

**PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
AMMAR TELIDJI UNIVERSITY OF LAGHOUAT
FACULTY OF LETTERS AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**



**Memory Narrative and Cultural Trauma in Toni
Morrison's *Beloved* (1987)**

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH IN PARTIAL
FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR MASTER DEGREE IN CIVILIZATION AND
LITERATURE

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Academic Year: 2021-2022

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge and give my warmest thanks to my supervisor, Mrs. Mouissa Fattoum, who made this work possible. Her guidance and advice carried me through all the stages of writing my project. I would also like to thank the committee members for devoting time to read and evaluate this work.

Sincere thanks and gratitude go to all my teachers in the department of
English.

Dedication

Above all, to God Almighty who showered me His blessing in my everyday steps and acts, especially for strength, courage and patience, wisdom and time and guidance in realization of this work.

This work is heartily and proudly dedicated to people who serve as an inspiration.

To my parents, my sisters Hassiba, Hanane and Hadjer and my ideal brother
Mohamed Lamine.

To the sole of my grandmother Hadja Aicha.

To the faculty and staff of the department of English.

To myself.

Abstract

The African American slave trade experience is one of the important phases in American history, which is a result of several sacrifices and fighting, starting from the abolition of slavery and the Civil Rights Movement to achieve selfhood and freedom. The journey toward freedom was characterized by harsh and difficult events that marked their haunting past and traumatized present, and African Americans lived with physical, psychological, and emotional impacts. Toni Morrison's Pulitzer-winning novel *Beloved* depicts the traumatic experience of African Americans in America, where she focuses on the historical, emotional and psychological impacts of slavery, which certain psychologists, namely Sigmund Freud and Joseph Breuer had examined and studied in their works. This dissertation sheds light on the experience of African Americans' journey to freedom and self-determination. Adding to the analysis of cultural trauma and memory narrative in Morrison's *Beloved*, the work questions the role of memory in the history of black slaves and its association with the process of self-realization for individuals and community on whole. Thus, the main objective of this research is to highlight the relationship between cultural trauma and memory narrative and to illustrate the psychological destructive impacts as it points to the process of collective healing in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*.

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General Introduction

General Introduction

Toni Morrison is an American novelist, editor, and professor. Her famous fifth novel, *Beloved*, a Pulitzer Prize-winning book, is a novel about slavery and its atrocities. Morrison deals with the historical traumatic experiences of slavery of African Americans as a distressing and destructive institution that dehumanizes and humiliates them, and roughly affects them emotionally, physically, and psychologically. Hence, *Beloved* is based on the true story of Margaret Garner, where Sethe is the protagonist of *Beloved*. She tries to kill her children and then herself, but she only succeeds in killing her two-year-old daughter. She prefers to kill them rather than let them experience the horror of slavery that she has been through and live a life imperiled by segregation and dehumanization. Through *Beloved*, Morrison gives voices to characters and sheds light on blacks' lives, emotions, and experiences to make them visible as they were invisible, voiceless, and forgotten in history.

In other words, *Beloved* exposes the unrecorded suffering and tortured slaves' experiences, and how they cope with their collective and individual past after many years of the abolishment of slavery in America. To heal and humanize their destructed, fragmented, and lost identity that consists of indescribable past painful memories, the traumatized ex-slaves have to confront and reconcile with these repressed memories. The percussions of slavery are depicted in *Beloved*, where trauma is prevalent through memory narratives. Though characters seem to be exposed to the horrific impacts of the Slave Trade experience psychologically, they characterize the notion of trauma as a violent shock, a wound from past violent experiences, and the consequences that affect the physical structure by making sense to the affected psyche and emotions that lead to full destruction

Beloved, however, examines the relationship between an enslaved past of the African Americans and the destruction of identity. The slave trade experience is a predictive system of dehumanization and fragmentation of the human mind. Thus, African Americans were treated roughly and subjected to segregation and destruction of psyche and emotions and were “moved around like checkers” (Morrison 23). It reflects on the social and economic life of the former slave, whose rights of free will and choice were doomed to denial. Therefore, this dissertation will attempt to answer the following questions:

- How did slavery affect individuals’ psychologically, physically and emotionally?
- How trauma was portrayed in Toni Morrison’s *Beloved* and what are its legacies on characters?
- To what extent collective memory affects individual’s identity perception?

According to the previous questions, it could be hypothesized that due to the long endemic history of slavery, black people failed to gain a sense of individuality or a sense of self. The destruction and haunting past that Seth runs away from, particularly her slave's traumatic experience, carries psychological and emotional impacts that affect her life and leads her to a terrible commitment. Slave history haunts the traumatized characters until they reconstruct and heal their deconstructed pieces of individual and collective memory. Yet, *Beloved* depicts a whole process of escaping the haunting past and a continuous effect of cultural collective trauma. Accordingly, the novel revolves around the criticality of community in the healing process.

General Introduction

Therefore, a variety of analytical and theoretical works have been introduced to analyze trauma, traumatic historical experiences, and collective memory. Sigmund Freud examines trauma through a theoretical framework and defines the psychological concept to fulfill the field. A set of theories is to be discussed throughout the novel which are: 'Psychoanalytical theories' by which Sigmund Freud and Joseph Breuer both researchers and philosophers gave full study on *Studies of Hysteria* (1895), in which they illustrate that only the remembrance of a traumatic event that cause kind of shock on individual's life. Thus, through Freud's theory the analysis exhibits the psychological effects of a particular event and it helps determine the origins of shock and hysteria, this study is done by Joseph Breuer who had researches about the impact of trauma and collective memory that emerged as a study in the 19th century.

Since the original event continues to damage and harm people's lives, abreaction that is an emotional and unconscious reaction which is response to something that brings back a painful situation or traumatic experience, it is required in order to be able to understand the effects of the past and gain freedom from its symptoms, which cause eternal psychological traces. As long as it is personified in the novel, characters as a group of traumatized people who share the same haunting past and harmful memory, react and respond violently to the historical traumatic event with violent responses under collective cultural trauma and collective remembrance. Moreover, Cathy Caruth, in her book *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* and *KaliTal: Worlds of Hurt, Reading the Literature of Trauma*, examines the slave trade experience and its impacts on former slaves in the past and future as an act of eternal memory.

The aim behind choosing this subject is to give a clear illustration of the journey to self-reconstruction on an enslaved community as well as on individual. Moreover, the objectives of this research to highlight the impacts of slave trade experience and how cultural trauma is interpreted and examined. Furthermore, to analyze how Toni Morrison depicts and represent trauma in *Beloved*, and to give more clarification about the process of healing of memory through several demonstrations of the collective memory and cultural collective trauma.

In this research, psychoanalytical and historical approaches are to be used in order to examine the factors that led characters to ask for self-definition and forced them to seek freedom, the freedom they fought roughly for during slavery and even after its abolishment. Additionally, it seeks to offer an understating of how they succeeded in determining their own lives as free and finding their way to heal and reconstruct the black identity while they were totally ignored, dehumanized, and fragmented

This dissertation is divided into tree chapters, chapter one deals with slave trade history and theories of trauma in order to create the link between the slave trade experience and trauma in memory narratives. While chapter two is about the analyses Toni Morrison's novel and questioning the notions of trauma and memory in the selected novel. In addition, chapter three points to relationship between historical trauma and the individual/collective memories.

Chapter One

Theoretical insights on Trauma and Memory

Narratives

Introduction

A variety of psychoanalytical studies provide evidence about the nature of trauma experience through memory narratives, demonstrating its legacies on the individual's psyche. Thus, trauma theory has interest in the neurobiological and psychological fields of those scholars such as Sigmund Freud and Joseph Breuer who have studied and analyzed the impact of the two main coins that influence the individual's memory of traumatic experience. Remembering as an ability to review the traumatic events from the past has been viewed as a basis for an individual's consistent and harmonic feeling of a temporal identity.

