

Reconstructing Black Female Identity in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*: A Postcolonial Feminist Analysis of Trauma and Resistance

Assist Lect. Samer Alwan Rajab

Directorate General of Education, Al-Karkh 1,

Ministry of Education

Keywords: Postcolonial Feminism, Trauma, Resistance, Silence and Voice, Reconstruction

Summary

This study explores Toni Morrison's *Beloved* through a postcolonial feminist lens, examining how the novel represents Black female trauma, resistance, and the reconstruction of identity in the aftermath of slavery. The study fills a significant gap in the literary field, offering an opportunity to synthesize the concepts of colonial legacy and feminist agency within a single interpretive context. The study pursues two primary objectives: first, to analyze how trauma is depicted and its impact on the identities of Black women; and second, to examine the narrative strategies through which resistance is articulated. The study situates the work of this novel within the context of questioning major historical discourses and giving voice to those traditionally silenced, as it emphasizes memory, silence, and tales as tactics of resistance. The methodological approach employed in the study is a qualitative literary analysis, informed by the theory of postcolonial feminism. Concepts of Spivak's subalternity inform the analytical framework, as well as Bhabha's hybridity and bell hooks' gendered silence. The scenes chosen in the novel are analyzed in terms of their symbolic coding and their impact on character development, trauma, and issues of agency. The findings reveal that trauma and silence in *Beloved* function not only as signs of suffering but as complex expressions of empowerment. The study concludes by asserting the need to extend the comparative and interdisciplinary study of Morrison, as she remains relevant in contemporary postcolonial and feminist ideas.

Introduction

In the aftermath of slavery and colonial control, Black women's voices were frequently silenced, repressed by both patriarchal and imperial organisations. Literature has emerged as a critical space for rearticulating silences and reclaiming

marginalised identities. Within this context, Toni Morrison's work stands out as a significant literary intervention in recreating African American female subjectivity and memory. Toni Morrison (1931-2019) was a renowned African American novelist and winner of the Nobel Prize, whose writing had a profound impact on American literary and cultural discourse (Raynaud, 2019). She is renowned for her insightful research on race, identity, and history. Most of Morrison's novels often explore the African American experience and the lasting impact of slavery on individuals and communities in the modern world. The style of her narrations is an amalgamation of poetry, complex characters, and multilayered symbolism, rendering her works reasonable grounds for critical interpretation (Narimonovich, 2024, p. 34). Her arguably most powerful novel is *Beloved* (1987), which will always stand as a pivotal point of reference for the emotional and psychological torment of slavery (Kasbi, 2022, p.19). *Beloved* is a story about a woman who used to be enslaved and is being tormented by the horrific past and the ghost of her deceased daughter, *Beloved* (Abu-Fares, 2021, p. 3). The novel explores themes of memory, trauma, identity, motherhood, and the pursuit of physical and psychological freedom. Morrison represents the way the past continues to live in the present, not only in the personal lives but also in the consciousness of the larger community, which was damaged by slavery (Mohammed, 2018, p.47). The outpouring of intimacy and pain that the women of color in the novel experience makes it one of the central texts to analyze in terms of race, gender, and historical trauma.

The title of the given study, *"Reconstructing Black Female Identity in Toni Morrison's Beloved: A Postcolonial Feminist Analysis of Trauma and Resistance,"* summarizes the essence of this novel in terms of identity production. It implies that the identity of black women, torn and distorted by the history of cruel enslavement, experiences the process of reconstruction that could be characterized by suffering as well as defiance. Trauma, as portrayed in *Beloved*, is not just a location of psychological discomfort. Still, it is a location where resistance is built, oppressing the prevalent (dis) fantasies of victimhood and disappearance. The feminist postcolonial approach utilized in the study enables the investigation of the intersection of race, gender, and history as the means of shaping identity in the conditions of colonial slavery and patriarchal oppression.

