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**RE-MEMORY AND THE HAUNTING OF SUBALTERN
IDENTITY: A POSTCOLONIAL ANALYSIS OF TRAUMA,
HISTORY, AND RESISTANCE IN BELOVED**



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Abstract

*This study provides a critical analysis of *Beloved* by Toni Morrison as a conceptual tool of re-memory and postcolonial theory of trauma and subaltern identity formation in the sense of how historical memory as a storytelling tool and a mental process reconstructs the lived experience of slavery. The study examines the ways in which Morrison disrupts linear historiography by introducing memory as fragmented, spatial and constantly recurring, and, in this manner, turns the past into a dynamic element that shapes the identity and consciousness of the present. The study uses a qualitative interpretive method to examine the way re-memory functions in the novel to articulate the collective trauma, retrieval of silenced pasts, and reconstruction of fragmented subaltern identities under the long-term effects of slavery. It also explores how the narrative strategies used by Morrison (nonlinear temporality, haunting, repetition, and symbolic embodiment) contest hegemonic colonial narratives and offer alternative ways of historical explanation based on lived experience, as opposed to archival recording. The results indicate that re-memory in *Beloved* is both a weight and a resistance mechanism, which allows the characters to face the oppressed past, as well as undergo psychological fragmentation and emotional discontinuity. The conclusion of the study is that the novel by Morrison is able to redefine the connection between memory, identity, and history by situating re-memory as an effective instrument of postcolonial resistance, ethical remembering and the recovery of subaltern voice within the literary narrative.*

Key Words : *emotional discontinuity, identity formation, literary narrative, postcolonial resistance, qualitative method, subaltern, trauma*

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Beloved (1987) by Toni Morrison is one of the seminal works in the discourse of postcolonial literature, especially in how it portrays the topic of historical trauma and memory as an embodied and inexorable force that cannot be erased. The novel recreates the history of slavery as a historical event rather than as a factual event that has been past but rather a psychological and cultural state that still defines identity in the post-emancipation era. The concept of memory in postcolonial theory is usually conceived of as a location of resistance to colonial amnesia, and the structure of narration in Morrison reflects this notion as fragmented time and re-memory, with the past haunting the present with the haunting intensity. According to scholars, the novel disrupts the linear history by making trauma cyclical and recurring thus disrupting the dominant discourse of history that seeks to silence out the voices of the slaves (Tokssoz, 2023). The haunting of *Beloved* is not just supernatural but is symbolic of the unresolved pasts that still haunt the establishment of solid

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identity. Consequently, the novel turns into a literary terrain in which memory acts as a source of burden and resistance and thus the fragmented consciousness of the postcolonial subject.

Subaltern Voices and the Repression of the Subject of History

In subaltern studies terms, *Beloved* is read as an effort to reclaim voices that have been subdued by colonial and slave narratives in history. The slaves in the novel are symbolic of subaltern subjects whose pasts have been conveniently omitted in the official archives and their memories are the sole means of historical bearing. The idea of a subaltern as put forward by Gayatri Spivak is especially applicable in this case as it questions the possibility of the marginalized speaking in its dominant discursive frameworks. Speech throughout the narrative is frequently disrupted, suppressed, or interrupted in the story by Morrison, which indicates the challenges of trauma language in the oppressive systems. The haunting effect of *Beloved*, as it is mentioned in critiques of the novel, signifies the re-emergence of the repressed slavery histories that cannot be silent (Lewis, 2024). It is in this light that this novel is seen as a counter-archive which recreates the subaltern identity not through institutional history but by means of embodied memory, narrative, and emotionality.

Haunting, Resistance, and Ethics of Remembering in Narrative by Morrison

The moral aspect of the memory of slavery is the key to the *Beloved* of Morrison, because haunting serves as a reminder of the past injustice and a curse that the characters have to overcome. The spectral presence of *Beloved* is the unresolved guilt, grief and the suffering of the enslaved ancestors that demand characters to face histories they seek to repress. The theorists of trauma also stress that the narrative presented by Morrison is not supposed to be a form of closure but an act of unceasing contact with the historical trauma in the form of moral witnessing (Samir, 2020). This haunting urges both characters and readers to realize the long-term impact of slavery and make memory a moral obligation and not a passive reminder. By so doing, Morrison reinvents the meaning of resistance as not just physical emancipation but also as the fight to reestablish narrative control over his or her own history. Finally, *Beloved* offers remembrance as a two-sided practice: it makes people heal by acknowledging the truth but at the same time, it re-exposes the wounds that history never had a chance to heal completely.