Sigmund Freud was one of famous writers who examine memory dissociation, and sub consciousness of remembering and trauma in regard to memory issues. He demonstrated through strong arguments how memory is affected by the cultural context. Actually, Freud's studies of trauma are considered as a predecessor and the origin of literature that deals with the different aspects of trauma theory and its classes into the neurobiological and psychological in order to examine the influence of the experience on individuals reactions and response to trauma. Additionally, the psychiatric aspect is the element that linked the combination of experience in memory narrative. Moreover, the spots of suffering and dissociation and the major themes that Toni Morrison deals with in order to compose a full series of events, to involve the readers in the traumatized life of the characters and to recount her The African-American experience is mainly described in current literary works by shedding light on slavery within the historical context of the story. Meanwhile, writers like W. E. B Du Bois, Fredrick Douglass and Toni Morrison aim to

enlighten many dark aspects of the issue of slavery and how it leads to horrible and negative impacts on enslaved individuals through the embodiment of the suffering and hardships of the past experience. Yet African American writers attempt to highlight and exhibit the fact that history is influenced by slave trade experience. Thus, literature demonstrates that slavery is the main reason for destroying familial ties, the whole maternal system and identity, as it results in a disfigured character.

1-Trauma Definition

Trauma indicates to an experience that left physical and psychological effects and could cause choc or stressful reactions. According to the American Psychiatric association which tackles the whole definition of trauma in the book of *the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, that people who have mental issues are exposed to a specific traumatic event or chronic traumatic event. However, violence, abuse, sexual violence are irritating aspects that lead to mental response and uneasy behavior. Usually, psychiatric has to treat the patient who suffers from impact of trauma in his life, with psychiatric medication to secure the neurotic system and give it temporally a stable mental estate and stimulate mind to recognize its consciousness and normal condition.

Trauma in general is a response to a deeply distressing or disturbing experience in the past that overwhelms an individual's ability to cope in society, causes feelings of helplessness, and diminishes their sense of self and their ability to feel a full range of emotions and experiences in the present life and future. Jean Laplanche and J.B Pontlis exhibit in their article "The Language of Psychoanalysis" in which they analyze the different effect of an event on the psyche, beside they demonstrate how psychoanalysis

gives all explanations to psychiatric impacts, they assert “An event in the subject’s life defined by its intensity, by the subject’s incapacity to respond adequately to it, and by the upheaval and long-lasting effect that it brings” (Laplanche and Pontils 1974). Accordingly, literature influences individuals’ life, it has an empowered language and an authorized significance to represent the inner world of human beings, making a space for flashback, memories and remembrances that are colored by suffering and the hardship of the past through traumatic experiences. Trauma or traumatize means a traumatic event which includes a single event or experience in the past; it involves the emotions and feelings. (Craparo et al 248).

Furthermore, psychological trauma deals with serious long-term negative consequences of trauma on human beings’ past and life. However, past trauma and traumatic memories affect the minds of the characters. Typical causes of psychoanalysis trauma include sexual abuse, dehumanization, discrimination, domestic violence, and particularly slavery. Significantly, slavery trauma impact can lead to violent behavior and psychological disorder and the feeling of menace.

1.1 -Literary Trauma Theory

A common conception about trauma in literature is that its primary goal is to give an exhibition through an aesthetic motion of war remnants such as violence, genocide, and discrimination. This is to demonstrate the most emotionally experience a person can live through. Accordingly, literary trauma is considerably about the problem of storytelling as trauma is about the traumatic events in novels. As well as it is about the difficulty of

representing the truth of an experience so shocking and horrific that cannot be contained within the human mind and memory. Trauma studies examine the impact of trauma in communal society and individuals experience through literature by analyzing psychological, rhetorical, and cultural signification. Literary fields study and analyze the complex social and psychological factors that influence the individual's comprehension and realization of a past traumatic experience and how such an experience shapes character's memory (Mcquade 2009). As how it is represented through African literature, hence, novelists expose on different view that remembering, identity, and the experience are influenced by extreme past events , thus remain a significant focus of the field that deals with the influence and the impact of trauma , particularly, the trauma theory in literature.

The combination of literary representation of psychological trauma and memory's role in identity shaping remains to be the central concern that defines the field of trauma studies. Psychoanalytic theories on trauma are combined with other additional theoretical fields, such as post-structural, sociocultural, and postcolonial theories starting from the central idea of criticism that interprets representations of an utmost experience, and its effects upon the identity and memory of individuals as characters. This affection played a huge role in the psyche of each individual through the several changes that occurred in personality and the quality of the services that this individual gave and shared in his or her society. Also, a traumatized character holds a kind of traumatized emotions and memory.

In past narrative productions, the psychological influence on an individual's memory is different than other experiences; these are the main ideas that shape the primary evolution in trauma studies that build the theory of trauma and the ways how trauma influences the identity and memory of characters. Psychoanalytic theories are to analyze

and study the emotional suffering in the novel; besides, the language of the damage and fragmentation that are the main consequence of emotional and cultural trauma. In this model, trauma theories affect the individual psyche and they are often used to explore the individual's experience of collective traumatic past events in a novel to create a link between the memory narrative and cultural trauma.

The traditional studies of trauma, Cathy Caruth, viewed her book *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* and Kali Tal: *Worlds of Hurt Reading the Literatures of Trauma*, that trauma as an event that disturbs consciousness and prevents direct linguistic representation of human estate and experiences (Caruth1996). The model points up attention to the hardship and severity of suffering by proposing the traumatic experience conclusively damages the psyche. Trauma in literature texts is an unassimilated event that remains outside normal memory and narrative representations and crashes identity as well. Furthermore, dissociation is included as a direct cause of trauma that provides a view that helps formulate the notion of transhistorical trauma.¹

Furthermore, Kate McQuade in an online writing about trauma in literature she discussed traumatic experience in African American literary works and its inherent dissociation upset the application of specific value to that experience because the level of fear destroys the human mind's ability to understand it and linguistically symbolize it. However, the past experience may not be narrated or recognized clearly, it acts like a tumor in consciousness that damage the self. These traumatic experiences employ a negative and

¹ - To make equivalent relationship between an individual and group and traumatic experience and pathologic effects and psyche.

frequently pathological effect on consciousness, especially psychological and memory that prevents the past from becoming incorporated into a life narrative deeply influenced. It emphasizes on the suffering caused by external sources such as discrimination and segregation that make internal changes and impacts to the mind and irrecoverable change identity. Trauma's modest absence yet viewed its presence in consciousness and through the event, it lacks a normal integration into memory and narrative, makes a shadow that indirectly points toward trauma's meaning and the truth of the past that effects the present memory and suppressed self (McQuade 2009) .

1.2 -Psychoanalytical Trauma

Psychoanalytical trauma presents a dilemma for scholars as it is conceptualized in the theory. It is to have the ability to be properly exposed to assimilation into memory and the psyche. Trauma is observed through Sigmund Freud's theories of analysis, defining the absence of the ability to cooperate naturally in a community. The broad exhibition is that trauma is not the original event in the individual's past life. But in that way, he is unable to recognize suffering in the first instance or realize the beginning of its trauma memory that through time will return to haunt him as a survivor.

Trauma, according to Caruth, is a paradoxical combination of consciousness and a contradictory sense. That is, to know the meaning of the past but the inability to comprehend it. Even more, it is about the contradictory crises in the past experiences in the traumatic narrative between the threat and survival and how the survivor runs out of the haunted memory. She explains that "Traumatic experience, beyond the psychological

dimension of suffering it involves, suggests a certain paradox: the most direct seeing of a violent event may occur as an absolute inability to know it; that immediacy, paradoxically, may take the form of belatedness” (Caruth 92). As she demonstrates “What we see and hear, in *Hiroshima mon amour*, resonates beyond what we can know and understand, but it is in the event of this incomprehension and in our departure from sense and understanding that our own witnessing may indeed begin to take place” (Caruth 56).

Although the traumatic experience joins the psyche of the individual differently than normal experiences in life, this formulates a traumatized memory that resists literary narrative representation. The unique process of this remembering results in an approximate memory but never determinate knowledge and consciousness. Caruth uses the neurobiological approach to link both processes of remembering and how trauma can affect a human psyche to explain the trauma's effects on the psyche and memory. The neurobiological response to trauma draws out a global response. This forecloses the possibility of narrative reminder in memory since the event cannot be "organized on a linguistic level" (Van der Hart 172).

The notion of trauma psychologically indicates a causal relationship that indicates a view of fragmentation and trauma. In this regard, memory is viewed as a box of experiences wherein traumatic memory is stocked differently in the mind and is unavailable for normal narratives since it remains separated from consciousness. Narrative recollection refers to normal memory and remains crucial for identifying and modulating the past.