The problem addressed in this study is how Toni Morrison's *Beloved* constructs the identity of the Black female through the metaphor of psychological rupture caused

by trauma and her redemptive struggle in a postcolonial feminist manner. Although *Beloved* has been widely examined through various critical lenses, scholarly attention has been limited to the intersection of trauma and resistance in the reconstruction of Black female identity within a postcolonial feminist framework. Existing literature has tended to capture trauma, gender, or postcolonial issues separately, with little attempt to integrate them into one discussion. For example, Ali (2024, p.17) examines trauma in *Beloved* mainly from a psychological perspective, while Islam (2024, p. 50) utilises postcolonial theory to explore agency and voice. However, neither analysis incorporates the gendered aspects of trauma within a cohesive postcolonial feminist framework. This oversight fails to address the intricate dynamics through which Black women's identities are both fragmented and reconstructed, shaped by their interconnected experiences of historical violence and personal resistance. This study will fill the gap by examining how the author illustrates the traumatization process not as a break in the psyche, but as the place where resistance develops, enabling the black female identity to be recaptured. It examines how Morrison's story renders suffering and silence as spaces of female agency, thereby providing a postcolonial feminist analysis of the construction of identity. To research this problem, two main objectives are established in the study. First, it aims to explore how the trauma in the novel is represented and how it affects Black female identity both psychologically and socially. Trauma by Morrison is graphic and figurative and demonstrates how violence in history leaves its mark on the bodies and minds of her characters, in particular, Sethe. The study attempts to reveal the extent to which trauma destabilizes and transforms identity by following the psychological echo of slavery through time. Secondly, the study aims to analyze the shapes of resistance presented in the story and their contribution to forming the identity. As *Beloved* shows, resistance is not just active defiance, but also the passive resistance of memory, narration, and maternal affection. The goal of this objective is to consider how such means of protest can serve as forms of empowerment, particularly in regaining agency and voice in the context of a pernicious history of oppression. The purposes inform a specific approach to the literary analysis, concentrating on the novel's characters, narrative devices, and thematic issues. This study is significant because it contributes to the broader scholarly debate on the formation of identities within postcolonial and feminist frameworks, particularly in how literary writings negotiate the processes of healing and self-assertion. Although

modernity was accompanied by significant development of digital technologies that transformed the global space in terms of communication and cultural production, racial, ethnic, and sectarian divisions have remained deeply ingrained in most societies. These barriers, often rooted in colonialism, cannot be easily broken by mere progress. The truth is that modern systems can replicate these biases in a different form. Therefore, although it is based on historical truth about slavery, *Beloved* by Morrison is a book that communicates the modern realities of racism, tribalism, sectarianism, and regional discrimination effectively. In line with this, the research question guiding the study is: How does *Beloved* reconstruct Black female identity through a postcolonial feminist lens, particularly in its portrayal of trauma and resistance?

This study positions *Beloved* at the convergence of historical trauma and literary defiance. The analysis employs a postcolonial feminist perspective to reveal how Morrison's novel reframes trauma from a symbol of victimhood to a narrative of survival and reclamation, thereby reconceptualising Black female identity as a dynamic, resistant, and relational process of becoming rather than a static inheritance.

Theoretical Framework

This study will use a postcolonial feminist approach to shape a critical reconstruction of the dynamics of black female identity in *Beloved*. This style is more suitable for the novel's thematic issues, as it enables the in-depth examination of the intersections between race, gender, history, and power. Postcolonial theory, as articulated by Edward Said and Homi Bhabha, centers on the cultural and psychological legacies of colonial rule. As described by Bhabha, the concepts of hybridity, the unhomely, and the third space find particular applicability in interpreting the fragmented identities of the formerly enslaved people who populate *Beloved*. According to Bhabha (1994), the "third space" is a liminal zone where cultural meaning is negotiated, not fixed, a concept that illuminates how Morrison's characters occupy shifting positions between past and present, enslavement and freedom, silence and voice. The cultural displacement and loss of continuity experienced by Sethe and others demonstrate an alienation that Bhabha would term the unhomely, which occurs when the individual is unfixed and the personal and political are blurred. This model can be used to perceive not only the characters as

victims of historical oppression but also as actors who struggled to exist in a post-slavery society, dealing with aspects of fragmented, mixed identity.

