

Family Values in Toni Morrison's *Beloved* and Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*

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Morrison, like Walker, underlines the significance of family values while, at the same moment, confronting the viewer with the implications of parental absence or sexual abuse within a family. Hermann confirms the nuclear family's direct impact on an individual's growth: "The basis of personality growth is a safe sense of association with caring individuals. The traumatized individual loses his fundamental feeling of self when this link is broken "(Hermann, p. 38). Herman further claims that "the stressful event is destroying the faith that in relation to others one can be oneself. The unsatisfactory resolution of the ordinary disputes over autonomy in development leaves the individual susceptible to shame and doubt" (Hermann, p. 38). Herman's observations are reflected in both books' fictitious protagonists; they have all been subjected to traumatic experiences from an early era. Both Sethe and Celie lose their mothers; they are exposed to the "double victimisation" being black and being females (Pellicer-Ortín and Andermahr, p. 98). The following paragraphs argue that while *Beloved* emphasizes the significance of the connection between mother and children, the parental problems and maternity as such are somewhat shadowed in *The Color Purple*, while the emphasis is on the bonding between women.

Celie has been the victim of sexual assaults since the age of thirteen, committed by her alleged father. Consequently, she gives birth to two kids who were taken from her right after they were born. Even after the arranged marriage to Albert, a widowed dad of four kids, her humiliation and infringement did not stop. Only her husband is now abusing her, perceiving her only as a sexual item and as someone who is there to look after her kids, her home and her fields. Celie (Tucker)'s "patriarchal oppression" is emphasized by silencing her: "Tell no one better than God. It would destroy your mammy "(CP, p. 3) were her father's words after being raped by the person she thought to be. Not only is Celie silenced, she is also introduced as someone not to be heard: "She tells lies" (CP, p. 10) when she hands her over to Albert, Alphonso tells him. Tucker explains the objective of this bizarre comment as an effort to discredit Celie if she attempts to talk about the breach to which she was subjected. It was stated before that the "double awareness" is one of the defensive reactions to a prolonged pain (Herman, p. 24), when victim tries to banish the traumatic experience from her memory. In the case of Celie, this is reflected not only in her silence, but also in her reluctance to name her masculine oppressors; therefore, she relates to Alphonso, the man she believes to be her dad as "he" and to her husband, Albert, as "Mr.-." Tucker indicates that "naming is a means of having authority" (CP, p. 10) and that "Celie needs to be able to name in order to create self-confidence." (CP, p. 10)

Thirteen is also an important landmark in the time-line of Sethe; she arrives at the Sweet Home, a Kentucky plantation, at this era. She gives birth to her first kid a year later, but unlike Celie, the kids of Sethe are not the result of rape, they are the result of a loving relationship. In opposition to the previously mentioned general routine with regards to not regarding family ties among slaves and denying them the privilege to keep up their children, Sethe can appreciate both for a brief timeframe ; she gets endorsement to wed a person she becomes hopelessly enamoured with and they are allowed to live with their children (*Beloved*, p.70). After the death of the plantation's initial owner, Mr Garner, her living circumstances alter dramatically. The absurdity of the plantation's name, Sweet Home, is magnified under its fresh manager, the schoolteacher's sadistic and strongly racist views. Sethe turns into a casualty of unfeeling beating and rehashed corruption, pregnant with her fourth youngster, and she flees with her significant other and the various slaves from the estate. Her three children, two young men and an infant young lady who is still nursing Sethe are sent in advance to their grandma, Baby Suggs. Regretfully, the schoolteacher learns about their plan of escape ; some of the males are murdered, some are chained as a direct result. Sethe is the one who actually achieves their pre-planned destination and reunites during the escape with Baby Suggs and her kids, including her fourth child, Denver. Morrison portrays Sethe's path to freedom as a manifestation of her "fiercely protective mother love" (Bouson, p. 142), reflecting on a racial discourse that regarded slave

women as "animal breeder females" (Bouson, p. 139) without any attachment to their kids. Despite her pregnancy and badly beaten body, she is determined to reunite with her kids ; she is focused on the concept of nursing her baby-daughter with her own milk (B, p. 97). Her powerful motherly instinct is revealed when she recalls her emotions of pride and joy after meeting Paul D with her kids: "I was big, Paul D, and deep and wide and when I extended my arms every one of my youngsters could get in the middle of ... Looked like I adored em progressively after I got here" (B, p. 190).