In traumatic memory that prevents to remember the past, is to put in the function of historical memory concerning a cultural traumatic experience or a collective one in parallel. That is to say, rememory stimulates the trauma. Accordingly, Caruth in her interpretation of

Freud's *Moses and Monotheism* in visions that "history, like trauma, is never simply one's own, that history is precisely the way we were implicated in each other's traumas" (Cathy Caruth 24). Asserting that trauma evokes a shared response through time and damages the psyche. Additionally, these points of view are based on neurobiological and psychological effects on an individual's mind and life; it indicates trauma's intrinsic in transhistorical or intergenerational quality that can be transmitted across time and from one generation to other carrying same traumatic aspects through time. The contagious potency of trauma is joined with the timelessness of an extreme experience that refuses narrative assimilation into memory. And from this perspective, trauma transhistorical had a potential aspect, this means that a cultural group through a traumatic experience in the historical past can be part of the psychic and psyche scenery of the contemporary individual who belongs to the same cultural group (Caruth 24).

2-Slavery and the Historical Trauma

According to Steven Mintz, 1526 to 1867 was a period of the Atlantic Slave Trade. Over 12.5 million slaves were brought from Africa, and about 10.7 million arrived in America. The Atlantic Slave Trade journey was probably the most costly in human life of transporting blacks on all long-distance migrations to America. However, the huge number of slaves brought from Africa was over 30,000 per year in the 1690s and 85,000 per year in the 1700s; while eight out of ten Africans were forced into the slave trade crossed the Atlantic in 1700 to 1850. Moreover, 1821 to 1830 was a decade that witnessed more than 80,000 people a year emigrating from Africa on American slave ships. Effectively, more

than one million and more than one tenth of the number transported in the slave trade era came after the next twenty years.

Accordingly, over 90 percent of enslaved black Africans were imported into the Caribbean and South America. But only about 6 percent of African captives were sent immediately to British North America. Though, a quarter was included by the US population of people of African descent in the New World in 1825. For more evidence, the historical event of the slave trade was a traumatic experience, where The Middle Passage was dangerous and dreadful for African slaves. Also Men and women were separated and chained for long periods, and children were always kept naked, packed close together. Thus, about 12 percent of those who were carried off in slave ships did not survive the voyage.

Here, former slaves are haunted between her guilt and the harsh experience of slavery she experienced. Slavery also misshapes men's identity and makes them victims who are discriminated against by slave owners, in this context Morrison states "Nothing else would be in her mind. The picture of the men coming to nurse her was as lifeless as the nerves in her back where the skin buckled like a washboard" (Morrison12). Such an experience of a humiliating environment within slavery, leads to the traumatic experience that neither can be forgiven nor forgotten by the African-Americans, who faced it during and after being enslaved. Therefore, literary works such as *Black Reconstruction in America* (2014), by Du Bois, which represent multiple effects linked historically to slavery in order to prove the appalling features of slavery and its dark historical reality within the African-American experience and the psychological trauma effect on individuals.

3-Sigmund Freud's Trauma Theory

According to Sigmund Freud, the traumatic experiences in an individual's life are illustrated and elaborated through a theory of psychological studies that guides the field of psychology and deals with the mental estate of an individual who could experience such events. Early theories established by Freud in "Studies on Hysteria 1895" written with Joseph Breuer control trauma's conceptual functionality by literary trauma critics today¹. Especially, his appropriated theories are classified subsequently in his career in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, 1920.

He asserted that the original event that marked an effect on an individual's personality was not traumatic in itself, but only in its memory and remembrance. As long as the original event continues to apply to harm and traumatize, the mention of healing or abreaction is claimed to comprehend the effects of the past and gain freedom from its symptoms, causing psychological damage that could affect the community more than the individual.

Furthermore, James Strachey explains the process of remembering as a psychological process that applies to psychological pain and also attributes a value to the ultimate past experience. This previous traumatic remembering is titled "Pathogenic Reminiscences". For the pathologic symptoms, memory causes and strongly affects the

¹ - Freud development of a concept of historical trauma by adapting his theories on latency and repetition of the individual's traumatic memory and applies it to the Jewish culture in order to explain their cultural history and psychology. Freud argues that the "traumatic experience" of Jews can be viewed as a historical trauma arising from the return of the repressed and the delayed effects of the original ancient trauma Freud 1939: 65.

individual's psyche. Thus, trauma is defined as a loss of remembering and an event within the unconscious and insensible that causes a split of the ego or fragmentation. As well, Freud, throughout his studies, explored the gap or dissociation in the psyche as a result of the notion of trauma. According to Freud, the human mind as an organism contains an inner and outer surface. The outer surface has a protective shield against harmful external stimulation. However, the external stimulation splits the barrier and enters the inner psyche without the appropriate internal defense (Strachey 40).

4- Memory Narratives

It is generally assumed that a sense of self and identity is found through narratives and experiences that may have an impact on an individual's memory. Early studies of the phenomena of reconstruction and the dissociation of the past through narrative memory put them in one designed pattern from the remembering site to the traumatic redesigned memory to further support the relationship between the memory narrative and trauma. However, the circumstances in which narratives were written were mainly an atmosphere that performed such narratives. For this, Jacobs reports that "This is my historical life - my singular, special example that is personal, but that also represents the race." Two: "I write this text to persuade other people - you, the reader, who is probably not black - that we are human beings worthy of God's grace and the immediate abandonment of slavery." (Jacobs 1861).

This is to clarify how memory narrative reconstitutes the past of an individual's life in a variety of ways and that the main character in his traumatic experience is to be exposed to several shapes of memory. The person who has lived through such psychological effects reconstructs and reconstructs his/her past through the means of a combination of narrative memory and dissociation. Furthermore, memory is a system that organizes devices of the mind, which combines all aspects of experience and past memories and automatically merges them into flexible meaning schemes that form the whole memory process. (Craparo, et al 248).

Conclusion

To conclude, trauma theory remains a particular core concept in the memory narrative that designs a style of literature to give a representation of an oppressed community. As well, literature is for recording human experience and life and it gives a wild and convincing illustration of how African-Americans were struggling and fighting for self-determination and for their freedom. She gives a whole demonstration of cultural trauma, and identity in *Beloved*. Scholars have confirmed the huge influence of traumatic memory through various studies about the emotional and psychological damages caused by a past traumatic event that is engrained and deeply-seated in an individual's mind and memory.

Chapter Two

Questioning Trauma and Memory in Toni Morrison's Beloved

Introduction

Toni Morrison is an American writer who deals with the subject of slavery and trauma in her novels. Her famous novel, *Beloved*, discusses the destructive legacy of slavery as it chronicles the life of Africans who used to be under the psychological legacies of slavery. Morrison wrote *Beloved* in order to comprehend the details of slavery and to reconnect herself with her black African ancestors. Also, another reason for Morrison to write a novel about enslavement is to complete the traditional slave narratives through the traumatic experience in the novel and through Sethe's background, as she symbolizes a whole framework of a psychoanalytical trauma and memory, highlighting the historical collective trauma and memory.

Furthermore, *Beloved* examines the eradicating patrimony of slavery, as it records the life of a black woman from the Pre-Civil War period as an enslaved woman to her life in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1873. *Beloved* serves as a savior that defends the voiceless and weakest discriminated minority; especially, to support enslaved men and women. Particularly, to help African American women to have their legal civil rights, and to be considered as citizens.

The novel is purely a historical account on account that it reveals the slave trade experience of African- Americans, a journey that was made of sacrifice and hardships that blacks endured to gain their freedom. As long as *Beloved* is devoted to sixty million black people, who died before being in the service of the slaveholders during the slave trade, in

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which Morrison deals with the dimension of collective trauma and memory healing (McKeon 2012).

However, the story illustrates dehumanization, discrimination and traumatic legacies for African-Americans as a group and individuals. It engraves a traumatized collective memory in to the actual present and future; accordingly, Morrison accords that African Americans carried a destructed memory through a series of sequential events of enslavement and discrimination both individually and as a minority. The psychological impacts of trauma were widely noticeable through the transitional influence on their families as well, especially former slaves who became free men and revolutionists to call for human rights, freedom.

