, such as a castle that would evoke thoughts of power and success, are used to demonstrate the opposite and appear in a form of decay or ruin. Regarding gothic elements, Hogle (2002) in the "Introduction" of the book *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction* states:

[. . .] a Gothic tale usually takes place (at least some of the time) in an antiquated or seemingly antiquated space – be it a castle, a foreign palace, an abbey, a vast prison, a subterranean crypt, a graveyard, a primeval frontier or island, a large old house or theatre, an aging city or urban underworld, a decaying storehouse, factory, laboratory, public building, or some new recreation of an older venue, such as an office with old filing cabinets, an overworked spaceship, or a computer memory. Within this space, or a combination of such spaces, are hidden some secrets from the past (sometimes the recent past) that haunt the characters, psychologically, physically, or otherwise at the main time of the story (Hogle, 2002, p.2).

Gothic tale usually takes place in an antiquated space, which is associated with some secret from the past that hunt the characters. Gothic elements are used in novels to create a feeling of dread and mystery.

The conventional gothic narratives usually end with the predictable destruction or repression of the ghost. But in *Beloved*, the situation is different. On the contrary, the novel *Beloved* begins with the supernatural disturbance in the real world at the very beginning. There seems to be a presence of an invisible being inside the house. Hogle (2002) further writes, "These haunting can take many forms, but they frequently assume the features of ghosts, specters, or monsters (mixing features from different realms of being, often life and death) [. . .] to manifest unresolved crimes or conflicts that can no longer be successfully buried from view" (Hogle, 2002, p.2). In *Beloved*, the ghost seems to be baby's ghost whom Sethe had earlier murdered. The intervention of the baby ghost creates problems for everyone. The ghost appears to be breaking and shaking the things in the house and causes everyone's private uneasiness and anxiety. The members living there face frequent disturbance. In this sense, the gothic manifestation emerges and is recognized as a mysterious, uncanny and even detestable presence.

The first place depicted to be haunted by ghost in the novel is 124, Bluestone Road. Sethe's two sons Howard and Buglar cannot stand the terror caused by the ghost. They get horrified so they flee. As the narrative reveals:

124 was spiteful. Full of a baby venom. The women in the house knew 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 a line next to the doorsill (*Beloved*, p.3).

After living in the scandalous house marked with the invisible being for a few years, the two boys, Howard and Buglar, flee in dread. The other members of the family, however, treat the supernatural intrusion with either indifference or disdain. Since 124 is a source of the gothic atmosphere, Morrison keeps this place within the subjective focus. She intends to put more emphasize on the supernatural being's impact upon the main characters as well as their responses to it. For Sethe and Denver, they are the only victims who do not surrender to the harassment of the ghost.

Holding another view, Baby Suggs also ignores the ghost's presence. He scolds Sethe for not being indebted to the annoying presence which reminds her of her lost children. Sethe and Denver's reaction as well as Baby Suggs' ignorance, however, do not correspond to Paul D's negative response when he first experiences the spirit's manifestation in 124.

Now he was trembling again but in the legs this time. It took him a while to realize that his legs were not shaking because of worry, but because the floorboards were and the grinding, shoving floor was only part of it. The house itself was pitching (*Beloved*, p.18).

When Sethe, Denver, and Baby Suggs feel the gothic disturbance, they immediately know that it is the return of the murdered baby girl. They show indifference to the situation. Paul D also feels this disturbance. In the beginning, it becomes difficult for him to understand anything. But later when he knows the reality, he becomes restless. He begins to think about the way to expel the spirit from the house. Paul's arrival creates motion in the narrative. In his work "The Telling of '*Beloved*' he writes, "Paul's arrival sets the story in motion. Outraged by the spiteful

persecution of a "haunt" that resents his sudden irruption into a house it has taken possession of Paul attacks it and drives it out"(Prasad Bhatt, 2018, p.1681).

