



## Representation of Traumatization In Morrison's Beloved from A Caruthian Perspective



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**Abstract:** *The study analyzes traumatization as a process in Beloved (1987), written by an Afro-American writer, Toni Morrison, following Cathy Caruth's (1996) trauma theory, which states that "a shock that appears to work very much like a bodily threat is, in fact, a break in the mind's experience of time" (Caruth 1996: 61). Traumatization can be used as a process in literature and is frequently and intricately linked to pain in ways one does not fully comprehend. This research study follows one of the types of textual analysis, i.e., the Content Qualitative Method introduced by Bernard Berelson (1952) in communication research, which demonstrates that 'content analysis is a research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of clear content of the communication. It also analyzes the reactions of the victimized characters to the horrific incidents they encountered. As a result of being traumatized by slavery and murdering her own daughter, Sethe suffers the most visible split. It builds a bridge between the events in the narrative and the readers' imaginations to get to know the psychology of victims in an altered state of consciousness.*

**Key Words:** Trauma Theory, Slavery, Nostalgia, Traumatization, Textual analysis, Marginalization

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### Introduction

Traumatization is the process by which the human mind behaves in an abnormal manner. It is that situation where the system tries to get into a state of perceiving danger and feeling hopeless. Hartman (2003) states that;

It happens when the sequence of incidents and reactions makes changes in the

functioning to keep the body alive, which is almost a risky process for the system and can leave complications in physiology, memory, sense of self, perception, reactivity, emotional regulation, cognition, behaviour (p. 2).

Traumatization can stop when the danger is gone or can continue after, depending on how the mind confronts the

situation. If the victim is still in a state of illusion after the incident has turned in her support and she is therefore secure, the disturbance will go on. It has no end until and unless it is eradicated through diagnosis, treatment, or any viable therapy. Moreover, "traumatization" may cause a mental disorder if it's not treated. It takes time to disappear; sometimes it takes hours, days, or even weeks, but until then, the victim should feel safe and calm down. Once the human cortex sends the signal to the perception part of the mind (amygdale) that the danger is ended, the body will naturally go back to regular condition. The brain favours peace and stability over disorder because chaos results in disturbances of the mind and hence makes the system uneasy (Hartman, [2003](#). p. 2).

Today, trauma is discussed in a variety of literary forms, including scholarly histories, accounts of sexual abuse, memoirs, documentaries, and other forms of public storytelling. Trauma theory, meanwhile, can be viewed as a forum in which a variety of viewpoints can be voiced and addressed. The disorder and destruction in the world today are a leading cause of stress, anger, isolation, depression, broken relationships, relocation, and a host of other mental and physical illnesses. In *Studies on Hysteria* (1895), Sigmund Freud said that hysterical memories are historical in the sense that they are connected to real traumas in the patient's life. He further explains the condition of the victim by saying, "The response of a traumatized person to the trauma has only a fully cathartic impact if it is adequate, and the past that is still hurting had no outlet when it first happened" (p. 189).

Herman ([1992](#)) notes that; "trauma has such a heartfelt effect that it threatens the victim's trust in both themselves and other people." She further said that trauma compels the victims to get away from those around them and brings the victim into a complete state of uncertainty. As a result, the

victim gets exposed to odd actions and unusual and unstable behaviour towards others to whom s/he is very close, which is characterized by conflicting traits like intimacy at one point and total alienation at another. As a result, the theory of trauma was born (Herman, [1992](#). p. 3).

A different type of trauma known as historical trauma is when a particular event such as ethnic or racial hostility, war or violence becomes a universalized and symbolic representation of human suffering. Numerous violent incidents have been connected to post-traumatic stress disorders, which are thought to be the treatment for specific dissociative disorders. Post-traumatic stress disorders, or PTSD, are actually a type of reaction to a traumatic experience, such as seeing a battle or going through a difficult period of war, like both World Wars, which can cause distressing symptoms that are defined based on Caruth's ([1996](#)) explanation like this: "Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which included symptoms previously known as shellshock, combat stress, delayed stress syndrome, and traumatic neurosis, and referred to reactions to both human and natural disasters," (p. 21).