1- Memory and the Conundrums of the Past in Morrison's *Beloved*

Toni Morrison deals with the traumatic experiences of slavery and its repercussions. A memory that is full of harmful clichés about the dehumanization of African Americans, which strongly affect them physically and psychologically. *Beloved* is a real story of Margret Garner, in which Sethe plays the major role where she tries to kill all her children and then herself. Sethe really wants to kill them rather than making them try out slavery that she had been through and she wants to protect them from being dehumanized and traumatized, Morrison highlights Sethe's intensions through this passage "a young mother who, having escaped slavery, was arrested for killing one of her children (and trying to kill the others) rather than let them be returned to the owner's plantation" (Morrison 7).

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Furthermore, Morrison gives voices to her characters, emphasizing blacks' lives, emotions, and experiences to make them visible and to contextualize blacks' dehumanization and anguish that were kept invisible, silenced, and forgotten in the past. It is estimated that *Beloved* displays "the tension between forgetting and remembering past experiences through unspoken memory; Morrison demonstrates the multiple feelings suppressed by the dominant discourse of America slavery's history" (Sadehi 136). The novel exposes the unrecorded slaves' experiences, especially how they survive with their past after many years of the abolishment of slavery and the Civil Rights Movement¹. As well, to heal their traumatized and deconstructed identity that was founded by distressing memories. In this context, Morrison affirms that characters are influenced by past experience as one structure:

“Sethe: "It's so hard for me to believe in [time]. Some things go. Pass on. Some things just stay. I used to think it was my rememory. . . . 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.”

Denver: “If it's still there, waiting, that must mean that nothing ever dies.”

Sethe: “Nothing ever does.”(Morrison 36)

¹ 1950s- 1960s: A struggle for social justice for black Americans to gain equal legal social rights, it had officially abolished slavery but not discrimination against African Americans, and they continue to encounter racism.

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Thus, the ex-slaves have to confront and face their haunting past by reconciling with all these repressed memories, healing their remembrance and restoring their identity.

Therefore, all the slave trade experiences that African Americans have passed through on account of slavery affected them drastically, even after its abolishment and gaining their rights. Thus, Nancy Peterson had examined in her book *Beloved Character Studies* in which she discussed the status of characters in the novel and how they decided to escape the persecution, she states “They have just managed to escape from the fact of slavery but have not been released from its effects” (Peterson25). He neither confirms the fact that they are physically and nationally free nor psychologically free. Yet, the brutal psychological effects of slavery on individuals’ memory are depicted in *Beloved*, where trauma is widely prevalent. As a combined work, Morrison and most of the characters are subjected to violence, discrimination, traumatization, and dehumanization. This idea is portrayed along the following lines:

In trying to make the slave experience intimate, I hoped the sense of things being both under control and out of control would be persuasive throughout; that the order and quietude of everyday life would be violently disrupted by the chaos of the needy dead; that the herculean effort to forget would be threatened by memory desperate to stay alive (Morrison8).

The characters’ psyche demonstrates the impact of trauma on individual’s memory, and it results in an influential violent shock and trauma that affect the whole physical and emotional structure of an individual. In particular, Paul D was a former slave and one of the main characters who are haunted by his horrific past and memories. A schoolteacher sent him to prison in Georgia, where he succeeded to escape and get freedom; however, he never escaped the cumulative experience of his past which left him

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traumatized, as it is illustrated in this passage “ he has an iron bit in his mouth chained with forty-five other slaves almost drowned in muddy water” (Morrison 10). Paul D has declared to Sethe that he would never “be Paul D again living or dead, schoolteacher changed me. I was something else.” (39). Therefore, the haunted past in *Beloved* is engraved in the characters’ memory, and continue to influence their present excessively. As the novel shifts between the present narration and memory of enslavement experience, it combines the similarities of each phase that is the way to any act that makes a trauma related to remembrance, to form a correlative chain made of past and present, as well as, memory and trauma.

2-Collective Remembrance and the Power of Memory in *Beloved*

Beloved re-conceptualizes American history by investigating slavery as a destructive phenomenon by reconstructing the phenomenon and its psychological effects through the memory of the characters. Among them, Sethe who is the female protagonist, such reconstruction event and its effects serves in two sides: firstly, it describes the psychological and emotional effects of a historical phenomenon on the “sixty million and more”, is the number of Africans who died on the way to slave trade, who marked the history of enslaved Africans. Morrison gave a voice through her writing to those sixty million and more using the characters including Sethe, Paul D, Denver¹, Stamp Paid and Schoolteacher (the primary discipliner of the slaves in Sweet Home, he is the most violent and abusive to the slaves). And that makes them representative of an entire category of people who had experienced the lumpiness of enslavement in a particular historical epoch

¹ - Denver: among the main characters of the novel, she is Sethe’s daughter.

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of the slave trade. Secondly, it draws parallels and similarities between individual with a traumatic experience and historical processes of psychological healing.

Moreover, the former slave becomes a sign that illustrates the capacity of fictionalized narratives of a particular historical phenomenon to fulfill the gaps in historical narratives, by uncovering how communities and individuals were subjected to slavery, and the implication of this psychological effect, Morrison explains how the whole African society had lived in same context as whole influenced community:

Four families of slaves who had all been together for a hundred years: great-grands, grands, mothers, fathers, aunts, uncles, cousins, children. Half white, part white, all black, mixed with Indian. He watched them with awe and envy, and each time he discovered large families of black people he made them identify over and over who each was, what relation, who, in fact, belonged to who. (202)

In this claim, Marilyn Sanders Mobley argues that Morrison uses memory to explore and exhibit the emotional and psychological effects of slavery on the psyche of black people. To further explanation of what has already been described in the slave narratives that are an account of life of a fugitives or former slaves, written or orally related to the slave personal experience; and how it could be widely expanded by fictionalizing the slave experience that Morrison makes it all the more vivid and eternal memory that is accessible to readers. Additionally, Morrison gives a wild view about how characters managed to survive and to heal through the collective remembrance in *Beloved* in this context Morrison states “to belong to a community of other free Negroes—to love and be loved by them, to counsel

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and be counseled, protect and be protected, feed and be fed—and then to have that community step back and hold itself at a distance—well” (165). Sethe represents the nobleness of the role she plays as a mother, woman of her society and the pride of her race that she belongs African American enslaved community; she left her country and built a new life as an American citizen. Yet, she had always the pretention of being freed, having her own job and to cooperate in society; she escaped slavery after a journey full of hardship and sacrifice, she succeeded in freeing herself after the commitment that was always engraved in her memory and her family. As well as Morrison states “young mother who, having escaped slavery, was arrested for killing one of her children (and trying to kill the others) rather than let them be returned to the owner’s plantation. She became a cause célèbre in the fight against the Fugitive Slave laws” (7).

Her courage and strength made her a woman of her black community and she caught the attention of abolitionists and newspapers. Thus, she always carried the haunted past and traumatized memory that Morrison wants her readers to understand. In this regards, she admits “I wanted the reader to be kidnapped, thrown ruthlessly into an alien environment as the first step into a shared experience with the book’s population—just as the characters were snatched from one place to another, from any place to any other, without preparation or defense” (8). Sethe shares the impacts in her life that past had left for her children, their three left children witnessed that fear from living the same terror, about this her little girl states “All the time, I’m afraid the thing that happened that made it all right for my mother to kill my sister could happen again. I don’t know what it is, I don’t know who it is, but maybe there is something else terrible enough to make her do it again” (191). Therefore, Morrison claims that the past is reincarnated or at least the painful memories are recalled and remembered.

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Moreover, Paul D is a strong character that had been introduced to represent the way how enslaved people within a community share the psychological and physical effects of enslavement. Yet, they managed to survive and to heal their collective traumatic memory through cooperating in the relief of the attached lineage. However Paul D has experienced the absolute frightful slave experience by the schoolteacher who tortured him roughly and destroyed his African identity with full dehumanization, humiliation, and segregation Morrison illustrates “For years Paul D believed schoolteacher broke into children what Garner had raised into men. And it was that that made them run off. Now, plagued by the contents of his tobacco tin, he wondered how much difference there really was between before schoolteacher and after” (204). Though, he was incapable to feel home anywhere until he met Sethe’s family and decided to restart his new life again with her. Despite their painful memories that are engraved on their inner worlds, they tried to create good feelings and remain positive. Astonishingly, they had always the fear of being rejected that is deeply concomitant with haunted past and traumatic present “Don’t love her too much. Don’t. Maybe it’s still in her the thing that makes it all right to kill her children. I have to tell her. I have to protect her” (192). As a former slave, he kept remembering and healing his slave injuries that stay hidden, but Sethe and past events forced him always to face his unforgettable past. Also Paul D fought to collaborate in the healing of the surroundings’ memory and support them through overtaking enslavement impacts together.