It seems that fear, abomination and annoyance are the primarily negative feelings for the supernatural intervention. The manifestation of the ghost contributes to grotesque plot and horrid atmosphere. It creates disappointment and loathing of the characters, except Denver, who anticipates her dead sister's companionship, carrying with "a vague smile on her lips" (Prasad Bhatt, 2018, p.1681). It is the existing, gothic atmosphere in the novel.

For the most members of black community, the baby ghost is simply seen as evil. They feel disturbed by its frequent presence. The ghost in the novel, unlike the gothic convention of the simple, mystic haunting, further transforms into a human figure with a picture of young lady and baby strangely mixed. Not only is her appearance elusive but also her manner of speaking seems mysterious and hardly comprehensible (Prasad Bhatt, 2018). The gothic not only grows real but also contains unusual, supernatural power. As it is quoted in the novel, Beloved impalpably disappears and reappears at will in a shed with no footfall, which terrifies Denver for her possible loss of company; from Paul D's witnessing, Beloved can "pick up the rocking chair single-handed" (Prasad Bhatt, 2018, p.1681). Beloved's supernatural ability is implicitly revealed and marked. She appears and disappears and terrifies Denver and other members. She also picks up the rocking chair in her hand in a strange manner and it amazes everyone.

Like conventional gothic narratives, Morrison's *Beloved* transgresses the boundary of physical laws beyond rationality. Hogle (2002) holds the same opinion and writes, "Gothic fictions generally play with and oscillate between the earthly laws of conventional reality and the possibilities of the supernatural" (Hogle,2002, p.2). Through various manifestations, the ghost makes itself not only visibly but also audibly perceptible, of which Stamp Paid is the witness. When Stamp Paid goes to visit Sethe, and tries to knock on the door of 124, he cannot enter the house, but circles it instead. Stamp Paid also hears unusual sound of Denver's existence in 124. In this way 124 becomes a site of these gloomy episodes where unspeakable fear of the heavy

historical trappings returns. It repeatedly signals the disturbing return of pasts upon presents and evokes emotions of terror. The thing that Stamps Paid perceives is the mysterious incidents that blur historical boundaries. The visual and audible manifestations of the ghost along with Beloved's physical embodiment with supernatural force construct a horrible picture, plot, and gothic atmosphere.

The incarnation of the ghost later made things more complicated. The ghost's haunting of the house creates disturbance. The incarnation of the baby ghost in Gothic opens up a space, beyond chronological time convention, of moving back and forth between past and present, between facts and ideas. Through this incarnation, Morrison extends the possibility for novelistic expression and unfolds a distinct domain of narrative experience. The embodiment of the ghost's body is too an emblem of social injustice within the slave narrative, which carries witness of the slave's horrible experience of discrimination under slavery (Prasad Bhatt, 2018).

The novel also reveals that being a black slave means an unresolved bond to a physical mark. It is a type of dissimilarity and a psychological burden of marginalization for blacks. In this respect, the black slave is regarded as the abject. Hogle (2002) writes, "Kristeva argues for ghosts or grotesques, so explicitly created to embody contradictions, as instances of what she calls the "abject" and products of "abjection" (Hogle, 2002, p.7). Indeed, as the abject, the black slave is entirely excluded from the lines of both kinship and social life. He is separated, refused and oppressed. This abject, however, signified by the incarnation of the ghost, attempts to trespass against the systematic order and conventional border of American society.

The gothic elements in the novel are explicit. The character, plot and narration carry various references of the ghost, soul, blood and killing. Morrison uses these gothic elements to manifest how slavery and racism at their cruelest level disfigure black slaves like Sethe. Such elements play an important role in *Beloved*. They break down the existing limit of expression. The supernatural occurrence creates the terrible and suspicious atmosphere.