At the same time, feminist theory, particularly black and postcolonial feminist criticism, informs this analysis through the lived experiences of black women. Thinkers such as Bell Hooks, Gayatri Spivak, and Chandra Talpade Mohanty have proposed the need to put the voices of women who have historically been silenced, particularly in patriarchal and colonial systems, front and center. Claiming that subaltern voices are steadily silenced by imperial discourse, and in particular the voices of colonized women, Spivak (1988; 2023) wonders, "Can the subaltern speak?" in a deliberately provocative manner. In *Beloved*, Morrison answers this question by projecting a narrative where the memory, the trauma, and the silence merge to symbolize the colonized female subject against which Spivak describes epistemic violence. The painful past, which she cannot utter, is turned to speech, embodied and haunted.

In contrast to the Euro-centered, individualistic models that are commonly privileged in a traditional trauma theory, the postcolonial feminist studies of trauma put the issue of collective, historical, and multigenerational aspects of trauma experienced by colonized and racialized women back on the map. In this narrative style used by Morrison, fragmentation, repetition, and nonlinear time flow reflect the dazing impact of trauma, yet they emphasize the possibility of community recovery. The maternal relationship, in particular the one between Sethe and Denver, becomes the space of both psychic violence and love repair, which can be perceived via the feminist psychoanalytic frameworks.

Therefore, the analysis undertaken in the following section will consider this theoretical perspective and inform a possible reading of how trauma in *Beloved* is not merely suffering, but also a turning point in the rebuilding of resistance and identity. Close reading will take place within the framework of the postcolonial feminist theory when analyzing narrative structures, character growth, symbolism, and silences, and how Morrison reclaims the subjectivity of the Black female historical voice that has been erased and marginalized by history. Overall, drawing on both postcolonial and feminist theoretical traditions, this approach enables an in-depth exploration of how *Beloved* reconstructs the Black female subject in the shadow of slavery, with an excellent level of contextualization. The postcolonial feminist framework utilised in this analysis facilitates a nuanced and complex

interpretation of *Beloved*, emphasising the agency of Black women amidst historical violence. The following section applies this framework to key narrative scenes, illustrating how trauma serves as a site of both subjection and resistance.

Literature Review

This chapter reviews the literature on which the present study is based. It is divided into three critical sections, which include acute observations on the life and literary philosophy of Toni Morrison, the key themes and interpretations of *Beloved*, and contemporary scholarly contributions that respond to postcolonial feminist theory. Collectively, the strands provide a context for the analysis and outline how the study can contribute to existing academic discourses.

1. Studies on Toni Morrison's Life and Literary Contributions

Toni Morrison continues to dominate modern American literature, and her distinctive narrative style and thematic issues have been the subject of extensive research by many scholars. Many recent studies have highlighted her contributions as a novelist and a cultural critic of mainstream discourses on race and identity. For example, (Smith & Chapman, 2022, p.21) underline the originality of using language as a strategy through which Morrison reclaims the oral traditions of African Americans in her texts to establish cultural memory.) Similarly, Otuegbe (2023) examines Morrison's work, focusing on the reframing of history through trauma, and situates her platform at the intersection of literary art and socio-political activism. These publications further solidify Morrison's powerful influence today and position her as the voice of centrality in expressing Black experiences in the U.S.

2. Critical Approaches to *Beloved* in Recent Scholarship

As a psycho-cultural study of slavery, *Beloved* has remained an object of intellectual concern. More recent analyses have inclined towards trauma, memory, and identity and tend to deploy interdisciplinary approaches. Alizadeh Majdi (2023, p.93) examines the role of fragmented narrative patterns and ghostly symbolism in the drama of *Beloved*, with a focus on the haunting aspect of trauma. He connects it to collective memory and healing. Additionally, Shubaili (2025, p.2) examines the maternal relationships in the novel as spaces of opposition and survival, highlighting the intricate processes of loving and loss among enslaved populations. Other research, such as Qayoom (2022, p.5), has commented on *Beloved* and the politics of silence and voice, highlighting how we can learn from stories of marginalized

pasts through narrative reclamation. These latest works give us greater insight into the novel's complexity in addressing trauma and resilience.