Hybridity, Liminality, the Postcolonial Subject in *Beloved*

In the postcolonial theoretical approach, *Beloved* can be interpreted as a story that disrupts the established constructs of identity by the idea of hybridity and liminality. The subjects in the novel are in a middle ground between the traumatic past of slavery and the uncertain opportunities of freedom that creates fragmented and shattered subjectivities. The theory of hybridity by Homi K. Bhabha can be of great use in explaining this state, as it emphasizes how the colonial past creates so-called third spaces in which identities are not determined but negotiated on a continuous basis. In *Beloved*, Sethe and other formerly enslaved people live in such in-between worlds where the past and the present are in contrast, and personal identity is defined by the memory and dislocation. The novel defies the chronological flow of historical events by introducing identity as an ever-changing process affected by the cultural trauma and mental discontinuity. This ambivalent hybridity is part of the wider postcolonial situation where people of the former colonies have to reconfigure the self within the residual forms of colonial violence (Bhabha, 1994).

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Subaltern Silence and the Borders of the Historical Representation

Whether the subaltern can indeed speak or not is the key issue in the interpretation of the narrative construction of *Beloved* where silence plays a crucial role as speech. The enslaved characters also find it difficult to express their experiences in the backdrop of the dominant linguistic and historical framework that was never intended to cater to their realities. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak posits that the subaltern is being deprived of a voice in the colonial discourse where he or she cannot voice anything, but rather the voice is mediated and distorted or erased by the forces of hegemony. This silencing is symbolized in the novel by Morrison as disjointed dialogue, fractured memories, ineffability of the trauma that cannot be articulated verbally. *Beloved* herself is turned into some sort of paradoxical character who represents a voice of the past and reminds us of its inability to be expressed. This contradiction shows the fact that historical violence does not just ruin lives but serves to ruin even the potential of writing such lives in an official historiography (Spivak, 1988).

Trauma, Late, and the Form of Unclaimed Experience

The portrayal of trauma by Toni Morrison in *Beloved* is consistent with the theory of trauma proposed by Cathy Caruth in her argument of a trauma being an unclaimed and late experience that recurs over time in partial ways. The trauma theory suggests that traumatic experiences are not completely absorbed during the time when they occur, on the contrary, they reappear in the form of intrusive memories which interferes with usual time and identity perception. Sethe is not entirely understood in a linear time context but comes back in the form of dreams, hallucinations and re-memory in the novel, through her slavery and infanticide. This lateness is a representation of the way in which trauma is stubborn to coherent narrative formations and instead it creates cyclical forms of recollection and repetition. This psychological structure is reflected in the narrative technique used by Morrison, who does not recognize the continuity of the narratives, but rather builds meaning by disrupting and fragmenting them. This spectral quality of the past in *Beloved* is therefore a manifestation of the current psychological aftermath of violence in the past (Caruth, 1996).

Statement of the Research Problem

Although the literary exploration of Toni Morrison and *Beloved* has been an extensively explored topic in scholarly literature, it seems that there is still a gap in the literature that requires a more dedicated and comprehensive examination of how re-memory as a narrative technique, a psychological process, and a means of postcolonial reconstruction of the subaltern self. The body of research tends to discuss trauma, memory, and identity as individual issues of analysis, without considering how Morrison, within the same narrative structure, interrelates these variables in a way that is coherent. This study thus fills the gap by critically analyzing the functioning of re-memory in various aspects of the novel, which form an individual consciousness as well as a collective historical perception. The issue is that little attention has been paid to how the fragmented nature of the narrative structure created by Morrison reconstructs repressed histories in addition to disrupting traditional ideas of identity and time. This paper attempts to fill in this gap with a full-fledged interpretation of *Beloved* as a text in which memory is not passive recollection but an active force of resistance, identity making, and historical reclaiming.

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

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Research Objectives

- To critically examine how *Beloved* by Toni Morrison is an expression of re-memory as a tool of reconstructing historical trauma, identity and subaltern experience in a postcolonial environment.
- To explore how re-memory in *Beloved* can be viewed as a narrative technique of sharing trauma, reclaiming suppressed histories and redefining fragmented identities during slavery and the post-slavery period.
- To explore how re-memory in *Beloved* by Morrison can be used to narrate historical trauma and subaltern identity formation in a postcolonial and critical literary approach.

Research Questions

1. What does *Beloved* by Toni Morrison suggest about re-memory as a means to re-construct historical trauma, identity and subaltern experience in the postcolonial world?
2. How does re-memory in *Beloved* serve as a narrative technique to tell the trauma, reclaiming of suppressed pasts and redefining fragmented identities during slavery and its legacies?
3. What does re-memory in *Beloved* add to the portrayal of historical trauma and subaltern identity formation by means of postcolonial and critical literature?