Freud ([1895](#)) defines 'hysteria' as referring to neurotic disorders that emerge from sexual incidents obtained before puberty or before the age of maturity. According to this theory, trauma causes a lesion or a disaster in which traumatized figures are unable to define or describe themselves as they are. This type of trauma, in general, is considered individual trauma. Such trauma as an external force filtrates their psyches and minds to the point that it "splits the mind, lodging itself in a part of the mind that cannot be assimilated" (p. 200). Caruth's ([1955](#)) critical theories on trauma are at the heart of contemporary literary studies. Trauma originated from the Greek, "traumatikos", meaning "wound", or "a bodily injury." First, it was examined in the latter part of the nineteenth century by three

scholars working in the field of psychoanalysis: Jean-Martin Charcot (1825-1893), Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), and Pierre Janet (1859-1947). French neurologist Charcot conducted the initial research on the topic. These intellectuals focused their investigation on the root of the "hysteria" syndrome that was prevalent in their communities at that particular time. Later, Freud reexamined Charcot's theories about hysteria as the effect of traumatic events (p. 5). It is also highlighted by Caruth (1995) in the following words:

It is no longer possible to simply place the concept of traumatic temporality within a larger and more traditional temporal framework (i.e., to place the conceptual event of the theory of trauma within the framework of the empirical, institutional, and cultural histories that are its context), as that would contradict the theory's main insight, which suggests that our more conventional conceptual histories may need to be revised (p. 19).

Caruth (1995) opines that the main concept of the event in the context of trauma theory is unable to link with that of the framework used by the earlier histories. Characterization may contradict the true meaning of traumatic mishaps due to the conventional histories of traumatization (p. 19).

Marder (2006) describes trauma in her work, *Trauma and Literary Studies*:

Trauma is a term that derives from the Greek word "wound." Even if the exact definition of the modern idea of trauma varies depending on the setting and discipline, there is universal agreement that if trauma is a wound, it is a highly distinctive form of the wound. Trauma does not have a particular set of physiological representations that can be used to diagnose it, and it almost always has recurring, uncontrollable, and unquantifiable repercussions that last for a very long time beyond its apparent precipitating cause.

Consequently, understanding trauma brings a special set of difficulties (p. 2)

## Problem Statement

Morrison has portrayed her protagonist in traumatic situations that have certain mental implications for her. It becomes important to study the causes of such incidents. The study analyzes traumatization as a process in *Beloved*, written by an Afro-American writer, Toni Morrison. Traumatization can be used as a process in literature and is frequently and intricately linked to pain in ways one does not fully comprehend. Remembering results in psychological discomfort and also gives value to prior repressed experiences in the unconscious mind. The study of trauma describes the increasing effects of events resulting in mental imbalance, explores the types of trauma experienced by the characters, and explains the three pathways of trauma theory and its implications. The study further emphasizes the influence of physical and mental trauma on their lives and also covers the annihilation of identity brought on by enslavement as well as the psychological, physiological, and spiritual devastation inflicted by slavery. As the issue of slavery is still being debated and addressed in a crucial way, it is important to study the issue of the destruction of identity due to slavery and nostalgia by deeply observing the experiences and language shown in the selected text. It also investigates the challenges confront by the marginalized segments of society for their equal race-based rights, and how they smoothly hamper the development of their personalities.

## Research Objectives

- i. To explore the process of traumatization in the novel
- ii. To analyze the protagonist's reactions to the horrific events in Morrison's *Beloved*

- iii. To find out how nostalgia and slavery result in the destruction of the characters' identities

### Research Questions

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- i. How does the process of traumatization affect the lives of the characters in Morrison's *Beloved*?
- ii. What are the mental implications for the characters due to the horrific events in *Beloved* (1987)?
- iii. Why did nostalgia and slavery impact the identities of the characters throughout the novel?

