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**The Traumatic Shadow and Memory  
In Toni Morrison's Beloved**

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## *Dedication*

I am grateful to:

My lovely parents

My sisters and brother

To all the members of my family

My teachers everyone by his/her name

My friends who stood by me : Housseem , Abd el Basset ,Ibrahim ,Abdel  
kader , Amine

Thanks to all of you for the efforts and the attention you paid to make this  
work successful.

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## **Abstract**

The aim of this research is to investigate trauma and the role of memory in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. Through her works, Morrison portrayed the African American lives during slavery. Morrison's depiction of characters illustrates the traumatic history of the Afro-Americans using their experience. In fact, there is a memory preserved in the conscience of the people, fulfilled with the painful events from their terrifying past. This work adopts Trauma theory as a theoretical approach to prove how the traumatic experience of the characters can affect their lives. This work is divided into three chapters. The first chapter is entitled "The Historical Background of Trauma Theory". This chapter checks the basic tenets of trauma theory, It also includes Freud's interpretation of trauma theory, This chapter also provides an understanding of contemporary trauma by Cathy Caruth. It also simplifies the use of the theory and permits its comprehension. The second chapter is entitled: "The Traumatic Experience of characters in *Beloved*" this chapter explores the traumatic experiences of the characters in the novel. The third chapter also deals with the textual study of *Beloved* including plot summary and setting and common themes.

**Keywords:** Toni Morrison ,*Beloved*, Trauma Theory , Memory , Slavery , Freud  
Cathy Caruth

## General Introduction

Literature serves as a gateway to learn the past and expand the knowledge and understanding of the world. In order to explore a literary text, it is important to investigate and study the context in which this same text was written. Literature and History are interrelated in terms of remembering past events, Through the reading of some literary texts that portrays historical events, readers' understanding is improved since it covers historical contexts which are based on someone's experiences.

The late twentieth century has witnessed eminent literary works which deals with human life experiences, some of these works were connected to characters' painful experiences that caused them many psychological disorders. Literature became a center of exploring the impacts of trauma. Trauma disciplines checks memories, introspection, retrospection, foreshadow flashbacks and awful remembrances that are colored by pain, wound and sufferings.

Contemporary Scholars as Cathy Caruth, Judith Herman, James Berger and others, have focused on the intersection of trauma and other cultural areas of study and discipline as the relationship history and literature which became one of the main intersections.

During the 20th century, many different social classes emerged and were divided into groups. This separation impacted the African American lives since they witnessed many tough experiences and bad condition that made them mentally unstable. Trauma as a theme has attracted the attention of American feminist writers who made this topic the center of their works. In fact, Many of African American

writers were interested in trauma because they already experienced some traumatic experiences as Toni Morrison , Maya Angelou and others.

Toni Morrison master piece *Beloved* is a great representation of this tough period of time. Morrison wrote this novel after having discovered a document which recounts the story of a slave woman named Margaret Garner, who was arrested for having killed one of her children. Rather than taking back her daughter to the dismal life of a slave, Morrison implicitly shows through the novel how African Americans were victims to slavery.

The aim of the research is to answer the following research questions: What are the traumatic events that the characters of *Beloved* have faced? What are the effects of trauma on the characters? How do characters turn victims? To answer these questions, a basic tenet of trauma theory is presented besides an analysis of the traumatic experiences of the characters in the book b referring to Trauma Theory.

It is hypothesized that the three female characters Beloved, Sethe and Denver have experienced the consequences of slavery and racism like violence against the body. It also hypothesized that violence and its effects lived with the characters and created instability of mind. The last hypothesis is that the character Denver represents the emotional effects of trauma and the ghost of Beloved shows the psychological impact of trauma on Sethe.

This research work is divided into two chapters. The first chapter is entitled "The Historical Background of Trauma Theory". This chapter checks the basic tenets of trauma theory, It also includes Freud's interpretation of trauma theory. This chapter will also provide an understanding of contemporary trauma by Cathy Caruth. It will also simplify the use of the theory and permit its comprehension. The second chapter is entitled: "The Traumatic Experience of characters in *Beloved*", this chapter\_it will explore the traumatic experiences of the characters in the novel. It also deals with a textual study of the novel including plot summary setting and dominant themes.

# **Chapter One**

## **The Historical Background of Trauma Theory**

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## Introduction

The African Americans had witnessed painful experiences that affected their social lives and communities. Due to the dominant white supremacy in the American culture, African Americans were considered as marginalized and unwelcomed in the white American society. The racial prejudice and being under control of white people pushed them to look for solutions for the unfair treatment by the American white people and to prove that the skin color does not matter to be superior than other social groups since they all have capacities and competences. In 1950s, the Black American writers began to use their literary works to improve themselves over the whites and to obtain equality and justice.

Slavery, Racism and violence were the main issues that African Americans had endured during the 20<sup>th</sup> century in their writings. Many of women writers tackled the painful period that the blacks faced like Toni Morrison who is one of the pioneer writers to deal with the issues of slavery and maltreatment of the African Americans. Her master piece *Beloved* is considered as one of the famous literary works to portray the painful experience of the African Americans during slavery.

Slavery impacts affected characters' mental status in different ways. However, Trauma as a consequence is a centre concern in *Beloved*. Sethe, Beloved and Denver were the victims of maltreatment or witnessing the painful trauma of others. Morrison use of remembering and re-remembering processes of the African Americans past to open an important questionings about the horror and painful experiences of Black community during slavery.

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## **1.1 An Overview of Trauma Theory:**

the word Trauma is derived from the Greek word “τραῦμα (traûma), literally means: wound, injury, damage, it is caused by an external threat or violence .Nowadays the word trauma is also used to describe a shocking event that a person endures and its effects on the mental and the physical status of the victims . According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the word trauma can be defined as “a deeply distressing experience › emotional shock following a stressful event.”, also it can be “physical injury” (Oxford Dictionary, 2009, 1534) .

Accordingly. Shoshana Ringel and Jerrold Brandell confirms that Trauma Theory as a field of study was first investigated by Jean Martin Charcot the French neurologist,: “it was the French neurologist, Jean Martin Charcot, who was one of the first physicians to investigate the relationship between trauma and mental illness.“ (2012)His main concern was to study “Hysteria” which is psychical wound that mostly touches women and the mental status of individuals who experiences painful incidents. He theorized that “the causes of hysteria should be traced back to a psychological malfunctioning rather than to a physical one. “(Ringel and Brandell, 2012).

The late 19th century have known a numerous works and articles concerning trauma theory. Janet, Breuer and Freud agreed on : “independently concluded that hysteria was caused by psychological trauma” (Ringel and Brandell, 2012, 2). In which they agreed that trauma damages the mental status of the victim as well as the physical parts of his body. Their study was based and influenced by Charcot findings

Generally, contemporary Trauma theory investigation started in the early 1990's influencing human studies, Trauma is a psychological and mental damage which leaves on the

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individuals a deep and sometimes a permanent effects. This field of investigation turns back to the domain of psychoanalysis , psychiatry and sociology. According to Linett it can be defined as :

Contemporary theories seem to agree on a definition of trauma interms of overwhelming life experiences that shatter the social andpsychological sense of self and precipitate existential crisis,characterized byflashbacks, nightmares and other reexperiences,emotional numbing, depression, guilt, autonomic arousal, explosive violence or a tendency to hypervigilance. (160)

In other words, He meant that trauma is usually referred to a psychological state of the individual who becomes a victim of terrifying incident for example; Family problems, accidents, war, rape...etc, an extreme anxiety, sorrow, or shock after a negative event can also change his behavior, Victim's behavior will start changing; he starts doing something unusual and getting flashbacks of what happened to him/her, and having nightmares also. Trauma differs among individuals, from a situation to another and from a circumstance to another as well.