When the school teacher comes to remember Sethe and her kids, she can't bear the idea of putting her kids through the same expertise of racist repression and indignity that she knows so well ; her act reflects the conviction "that white people can take your whole self for anything that comes to mind. Not only are you working, killing, or maiming, but you're being dirty. You couldn't like yourself anymore, dirty you so bad. Dirty you were so bad that you forgot who you were and couldn't believe about it "(B, p. 297). Overburdened by panic, Sethe tries to murder all four of her kids and she slits her elderly daughter's throat before anyone can prevent her ; a child whose name we never learn ; who continues to be called Beloved. For Sethe, this act represents her motherhood love's ultimate manifestation.

Contrary to Sethe's powerful maternal love, the maternal instinct of Celie appears to be significantly damaged. Impregnated twice by her supposed dad when she is barely a teenager, soon after birth she is deprived of her kids and for several years she is not even sure if her kids are alive. Thus she keeps her maternal emotions buried, also influenced by the non-existent connection with her mom who "was pregnant every year, becoming weaker and more mentally unstable every year until... she died" (CP, p. 158). Celie thinks it was "the tale of his Alphonso who killed her" (CP, p.7). While the word "his tale" may refer to Celie's sexual assault and its consequent rejection to his spouse, Tucker provides yet another explanation: "A reference to the reality that Celie's mom, ill with excessive job and childbearing, attempted to fit the submissive wife's patriarchal script with no voice and no authority." Also significant is the connection between Celie and Mr-s kids that is revealed when Harpo, Mr-s eldest son, wakes up in the center of the night, frightened by a nightmare that reminds him of his mother's murder that he was a witness and goes to Celie for comfort.

Celie stays unperturbed and admits to herself: "For them I don't feel anything. None of Harpo's patting back like patting a dog. It's more like patting another piece of wood ... Anyway, neither do they love me, no matter how good I am" (CP, p. 30). Celie thinks about Harpo to a bit of wood, an article rather than a person, symbolizing the suppressed emotions of traumatized Celie, who also sees herself as an object, a tree, in an effort to detach herself from the pain that her abusive husband has placed on her. While such depersonalization and absence of feelings are deemed to be one of the traumatic responses of people overwhelmed by fear and helplessness (Herman, p. 25), it also resembles the prevalent practice in moments of slavery that viewed slaves as artifacts, a portion of ownership, a means of return. Pellicer-Ortín and Andermahr argue that "the abuse of any black individual (male and female) by the white man is thus reinstated by the black male against the black woman" (Pellicer-Ortín and Andermahr, p. 99). This argument is bolstered by Tucker who brings up that Celie is explicitly mishandled by Alphonso as a substitute of her mom, later by Albert as a substitution of his dead wife, as well as his lover, Shug Avery. Moreover, she is given to Albert instead of her sister, Nettie, and she is handed over as if she was an animal .

According to the slavery analogy, the detachment of Celie from Mr 's kids also evokes the earlier stated resistance of slave females by dismissing kids born as a consequence of sexual exploitation and rejecting the stereotype of black nanny. This attitude is further developed by Walker in the personality of Sophia, the wife of Harpo. Celie's total opposite, Sophia is all but submissive. Born into a family with a dominant dad and six brothers and five sisters, as a battlefield she learns to approach the world. "I had to battle for my whole life. I was going to have to clash my father. I was going to have to battle my siblings. A girl child in a men's family isn't secure, "she informs Celie after figuring out she had advised Harpo to beat her (CP,p.38) Sophia refuses to recognize the predetermined subordinate position of females of that moment and declines to be subjugated by anybody, be it her husband or white society. It's devastating the price she pays for her rebellion. After she will not function as a house keeper of a white town's city hall leader, therefore dismissing "the customary racial good example anticipated onto African American ladies which goes back to the seasons of subjugation going about as the cliché dark mammy from the manor fantasy"

(Pellicer-Ortín and Andermahr, p. 101), the civic chairman slaps her, discovering her refusal annoying. Sophia restores the blow in an after-effect of which she winds up in jail, beaten so seriously that a portion of the injuries are of lasting character. Her jail sentence is later transformed into a long-term bondage in the family of the mayor; this servitude bears the symptoms of slavery, since Sophia is not permitted to leave for years. Crippled, denied of her freedom, of her family, Sophia unobtrusively satisfies her obligations around the house and helps raise the kids of the mayor; her resistance is shown by the disdain she maintains in the family of the mayor and by the cold detachment from the kids she is meant to care for. Sophia's comment represents not only her opposition to the mayor's family members, but also the American society's ethnic tensions.

Celie and Sophia's forcible separation from their kids summons the deterioration of families in snapshots of bondage, which by selling them away denied weddings among slaves and isolated family members. This would likely also occur to Sethe and her kids if she had not first murdered one of her siblings before the school teacher could have taken her away. The following section of my thesis will focus on Denver, the remaining daughter of Sethe and the only one who remained with Sethe after she was abandoned by everyone else.

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