### Literature Review

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#### Background

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In this chapter, the reviews of former researchers about the selected theory and fiction work are emphasized and put under consideration. Fink (2014) describes a literature review as "a systematic, explicit, and reproducible method of identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing the existing body of completed and recorded work produced by researchers, scholars, and practitioners." (p. 3). The selected work explores the lives of blacks after WWII, their current situations due to past situations, and the impact of mental and physical slavery on their present lives.

#### Slavery

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In a historic article from Yenor (2018), *December 18, 1865, CE, "Slavery is Abolished"* says that the United States Constitution was amended to include the 13th Amendment. The primary aim of the past constitution was to abolish slavery from its roots, and 100,000 slaves from Kentucky to Delaware were instantly set free as a result of the amendment. The language of the Thirteenth Amendment was adapted from the Northwest Ordinance of 1787.

The Amendment sustains a significant rule for making people in "involuntary

servitude" as "punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted." Many scholars say this rule vanquished oppression in one way just to let it continue in a new form. These restrictions are sometimes credited with laying the groundwork for the U.S. system of mass incarceration, which suspiciously cages black people. These amendment rules were said to be fake to trap innocent blacks in another way. Two years earlier, when the Civil War was at its peak, the Declaration of Emancipation, which was issued by President Abraham Lincoln, emphasized that all black people who were imprisoned in states that would rebel against the Union (as Confederate states) were free. The declaration did not provide for the freedom of enslaved persons in the "border kingdom" that coincided with America since the Union believed them to be a distinct entity and did not enforce U.S. laws. Within five years, the Fourteenth and fifteenth amendments were passed by Congress. These amendments, which grant every one of the male American, whatever their race, citizenship, equal protection under the law, and the right to vote, are now the ones that are being challenged the most in court. However, it would be more than 50 years before all women, regardless of race, could access these facilities. (p. 1).

#### Whites' Subjugation

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As the discussion starts about slavery, the authoritative nature and ruling behaviour of whites come across automatically. And for this reason, the truth is that white dominance is one of the most flexible and adaptive social powers in man's history, when it is thought to be freed from all these powers or when one just imagines having as a final point ended up white reign, it recreates itself, and each rising is further invisible and restrained than the last. Systemic racism is so convenient that we either ignore it or choose to exclude it from our memory, or at the very least from our

daily conversation. Notice two things while reading about the black and white concept, first, that after slavery, many of these different systems of white subjugation overlaid; and second, that there has not been a single minute in the white's history since 1619 in which black people were not systematically frightened and repressed by white people.

Tucker (2016) added to the discussion:

In a time when telecommunications were primitive and blacks lacked freedom of movement, the parting of black families was a kind of murder. Here we find the roots of American wealth and democracy — in the for-profit destruction of the most important asset available to any people, the family (p. 3)

## Research Methodology

### Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is Trauma Theory (1996) by Cathy Caruth. The main principle of Caruth's work is that "trauma is an un-presentable or hideous event that fundamentally fragments the psyche" (p. 61). Trauma is observed as an experience that remains cognizant. Trauma is thought to be caused by fragmentation or dissociation. The research study focuses on the concept of trauma as conceptualized by Cathy Caruth (1996), the most prominent figure in contemporary trauma theories, and provides an in-depth exploration of how trauma affects the characters in Morrison's *Beloved*, specifically Sethe.

Caruth (1991) argues that "it's an unexpected or overpowering wild incident or occurrence that is not fully realized at the time of occurrence but occurs later in recurring nightmares, flashbacks, and other repetitive phenomena." In other words, the violent or traumatic experience is not only recalled as a past occurrence but also becomes part of the survivor's present. She says that a traumatized person's sense of "time, self, and the world" might be shattered

by this "belated" experience of trauma or uncontrollable memories. Caruth states that "trauma is a type of shock that appears to be a physical threat but is actually a pause in the mind's perception of time." (p. 61).