As well as, enslavement had left destructive identity of African Americans, Denver one of the main characters that represent resistance to community to escape the haunting past to a free life, but she always found the ghost that unable her to be separated from the haunted past, she states “BELOVED is my sister. I swallowed her blood right along with my

mother's milk" (191). Denver had an imaginable link to her family, especially her mother as she strongly believed that her mother's sin was kind of motherhood violent tender "I love my mother but I know she killed one of her own daughters, and tender as she is with me, I'm scared of her because of it. She missed killing my brothers and they knew it" (191). Accordingly, Denver had never been able to survive and heal through the collective remembrance; however, she introduced a performance of an incomparable degree of trauma within the characters, nevertheless, they do not comprise the same degree of psychological damage. She gives an inspiration that Sethe's family had to cooperate in the healing process of memory, but with an illustration that trauma destroyed character's feelings but they tried to keep same willingness to freedom.

3-Slave Trade and its Legacies on Characters

It is common nowadays for writers to explore the psyche of community through language and aspects that form individual's personality, as if they were interchangeable as it is highlighted in this passage "To render enslavement as a personal experience, language must get out of the way"(8). Then slaves had been Americanized and adapted all extraneous aspects to slave experiences such as language, religion, way of clothing and lifestyle. Many of African-American writers such as W. E. B Du Bois, Fredrick Douglass and Toni Morrison argue that the slave trade has impacts on collective psyche rather than the individual psyche (Freud 67-108). While it might be argued that individual's psyche cannot be directly applied or functioned to a consideration of a group or community experience, which is how it is illustrated in the same passage

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In trying to make the slave experience intimate, I hoped the sense of things being both under control and out of control would be persuasive throughout; that the order and quietude of everyday life would be violently disrupted by the chaos of the needy dead; that the herculean effort to forget could be threatened by memory desperate to stay alive (Morrison8).

Yet, impacts of slavery affect the mind function and psyche, also act of remembrance may not be utilized for preliminary formulations of memory caused by an event of trauma. Thus, more elaborated psychological studies may be established on the impact of slave trade, and how it changes the individual's emotional and mental estate.

However, on a closer view, for an experience to be considered collective implies that there is a degree of sameness in the subjectivity of that experience of the past. Accordingly, traumatic slave experience of a community encompasses elements of both collective and shared trauma and personal trauma. It might be distinguished that the way how a community shares the experience of trauma is different than how they had been responded to its impacts, Morrison states "and Sethe herself too complicated. When she got out of jail and made no gesture toward anybody, and lived as though she were alone, Ella junked her and wouldn't give her the time of day" (234). Furthermore, the geographical commonality which slavery invaded to cause a historical traumatic experience based on individual's identity, race, ethnicity and culture, hence, this gives a full aspects to complete the notion of cultural trauma.

One of the important things that could happen during a crushing traumatic experience to an individual is the disassociation of the emotional response associated with the traumatic event, which is considered as another kind of psychological effect of crushing traumatic experience. At the very beginning of occurrence, the individual's mind feels

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narcotized, so it gives that disassociation of the emotional response. Accordingly, it is a response to a past experience, by a reaction emotionlessness and voicelessness; however, the situation effects and hurts human's memory and enable him to create any meaningful and emotional interactions.

However, some of the main emotions of the traumatized mind, both collective and individual, seek to isolate and avoid the feeling of shame and humiliation. Therefore, *Beloved* examines how characters attempted to escape and resist these feelings of shame. It is stated

Just as Denver discovered and relied on the delightful effect sweet things had on Beloved, Sethe learned the profound satisfaction Beloved got from storytelling. It amazed Sethe (as much as it pleased Beloved) because every mention of her past life hurt. Everything in it was painful or lost. She and Baby Suggs had agreed without saying so that it was unspeakable (Morrison61)

These emotions seem to be an integral effect of a traumatic event. It is understandable that we are prone to effective feelings such as shame and humiliation when we are traumatized, because hard experiences overwhelm our deepest vulnerability. That is the analysis of the Healing of the Collective Trauma and the Emotional Disassociation by EugenKoh in Melbourne School of Population and Global Health.

4- Collective Trauma and Remembrance

African Americans as a discriminated community have shared nearly the same trauma degree in the experience of slavery and racism. However, in some instances, they have audaciously confronted their intolerably painful past and moved out of their darkest places. Although they have engaged in this work to heal as individuals from their personal losses and grief, many of them have also found the need to heal collectively from their cultural trauma, and the trauma of violence.

Additionally, collective cultural trauma comprises a set of dimensions: the personal trauma of the individuals that make up the collective form. Yet, the slave trade that was experienced by African community results in collective impacts and as a collective experience that is composed of individuals, an event, and psychological and physical damage on whole community, as well as, on individuals, thus these are the elements with form a traumatic collective experience that harms individuals.

Each of the later dimensions may be involved as a specific focus that helps to deal with the traumatic collective experience, and to maintain different approaches to healing on individuals and whole community. The process of healing is mandatory in a slave trade trauma. Usually, the notion of healing together in community who experienced historical trauma in consisted of some aspects of the collectivity and the individuality. Again Morrison states “Holding hands, bracing each other, they swirled over the ice. Beloved wore the pair” (162).

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Morrison tackles the collective memory in her writing to introduce cultural trauma and history of her race, meanwhile, she might not be thinking about the healing of the collective memory of individual's memory. However, when the focus is on healing as a collective, it is probable that there will be also a recovery, to different degrees, from collective and individual traumas that are resulted from slavery. Since African Americans have experienced slavery as a traumatic experience that affected their mental and emotional lives, the issue of enslavement experience is on the healing of collective trauma and that of the whole community.

Conclusion

Ultimately, Morrison deals with different views of traumatic events that changed the track of the history of blacks and mark a legacy that persists not only in individuals' lives and their descendants, but also in the geopolitical instability around the world today. Thus, dehumanization and slavery's impacts are in some sorts more complex than wars. They are rarely isolated elements which influence the memory; to form feelings of antagonism and hatred. They involve not only systematic violent reaction to the past but also the distortion and destruction of social connections that result in the cultural trauma. Beyond the humiliation and dehumanization are the more insidious traumatic collective experiences and they are difficult to be described, thus Morrison defines the impacts of slavery, and examines the psychological effects through the main characters who share the same trauma degree and collective remembrance.

Chapter Three

The Relationship between Trauma and Memory in Beloved

Introduction

As what has been already established in literary studies, cultural trauma is first and foremost a scientific and empirical concept that provides a new casual and relevant link between previously separate events, structures, perceptions, and impacts caused to individuals by traumatic experiences such as the slave trade that is , certainly, one of the traumatic experiences . But this new concept of cultural trauma also examines the field that is related to the psychology of individuals. Though, the construction of cultural trauma includes geographical position, social groups and culture. This concept exhibits the relationship between the elements of cultural trauma and its impacts in order to achieve a complete analysis of these impacts characters.

The objective of this chapter is to highlight the relationship between the slave trade and cultural trauma, in reference to Morrison's *Beloved*. Moreover, Morrison explores the notion of cultural trauma in the formation of African American identity from the Civil War to the Civil Rights Movement. Trauma, in the general context of dehumanization and fragmentation, is directly linked to slavery, not only as an institution or even a temporary experience but as a collective memory and a form of remembrance that establishes the identity of a people.

1- The Manifestation of Trauma in Toni Morrison *Beloved*

In many circumstances, different degrees and gradual forms of collective trauma are both historical and continuing; it does not make sense to deal with the notion of healing in former situations due to slave trade experience but rather of recovering wounds from a historical event. There must also be efforts to reveal and bring to an end a process of continuing trauma and injury to African Americans. Yet, it is complicated by a lack of convention over the clear definition of trauma and variability as to how the knowledge about individual psychology can be applied to collective aspects.