3. Postcolonial Feminist Perspectives in Analyzing *Beloved*

The application of postcolonial feminist theory in *Beloved* has also expanded, aligning with the broader trends in scholarship that prioritize the centering of racial, sexual, and postcolonial identities. It is worth noting that, in her article, Lewis (2024) draws on Gayatri Spivak and describes enslaved women as the subaltern in the novel, claiming that Morrison reclaims subaltern agency through embodied memory in her book. Similarly, Kaur (2022, p.490) and Farhan (2024, p.1101) combine the concepts of hybridity and the third space, as formulated by Homi Bhabha, to introduce the negotiation of fragmented identities by the characters of a post-slavery America. These analyses even reveal the analytical potential of accessing postcolonial and feminist frameworks to deconstruct the multifaceted presentation of trauma and resistance created within the novel. Despite these valuable contributions, few studies synthesize trauma theory and postcolonial feminism to fully explore how Morrison constructs identity as both fractured and resisting. This research expands upon earlier work by providing a holistic perspective on trauma that sees it as a tool for political agency and narrative healing in addition to a source of pain.

Methodology

To effectively examine how *Beloved* reconstructs Black female identity through the interwoven lenses of trauma and resistance, this study adopts a qualitative and interpretive methodology rooted in postcolonial feminist theory. The approach outlined below integrates textual analysis with conceptual instruments drawn from key feminist and postcolonial thinkers, which enables a critical deconstruction of the narrative techniques that express repressed histories and corporeal struggles against oppression.

1. Approach and Design

This study is part of a qualitative study based on literary investigation. This is a descriptive and analytical study that interprets Toni Morrison's novel, *Beloved*. Specifically, a qualitative literary approach is particularly well-suited to this study, as it would enable the pursuit of symbolic, psychological, and ideological dimensions of the text that would be beyond reach under a quantitative or straightforward structural approach. Specifically, postcolonial feminist theory enables one to

interpret a text in context, focusing on the racialized and gendered power relations present within the language and structure created by Morrison. This method does not employ any statistical models or quantify results. Still, it focuses on close reading to evaluate the novel's coverage and approaches Black female identity reconstruction through trauma and resistance. It enables the reader to critically engage with the text's language, structure, and symbolism within the framework of postcolonial feminism, informed by its design.

2. Data Source

The novel *Beloved* (1987) by Toni Morrison serves as the primary source of evidence for this study. External data sources, such as interviews or surveys, will not be utilized, as the analysis focuses on the content of the literature. Certain scenes, characters, dialogues, and narrative patterns will be selected for detailed consideration concerning the study's topical issues, particularly those concerning the themes of trauma, resistance, and female identity. Second, sources such as peer-reviewed journal articles and theoretical texts will serve as evidence for the analysis, but will not form the foundation for the data.

3. Method of Analysis

The analysis approach is founded on textual reading back utilizing a postcolonial feminist theory. These include the application of the theoretical ideologies of major thinkers such as Homi Bhabha (e.g., hybridity, the unhomely), Gayatri Spivak (e.g., the subaltern), and bell hooks (e.g., gendered silence and resistance). The purpose is to analyze how Morrison codes trauma and resistance through narrative moves, characterization, and symbolic imagery. The selection of specific scenes for analysis, such as Sethe's infanticide, Denver's isolation, and the spectral presence of *Beloved*, is based on their thematic centrality to the novel's treatment of trauma and resistance. These scenes function as narrative flashpoints where psychological rupture and identity reconstruction intersect most powerfully. To make the process of analysis easy to understand, the table provided below lists some significant elements of literature, the related theoretical constructs, and particular foci of analysis:

Method of Analysis – Analytical Table

Literary Element	Theoretical concept	Analytical Focus
The scene with the infanticide of Sethe	Postcolonial Trauma (Spivak)	The influence of traumatic memory on identity and agency
Social withdrawal in Denver	Gendered silence (bell)	Social isolation as an oppression

	hooks)	and a measure of resistance
The apparition (hunting) of <i>Beloved</i>	The Unhomely (Bhabha)	Ghostliness is a metaphor for the motherless, incomplete identity
Oral memory storytelling	Subaltern voice (Spivak)	Recovery of agency through the telling of histories of disempowerment

This methodology ensures that the analysis remains both textually grounded and theoretically informed, enabling a rich engagement with Morrison's narrative strategies. It allows a nuanced understanding of how *Beloved* navigates silences, memory, and identity as modes of cultural survival and feminist resistance.