Psychoanalytic thought dominated trauma research in the latter part of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. Psychoanalysis, according to Herman (1992), is "a study of the internal vicissitudes of fancy and desire apart from the actuality of experience" (p. 5). Literature and trauma may appear unrelated, but Caruth (1996) believes they are inextricably linked. Literature is frequently and intricately linked to pain in ways one does not fully comprehend. Traumatic experiences are never fully understood, but they insist on being expressed, and literature informs us as much about what we don't know as it does about what we do. She believes that;

Traumatic experience is not possessed by an individual or group, thus its impact is never captured by direct reference. It is, paradoxically, literature's very indirectness—its figurative language, gaps in speech and linguistic particularities—that transmits the force of a traumatic history (p. 62)

Felman (1995) says about the involvement of testimony in trauma and history that, in literary and historical texts, the act of testimony has drawn the special attention of trauma theorists. Strange things happen to the victim as a result of trauma. The term "testimony" refers to an effort made by a trauma victim or survivor to go on evidence, to give influence and importance, and thus perceptible, to the traumatizing incident that the victim is attempting to overcome. A traumatic incident can be classified, understood, and determined through testimony, which asserts and challenges the reconciliation of the painful occurrences of the incidents. A "witness" who will hear, see, or interpret the statement, investigate it, and employ the witnessing issue in an argument or investigation of the

experience of trauma is necessary for testimony to occur (p. 15).

Caruth (1995), in her book *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, describes the appearance of trauma in the patient. She says the time between the traumatic incident and the first appearance of the symptoms of the event is termed the "incubation period." This is the phase when the occurrence of the experience is not apparent. This period is known as "latency" and is considered a feature of trauma theory. The reality is that traumatic remembering is not an effortless remembrance but it's a most noticeable aspect. While the visuals of traumatic restoration remain totally factual and particular, they are mostly unavailable for mind-full recollection and control. A confusing negation has appeared as the foundation of its various classifications and descriptions since the earliest studies on trauma. This very strange phenomenon presented a challenge to Sigmund Freud when he was confronted with the "war neuroses" that resulted from the First World War. As "post-traumatic stress disorder" has encountered trauma, one can recognize the possibility of history based on experiences and references (p. 7). Through the notion of history in trauma theory, this study will establish a relationship between history and trauma and provide insight into the traumatization of the fictional characters through a sequence of events in the fiction work *Beloved*.

Trauma theory studies the traditions in which distressing incidents are practised in and through literary texts. Alpert (2001) says that It makes an effort to comprehend the various ways that traumatic events are displayed, processed, revealed, and suppressed in a variety of cultural and historical works. Trauma theorists are interested in how different authors attempt to talk about and characterize their own traumatic experiences through their writing, as well as how characters in fiction attempt

to do so and how works of literature serve as records and pronounce traumatic experiences on a broader cultural scale. (p. 14).

## Research Method

This research study follows one of the types of textual analysis, i.e., the Content Qualitative Method introduced by Bernard Berelson (1952) in communication research, which demonstrates that "content analysis is a research technique for the objective, systematic, and qualitative description of the manifest content of communication" (p. 8). Certain events, words, phrases, themes, and concepts will be focused on in Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987). This research adopts textual study as a means of analysis in order to achieve the mentioned objectives. In addition, for an in-depth analysis of the characters, specifically the protagonist (Sethe), the current study draws attention to Cathy Caruth's (1996) Theory of Trauma.

According to Berelson (1952), textual analysis can be applied to a wide variety of methods for understanding, defining, and analyzing texts. Here, it serves to convey a range of information, including its literal and sub-textual meanings as well as the text's symbols, assumptions, and ideals. Almost all of the work done in this discipline entails a thorough analysis of texts. So my study specifically follows the type of textual analysis, which is qualitative content analysis, used to crack down on the meanings associated with messages rather than the number of times message variables occur. The analytical technique used in this research paper explores the factual aspects of the text and also the pieces that readers and scholars don't agree on (p. 4). Collecting data entails making observations or taking measurements in a methodical manner. It enables the researchers to acquire firsthand knowledge and unique insights into the study challenge, whether the researcher is conducting research for business,

governmental, or academic purposes. For the collection of data, the aim, type, method, and procedure of research should be taken into consideration. As the data collection requires finding out particular subject matter, this research study gathers and analyzes specific information regarding the questions and objectives of the selected novel, *Beloved*. This study follows the collection of data from the primary data collection source, which also falls into the category of qualitative data collection methods. Further, it provides information through access to already existing data, research journals, and reviews written by researchers, professors, and other experts because getting data from the mentioned source is considered accurate and easily accessible (p. 5).