The psychoanalytical field is set on two shapes of cultural trauma. The first one focuses on trauma as a constant and continuous process, and the second considers the traumatic experience in regard to determining the events. However, psychoanalysis focuses on how the human mind responds to what it experiences, in particular to threats, menace and psychically painful experiences. In the same case, Sethe deliberately expresses her desire to kill her four children to prevent them from experiencing enslavement and dehumanization. The attempt to kill the baby is a response to what Sethe has experienced, with a system of preventive and protective mechanisms, the most central of which, according to Freud, is repression (Strachey 146-158). Hence, it presents trauma in regard to specific external events that become embedded in the psyche and within memory. The mind reacts to these external traumatic events by repression and employs a host of defenses to

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keep the repressed from consciousness.¹ Which is an unconscious reaction to a current trauma might be intensive more than a reaction to a past event.

In addition, the second approach that is the behavioral focuses on the operation and process of the mind itself, how it perceives, reacts and what influences its capacity to think. It considers trauma in terms of its overall impact on the development and functioning of the mind. Following this train of thought, it is claimed: “Cultural trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways”. (Alexander 1). The same process leads Sethe to such commitment which is a reaction and violent response to trauma, by which she influences her family “I love my mother but I know she killed one of her own daughters, and tender as she is with me, I’m scared of her because of it. She missed killing my brothers and they knew it” (Morrison 191).

Moreover, the sociological approach highlights and defines the social processes by which a shared experience is collectively recognized as traumatic and how its impact is continually mediated through collective memory and representation. Thus, African Americans have been through the slave trade as a traumatic collective experience. Following this claim, Morrison introduces the continuous process of trauma, which is recorded in the history of Africans as a collective trauma, as well as an individual’s trauma owing to the haunting past and traumatized memory. In the selected novel, each character symbolizes the way how a collective group manifests in building such historical marked event. For further illustration Denver states “I need to know what that thing might be, but I

¹ - In the Vol14 of The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychology Works of Sigmund Freud by James Strachey

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don't want to. Whatever it is, it comes from outside this house, outside the yard, and it can come right on in the yard if it wants to" (191). Yet, the fear of experiencing slave trauma clearly appears in the novel through the portrayal of those characters that witnessed the abolishment of slavery and gained their social rights. Progressively, they have tried to overcome the feeling of fear, as openly stated in this short passage: "The singing women recognized Sethe at once and surprised themselves by their absence of fear when they saw what stood next to her" (239)

As a result, Morrison provides a complete history of what African Americans had gone through in order to gain a brief sense of freedom; through many years of discrimination and humiliation, they succeeded in having such feelings of love and joy with the full certainty that they were finally freed as humans with rights and feelings, in contrast to who they used to live as subjected people. "I went back to the house to examine this apprehension, even panic. I knew what fear felt like; this was different. Then it slapped me: I was happy, free in a way I had never been, ever. It was the oddest sensation. Not ecstasy, not satisfaction, not a surfeit of pleasure or accomplishment. It was a purer delight, a rogue anticipation with certainty" (6).

2-Relationship between Cultural Trauma and Collective Memory

When members of a community are subjected to dehumanization and racial discrimination, which stamps traces and make a horrendous and traumatic memory. That is symbolized by permanent effects on their consciousness, and racial significance of their identity by which individuals attribute to construct a community with a conceptualization of self-determination (Piepmeyer2007), and the scientific concept of cultural trauma exhibits an emerging domain of social responsibility and political action as well. *Beloved* is a novel that can easily be read as an instance of ‘trauma fiction’ in which the author is trying to rescue the neglected previous historical periods and give voice to generally repressed or forgotten stories of African slaves from the perspective of unmentionable in the history of America. Yet, the intertextual reference to Sethe, the mother that is haunted by her dead beloved baby daughter, is an inescapable fact, considering that it points to a cultural trauma that deeply rooted in slavery experience of Africans. It is estimated

Collective traumas are reflections of neither individual suffering nor of actual events, but symbolic renderings that reconstruct and imagine them. Rather than descriptions of what is, they are arguments about what must have been and what should be. From the perspective of cultural sociology, the contrast between factual and fictional statements is not an Archimedean point. The truth of a cultural script depends not on its empirical accuracy, but on its symbolic power and enactment. Yet, while trauma process is not rational, it is intentional. It is people who make traumatic meanings, in circumstances they have not themselves created and which they do not fully comprehend (Alexander 4).

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Cultural trauma is explored rather than individual trauma. Additionally, it is concerned not only with the psychological impact of trauma but the social significance that historical events come to have for communities as collective cultural trauma. Yet, scholars identify a predominant theory of trauma, which emphasizes certain extreme events and experiences that destroy an individual or collective well-being and emotions. This theory is distinguished between Enlightenment and psychoanalytic strands. However, the former emphasizes trauma as a rational response to extreme events that represent the traumatic experience of African Americans' history; the latter, quite the reverse, articulates the psychological defense mechanisms that are provoked by the event to form the notion of the cultural trauma that is linked to collective identity.

Besides, African Americans live with traumatized emotional hardships and suffering for a long time, maybe forever, because it is difficult to cure the wound of the mind. At this point, the wound affects their minds and psyches and then transforms the issue from personal to collective because the wound of the mind can be shared. The collective trauma is talked about in the novel along these lines:

was it there because the person had been killed, or maimed or caught or burned or jailed or whipped or evicted or stomped or raped or cheated, since that could hardly qualify as news in a newspaper. It would have to be something out of the ordinary--something whitepeople would find interesting, truly different, worth a few minutes of teeth sucking if not gasps. And it must have been hard to find news about Negroes worth the breath catch of a white citizen of Cincinnati. (Morrison148)

Yet, trauma narratives come after the emergence of the collective overwhelming events in order to exhibit the unknown pain of African Americans as a way of demonstrating the facts when healing the wounds and emotional impacts. However, the repetitive wound, which occurs later shows a mortal impact of trauma on the survivors, as it demonstrates and the futile process of recovery discourse, and that is called Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (William H, et al 236–8). Furthermore, destiny allowed the characters to have a new chance in living healthy and out of the control of slaveholders. Even so, they cannot escape their past or escape the effects or the blemishes of slavery on their new lives, as demonstrated in the following words: “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” (Morrison40).

Nevertheless, trauma has consumed the characters’ emotions, hope, and self-reveal; it has left their bodies hollow and offers few chances to cope with their lives. *Beloved’s* cravings intimidate the social values of collectivity and self-sacrifice. Moreover, Morrison explicitly links *Beloved’s* to for sugar in her narrative, which is strongly associated with the painful experience of the slave trade as stated “it was as though sweet things were what she was born for” (66). In particular, she uses sugar as a symbol of the values of slavery that the former slaves have been exposed to. Accordingly, the slave trade survivors, who have witnessed several shapes of trauma, are a model of the cultural trauma that comprises the collective identity of these individuals; thus, recording the history of trauma that is tied to the slave trade experience in the United States.

Accordingly, cultural trauma and collective memory are interconnected concepts. As illustrated above, not all aspects of a collective trauma are cultural trauma and not all aspects of cultural trauma are experienced collectively as what we have seen in the slave trade experience. For instance, a migrant or a refugee may experience cultural trauma in his or her new host country. Yet, in this situation, it might be an individual/personal experience that one shares with his family or others with a similar sense of cultural identity and collective memory. "Nothing better than that to start the day's serious work of beating back the past" (74). As a result, the interconnection between past and present would be visible throughout African American history in perpetuity.

3-The Physical Embodiment of Psychological Trauma

Toni Morrison's *Beloved* won the Nobel Prize in literature about the history of African Americans in the United States. The embodiment of the traumatized selves of Sethe and Denver is embedded in a loss of self and identity, generational violence, and oral fixation that Mark Noe tackled, in his article published online entitled, "The Oral Fixation: The Oral/Textual Binary from *Phaedrus* to Freshman Composition" that illustrates how loss of identity destroys a collectivity's principles. In which more value more value and importance was given to the oral contexts rather than contextual ones (Noe 349-364). Thus, the trauma of Sethe's family is contemporary and generational that leaves a violent impact on her children and family subsequently. *Beloved* certifies a literary and social role of exhibition and examination to the several impacts of slavery and its psychological effects

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on individuals, as the embodiment of trauma that enables Sethe and Denver to overcome their past to cope with their current lives.