The meaning of the term trauma has also been taken from a "stress or blow that may produce disordered feelings or behavior" to a "state or condition produced by such a stress or blow" (Erikson184),furthermore Van der Kolk clarified the nature trauma when he asserted that "Traumatization of occurs when both internal and external resources are inadequate to cope with external threat" (393) which means that due to various internal and external features, the mental status of human will be a victim to match with the external incidents that may damage the mind .Lenore Terr contends that: "psychic trauma occurs when a sudden, unexpected, overwhelming intense emotional blow or a series of blows assaults the person

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from outside. Traumatic events are external, but they quickly become incorporated into the mind” (8).

Trauma theory studies literary and cultural texts to provide new significance to the real world. This study claims that trauma causes the shock; and this leads later to the identity destruction. Moreover, Trauma syndromes give a wide understanding of the shocking events impacts on individuals that they faced in life such as violence, rape, abandonment and their impacts on their relationships. Trauma theory helps its survivors to show trauma effects and anxiety and understand the value of knowing these effects. People get traumatized when they face shocking and frightening events in their life and they get hurt by others not necessarily something.

Trauma will be viewed theoretically. It is a useful and helpful tool for researchers and even psychoanalysts to expose the symptoms and impacts of those traumatic experiences.

### **Other Perspectives in Trauma Theory :**

Trauma theory is wide field of study . It can be investigated from different angles of research. socially; trauma theory is a study case for many sociologists in which they dealt with the effects of traumatic incidents on the social life of the victims and their behavior , for example Jeffrey C. Alexander In his book Trauma: A Social Theory (2012) develops a social theory of trauma and uses it to work on investigations into social suffering around the globe. In another hand , during the 19 th AND 20 th century the world had witnessed many events that changed the Balance of the world , Vietnam war and the Holocaust, 9/11 as an example affected the political , cultural and the social life of the Americans people , many of them were victims of the traumatic incidents that they have seen or be its victims . Yet, many experts in the field of sociology and history referred those incidents to historical effects of imperialism and colonialism as in Afghanistan and Iraq also globalization that America once

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was part of .Nowadays, trauma theory became a center of investigation for many contemporary writers, poets, novelists..... , numerous literary works concerning trauma theory was adapted to show up the unbearable truth and facts that may the victims hide .Cathy Caruth , Judith Herman and others are considered as new wave of researchers to study trauma upon the literary works through using the Freudian theories of trauma as reliable source to explorer the traumatic incidents in the works .

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## **1.2 Trauma as Psychological Approach :**

The psychological trauma was firstly studied by Charcot, it was known as hysteria as he defined it , it was unknown disease before his attempt to study its characteristic “hysteria had been considered a disease with incoherent and incomprehensible symptoms.” (Herman, 1992) . Belatedly Charcot’s students Janet and Freud conclude that the symptoms of hysteria were because of psychological trauma . Freud is adapted a numerous of theories concerning trauma , those works were considered as helpful tool to analyze and explore the literary texts , Cathy Caruth, Judith Herman , Lacapra and others were deeply influenced by Freudian psychoanalysis as it is mentioned in their works .

### **1.2.1 Freud's Interpretation of Trauma Theory**

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) is the founding father of psychoanalysis studies, through his works he attempts to deal with psychological and mental Status and other theories that investigates the human Behavior.

In the late nineteenth century, Freud’s collection of articles that deals with psychological illness and other related ideas made him key figure in psychological studies. His study about hysteria and the trauma of sexual abuse (Freud, 1962) is considered as an emergence of contemporary trauma hypothesis. Nowadays, His works is conceived as a reliable source and tool to discuss and explore literary works, As Caruth said:

If Freud swings to writing to depict horrible experience, it is on account of writing, similar to therapy, is keen on the unpredictable connection amongst knowing and not knowing. What's more, it is at the particular time when knowing and not knowing cross that the dialect of writing and the psychoanalytic hypothesis of horrible experience exactly meet (3).

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Caruth confirms that the ideas of the painful experiences that writers mentioned in their writings now a days is connected to Freudian interpretation and thoughts of the traumatic experiences,

It also clarified that Freudian ideas offers an extensive explanations and database for scholars and psychoanalysts. "The idea of injury can be said to lie at the core of Freud's underlying disclosures thus to advise his most punctual psychoanalytic plans" (Forster262).According to Leys:"numerous specialists in the field of injury considers now jump at the chance to feel that Freud's work has been totally superseded [and] it will turn out to be certain that they themselves are beneficiary to troubles that must be comprehended through going up against, not denying, Freud's inheritance" (11).

Freud hypothesize that, Injury has psychological and mental sense because it deals with the effects of trauma on the Individual's psyche instead the body. In *Studies on Hysteria (1893)*, Josef Breuer, Freud argued that

we must point out that we consider it essential for the explanation of hysterical phenomena to assume the presence of a dissociation, a splitting of the content of consciousness. [T]he regular and essential content of a hysterical attack is the recurrence of a physical state which the patient has experience earlier".(

Van Der Kolk, Weisaeth et al 30)

in Their book " On the Psychological Mechanism of Hysterical Phenomena: Preliminary Communication,"(1893),Breuer and Freud Named the traumatic dissociation as "hypnotic hysteria" which involves "splitting of consciousness" or "double conscience" in which thoughts are fragmented and then taken off from normal waking consciousness. they also investigated its connections with Traumatic experiences .

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In 1962, Freud theorized that “a precocious experience of sexual relations . . . resulting from sexual abuse committed by another person . . . is the specific cause of hysteria . . . not merely an agent provocateur” (195). According to Freud, Hysteria is a main consequence of Sexual abuse at early ages.

In the 1880s, Freud and Breuer as well as Janet assumed that hysteria is a result of psychological trauma. They clarified that individual’s reactions to traumatic shocks causes the instability of mental status and a Hysterical outcome. Janet termed it “dissociation.” According to Janet, “dissociation manifested in hysterical symptoms” (Herman, 1992)

Particularly, Freud Moved from the term “seduction theory” to ”conflict theory” In which he claimed that not the exterior trauma remembering is the reason that caused hysteria but it is about the unwanted genre of sexual and aggressive actions. “. . . . whereas Freud privileged intra psychic theory and fantasy over external trauma, he did suggest that it was possible for external trauma to influence the patient’s state of mind”(Diamond 278). Moreover, in “Beyond the Pleasure Principle”, Freud points that “traumatic neurosis is a kind of repetition of compulsion”(1920), he claims that trauma is repetitive process that haunts sporadically the stability of the mind.( Van Der Kolk, Weisaeth et al)

Freud’s *Moses and Monotheism* is considered as one of Freud's finest achievements, a source that is very important to analyze and investigate the cultural phenomena, collective identities, collective memory, or national traumas. So many books and articles have been published on it . as an example Cathy Caruth's *Unclaimed Experience. Trauma, Narrative, History* (1996). His book is trusted reference to investigate the traumatic experiences in beloved as an example and its impacts on the characters that are depicted in the literary works these present days

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## 1.2.2 Caruth's Contemporary Trauma Understanding:

Cathy Caruth (born 1955) is one of the key figures of Trauma Theory analysts, Caruth is a professor specialized in Humane Letters and Comparative literature at Cornell University, Robert Jay Lifton, M.D. describes her as “one of the most innovative scholars on what we call trauma, and on our ways of perceiving and conceptualizing that still mysterious phenomenon.”