## Discussion and Analysis

### Destruction of Identities through Slavery and Nostalgia

This section introduces a detailed discussion on the representation of traumatization in Morrison's [1987](#) masterpiece *Beloved*, followed by Cathy Caruth's [1996](#) theory of trauma. European immigrants brought slavery to the American land in the 1500s. European settlers increasingly depended on imported African slaves as a cheap labour option when none could be found from other sources. By the early 1700s, African slavery was the main form of captivity in British North America. By tracing the history of a black woman called Sethe from her years when she was a slave in Kentucky prior to the Civil Conflict to her arrival in the Ohio city of Cincinnati in 1873, the fiction confronts the damaging effects of slavery.

This study investigates the uninvited involvement of the traumatic past in the present lives of the characters, especially the protagonist Sethe, through a close textual analysis of Morrison's *Beloved* ([1987](#)). Also, the issue of traumatically haunted subjects and objects examines the traumatic aspects

of the past. Further, what effects the horrific haunting has on the protagonist's life as well as the lives of the other characters, and how do they handle the memory of the past? There is a substantial fictional representation of traumatization in *Beloved* (1987). The author chooses horror as well as historical fiction to represent the hurdles faced by African Americans. Morrison's *Beloved* ([1987](#)) illustrates how racism and slavery have the ability to strengthen white dominance over black people. Racism involves insolent treatment and discrimination, whereas slavery is based on dominance and submission in Morrison's *Beloved* ([1987](#)). So in order to consider the trauma theory as a tool for the study, it's important to unfold the causes of traumatization as represented through traumatized bodies in *Beloved* (1987).

### Representation of Traumatization in Morrison's *Beloved*

As the novel *Beloved* (1987) is about recollection, an act filled with memory and its negation, Morrison illustrates that she wrote a piece that can be given less attention, not because it is hard to discuss but because of the subject chosen by her, a subject that overwhelms an individual's thoughts and imaginations, experiences and practices, and almost whatever reminds of the traumatic event. In the novel, characters are often forced to ironically remember trauma even though they are badly trying to forget it. Morrison says;

I thought this has got to be the least read of all the books I'd written because it is about something that the characters don't want to remember, I don't want to remember, black people don't want to remember, white people don't want to remember. I mean, it's national amnesia (1989).

The very first lines of the novel represent the shattered and shaken picture of a house that has undergone a catastrophic moment

and awaken the readers to consider the suspicious beginning.

124 WAS SPITEFUL. Full of a baby's venom. The women in the house knew it and so did the children. For years each put up with the spite in his own way, but by 1873 Sethe and her daughter Denver were its only victims. The grandmother, Baby Suggs, was dead, and the sons, Howard and Buglar, had run away by the time they were thirteen years old--as soon as merely looking in a mirror shattered it (that was the signal for Buglar); as soon as two tiny hand prints appeared in the cake (that was it for Howard). Neither boy waited to see more; another kettleful of chickpeas smoking in a heap on the floor; soda crackers crumbled and strewn in a line next to the door sill. Nor did they wait for one of the relief periods: the weeks, months even, when nothing was disturbed. No. Each one fled at once--the moment the house committed what was for him the one insult not to be borne or witnessed a second time (Morrison, 1987, p. 1)

Sethe and her daughter Denver were the only victims of that environment in 1873. Her mother-in-law, Baby Suggs, had died, and Howard and Buglar (two sons) had fled at the age of 13 years. For the boys, glancing in a mirror reflected the signal for Buglar or two little prints of hands appeared in the cake by Howard. They were afraid of the consequences of living in that house. These were signs for them to leave the house before their mother cut their throats (Morrison, 1987, p. 1).