Analysis

This section provides a detailed analytical examination of *Beloved* through the lens of postcolonial feminist theory, aiming to investigate how trauma, resistance, and identity reconstruction are embedded in the narrative structure and characterization of the novel. In the analysis, the theoretical perspectives of authors, such as Spivak, Bhabha, and Hooks, are employed to apply theories to specific moments in the text. The analysis is thematically organised into three subsections, each supported by textual evidence and interpretive commentary, drawing on insights from Spivak, Bhabha, and bell hooks.

1. Trauma and the Legacy of Slavery in *Beloved*

The sense of trauma, especially concerning Black women, is permeated throughout *Beloved*, written by Toni Morrison. The killing of a baby by Sethe, the main character of the novel, is one of the most vivid forms of this trauma. This is one of the most gut-wrenching incidents in the novel, where she is willing to kill even her daughter so that she would not be put into slavery again. This is a demonstration of what Gayatri Spivak (1988) has labeled as the subaltern moment, which refers to the behavior of the silenced subject, rather than speech, as the system has erased it. Morrison writes: "*I took and put my babies where they'd be safe*" (Morrison, 1987, p. 236). This statement is frightening yet determined, as Sethe does everything in her power to act under unbearable historical pressure and make maternal affection a militant gesture of protest.

In addition, Sethe has experienced trauma on an individual and societal level. The physical scars on her back, which resemble a chokecherry tree, represent the lasting effects of racial abuse. Morrison narrates: "*It looked like a tree. Trunk, branches, and*

even leaves"(p. 18). This metaphor not just embraces the disgusting beauty of pain, but also links the personified suffering of Sethe with all the precedents of black female exploitation. Similarly, despite seeming to struggle against the foreign encroachment of the political, as Homi Bhabha (1994) hints in his notion of the unhomely, the domestic space is penetrated by the political when Sethe feels her guilt, grief, and memory creeping around in her home.

The nonlinear narrative structure used by Morrison is similar to the way trauma affects memory, with no distinction between the present and the past. Fragmentation, repetition, and silence, as an emotional response to trauma, are a testament to the disorientation that trauma can produce, followed by postcolonial theory on trauma, which holds that colonized subjects commonly think nonlinearly through time, where history continues to invade and intrude upon the present. Therefore, Sethe's imprisonment in the memory signifies how slavery remained unhealed, and recovery is not possible without admissions.

II. Silence and Resistance as a Feminist Agency

The silence in *Beloved* cannot be identified as mere lack of speaking, but as one of the forms of feminine resistance. Bell hooks (1990) confirms the theory that not speaking can work as one of the survival methods of Black women, especially when their voice was historically denied to them. This is illustrated in the case of Denver, who initially withdraws from society. Morrison writes: "*Denver knew it was on her. She would have to leave the yard; step off the edge of the world...*" (p. 243). Her silence, formed by trauma, changes into action, signalling a shift from passive to active resistance.

Simultaneously, Sethe displays gendered silence. The weight of unimaginable pain is evident in her stuttering and hesitant sentences. At one point, she says: "*Some things go. Pass on. Some things just stay. I used to think it was my rememory...*" (p. 43). This vague language shows how trauma is passed down from one generation to the next and how hard it is to describe pain that has been shaped by both slavery and motherhood.

Instead of conceiving of silence as an empty area, Morrison describes silence as an area of significance and perseverance. In a postcolonial feminist approach, silence is more a form of passive resistance, a rejection of the desire to fit into historical accounts by predominant narrators who have neglected the inner world of Black

women. Through the establishment of depth to silence, Morrison confirms the subversive power of silence.

III. Narrative and Identity Reconstruction

The most dramatic core of *Beloved* lies in the storytelling as a form of healing. Morrison employs her various voices and nonlinear chronologies to describe how memory and identity were shattered. The revenant *Beloved* is used as an allegory of suppressed talking back to show up again. Morrison describes her as: "*She had new skin, lineless and smooth... Her hair was long and she wore it loose*" (p. 63). This eerie physicality reflects not only a supernatural presence but also the embodiment of unspoken pain. This confrontation between Sethe and *Beloved* turns into a symbolic re-incorporation of the repressed past into a unified image of one individual. Morrison writes: "*Beloved, she is my daughter. She mine*" (p. 200). The reclamation of maternal identity, through such affirmation, is not a guilt but a recognition. This refers back to Spivak, who urges that the subaltern can recuperate their voice only through the presence of narrative.