Nowadays, Trauma theory became an eminent topic to explore. Caruth is one of the pioneer scholars who explored trauma theory. Tracing Back from Freudian psychoanalysis model, Caruth discussed trauma theory as a main concern; in her popular *book Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* claimed:

“If Freud turns to literature to describe traumatic experience, it is because literature, like psychoanalysis, is interested in the complex relation between knowing and not knowing, and it is at this specific point at which knowing and not knowing intersect that the psychoanalytic theory of traumatic experience and the language of literature meet.”(3)

Many contemporary writers took his articles as reliable source to investigate literary works that are concerned with historical trauma and tragic memories. Cathy Caruth as one of Freud followers adopted the Freudian Psychoanalysis of trauma,

"trauma theory is one of the areas today in which this survival is precisely taking place, not only in the assured-ness of its transformation and appropriation by psychiatry but in the creative uncertainties of this theory that remain, for psychiatry and psychoanalysis, in the enigma of trauma as both destruction and survival, an enigma that lies at the very heart of the Freudian insight itself" (59)

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Cathy Caruth described trauma as “ a shocking event that the mind is unable to adequately process as it takes place and which is thus not really felt to have happened” (17) That means that Trauma happened when the individual’s mental status cannot handle what occurs as an effects of a trauma.

In Caruth’s point of view, Trauma seems to be “much more than a pathology, or the simple illness of a wounded psyche: it is always the story of a wound that cries out, that addresses us in the attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available” (1996) We understand from Caruth definition that trauma attempts to surface the hidden truth of the traumatic experiences , Beside investigating the traumatic neurosis of Freud, Caruth works deals with historical and communal background of the literary works .

Caruth traced back the trauma concept meaning to the Greek term trauma ‘wound,’ However, It is indicated to the damage that hits the individual’s body, Drawing from Freud hypothesis is, trauma is understood as “a wound inflicted not upon the body but upon the mind” (3) Through adopting Freud interpretation of trauma theory, Caruth asserts that Trauma Touches the individual’s state of mind as well as his body.

In term of history; Caruth clarified that History can be defined “Double-Telling” and which is helpful tool in trauma narratives and retelling the Painful Historical experiences, “It is the inextricability of the story of one’s life from the story of a death, an impossible and necessary double telling, that constitutes historical witness” (1996).As Caruth claims in her “*formulation of constructing*“ what we are in trauma, identity/history can be formed through our own recognition of and our own implication in each other’s traumas so we may form an ethical relation to the real bursting from the wound that cries out.”She assumes that identity construction can be connected to each other traumas in which we built ethically connection to the real reason of Trauma’s bad impacts.

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Caruth argues that “indeed at the specific point at which knowing and not knowing intersect that the language of literature and the psychoanalytic theory of traumatic experience precisely meet.”(3) In terms of the link between narrative literature and the Freudian Psychoanalysis, Caruth confirms that the Freudian psychoanalysis can be a useful tool to investigate the traumatic experience in contemporary literary works.

Caruth contends that “trauma is not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual’s past, but rather in the way that its very unassimilated nature—the way it was precisely not known in the first instance—returns to haunt the survivor later on”(4) she points that trauma is not referred to individuals’ violent past only, but it is an unknown and unusual phenomenon that may hit the mental status stability again. Tracing back from the Freudian Hypothesis, Caruth asserts “that trauma seems to be much more than a pathology, or the simple illness of a wounded psyche: it is always the story of a wound that cries out, that addresses us in the attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available”(4) Caruth confirms that trauma is much more than injury that an individual suffers. According to her, trauma can surface the hidden facts and realities that are tied to personal traumatic experiences.

“Trauma is tied up with the trauma of another” (8) according to Caruth, trauma can be related to other individuals of the same community. Furthermore, the tragic events that individuals endured may cause periodic hallucinations and other symptoms that cannot be tied to the human self control. “An overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often uncontrolled, repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena”.(57-58)

“As it is generally understood today, post-traumatic stress disorder reflects the direct imposition on the mind of the unavoidable reality of horrific events, the taking over of the mind, psychically and neurobiologically, by an event that it cannot control”(58) Moreover,

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Caruth clarified the term Post Traumatic Stress Disorder as “PTSD seems to provide the most direct link between the psyche and external violence and to be the most destructive psychic disorder”.(58 )Caruth Discussed the Link between the tragic experiences That is caused by an exterior cruelty and the destructive impacts on Individual’s psyche. She also pointed that Trauma is not a destructive tool only but it can be a reason to survive, “Trauma is not simply an effect of destruction but also, fundamentally, an enigma of survival” (58). Additionally, Caruth investigated as well how a can traumatic event impacts individual’s life through many frequent destructive syndromes. “In modern trauma theory as well, there is an emphatic tendency to focus on the destructive repetition of the trauma that governs a person’s life”. (63)

As modern neurobiologists point out, the repetition of the traumatic experience in the flashback can itself be retraumatizing; if not life-threatening, it is at least threatening to the chemical structure of the brain and can ultimately lead to deterioration”.(63) it is also clarified The frequent flashback as consequence of a traumatic even can also traumatize again individuals .in addition, it may damage the brain Structure. On account of Caruth understanding “Trauma is described as the response to an unexpected or overwhelming violent event or events that are not fully grasped as they occur, but return later in repeated flashbacks, nightmares, and other repetitive phenomena”(91)) Drawing from the previous definition , Caruth explains that trauma causes frequent damage that traumatized people suffer from , it also signifies that it is unpredictable and difficult to pursue ,Its mental status that impacts the psyche and causes pain and illusion

.Caruth notes that; "the event is not assimilated or experienced fully at the time, but only belatedly, in its repeated possession of the one who experiences it" (4).According to Caruth , trauma can be defined by relating it to the scope of the traumatic experience . According to Caruth trauma is "the return of the repressed and a sense of absence". (55) Cathy

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Caruth points also that "trauma is not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual's past, but rather in the way that it's very unassimilated nature- the way it is precisely not known in the first instance- returns to haunt the survivor later on"(10) Caruth meant that the hidden emotions and memories will back and appear to pursuit and hit the psyche and causing pain. Unpredictably, the shock of painful experience will resurface and make the victims remember again their tragic incidents. However, the symptoms of trauma on the traumatized people's psyche is frequent they may overcome the present situation but it will return later to haunt them once again.

Caruth explained that "what returns to haunt the trauma victim is Freud's primary example of trauma is not just any event but, significantly, the shocking and unexpected occurrence of any accident" (12). Also, in her book "Unclaimed Experience", she argues that "trauma is not simply an effect of destruction but also, fundamentally an enigma of survival" (60). What Caruth meant is that trauma can be constructive since it gives the power to sufferers to fight and get through it. In another hand, it can be destructive because it haunts the stability of human mind.