We could move, she suggested once to her mother-in-law. "What'd be the point?" asked Baby Suggs. Not a house in the country ain't packed to its rafters with some dead Negro's grief. We lucky this ghost is a baby. My husband's spirit was to come back in here? or yours? Don't talk to me. You lucky. You got three left. Three pulling at your skirts and just one raising hell from the other side. Be thankful, why don't you? I had eight. Every one of them gone away from me. Four taken,

four chased, and all, I expect, worrying somebody's house into evil. Baby Suggs rubbed her eyebrows (Morrison, 1987, p.6)

Being in a state of extreme regression, Sethe once suggested to her mother-in-law that "we could move and have a better life than now" (p. 6). But, for her mother-in-law, moving away was pointless. She thinks that for the sake of survival, relocating is a good idea, no matter how tough the second option is going to be, but it won't affect or inspire the whites. They don't care if one, two, or a group of black people are missing or starving somewhere. Baby Suggs feels happy that they have a baby ghost, but at the same time, she is ambiguous about her husband's spirit. The ambiguity is not only for the return of the spirit but for whoever they lost in their past—she wanted everyone back. Baby Suggs abuses Sethe at the same time that she longs for her life because she was left with three children. The children who had never known hardships were confronted in a very different stage of their lives, and the brutality took over everything from Baby. This is the only regression in Baby Suggs' life that her children couldn't stay a bit longer. She had eight. They have all vanished. Four were taken, four were chased, and she left hopeless with a deep sigh of grief (Morrison, 1987, p. 6).

'That's all you let yourself remember', Sethe had told her, but she was down to one herself-- one alive, that is--the boys chased off by the dead one, and her memory of Buglar was fading fast. Howard at least had a head shape nobody could forget. As for the rest, she worked hard to remember as close to nothing as was safe. Unfortunately, her brain was devious (Morrison, 1987, p. 7)

Sethe was the only female working on the farm at Sweet Home. Her mistress, Mrs Garner, had sold her brother in order to pay off debts, and this deal made her way too upset, and she sometimes bursts into tears. When Mr Garner died, the throne was in her brother's hands. The schoolteacher arrived

and changed the rules inside Sweet Home. He cut the throats of a few slaves and tortured some. He also brutalized those who tried to escape. His major source of enjoyment and entertainment was seducing women and sexually harassing them during work (Morrison, 1987, p. 15).

It had been a long time since anybody (good-willed white woman, preacher, speaker or newspaperman) sat at their table, their sympathetic voices called liars by the revulsion in their eyes. For twelve years, long before Grandma Baby died, there had been no visitors of any sort and certainly no friends. No coloured people. Certainly no hazelnut man with too long hair and no notebook, no charcoal, no oranges, no questions (Morrison, 1987, p. 21)

Grandma Baby and her family had been living in isolation for twelve years, without any visitors or any coloured people around to visit and ask if they were ok. A white woman, a priest, an educator, or a newspaperman hadn't sat at their table in a very long time. That was maybe the last gathering they had, and after that, everything was abolished forever (Morrison, 1987, p. 21).

She missed her brothers. Buglar and Howard would be twenty-two and twenty-three now. Although they had been polite to her during the quiet time and gave her the whole top of the bed, she remembered how it was before i.e. the pleasure they had sitting clustered on the white stairs--she between the knees of Howard or Buglar--while they made up die-witch! Stories with proven ways of killing her dead. And Baby Suggs telling her things in the keeping room (Morrison, 1987, p.37)

Amy, the well-wisher and lifesaver of Sethe and Denver in the forest while escaping from the Sweet Home, tells about her experience. Again, she is narrating her story about when she was fishing off the Beaver River and noticed a nigger floating by her feet. She then lifted her feet and legs and

rubbed them so tightly that Sethe ruptured and screamed. Then Amy warned Sethe that anything dead resurrected hurts. The more it hurts, the more it heals (Morrison, 1987, p. 67).