Morrison deals with the darkest elements of life through the story of an escaped slave, based on the murder of her innocent baby girl. The obscure mother-daughter relationship in *Beloved* displays the deconstructing effect of slavery upon the human mind. Morrison thoroughly presents this phenomenon by awarding the psychological and emotional effects of slavery within a physical embodiment, which gives an image of how the unstable psyche of an individual affects the body. Beloved enters an illusory level of trauma in the protagonists' lives through the physical manifestation of the divided identities of Sethe and Denver, demonstrating the twisted relationship between mother and daughter in the novel "Like the fruit of common flowers. The dress and her mother together looked like two friendly grown-up women—one (the dress) helping out the other. And the magic of her birth, its miracle in fact, testified to that friendliness, as did her own name "(Morrison 34). Nevertheless, Beloved is the love that joins Sethe's family, and empowers the senses of motherhood between Sethe and his dead daughter. As well as, Beloved beautifies the feeling of sisterhood between Denver and her beloved sister.

Furthermore, Sethe meets her husband and falls in love, however, this does not protect her from sexual assault or psychological trauma. Yet, it is another kind of dehumanization of the black female that is engraved in her traumatized memory; she escapes slavery only to be hunted down by her former slave-owner. Sethe describes her situation as follows: "Beloved asleep on my back. Denver sleeps in my stomach. Felt like I was split in two" (238). Particularly, motherhood only forces Sethe into further psychological instability and trauma. While Sethe's children give her the motivation to

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escape slavery to freedom and be self-determined, they are also the basic which leads Sethe to decline into dissociation and fragmentation. In this context, Morrison points out:

Daily life took as much as she had. The future was sunset; the past something to leave behind. And if it didn't stay behind, well, you might have to stomp it out. Slave life; freed life—every day was a test and a trial. Nothing could be counted on in a world where even when you were a solution you were a problem (234).

Sethe explicitly approves and acknowledges the huge effects on her children; the exceptional physical and emotional combination of motherhood stands out among other human relations.

Notwithstanding, existing research that deals with trauma theory argues that the interconnection between motherhood and slavery is part of what pushes Sethe into insanity and mental disorder under the menace and fear due to the agonizing legacies of the slavery . Moreover, this psychological effect is intensified by Sethe's undeniable concentration on her dedication to her children. Readers can easily notice that Sethe's maternal approaches to responsibilities acted with a passion that is almost too violent. Despite her frequent use of violence, Sethe's motherhood instinct is the only strength that keeps strong emotionally and physically. Nevertheless, the dichotomy of her fear and sense of the menace of slavery and her love for her children burdens her life throughout the entire novel.

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Emerging from the horrors and menace of slavery, Sethe lives a kind of trauma-based hysteria according to the analysis of Sigmund Freud in his studies on Hysteria entitled *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. Freud, in this production, explains that the original event that caused psychological pain is not traumatic in it but only in its remembrance since the primary event keeps hurting. Thus, the process of healing is decisiveto understand the effects of the past and gain a sort of freedom from its symptom, causing psychological and physical reflections.

Eventually, the conflict between love, menace, and fear drives Sethe to her breaking point both emotionally and psychologically. This classification introduces Sethe's experiences to an entirely new level of trauma, suggesting the prospect of psychological impacts as severe as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD). This provides a clinical rationale for Sethe's irrational actions and behavior. Furthermore, putting Sethe's story under the title of emotional torture legitimizes the detailed analysis of her trauma over time. Sethe's slave experience, including rape, whipping, and torture, predictably results in psychological and emotional trauma, adding to the collective trauma.

4-The Motifs of Historical Recovery Through Memory

In slavery, black people are traumatized by all kinds of atrocities; they have been brought from Africa and broken up with their families and ancestors, then exchanged, dehumanized, and sold to slaveholders in America as property. All these historical traumatic experiences are represented in *Beloved* wherein Sethe and other characters are former slaves, who have undergone the impacts of slavery. Morrison depicts their traumatic historical experiences throughout in her novel in this fashion:

Her puberty was spent in a house where she was shared by father and son, whom she called ‘the lowest yet’. It was ‘the lowest yet’ who gave her a disgust for sex and against whom she measured all atrocities. A killing, a kidnap, a rape—whatever, she listened and nodded. Nothing compared to ‘the lowest yet’ ” (Morrison 234)

Surprisingly, memory is an indication of hope in Morrison’s works and writings. Her novels usually begin with a person, a scene, or a flashback in Morrison’s memories. Yet, Morrison reports that she strongly depends on memory in her writings for two reasons. Firstly, she cannot trust “the literature and the sociology of other people to help me, I [Morrison] know the truth of my own cultural sources” (386). Second, because memory is the source of her imagination.

Coming to the motifs of historical recovery through memory, Sigmund Freud formulates that the process of engaging with a historical traumatic memory not only infers connecting with the past of a community but also resembles the collective memory of a

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given group. Yet, collective resistance to remembering a painful time is personified through all the traumatized characters, which transcends the boundaries of personal tragedy and suffering to include the tragedies of all people. Following this claim, Morrison draws parallels between historical traumatic memory and the psychological process of recovery.

If a house burns down, it's gone, but the place – the picture of it – stays, and not just in my re-memory, but out there, in the world. What I remember is a picture floating around out there outside my head. I mean, even if I don't think it, even if I die, the picture of what I did, or knew, or saw is still out there. Right in the place where it happened (40)

The fewlined cited above do not denote Sethe's desire to refer to a personal memory only, but she points to the healing process that is powerfully entrenched in the slave trade. The obsession with memory in Morrison's work is noticeable due to the nexus between the painful memories of the past and present as suggested in the following words “ every mention of her past life hurt” (34)

Furthermore, Morrison, through the motif of recurrence of memory, challenges the notion that the end of the institution of slavery brings about real freedom from it. She emphasizes the important value of engaging in a type of collective remembering to ameliorate and improve the psychological rest of a painful historical collective traumatic experience. As long as, the past, for Morrison, is not a fragmented entity, it is important to point to its prominence using the trope of memory, with the objective of arriving at a fuller picture of what happened in a specific historical event. This, however, can act as the first step of the historical recovery.

Conclusion

Beloved explores the emotional, physical, and spiritual destruction wrought by the slave trade. This destruction, however, continues to haunt the characters, who are former slaves even in even after the abolishment of slavery. The most serious and critical of slavery's effects is its negative impact on the former slaves' senses of self. African Americans were treated as subhuman and were traded and sold. Consequently, the inability to believe in their own existence as humans with legal social rights pushes them to react and respond to the fear and menace with hysteria and psychological issues. This idea is portrayed through Sethe's guilt in her tragic constant affection in the novel. Even though the characters are living with a traumatic historical slave experience, collective memory is an instinctual process that occurs over time.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

A journey towards self-definition brings together a selection of literary writings, articles, and novels by African American authors. After all, African literature and writings became preserved by novelists who use other languages in order to convey the message they want to the world. Many African American authors dedicated their writings to the immense phenomenon that their race had experienced in the course of slavery. Some of them have experienced it directly, others indirectly through the continuous traumatic heritage. Hence, the two main topics in African American literature are slavery and the life of African Americans, examined through the theory of trauma and its different aspects that give the origins of their trauma and the impacts resulting in a field of historical-cultural trauma. Slavery was an oppressing system that was against the black race and African identity. Yet, brutality and oppression toward slaves through dehumanization and fragmentation, marked African Americans' lives after slavery, in terms of segregation and a search for self-determination and identity in a country where they were brought to and sold to slaveholders. Thus African Americans had no legal social rights or were considered humans.

In *Beloved*, Toni Morrison employs remembrance and memory as a literary technique that enables her to embody the personification of cultural trauma and memory in her writing. She describes the poor living conditions of slaves. Additionally, Morrison has provided the motive and vocabulary for those presentations to claim that the past is never past, but always present. Actually, Morrison's style of writing is described as the closest thing to a prevalent method in African American literary criticism in order to read how the past haunts the present, by which she gives a voice to unspeakable literature and highlights

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the valuable literary heritage, especially to record African American history. Though an enormous structure and a framework of scholarship have been built up around Morrison, surprisingly little has been written about *Beloved*. The supervision is odd since putting the volume of both trauma and memory together not only initiated Morrison's theorization of the Africans' history through examining the impacts on a community and then on individuals but also separately introduced her to the source material for her best-known work in trauma and memory.