Trauma theory is field of investigating that had been the interest of many psychoanalysts, scholars and other literary critics through different techniques. As theoretical approach, trauma theory conducts behavioral and moral studies that can affect the human psyche and ethics; it is adapted and adopted in many literary works during the 1990s by Caruth, Caruth is one of the key figures of scholars and theorists to explore trauma theory. Caruth works are considered as standing point to trauma theory progress. Through psychoanalytical texts; she managed to interpret and investigate the trauma theory by using other scholar's thoughts, Caruth is considered as one of the pioneers scholars who paved the way to the development and at first the emergence of the trauma theory field of study along

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with other scholars as: Dominick Lacapra and others, they gave the birth to trauma theory since they participated in one way or another to the progress of this field of research.

## **1.3 Trauma as Historical approach:**

Historical trauma can be defined as the trauma of the collectivity in which we are all implicated in each other's trauma. As it is argued by Cathy Caruth "History, like trauma is never simply one's own, that history is precisely the way we are implicated in each other's traumas" (24) . Accordingly ,Brave Heart and DeBruyn introduced it as : " Historical trauma refers to a complex and collective trauma experienced over time and across generations by a group of people who share an identity, affiliation, or circumstance" (1998)in which he clarified that trauma can be passed through time by people who belongs to the same community

Historical trauma can be experienced by “anyone living in families at one time marked by severe levels of trauma, poverty, dislocation, war, etc., and who are still suffering as a result” (Cutler, n.d.2014)

Historical trauma is cumulative and collective. The impact of this type of trauma manifests itself, emotionally and psychologically, in members of different cultural groups (Brave Heart, 2011).

Gregory Phillips talks about two areas of historical trauma . firstly, He talked about "Cumulative trauma is subtle and the feelings build over time, for example racism." in which he clarified that trauma can surface again as a reaction to racism and the other one " Inter-generational trauma – if trauma is not dealt with adequately in one generation, it often gets passed down unwittingly in our behaviors and in our thought systems... For example, if you want to heal children and youth, you have to heal yourself as well to break the cycle" he

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points that trauma can be transmitted from generation to another through behavioral and thinking systems

Historical trauma is used to present the shocks on the communities all over the world. In addition, it also points to events and experiences that many people consider traumatic. Due to the Holocaust as tragic experience, Historical trauma emerged as a field of study; however slavery was also described by the historical trauma, in which it was based on African American's experience at slavery.

Nowadays, The Black people contemporary generations still affected by slavery, Historical trauma is an intergenerational and generational traumatic experience that can be experienced through familial generations. Moreover, It is noted that cultural groups and communities who share a history full of violence, oppression and slavery can also be described by historical trauma. In another hand, cultural trauma is generational because it touches specific cultural group through multiple generation's not specific individuals.

Keisha Ross defined historical trauma as

Historical trauma is most easily described as multigenerational trauma experienced by a specific cultural group. Historical trauma can be experienced by “anyone living in families at oneTime marked by severe levels of trauma, poverty, dislocation, war,etc., and who are still suffering as a result. (1)

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It is also called intergenerational trauma because it refers to collectivities and has continual effects through generations. It is not like a personal trauma, but it rather goes from generation to generation.

As a collective phenomenon, those who never even experienced the traumatic stressor, such as children and descendants, can also be traumatized and be lately some signs and symptoms of trauma will appear as a reaction to their psychological status. To exemplify African-American have experienced many types of discrimination, racism, race based segregation, slavery and violence that leave a deep pain. The Black community members were sufferers to micro aggressions, which are according to Michaels: “events involving discrimination, racism, and daily hassles that are targeted at individuals from diverse racial and ethnic groups.” (2010)

It is also noticed that slavery and colonialism and other features were the main reasons that cause those Stressors which led to Impoverished black Communities . there were many impacts on the norms of living among them.

### **1.4 Trauma as Sociological Political and Cultural Dimension:**

Trauma theory is wide field of Study. It can be investigated from different angles of research. socially; politically and cultural, trauma theory is a study case for many sociologists in which they dealt with the effects of traumatic incidents on the social life of the victims and their behavior , for example Jeffrey C. Alexander In his book *Trauma: A Social Theory* (2012) develops a social theory of trauma and uses it to work on investigations into social suffering around the globe ,Greg Forter also asserts in “Colonial Trauma, Utopian Carnality, Modernist Form: Toni Morrison’s *Beloved* and Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things*,” : “Forter argues that novels employ modernist techniques to convey a concept of trauma, contrary to the traditional psychoanalytical view, in which remembrance of the past

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does not produce a repetitive foreclosure of knowledge but rather produces understanding and healing within a modern postcolonial reality.” (Balaev 2014) Forter clarified that the contemporary literary works has used a new techniques to transmit and to convey trauma theory in a different mean; also he mentioned that remembering process of the traumatic past clarifies and shows up the hidden truth in the modern society .

. Forter’s argues that the psyche is connected to historical features: “insist the condition of traumatic healing is a *social* amelioration by which the causes of past injuries cease to be operative in the present.” (Balaev 2014)as an example, Morrison works assumes importance of detect the traumatic past and the ideal future in which is a process fixed the social study of the sufferers.

Irene Visser mentioned in , “Trauma and Power in Postcolonial Literary Studies,” that :” anthropological and sociological theories that emphasize the cultural-historical specificity of individual and collective trauma are better suited to analyze postcolonial literature because these theories allow for a differentiated understanding of trauma in indigenous narrative traditions. Employing postcolonial, sociological, and anthropological theories” (Balaev 2014).

Visser assures that sociological theories that deal with the cultural and the historical of individuals and the collective trauma are trusted tool to explore and investigate postcolonial literary works in term of providing different interpretations of trauma concept. Moreover Visser confirms that : “collective trauma, even when creating disruption, can also enable social solidarity and cultural identity rather than inherently fracturing the self.” (Balaev 2014) in Visser’s understanding, collective trauma can be a motive to enable social unity and solidarity rather than self destruction.

# **Chapter One: The Historical Background of Trauma Theory**

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## **Conclusion**

This chapter is entitled The Historical Background of Trauma Theory, it has covered a General back ground of trauma theory, It has also Contained an overview of trauma theory including its emergence and famous scholars to deal with trauma theory. Also, the first chapter deals trauma as psychological approach In which Freud's interpretation of trauma theory is presented In another part entitled Caruth's contemporary trauma understanding, a definition of trauma theory according to Cathy Caruth understanding is mentioned.

As far as history is concerned the historical trauma concept has been introduced in trauma as historical approach, the definition of Historical Trauma is also investigated to discuss the historical trauma and its relation to slavery and history and to discuss other dimensions of trauma theory .Furthermore , a Sociological political and cultural Dimension is added to used to give more understanding to other dimensions of trauma theory .

# **Chapter Two**

**The Traumatic Experience in Beloved**

## Chapter two: The Character's Traumatic Experiences

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### Introduction

*Beloved*, written by Toni Morrison, is a historical fiction that deals with the African-American trauma of slavery. Toni Morrison wrote this novel after having discovered a document telling the story of a slave woman named Margaret Garner, who was arrested for having killed one of her children. Rather than taking back her daughter to the dismal life of a slave, Margaret Garner used a butcher knife to kill her young daughter after their failure to cross the borders to Ohio which is a free state and Federal marshals storms to Kite's home. Garner also tried to kill her other children, but she did not succeed. Morrison implicitly shows throughout the novel the psychological effects of slavery on the individual.