Yet the morning she woke up next to Paul D, the word her daughter had used a few years ago did cross her mind and she thought about what Denver had seen kneeling next to her and thought also of the temptation to trust and remember that gripped her as she stood before the cooking stove in his arms. Would it be all right? Would it be all right to go ahead and feel? Go ahead and count on something? She couldn't think clearly, lying next to him listening to his breathing, so carefully, carefully, she had left the bed (Morrison, 1987, p.75)

Sethe awoke next to Paul D, thinking about her daughter and what she would think if she saw her mother sleeping with someone she didn't even know. She couldn't think clearly, so she left the bed and stood before the cooking stove, listening to his breathing. Even though she was at ease with him for the time being, mixing her acquaintance with him felt bitter. Paul D., his relation, his memories—everything about him irritates Sethe because of her past with him and the location where they were (Morrison, 1987, p. 75).

It was as though one day she saw red baby blood, another day the pink gravestone chips and that was the last of it. 124 was so full of strong feelings perhaps she was oblivious to the loss of anything at all (Morrison, 1987, p.76)

The place where Sethe settled after escaping from Sweet Home was completely clueless and meaningless because of the loss of his loved ones. It was so full of memories and emotions, struggles and sacrifice, contributions and compromise (Morrison, 1987, p. 76).

He was responsible for that. Emotions sped to the surface in his company. Things

became what they were: drabness looked drab; the heat was hot. Windows suddenly had a view. And wouldn't you know he'd be a singing man? Little rice, little bean, No meat in between. Hard work ain't easy, Dry bread ain't greasy (Morrison, 1987, p.77)

At the very end of the novel, it is clear how Paul D's arrival affected Sethe's life. A life that had just been restored to normalcy, a life that had almost been dreadful enough to cause someone trauma, all vanished with the arrival of a person. His existence caused emotions to raise, drabness to look drab, and heat to be hot. Everything blurs to the point of destroying and tearing apart a family. But the regret is that the person who has destroyed identities appears to be nothing more than a careless man. He is singing without any hesitation and is happy with a little rice, a little bean, and no meat. Hard work is easy, and dry bread is not greasy (Morrison, 1987. p. 77).

## Conclusion

Toni Morrison's masterwork, *Beloved* (1987), depicts the degrading repercussions of slavery on her heroin's history and memories. Morrison has dedicated her literary career to ensuring that white interpretations of the black experience during and as an outcome of slavery are not permitted. The narrative *Beloved* explores the value of remembering when coping with hardship. Sethe tries to find peace inside her throughout the narrative, mostly because the recollections of her daughter's murder and her slave decades at Sweet Home are all too traumatic to revisit consciously. The idea that there cannot exist

happiness without pain and no misery without happiness is connected to the memory problem. No matter how amazing an event is, without some memory of pain, you cannot really enjoy the pleasure it offers. Sethe and her background become a major stumbling block in her current relationship with Paul D. In *Beloved*, a communal intervention to exorcise the soul of a deceased child distinguishes her from the residual memories of her existence as a slave. Although 124 represents freedom for Baby Suggs and Sethe, Sethe's conception of freedom is predicated on ownership, a metaphor that is important to all of her acts in the novel. According to Sethe, slaves were punished for not moving efficiently, for being late going to the crops, for challenging leadership, for trying to run away, and for a variety of other reasons. Whippings, torture, mutilation, incarceration, and being given away from the plantations were among the penalties.

In the 1500s, European immigrants brought slavery to the American Continent. European settlers were more and more reliant upon imported African slaves in the absence of accessible labour from alternative sources. By the early 1700s, African slavery had become the norm in British North America. The work examines the damaging effects of slavery by tracing the narrative of a Black woman called Sethe from her years as a slave in Ireland before the Civil War and back to her life in the Ohio city of Cincinnati (1873). Despite being a free woman, Sethe is still enslaved by the agony of her life as a slave.

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