Madness is a common theme in the Gothic narratives, which creates suspense for the readers. It also explores aspects of human nature that cannot be easily understood. Beloved, in seeming madness, presents herself a dramatic figure of the devil. She carries insatiable desire for revenge on her mother. Beloved becomes a witch, a ghost, a devil, with her domination of things around her. Harris (1999) in his work *Beloved: Woman, Thy Name is Demon* explains Beloved and Sethe's corporal relations in this way, "Like a vampire feeding vicariously, she becomes plump in direct proportion to Sethe's increasing gauntness. Vengeance is not the Lord's; it is Beloved's, her very body becomes a manifestation of her desire for vengeance and of Sethe's guilt" (Harris,1999, p.132). Beloved creates difficulties for her mother Sethe. The possession of Sethe's life by her daughter not only unveils one's illogical emotion and desire, but also reverses the mother-daughter relations. More importantly, it increases violent sensual perception and creates a confusion of intense emotions and physical sensations.

The setting of the novel *Beloved* uses flashback to create gloominess. It is the feeling of Sethe and other residents of the house traveling not only in physical distance but also the passage of time that creates a haunting quality. It is the element of the ghost that furthers the notion of the unknown for the reader. These things help to analyze Sethe's character. It is the haunting that brings her story to the forefront of attention. While the house is physically haunted by Beloved's ghost, it is also haunted by the collective experience of all its residents. The story is told not only in flashback but also from different points of view, which adds to the suspense.

This novel *Beloved* works to capture the essence of slavery's consequences for its characters. It narrates the truth which is created in flashback and ghost story (Prasad Bhatt, 2018). The characters are trapped in the present because they are imprisoned by the horrors of slavery. Morrison's use of magical realism in the form of *Beloved* the ghost is evident in the novel. This strange creature shakes the furniture, puts tiny handprints on the cakes, and shatters mirrors. Sethe and Denver get shocked. The physical ghost acts as an embodiment of Sethe's

sorrow and guilt (Prasad Bhatt, 2018). The consequence of Beloved's actions only feed Sethe's inability to function in the present.

In conclusion, it can be said that *Beloved* is connected with the readers on many levels. Gothic narrative, as a genre, *Beloved* discloses certain conceptions and beliefs. In a gothic narrative, rationality does not always address truth (Prasad Bhatt, 2018). The purpose of this chapter is to explore the concept that Morrison's *Beloved* is a Gothic narrative. It can be argued that Morrison has used many techniques which are derived from the Gothic period to narrate her story of Sethe. Sethe is a former slave haunted by the ghost of her murdered daughter, Beloved. The novel has many interwoven techniques of storytelling that make reading a challenge to analyze. Morrison tells the story which was not told before by revealing a very real situation with the use of Gothic elements.

Conclusion

The problem of this chapter has been solved by showing that the real and the Magic events truly exist in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. The Magical Realism characteristics showed the tendency to contribute to the features of Magic Realism. However, there is a number of cases where positive feelings are triggered by creating a mysterious, atmosphere. In a number of cases, the positive atmosphere seems to be interrupted by the negative one, which leads to the conclusion that the author seeks to play with reader's feelings by misleading. The mixture of positive and negative feelings also symbolizes the natural human's desire to seek for happiness. However, not letting go of the past negativity nor letting anyone to be completely happy and free.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

This work attempted to present the Magical Realism in Twentieth century Afro- American literature, via analyzing Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. This period saw a great development and was known as the famous productive era in African American literary genres since authors created remarkable novels like Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987). African American writers tried to show the real-life events by using Magical Realism in their works, and that is what Morrison applies in her novel *Beloved*.

In *Beloved*, Morrison intended to show the reader what happened to individuals in an institutionalized slave system in which African Americans had to live in the past. Narrating the story of Sethe, Morrison focused on the brutal aspects of slavery by emphasizing the sufferings of slaves. The novel showed us what happened to Sethe, her family and other slaves working on the plantation. We saw that Sethe was mistreated and raped. After she tried to escape from the plantation, she killed her baby and attempted to kill the rest of her children. Her husband went mad, and other slaves had unfortunate lives. After killing her baby, Sethe continued to suffer. She felt regretful pain, and had to live an isolated life for a long time in the black community. At the end of the novel, Sethe became mentally and spiritually exhausted, had no energy left to live a meaningful life.