Toni Morrison uses several literary techniques that combine modernist and postmodernist innovations (Torres 180). It is clearly stated through her use of the stream-of consciousness technique and flashback to make sure that the reader goes through the stories of the past from various angles. *Beloved* is a novel that highlights the physical and psychological harm among characters as a cause of the historical and cultural traumatic effects of slavery. Thus, trauma theory is considered as crucial source to study and investigate the traumatic experiences of the characters, and show how they turn into undesirables on account of their experiences. The purpose of this paper is to reveal how characters experienced trauma using the perspectives of trauma theory, as such theory was underscored by the pioneers of trauma studies like Cathy Caruth, Jefferey .C Alexander, Michelle Balaev, Judith Herman and Ron EyermanThe latter tackled trauma theory from different points of view:

## **Chapter two: The Character's Traumatic Experiences**

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psychological, historical, social or cultural. They have created the link of trauma theory with humanities using their own adaptations to fit cultural and literary studies.

### **2.1 The Character's Traumatic Experiences in *Beloved* :**

Through Toni Morrison's master piece *Beloved*, we comprehend that the novelist efficiently evokes the trauma of both individuals and collective pain of community as well. Through analyzing the traumatic experiences of the characters, Morrison foreshadows the shocks and terrifying life experiences of African Americans after the American Civil War (1861–65). Most of these experiences cannot be easily recounted. Traumatized people could no more recount their tragic memories, in such a way they were obliged to bury their painful memories. This repression causes past separation and consequently it is a reason to self destruction and shattering. Particularly, narration in *Beloved* consists of the characters' flashbacks and its central plot is about their memories which are affected by traumatic experiences.

*Beloved* as the voice of black trauma bears the memories of slavery and the emotional sorrow that blacks have suffered from. *Beloved* characters were mostly victims of many traumatic incidents in their lives. However, many techniques and methods of tortures and assaults were used such as whipping, shackling and sexual assaults and others. Chains, shackles and collars were easy to treat humans like animals imposing them to wear the latter by force.

## Chapter two: The Character's Traumatic Experiences

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In *Beloved*, as a victim of enslavement Paul D was badly treated, he was forced to wear a piece in his mouth which he used to hide because deeply embarrassed. When he recounts to Sethe his memories. Sethe's mother was also a casualty since she was obliged to wear an ear sign to show that she is owned she was treated as an animal.

Morrison restores the painful traumatic experience on the body and soul. The terrifying experiences they have resisted caused a detachment of their consciousness. Accordingly, Balaev argues that: "*extreme experience directly produces a dissociative consciousness*"( 2014) Through studying *Beloved's* characters lives we may be affected by their shocking incidents. The protagonist of *Beloved*, Sethe is one of the many victims of trauma who experiences much cruelty in her life. The school teacher flogs her pitilessly, also she was violently beaten to death regardless of her pregnancy. Furthermore she has been whipped with rawhide whips that causes cicatrix on her back. She holds "*the schoolteacher made one open up my back, and when it closed it made a tree*" (20).

The scar of chock cherry tree on her back also could remind of her mammary rape. She was a victim of mammary rape and simultaneously she perpetrates infanticide. Thus, the monstrous schoolteacher made her go through outrageous events, she became insane and out of control at the moment she sets eyes on him and imagines her daughter might witness the same trauma in the future. Due to her previous shock, Sethe lost self-control and became unconscious. Sethe's trauma of rape consequently causes her husband's dementia. Halle became insane when he knows of his wife rape. Cathy Caruth states that "*one's own trauma is tied up with the trauma of another*" (14). Halle attended the shocking incident of torture and could not

## Chapter two: The Character's Traumatic Experiences

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interfere. Paul D recounts to Sethe that her husband has psychological distress and was broken by something he does not know, "*whatever he saw go on in that barn that day broke him like a twig*" (81). Halle became made for hiding Sethe's mammary rape; he suffers from psychic and internal trauma as well. Sethe states: "*there is also my husband squatting by the churn smearing butter as well as its clabber all over his face because the milk they took is on his mind*" (83) This passage shows that her husband is overwhelmed by his repressed shock. Drawing from Barbara Schapiro's words "*traumatized by the rape of Sethe and the maternal violation that it also represents, Halle literally loses his mind—his self-hood shatters*" (206) Sethe's traumatizing experience also is a reason of her daughter Denver suffering and pain. An isolation and dissociation was caused by her mother's infanticide since she is scared to be killed by her mother as it was the fate of her sister Beloved, saying: "*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*" and "*I'm afraid the thing that happened that made it all right for my mother to kill my sister could happen again*" (242)

The infanticide crime of Sethe terrifies and traumatizes Denver to delirium, recurrent nightmares and hallucinations, when she tend to imagine that her mother is trying to kill her, "*she cut my head off every night*" (243). Her life is tied to her mother's remembering of her hideous past. On the other hand, she is emotionally overwhelmed by her mother's infanticide which is a reason of her emotional distress and anxiety.

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### 2.2 Slavery as Historical Trauma:

During Slavery, the black American community people were victim to many tragic incidents, Eyerman opined that slavery causes serious traumatic impacts on people. He stated: "the trauma in question is slavery, not as institution or even experience, but as collective memory, a form of remembrance that grounded the identity formation of a people" (1) So, what we can say is that Slavery impacts on traumatized people in their identity causing their detachment. Furthermore, Slavery is considered as historical trauma because its impacts are inherited by many generations of Black American people. As it is stated "*historical trauma refers to a complex and collective trauma experienced over time and across the generations*" (Brave Heart, DeBruyn, 1998). The repercussions of Slavery are generationally shared through biological, psychological, cultural or social means. It is defined as " Historical trauma (HT) is defined as cumulative emotional and psychological wounding across generations, including the lifespan, which emanates from massive group trauma (Brave Heart 2003)". Moreover, Enslavement appeared decades ago but still effects the generations of black Americans nowadays. Slavery is a reason to many other traumas such as psychological trauma, cultural and even social trauma. In *Beloved*, Denver was not a victim of slavery trauma; however she endured the terrifying experience of her mother and its effects through its present impression. As it is pointed by Young "*the contemporary members of the affected group may experience trauma-related symptoms without having been present for the past traumatizing event(s)*" (1997). Sethe grew up orphan, she was deprived of mother's love and committed infanticide by killing her daughter, and consequently she was not close to her daughter Denver.

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History is, in part, a collective memory, and like memory, is a highly malleable, reconstructive process (Antze & Lambek, 1996) Slavery is an atrocious collective remembering and a shock upon the African American community. It is considered as historical and national trauma for being once a terrific event and memory and a black page of American history and identity.

Drawing from Arthur Neal definition of the national trauma concept in his book *National Trauma and Collective Memory* as: "*according to its enduring effects, and as relating to events which cannot be easily dismissed, which will be played over again and again in individual consciousness, becoming ingrained in collective memory*" (1998) Slavery Still touches and affects the African American community, since it is a common memory whose its "enduring effects" are remarkable and cannot easily be buried .

According to Ron Eyerman: "*slavery is traumatic for those who share a common fate, not necessarily a common experience*" (14-15) Slavery is being traumatic when it comes to the retrospectivity of the traumatic events and terrifying memories for those who were direct victims of slavery like Sethe , Paul D, Baby Suggs and Halle in *Beloved* unlike Denver who is traumatized indirectly by her mother's traumas since she has no related reminiscence to slavery .

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### 2.3 Memory in *Beloved*:

When it comes to memory, Morrison built a narrative that co-exists with time, thus, the memory that brings the past to the present is apparent in *Beloved*. As the past was represented, memories of some characters are also pervading the novel. The time of slavery and violence against human qualities and values created others times for memory to remember. However, the main character, Sethe, was trying to repress the pain of rape and infanticide, meanwhile she talked about some memories, mourned and fought for healing. After all, the bad memories kept trapping her.