Oral narration and shared memory are also ways of resistance. When the women of the community come together to exorcise *Beloved*, they realize what Bhabha (1994) terms as the third space, a liminal place in which both history and identity are reorganized. This place enables the formation of new hybrid identities, which must be informed by memory but are not bound by it. In conclusion, Morrison's storytelling is more than just literary; it is political. By emphasising subjective memory over sequential history, *Beloved* recreates Black female identity as dynamic, resistant, and resilient.

Discussion

In this study, a postcolonial feminist approach is applied to analyze *Beloved* and understand how the author Morrison portrays the complexities of trauma, resistance, and the reconstruction of identity in the lives of Black women. It validates many of the assertions found in the literature, and it also contributes to the continuation of the analytical discourse by presenting a more unified theoretical framework. Several recent articles, including those by Alizadeh Majdi (2023) and Shubaili (2025), have explored the psychological consequences of slavery, particularly the importance of trauma in shaping Black subjectivity. Although such studies are successful in showing how traumas endure in the structure of narratives and the development of characters, they tend to analyze the topic through a

psychological or cultural studies angle. Conversely, this study takes a political and a gendered approach to the trauma, which is viewed in the light of Spivak and her analysis of the subaltern and in that of hooks and her development of the gender silence. This repositioning shows that in the *Beloved*, trauma cannot be simply experienced but also brokered, reconfigured, and mustered into agency through silence, memory, and storytelling. Similarly, although Qayoom (2022) has investigated the politics of silence and voice, this study sheds new light on the topic by arguing that silence does not always serve as a symptom of oppression. Still, it can also be considered an act of defiance, especially in the journeys of Denver and Sethe. Drawing on hooks' reconceptualization of silence, this interpretation relies on her framework to envision silence as a feminist and postcolonial assault against systemic erasure.

In addition to this, the study employs theoretical approaches by Lewis (2024) and Kaur (2022) on the subaltern and hybridity, addressing how the subaltern perspective is applied to hybridity in *Beloved*. But whereas in previous studies connecting to these ideas, these concepts are being used separately, in this study, they are used in conjunction with the narrative theory to show that the experimentation form, in the book by Morrison, fragmented chronology, the changing voice and the ghostly presence, is a literary enactment of what Bhabha refers to the third space, the hybrid territory in which the past trauma is set against the narrative retrieval. However, most importantly, the study will fill one of the gaps identified in the literature used previously: no combined framework examines both trauma theory and postcolonial feminist thought. Placing the focus of Morrison's narrative aesthetics on the types of resistance and healing, the study goes beyond the idea of victimhood and agency. Instead, it theorizes identity reconstruction as a dynamic action based on storytelling, maternal remembrance, and lived silence. Overall, the discussion comments on why Morrison should be read as a contributor both as a reporter of Black suffering and as a theorist of opposition. She not only reimagines a literary space in which those formerly silenced by history go about re-fabricating history by retelling it, but she also re-founds it. This discussion reveals that *Beloved* does not merely serve as a commemoration of the underscoring events, but as a projection of a blueprint for the recovery of Black femininity in politically charged narrative practices.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has critically examined *Beloved* through a postcolonial feminist lens, shedding light on how Toni Morrison reconstructs Black female identity through the interwoven dimensions of trauma, resistance, and storytelling. Through the analysis, it has been illustrated that the narrative methods used by Morrison (which include fragmentation, spectral presence, and an absence of time) not only reflect psychological suffering but also shift trauma toward a sense of agency and voice. Sethe, Denver, and *Beloved* can be considered channels of absent narratives and deformed identities. Instead of providing the traditional redemption, Morrison establishes a literary environment where healing occurs through confrontation, remembrance, and the restoration of the personality. It confirms the political aspect of literature as a means of decolonizing memory, rewriting histories, and empowering marginalized voices, especially those of Black women.