The present study aimed to define the origins and explained the concept of the term with its characteristics. The research questions of this dissertation were answered by showing the existence of the real and the magic events in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. The Magical Realism characteristics had remarkably contributed to the emergence of Magical Realism features. The results of the research resolved Toni Morrison's in literature tendency to exaggerate the characters' feelings, and the author via this endeavor portrays the negative - gloomy, eerie, tragic and sorrowful atmosphere. Thus, we conclude that the author sought to play with the reader's feelings by confusing and forcing him to step into the character's feet. The main and the most

significant case of Magic Realism is the ghost Beloved. In brief, the present study showed that this ghost carries a number of functions in the story.

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Résumé

Cette recherche étudie le Magique Réalisme au XX siècle dans la littérature Afro- Américains, le cas de *Beloved* de Toni Morrison. La littérature noire aux états- unis représente l'expérience et l'histoire des Afro- Américains. Dans *Beloved* Morrison montre les effets physiques et psychologiques sur la femme américaine, de plus, les véritables événements de la vie et de l'histoire Afro-Américain, en donnant une importance particulière aux horreurs et tortures de l'esclavage. Ce travail a pour but de montrer comment l'écrivaine a essayé de dépeindre sa façon de style en utilisant le magique réalisme dans son roman. En outre, de donner une image sur la façon de l'écriture des écrivaines de la littérature Afro-Américaine en adaptant ce style et de l'appliquer sur leurs travaux. Toni Morrison se concentre sur les aspects brutaux de l'esclavage afin d'effectuer le lecteur et la communauté de manière que l'histoire de l'esclavage ne doit pas être oublié. L'auteur pense que les problèmes horribles liés à l'esclavage sont évités et ignorés dans les écrits d'esclavage traditionnels. En fin, Morrison veut mettre l'accent sur les aspects douloureux et oubliés dans l'esclavage. Les romans de notre écrivaines forcent le lecteur à reconnaître l'existence et les conditions de l'esclavage dans un pays que préférerait d'oublier un tel crime qui n'a jamais été commis.

Mots-clés: La littérature Afro-Américain, L'esclavage, Magique Réalisme, La femme Afro-Américain.

الملخص

هذا البحث يدرس أسلوب الخيال الواقعي في الأدب الأفرو أمريكي إبان القرن العشرين مثال ذلك قصة موضوع بحثنا "بيلوفد" للروائية "توني موريسون". يمثل هذا الأدب في الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية تجربة و تاريخ الشعوب الأفرو أمريكية. ففي قصتها الكاتبة, تتعرض إلى مدى التأثير النفسي و الجسدي على المرأة الأمريكية مبرزة الأحداث الحقيقية في تاريخ تلك الشعوب و معطية بذلك أهمية خاصة للمخاوف و التعذيب الذي كان يتلقاه العبيد آن ذاك. إن الهدف من هذا العمل هو إبراز كيف وظفت الكاتبة في روايتها "بيلوفد", أسلوب الخيال الواقعي مما أعطى صورة واضحة على طريقة وأسلوب الكتاب و الأدباء الأفرو أمريكيين في كتاباتهم وتطبيقهم لهذا الأخير في أعمالهم الأدبية. الكاتبة "توني موريسون" ركزت بالأخص في روايتها على الجانب الوحشي في العبودية, غرضها في ذلك هو التأثير على القارئ و المجتمع و إن تاريخ العبودية و الاسترقاق لا يجب نسيانه لأنها ترى أن كل هذه المشاكل المريعة المرتبطة بالاستعباد تجاهلتها الكتابات التقليدية. و في الأخير "موريسون" أرادت إسقاط الضوء على الجانب المأسوي و المؤلم و المنسي للاستعباد, فهي بكتاباتها و روايتها تدفع القارئ للاعتراف بوجود وظروف العبيد في بلد يحبذ أن يكون هذا الشيء منسي و اعتباره جريمة لم تقترف .

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأدب الأفرو أمريكي, العبيد, الخيال الواقعي, المرأة الأفرو أمريكية .