Morrison gave the experience of slaves a voice to speak the unspeakable. The character *Beloved* is the symbol of time that is utilized to strengthen the narrative. Meanwhile, the ghost of *Beloved* represented the memory of her mother, Sethe. Linking this to what has been mentioned earlier, *Beloved* seems to be holding all memories of slaves. In this passage, Sethe depicts to the ghost of her daughter, *Beloved*, and lives the whole memory in a chat:

She whispered to me, chewed me, and swam away. Now I have found her in this house. She smiles at me and it is my own face smiling. I will not lose her again. She is mine.

Tell me the truth. Didn't you come from the other side?

Yes. I was on the other side.

You came back because of me?

Yes.

You rememory me?

Yes. I remember you.

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You never forgot me?

Your face is mine.

Do you forgive me? Will you stay? You safe here now.

The mysterious appearance of Beloved, who was embodied at the age she would have been, raises questions and has a variety of functions. She is the ghost of the murdered child, but she also embodies an emanation of all the millions of slaves who perished in their journey to freedom.

The arrival of Paul D pushed her to mourn her painful past. She thought of healing that pain through remembering traumatic incidents:

“Maybe this one time she could . . . feel the hurt her back ought to. Trust things and remember things because the last of the Sweet Home men was there to catch her if she sank? . . .her brain was not interested in the future.

Loaded with the past and hungry for more, it left her no room to imagine, let alone plan for, the next day. (70)

The shattered mirror and the handprints on the cake were memories of infanticide. Even Beloved was a memory of a dark past in the form of a body. In relation to what is aforementioned about the extent of violence, the manifestations that Morrison emphasized about the symptoms of trauma included memories. The latter had the role of showing both persistence and power. Persistence was in reminding Sethe of what she had experienced, and power was in her strength and self-control in the future.

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*“Beloved could not take her eyes off Sethe [...] Sethe was licked, tasted, eaten by Beloved’s eyes”*. (57) One can simply link the reaction of Sethe here to the memory of the killed baby. Morrison, however, reflected the whole trauma of slavery and its effects and side-effects in such reaction. After all, Morrison described the baby Beloved as longing to the presence of her mother, Sethe. Even when Beloved yearned to hear Sweet Home stories from her mother, Morrison underscored the presence of Sethe through memory, simply to put, through remembering the past.

Memories are mostly bad for Sethe, for her past is painful. Yet, in her past with Beloved, *“she found herself wanting to, liking it”*. (58) When Beloved was present in Sethe's life, she could help her mother in forgetting her infanticide violence. (Field 2007) That good presence of Beloved created the best memory in Sethe's life that helped her to be out of the traumatic traces of her past and bad memories: *“I couldn’t lay down nowhere in peace, back then,”* Sethe was thinking and recalling her daughter’s death, *“now I can. I can sleep like the drowned, have mercy. She come back to me, my daughter, and she is mine”*. (204)

Sethe was leaving everything to satisfy the needs of Beloved and make her happy. She left her job and ended her relation with Denver. The latter thought that Sethe would murder her girl again. Sethe suffered through her attempts of slaking Beloved. Morrison captured the life of Sethe as revolving around her past. Some kinds of traumatic traces of Sethe's past had been then brought, and Sethe was remembering anything that was related to the present pain. Things were not related only to the infanticide crime, to Sethe, rather to the entire traumatic past of the Middle Passage and slavery.

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Beloved is a literary work that recover the literal and imagined past in terms of remembering the story of Margaret Garner and of the “Sixty Million and more” the story of the African slaves from Congo who died in “The Middle Passage” crossing the Atlantic ocean as slave trade , Morrison said in her conversation with Taylor-Guthrie :

“Some historians told me 200 million died. The smallest number I got from anybody was 60 million. There were travel accounts of people who were in the Congo ... saying, ‘We could not get the boat through the river, it was choked with bodies.’ That’s like a logjam. A lot of people died. Half of them died in those ships.” (In reference to the epigraph in Beloved).

Generally, the presence of lake and ocean and river in the African American literature has been always referred to memory and history as the story of Rufus who committed suicide from Washington Bridge into the Hudson River, he chooses to takes his own life rather than be a slave in the “New World.”. However In Beloved, Sethe’s escape from sweet home plantation to Ohio which is a free state was unsafe at the level of the river “infected by the Klan “(66) . Getting over the river safe will make Sethe’s journey and dream of freedom be close as Morrison notes: “As soon as Sethe got close to the river her own water broke loose to join it.” (83).

However, the novel shadowed various characters' memories. Beloved, throughout her appearance in the novel, used her memory while living her present. She recalled Sethe's past, flashes of African life, the Middle Passage and others' experiences of slavery. Pamela E. Barnett, a professor of African American studies clarified in her article “Figurations of Rape and the Supernatural in Beloved”, that:” *The narrative merges Beloved’s memory of death with the histories of women who*

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*endured the Middle Passage, where the institutionalized rape of enslaved women began*". (1997)

In the second section of the novel, Morrison portrayed Beloved's thoughts in an unpunctuated long passage. There were some gaps among phrases. A good phrase that reflects such presentation is: "*how can I say things that are pictures.*"(210) Therefore, the fact that no declarative memory can express such trauma as Morrison portrayed in the minds of Sethe and Beloved was reflecting Beloved's disability of expressing painful traces and remembrances into a fully understood narrative. For that she failed in making pictures become words.

### 2.4 The Notion of The Past

*Beloved* includes various notions about time. For the notion of past, it is almost reflected in the representation of slavery in general and examples of immortal traumas in terms of the different characters' pasts. Field noted that *Beloved*: functions as a trauma-recovery novel both through its revelation of profound sexual trauma and in its tracing of a path to recovery, for Sethe and Paul D specifically, and the black community more generally. Sethe's rape, whether actual or metaphorical, sets in motion the horrific events from which she still has not recovered as the novel opens; similarly, Paul D's rapes, along with the other terrible violence he has endured, have kept him from forming a life in the present, as he is constantly battling his traumatic past.

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The past, and remembering it prove that any traumatic violence can affect someone's present in which recalls many images of violence in the past. Therefore, Morrison demonstrated in the novel the time of slavery through which some figures had lived a bad past. The novel ends with mentioning the potential of the black community to survive and heal from the brutality of the time of slavery.

The novel as many other novels that documented history- has a remarkable aspect of Morrison's imagination in remaking history. For instance, the school teacher is a picture that foregrounds “disremembered, unaccounted” slaves. The novel shadows how slaves were bought and sold as goods. It emphasizes how slave-holders exploited the slaves' work for their advantages. What is worse –and well documented- was the ways of torturing and manipulating the bodies of slaves. Morrison imaged the cruel lynchings, children deprivation of their families.

The white people supremacy at that time was powerful any other voice. For that, many events and hidden facts were kept secret for a long time. Slavery caused a deep gap in the black community which suffered from devastation and the worst conditions ever that may face a human being.

Sima Farshid, an Iranian professor of fiction and drama who has published several articles about Morrison's *Beloved*, mentioned that Morrison's original conception of *Beloved* was due to a real event she encountered while working as an editor at Random House. Margaret Garner, an escaped slave who had murdered her infant child, was caught by slave catchers after having escaped and reached the North. Morrison artistically reconstructed that documented and witnessed appalling history.