Furthermore, Morrison depicts the journey of African Americans to self-determination and freedom through the characters that represent the different parts of slave trade narratives. The main representation of the characters of the novel reflects the psychological repression of their past which is filled with traumas of slavery, where each character has been dehumanized and suffered in his or her own way. Nevertheless, collective trauma can be traced through one character's life story. Morrison's main character, Sethe has demonstrated the suffering and the pain through slave experience for herself and for her community. She embodied the response to segregation and dehumanization by violent actions, which are also a response to the psychological and physical impacts she has been through. Interestingly, Morrison leads her readers to observe the destructive pieces of memories that these characters have repressed for a long time, besides the struggle they have confronted in order to have freedom and a black identity.

Additionally, African Americans coexist with the fact of having fragmented and destructed identities that are a result of their traumatic memories. It is described as a 'double consciousness' that the writer Sandra Adell in her book *Double-Consciousness/ Double Bind: Theoretical Issues in Twentieth Century Black Literature*, states that "the authority of

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Western literary tradition, but invested with what Du Bois calls a double consciousness, and which Wright, reiterating Du Bois, refers to as a double vision and an organically born racial identity that stems from one's being a product of Western civilization, or more particularly, the American South "where do I onto this African-American world" (Adell 54), in which African American individuals struggle with self-determination that is to accept blackness or to behave as whites, exactly how Sethe reacts to her slave owner's oppression and the way how she changed her lifestyle and being part of American society. This dilemma of identity is included in the process of cultural trauma in memory narrative. In this context, Jeffrey Alexander in *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* argues that:

Cultural trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways (1).

Thus, collective traumatic events are shared moral responsibilities in which former slaves share the same psychological, physical, and emotional damage of traumatic memories that haunt their present lives.

Overall, *Beloved* is a literary masterpiece that is challenging in the sense that it depicts the total image of dehumanization and segregation in the unrecorded history of African Americans. Besides, the novel is a part of American history that is characterized by the emancipation of African culture and black identity. As well, the novel examines the huge impact of slavery on black individuals and the complexity of collective and individual healing of memory.

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Appendix

Appendix A

Toni Morrison's Biography



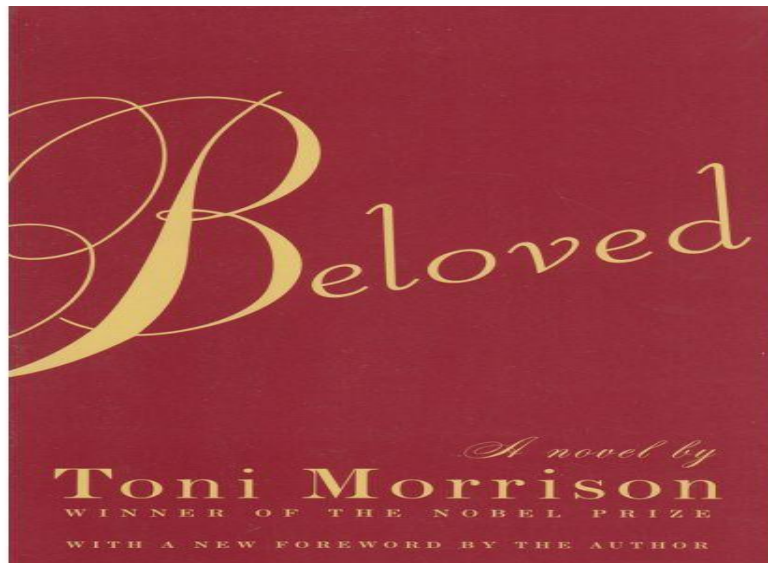
Toni Morrison, original name Chloe Anthony Wofford, born on February 18, 1931, Ohio, United States. Morrison is American writer noted for her examination of black experience, in particular, black female experience within the black community. She received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1993. Morrison grew up in the American Midwest in a family that apposed an intense love and appreciation for black culture.

Morrison's first book *The Bluest Eye* (1970) is a novel of initiation concerning a victimized adolescent black girl. In 1973, she published her second novel *Sula*. *Song of Solomon* (1977) is told about male narrator. Her famous novel *Beloved* (1987) won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction, that is based on the experience of the journey of Slave Trade, at the point of recapture of

slave trauma. The novel embedded the feeling of motherhood of a mother who wants to protect her children, and a society that wants to reconstruct their identity out of slavery.

Appendix B

Plot Summary of Toni Morrison's *Beloved*



The novel is about the story of Sethe and her family, after their escape from slavery. Their home in Cincinnati is haunted by a revenant ghost who is supposed to be her daughter's ghost. Sethe's youngest daughter Denver is quiet and friendless, her two sons Howard and Bulgar run away at a young age. Paul D, one of Sweet home slaves, where Sethe and her family belong to. In attempting to make the family forget the past, he seems successful at first to make a link with family members. They encounter a young woman who calls herself Beloved. Paul D is a suspicious character and warns Sethe. Progressively, Paul D is forced out of Sethe's house by a supernatural power. A relationship full of emotions is established between Sethe and Paul D and they want to establish a new family. Stamp Paid exposes the reason for the community's rejection of Sethe. Thus, Sethe is confused and has a re-memory of the discrimination and segregation of her master that harms her life. The novel resolves with Denver becoming an active member in her community, and Paul D returning to Sethe and revive love.

ملخص : تعد تجارة الرقيق الافرو امريكيين واحدة من المراحل المهمة في التاريخ الأمريكي ، التي تعتبر نتيجة تضحيات عديدة من خلال حركة الغاء العبودية و حركة الحقوق المدنية للوصول إلى الذات والحرية . اتسمت الطريق نحو الحرية بأحداث قاسية و صعبة كما خلفت ماضي مؤلم و حاضر مشوه و حياة بائس جسدية ونفسية وعاطفية. توني موريسون الفائزة بجائزة بوليتزر عن روايتها *Beloved* ، و لتي يصور التجربة التاريخية المؤلمة للأمريكيين الأفارقة في أمريكا باعتماد اسلوب روايات الذاكرة والصدمات الثقافية فيما يتعلق بالمنظورات التاريخية والعاطفية والنفسية، التي تم معالجتها من قبل سيغموند فرويد وبروير وجوزيف. يلقي هذا البحث الضوء على التجربة التاريخية للأفرو مريكيين في رحلتهم للبحث عن الحرية وتقرير مصيرهم. الى جانب ذلك، تحليل الصدمات الثقافية و قصص الذاكرة في الرواية. كما أن هذا البحث يبرز دور قصص الذاكرة في تاريخ العبيد السود في تجسيد العبودية كتجربة شخصية و اجتماعية صادمة. وبالتالي، فإن الهدف الرئيسي من هذا البحث هو إبراز العلاقة بين الصدمة الثقافية وسرد الذاكرة، ابراز الآثار النفسية لنتيجة عن الصدمة لنفسية،كم أنها تبرز عملية الشفاء الذاكرة ضمن مجموعة في روايتها *Beloved* لتوني موريسون.

Résumé :

Le commerce des esclaves africains est l'une des phases importantes de l'histoire américaine, qui est le résultat de plusieurs sacrifices et le combat par l'Abolition de l'Esclavage et Mouvement des Droits Civiques pour atteindre le sens de l'individualité et la liberté. Le parcours vers la liberté était caractérisé par des événements difficiles qui marquent leur passé obsédant, leur présent traumatisé et une vie avec des impacts physiques, psychologiques et émotionnels. Toni Morrison est lauréate du prix Pulitzer de son roman *Beloved*, qui représente l'expérience historique traumatique des Afro-Américains en Amérique en utilisant récits de mémoire et traumatisme culturel en ce qui concerne les perspectives historique, émotionnelles et psychologiques qui sont examinés par Sigmund Freud, Breuer et Joseph. Cette recherche met en lumière l'expérience du parcours des Afro-américains vers la liberté et autodétermination. Par ailleurs, pour analyser le traumatisme culturel et le récit de mémoire dans le roman *Beloved* et le rôle des récits mémoriels dans l'histoire des esclaves noirs dans la représentation de l'esclavage comme expérience traumatisante individuelle et collective. Ainsi, l'objectif principal de cette recherche est de mettre en évidence la relation entre le traumatisme culturel et le récit de la mémoire, et aussi de mettre en évidence les impacts psychologiques destructeurs, puis le processus de guérison collective de la mémoire dans le roman de Toni Morrison.