In doing so, this study contributes to literary and cultural theory in four distinct ways:

- 1. Theoretical Integration:** This framework integrates postcolonial and feminist theories, utilizing Bhabha's concept of the third space, Spivak's notion of the subaltern voice, and hooks's idea of gendered silence.
- 2- Narrative as Resistance:** It changes the way we think about storytelling so that it's not just a way to recover memories, but also a way to fight political oppression and rebuild our identities.
- 3- Expanding the Canon:** It places *Beloved* within broader discussions of transgenerational trauma, thereby providing a framework relevant to other postcolonial texts.
- 4- Contemporary Relevance:** It gives us new ideas about how narrative fiction can be used in modern discussions about race, gender, and historical justice.

The study demonstrates how trauma, resistance, and identity reconstruction in *Beloved*, as depicted by Morrison, are integrated into a postcolonial feminist framework. Trauma not only affects individuals but is also a historic scar indebted to slavery and sexism. Initially conceived of as non-resistance, thus a form of resistance, silence, and then as a means to re-establish agency, storytelling can therefore be viewed as an essential technique of re-appropriating the black female identity.

This study helps fill the interpretive gap in earlier scholarship by bringing several theoretical elements of Spivak, Bhabha, and bell hooks to bear on the topic. Such a

narrative strategy turns into a political testament and literary experiment. *Beloved* is, therefore, not just a work of reckoning on history but a strong vehicle that the voiceless use to tell their story. This study contributes to the discussion further through a theoretically informed and textual examination of literature as a form of resistance and recovery.

Future research could build on these insights by extending Morrison's legacy into comparative, theoretical, and intergenerational contexts, highlighting the transnational relevance of trauma, memory, and resistance. Such directions ensure that *Beloved* continues to inspire new critical dialogues across disciplines and generations.

References

- Abu-Fares, A. (2021). Slavery of the past and trauma of the present: A study of Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. *British Journal of Philosophy, Sociology and History*, 1(1), 1-7. <http://dx.doi.org/10.32996/bjpsH.2021.4.11.1>
- Ali, A. (2024). Reconstructing Memory and Identity in *Beloved* by Toni Morrison: Application of Trauma Theory. *VFAST Transactions on Education and Social Sciences*, 12(4), 16-24. <http://dx.doi.org/10.21015/vtess.v12i4.2003>
- Alizadeh Majdi, R. (2023). *Evolving Perspectives and Themes in Toni Morrison's Beloved: Unraveling Spiritualism, Motherhood, and Memory*. Università Ca'Foscari Venezia. Master Thesis.
- Bhabha, H. (1994). The other question: Stereotype, discrimination and the discourse of colonialism. *The location of culture*, 2, 94-120.
- Farhan, R. N.(2024). Feminist Identity Repression in Victorian Society through Thomas Hardy's "The Mayor of Casterbridge." *Ikil Journal for Humanity Studies*, 5(1), 1101-1117.
- Guha, R., & Spivak, G. C. (Eds.). (1988). *Selected subaltern studies*. Oxford University Press.
- Hooks, B. (1990). Postmodern blackness. *Postmodern Culture*, 1(1).
- Kasbi Saiddat, M. (2022). Slavery, Trauma, and Motherhood in Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987). Black struggle and the situation nowadays. <https://uvadoc.uva.es/handle/10324/58694>
- Kaur, B. (2022). Creating Diversification through Hybrid Identities and Educational Encounters: The Power of a Third Space. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 22(4), 489-501. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/QRJ-02-2022-0032>
- Lewis, T. (2024). Haunting Histories and Subaltern Voices: A Critical Analysis of Toni Morrison's *Beloved* through Postcolonial, Feminist, and Intersectional Lenses.
- Mohammed, M. (2018). The Impact of Slavery in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*: From the Communal to the Individual. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, 7(6), 48-51. <http://dx.doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijalel.v.7n.6p.48>
- Mohanty, C. T. (1984). Under Western eyes: Feminist scholarship and colonial discourses. *Boundary* 2(12), 333-358. http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-1-137-07412-6_5
- Mongia, P. (2021). *Contemporary postcolonial theory: A reader*. Routledge.