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Karla Francesca Holloway the American Professor of English & Professor of Law, considered *Beloved* like many other critics as the imaginative reconstruction of the historical text of slavery. In addition, Perez-Torres mentioned that *Beloved* offers a radical revisioning and recounting of the official history that has frequently ignored the other history of slavery. Documenting the suffering in *Beloved* was a large step taken by Morrison. That step was to reveal hidden truths about the inhuman institution of slavery. Moreover, Raynaud argued that the novelist linked the history of the oppressed whose voices were unheard to the history of books. For that, Raynaud asserted that Morrison is one of the truest historians. (The Pursuit of Memory, 2014)

Morrison treated unspeakable incidents. That can be a narrative instance. That is, when time cannot be written because living its hard moments, then absence is evoked by manifestation. The novel defines time through its volatility: —I was talking about time. [...] Some things go. Pass on. Some things just stay” (35) The study of *Beloved* as a document or historical reflection can be diachronic and synchronic.

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# **Chapter Three**

**The textual Study of Beloved**

## Chapter three: The textual study of *Beloved*

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### Introduction

The twentieth century has witnessed eminent novels by different writers from different socio-cultural backgrounds. The same period of time has also brought several ideologies, colonial missions, racism and slavery, rape and violence. Due to colonization, racist acts, slavery and other factors, the human body and psyche is violated. That has encouraged novelists to deliver historical events to represent how the body can symbolize the trauma of a community in a particular time in history, Morrison implicitly shows throughout her master piece novel *Beloved* the psychological effects of slavery and how it affects individuals.

### Biography of Toni Morrison

The American novelist, Toni Morrison, was born on February 18, 1931, in Lorain, Ohio. Originally named Chloe Anthony Wofford was the second oldest of four children to George Wofford, her father, and Ramah, her mother. She grew up in the American Midwest in a family that possessed an intense love of and appreciation for black culture. They lived in an integrated neighborhood, for that she did not become fully aware of racial divisions until she became teenager. She read eminent works of European literature. She graduated from Lorain High School with honors in 1949.

Carrying on the interest in literature, Morrison studied English major in Howard University then in Cornwell University. She wrote her thesis on the works of Virginia Woolf and William Faulkner, and completed her master's degree in 1955. She then moved to the Lone Star State to teach at Texas Southern University. she taught at Howard from 1957 to 1964. In 1965 she became a fiction editor. From 1984 she taught writing at the State University of New York at Albany. Then, she joined the faculty of Princeton University in 1989.

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Her first novel, *The Bluest Eye* (1970) was about a victimized adolescent black girl who longs to have blue eyes. In 1973, her second novel, *Sula*, was published. Then her works started to be nationally and internationally attractive, *Song of Solomon* (1977), *Tar Baby* (1981), *Beloved* (1987), *Jazz* (1992), *Love* (2003), *A Mercy* (2008) and *God Help the Child* (2015). In addition, she wrote essays that were published with her speeches as well as children's books.

The main theme in almost all her novels is the epic black Americans' history, culture and experience. Her exquisite language and African-American characters describe her narratives. Moreover, she shows how the characters seek their cultural identity in a world full of injustice. Strength and texture are found in her works by virtue of her interweaving way of writing, use of fantasy, and poetic style. Morrison won the Pulitzer Prize in 1988 and the Nobel Prize in literature in 1993. She earned many accolades and honorary degrees like the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2012 by the African-American Obama. In autumn 2016, she received the Pen/Saul Bellow Award for her achievement in American Fiction.

### 3.1 Plot Summary and Setting

Sethe, a former slave who lives in the United States of America, during the reconstruction period, has a daughter who is named Denver and they live together near Cincinnati, in a rural space. Eighteen years ago, she has killed her two years old daughter Beloved and in sweet farm that belongs to a schoolteacher that was a white man who treated the enslaved in most cruel and blunt manners. She escaped from slavery and left the farm, giving birth to her baby Beloved along the way. Alone she affronted the bad conditions, as her husband who should give hand and support her left her down in a time where blacks and women particularly, were ill-treated and exploited in different ways under the law of the strongest; and sexual violation of black women went over all other infringements.

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During her journey leaving Cincinnati with her four children, wishing change their lives with freedom, her dream dropped when her old master succeeded to catch her again. Unable to deal with this matter; she took a decision to kill her children to rescue them from the ghost of slavery forever; but fortunately she succeeded to kill only one of them, who is Beloved the two years old baby. Due to this act her old master rejected her. She was in jail for a period of time but she was released to raise her children.

The ghost of Beloved started haunting her house eighteen years later. Her two sons Howard and Buglar left the house when they knew about the spirit. Baby Suggs the grandmother considered as being holy, dead of melancholy after knowing about what occurred to Sethe. After Baby Suggs death, a former slave who used to be with Sethe came back to Sweet Home; Paul D Garner exactly like Sethe lived the same painful past of slavery, and his harsh experience memories in bondage in a prison for blacks.

A girl named Beloved came to Sethe's house some months later, by the beginning Sethe, Paul D, and Denver welcomed her, to live among them, expecting that she is one of those who survived slavery. But her weird nature and behaviors showed clearly that she is a ghost; of the infanticide beloved that would be at the age of eighteen unless Sethe killed her at two years old. Beloved's aim is to decay Sethe's life and take it off or turning her fool.

Sethe and Paul D Garner fell in love of each other and their relation grew. However Beloved, is trying her best to bring it down, and separate them. Once Sethe started understanding Beloved's truth, she recognized that her daughter's spirit is back. Sethe began developing an obsession toward the ghost, and a love that grows bigger to atone for her guilt she committed eighteen years ago. The spirit insists to take revenge and stays in Sethe's

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house; where she becomes almost mad and depressed. However Paul D Garner knew about that she killed her own baby, and decided to leave her.

After a woman from Cincinnati heard about the ghost, it disappeared. Sethe faces troubles because of its presence; but even though it doesn't exist anymore, Sethe's psyche has been touched seriously. Paul D Garner returns to Sethe's house and swear to help her deal with her trouble to heal and forget what she affronted before and after *Beloved's* death and looking hopefully to the future. Sethe and her daughter Denver decide to build a new life with Paul D, a common life in which the attempt to coexist with their past without getting annoyed with and being optimistic about their future. Sethe is finally convinced that, whatever the past was hard and painful, we still have the chance of a better life in the future; we only need to work out and find a way to overcome our obstacles and be well.

### 3.2 Themes in *Beloved*:

Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987) tells the story of an African-origin community in 1800s Ohio. Morrison In this novel explored slave history from the perspective of ex-slaves, especially from Sethe's point of view. One of the main themes of *Beloved* is the issue of race and Loss and effects of slavery.

#### 3.2.1 Slavery in *Beloved*

Slavery as a central theme in Morrison's novel, her focus on it shows its importance, in the portrayal of the nineteenth century where slave narratives were present strongly. For instance, Harriet Jacobs wrote *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* in 1861. It was about the experience of a female slave. That novel, as some critics claimed, had later been reread by the twentieth century novel, Morrison's *Beloved*. More than reconstructing motherhood and sexuality, the second novel reconstructed the slavery in another narrative that broke the

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silence of the first one. Therefore, Morrison, after more than one century, revised and recreated what had been unimaginable.