- Narimonovich, K. N. (2024). Analysis of Toni Morrison's Works in Linguistics. *American Journal of Philological Sciences*, 4(12), 32-35. <https://doi.org/10.37547/ajps/Volume04Issue12-06>
- Islam, S. (2024). *Postcolonial power dynamics: establishing control and negotiating agency* (Doctoral dissertation, Brac University).
- Otuegbe, N. (2023). *Recalling trauma: the legacy of slavery and colonialism in contemporary black women's fiction*. University of Wolverhampton, Ph.d, Thesis.
- Qayoom, A. (2022). Reading reminiscence, trauma, and dissent: A critical study of *Beloved* by Toni Morrison. *The Review of Contemporary Scientific and Academic Studies An International Multidisciplinary Online Journal*, 2, (12). 1-5. <http://dx.doi.org/10.55454/rcsas.2.12.2022.004>
- Raynaud, C. (2019). Toni Morrison (1931-2019): Reaching toward the Ineffable. *Transatlantica. Revue d'études américaines. American Studies Journal*, 2(2019). 1-14 <https://doi.org/10.4000/transatlantica.14962>
- Said, E. W. (2023). Intellectuals in the postcolonial world. In *Postcolonialism* (pp. 29-46). Routledge.
- Shah, M. (2016). Toni Morrison's *Beloved* in the context of Bhabha's theory of hybridization. *International Multidisciplinary Research Journal*, 3(4), 66-72.
- Shubaili, F. (2025). *Black Motherhood as a Site of Power: Morrison's Exploration of Maternal Violence in Beloved, Sula, and God Help the Child within the History of Black Movements in the United States*. University of Exeter: Ph.D. Thesis.
- Smith, D., Kelly-Morris, K., & Chapman, S. (2022). (Re) membering: Black women engaging memory through journaling. *Urban Education*, 57(10), 1-26. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/00420859211003932>
- Spivak, G. C. (2023). Can the subaltern speak?. In *Imperialism* (pp. 171-219). Routledge.

اعادة بناء الهوية النسوية في رواية (Beloved) لتوني موريسون: تحليل نسوي ما بعد الكولونيالية للصدمات والمقاومة

م.م. سامر علوان مرجب

المديرة العامة لتربية الكرخ الاولى

وزراعة التربية



Almsamer2@gmail.com

الكلمات المفتاحية: النسوية ما بعد الكولونيالية . الصدمة. المقاومة. الصمت والصوت. اعادة البناء.

الملخص:

تتناول هذه الدراسة رواية (Beloved) لتوني موريسون من خلال عدسة نسوية ما بعد الكولونيالية، حيث تبحث في كيفية تمثيل الرواية لصدمة المرأة السوداء، والمقاومة، واعادة بناء الهوية في اعقاب العبودية. وتملئ الدراسة فجوة مهمة في الحقل الادبي، اذا تقدم فرصة لدمج مفهومي الارث الاستعماري والتمكين النسوي في سياق تفسيري موحد. وتسعى الدراسة الى تحقيق هدفين رئيسين: اولاً، تحليل كيفية تصوير الصدمة وتأثيرها على هويات النساء السود. ثانياً، دراسة الاستراتيجيات السردية التي تبني من خلالها المقاومة. وتضع الدراسة الرواية في سياق التشكيك في الخطابات التاريخية الكبرى ومنح الصوت لأولئك الذين تم اسكاتهم تقليدياً، مع التركيز على الذاكرة والصمت والحكايات كوسائل مقاومة.

وتعتمد الدراسة ي منهجيتها على تحليل ادبي نوعي يستند الى نظرية النسوية ما بعد الكولونيالية. ويستند الاطار التحليلي الى مفاهيم سبيفاك حول المهمشين (Subaltern) ومفهوم الهجنو لدى بهابها، بالاضافة الى الصمت الجندري كما تصفه بيل هوكس وقد تم اختيار مشاهد محددة من الرواية لتحليلها من حيث ترميزها الرمزي وتأثيرها في تطور الشخصيات وتمثيلها للصدمة وقضايا الفاعلية .

وتظهر النتائج ان الصدمة والصوت في رواية (Beloved) لا يعملان فقط كمؤشرات على المعاناة بل ايضا كمتغيرات معقدة عن التمكين وتوصي الدراسة الى ضرورة توسيع نطاق الدراسات المقارنة والمتعددة حول اعمال موريسون نظر لاستمرار اهميتها في الفكر النسوي ما بعد الكولونيالية المعاصرة.