In particular, constructing the slavery of black women seemed more subjective and interior in Morrison's *Beloved*. Morrison, in her book *The Site of Memory*, argues that “no slave society in the history of the world wrote more or more thoughtfully - about its own enslavement....But most importantly - there was no mention of their interior life.”(90-91) Through her book, it seems that memory and imagination were used to create such narrative of African American history of slavery. Martinez argued that Morrison's *Beloved*:

Calls the history of slavery back as a ghost Americans have buried in darkness. Part of the darkness, it suggests, is the limits of the American dream as first articulated in the Declaration of Independence: life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That articulation fails to include the ideal that human love be extended to all human beings, love in the sense of affirming and assisting the existence of the other for his or her own sake and for the sake of a just community.(Martinez 1)

Through many images, slaves were shown as being fragmented or empty of a self. Morrison portrays slavery as a kind of psychological death. Sethe's mother-in-law, Baby Suggs, for example, refers to slave life as making a home with —a self that was no self.

### 3.2.2 Loss in *Beloved*

During slavery, The African American women faces tough times .Loss was a mutual thing for them, according to the historian Peter Kolchin ,Forced separation of families was the most egregious interference in their lives , this separation was mainly prevalent in the south :

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Good intentions alone proved insufficient to protect slaves against the dictates of economic interest, anger, or plain thoughtlessness; there were simply too many instances when it made sense or was necessary for masters with the best of intentions to separate their slaves. Most slave owners may have disliked the idea of separating their people – and some refused to do so under normal circumstances – but when push came to shove, few put their slaves' happiness above their own self-interest. (125)

Slave trade was the main reason of family's detachment, in which they used to sale children mostly in order to take them far away of their parents. Michael Tadman argues that: *“in the upper South about one first marriage in three was broken by forced separation and close to half of all children were separated from at least one parent.”* (Kolchin 126) Sethe also was a victim of many losses, through the death of Baby Suggs After her illness and Howard and Buglar's two sons escape from home, But seethe loss is different from Tadman and Kolchin understanding since they are talking on forced separation and children trade during slavery, in contrast Sethe had experienced death after their freedom.

In Beloved, there are two different themes Can be relevant to Loss namely: Death loss , Flight Loss .

### 3.2.2.1 Death Loss:

Sethe grew orphan, she encountered her mother death at early age, Her mother was hanged by her master, for this reason she never really experienced mother's love and care and she did not want them to suffer the same. When Sethe ran away from slavery, she did not want the same for her children since nobody owned them anymore. However, she discovered that her old master wants to take her back to slavery, for this reason she killed her daughter. Her Baby girl death is the main loss for her since she did not want to see her daughter's return to slavery.

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Baby Suggs was also a victim of many losses; she lost all of her children beside Halle “*Sad as it was that she did not know where her children were buried or what they looked like if alive.*”(163)Baby Suggs’s Children were taken from her when they were young, so that she did not manage to remember them anymore:

The last of her children, whom she barely glanced at when he was born because it wasn’t worth the trouble to try to learn features you would never see change into adulthood anyway. Seven times she had done that: held a little foot; would never saw become the male or female hands a mother would recognize anywhere. She didn’t know to this day what their permanent teeth looked like; or how they held their heads when they walked. (121)

Professor Elizabeth Ann Beaulieu argues that : “*Enslaved women, when they were allowed to keep their children in close proximity, faced the problem of providing proper child care and forming maternal bonds with them because the system made no suitable provision for either.*” (Beaulieu60)Baby Suggs did not want to search for her Babies because of her Living conditions and slavery institution at that time.

### 3.2.2.2 Flight Loss:

Estrangement Loss was also a major theme in beloved; Sethe’s children Howard and Boglard fled the house and did not see them again. This detachment was not by force, but because of their free will. She thought that the reason is the baby ghost’s presence in the house, Denver realized that Baby Suggs’s murder is the reason behind their escape.

Moreover ,Sethe’s husband loss is another theme that Morrison alludes to in the novel , She thought he had died and that he had been arrested while trying to run away with her “*He wasn’t there. He wasn’t where he said he would be.*” (68) That’s why she fled alone to the free north. What she did not know, later Paul D told her that Halley was emotionally shattered by his wife rape and He could not get over it

## Chapter three: The textual study of *Beloved*

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Beloved death by the end was a tragic event, once again Sethe faced another sad loss, and the baby girl needed Sethe's care and attention since she felt lonely and rejected. In the other hand, Denver wanted to help her get rid of Beloved because she ruined her mother's life. Sethe was supported by the whole community to get Beloved out of the house. Beloved loss was considered for the first time good for Sethe and Denver. Beloved was treated as a problem for supporting slavery and its effects that came along with it and by getting rid of Beloved, they were getting rid of the problem.

### Conclusion

This chapter is entitled to the character's traumatic experience in *Beloved*, it is divided into three main parts. The first one covers the traumatic experience of characters in the novel, as subtitle in this part I dealt with slavery as historical trauma in order to give understanding of trauma theory through the novel. It also discussed Memory through *Beloved* to explore the untold stories of the African Americans. It is supported by a subtitle "the notion of the past" in which the painful experiences of the black Americans are presented. In the third part of this chapter, the textual study of *Beloved* including plot summary and setting was presented. The main themes of novel as slavery and Loss were discussed

## General Conclusion

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### **General Conclusion:**

Toni Morrison works depict all the pain and the overwhelming experiences that the African American endured during slavery. She has particularly focused on the oppression and supremacy of white American upon the black Americans. Morrison's famous works include *Beloved*, *The Bluest Eye* and *God help the Child*. They check the hidden reality of the tragic history of the African Americans.

Slavery, Rape, Racism and Violence are the major themes that Morrison mentioned in her master piece *Beloved* (1987) She concentrated on the traumatic effects of slavery among the Black community through portraying the painful experiences of her characters; she also depicted the abuse and cruelty that African American endured as slaves.

This research has studied trauma theory as it is represented in Toni Morrison's *Beloved* and in the light of Freudian hypothesis of trauma theory and Cathy Caruth understanding of trauma theory. This research applies trauma theory by adopting the Freudian psychoanalysis of trauma theory since it checks the psychological effects of traumatic incidents of characters.

We dealt in the first chapter with the historical background of trauma theory from which a general overview of trauma theory is presented. This chapter also gave a Freudian interpretation of trauma theory in which the different hypotheses along with an understanding of trauma theory by Cathy Caruth are also explained—As far as history is concerned, the historical trauma concept has been introduced, the definition of Historical Trauma is also investigated to discuss the historical trauma and its relation to slavery and history.

## General Conclusion

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The second chapter is divided into three main parts. The first one covers the traumatic experiences of characters in the novel, as subtitle in this part we dealt with slavery as historical trauma in order to give understanding of trauma theory through the novel. It also discussed Memory through *Beloved* to explore the untold stories of the African Americans.

In the third chapter, we presented the textual study of *Beloved* including plot summary and setting and major themes.

Through investigating the traumatic experiences of the characters and exploring the psychological and physical impacts of trauma, It is apparent that traumatized characters were victims of the same effects of trauma since they all suffered from instability of the mental status. Sethe , Beloved, Paul D and Halle were particularly the ones who suffered from the extreme effects of torture humiliation and violence on their psyche and body. Consequently through the analysis of characters' experiences we found that estrangement and separation were the major consequences of their trauma; we also noticed that some characters were disconnected and isolated in their community. We discovered that Sethe's daughter Denver is traumatized even though she did not witness the same tragic experience of her mother; she is indirectly traumatized and afraid because of the infanticide crime committed by Sethe.

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