Significance of the Research

The study has had an impact in the sphere of literary and postcolonial studies since it offers an in-depth critical interpretation of the novel *Beloved* by Toni Morrison in terms of re-memory, theory of trauma, and the formation of subaltern identity. It adds to the current scholarly discourses by supporting the notion that literature is not only mirror of the past but it is a place where history is being reconstructed, challenged, and redefined. Through the central analytical idea of re-memory, the paper contributes to the academic discourse of understanding the ways in which Morrison questions the traditional historiography and the ways of time in a linear manner. It also reinforces theoretical arguments in the field of postcolonial discourse by illustrating in which fragmented memory is used as a resistance policy against colonial erasure. Moreover, this study incorporates various theoretical approaches, namely postcolonial theory, trauma studies, and memory studies, thus providing a multi-dimensional concept, which can be extended to other pieces of literature on historical violence and cultural displacement. By doing so, the research will add to the development of the critical approaches to the study of the narratives of slavery and postcolonial identity.

Delimitation

The study is narrowed down to a tight textual and theoretical account of *Beloved* by Toni Morrison with a special emphasis on re-memory, trauma and formation of subaltern identity within a postcolonial context. It does not go as far as analyzing the other literary works by Morrison or even provide a comparative analysis with other authors, but some limited references made to theory, where needed. The study is limited to qualitative interpretation and does not entail empirical data gathering like surveys, interviews, and field research. The discussion is limited to the literary and theoretical approaches, especially the postcolonial theory, trauma theory, and memory studies, and does not involve irrelevant disciplines other than conceptual connections. This narrowing down

guarantees a specific and comprehensive study of the novel, making it possible to explore in detail re-memory as the main analytical paradigm.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

Recent criticism highlights that *Beloved* by Toni Morrison remains a key source of discussion in the study of how trauma meets memory and postcolonial identity formation. According to scholars, the novel is not the symbol of slavery as an event in the past but a constantly experienced psychological state that defines African American subjectivity. As an example, Alogaili (2024) points out that fragmented memory in *Beloved* evokes to the fragmentation of the identity through violent disruptions of slavery. Equally, El Mitry (2024) claims that Morrison creates the otherness by using memory spaces whereby identity is in a continual negotiation under the burden of historical oppression. Besides this, Lalithambika (2025) also views the novel as a postmodern trauma narrative where nonlinear storytelling reflects the disintegration of the psyche and the loss of cultural identity. Together, these analyses indicate that memory in *Beloved* is not simply recollection, but a reconstructed location of an identity battle and postcolonial survival.

Re-memory and Reconstruction of Historical Consciousness

An important line of recent scholarship is the emphasis on the idea of re-memory as a means of rebuilding repressed histories of slavery as formulated by Morrison. According to the scholars, re-memory upsets Western historiography because it introduces a memory as a spatial and embodied, and recurring. Likewise, Qayoom (2022) points out that *Beloved* is one such instance of a literary dissent, with memory as the instrument of resistance to the mainstream discourse of history. In addition, El Mitry (2025) opines that in *Beloved* the sense of memory is closely connected to the sense of space, in which landscapes and home spaces turn into vessels of the traumatic memories. All these studies support the concept that re-memory is not passive memory but an active process of re-constructing repressed histories and identities. Moreover, Kumari (2023) notes that post-memory structures in *Beloved* illustrate an idea of how descendants acquire traumatic pasts that they themselves have never lived through. All these studies affirm the fact that *Beloved* trauma is not conquered by emancipation but remains as a cultural and psychological legacy.

Subaltern Silence, Resistance and Narrative Recovery

An emerging literature is devoted to subaltern identity and politics of silence in *Beloved*. The theoretical framework developed by Spivak is core in these interpretations as scholars of the present-day claim that voices of the slaves are usually mediated or concealed under the mainstream discourse. Baram Mohammed and Berzenji (2023) assert that *Beloved* is a challenge to colonial power systems, as it recreates Black subjectivity with trauma narratives. Likewise, Qayoom (2022) implies that a narrative form of Morrison becomes a dissent of its own, a process of rewriting history, placing the oppressed in control. El Mitry (2024) also adds to the exclusionary social and historical structures by which otherness in *Beloved* is made by silencing the expression of the subaltern. The combination of these studies demonstrates that the novel of Morrison turns silence into a strong narrative mechanism of resistance and healing.

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Haunting, Memory Spaces, and Postcolonial Resistance

Newer work also discusses the spatial and spectral aspects of memory in *Beloved*, addressing the subject of haunting as historical continuance. According to the argument of researchers, haunting is the representation of the unresolved colonial violence, which still influences the post-slavery identity. El Mitry (2025) examines the role of physical spaces like homes and natural landscapes as the location of memories of the trauma, where the trauma is replicated. Lalithambika (2025) goes on to state that the spectral images used by Morrison are related to the postmodern fracturing of historical certitude in which the past and the present are in a state of constant tension. Likewise, Ajmal et al. (2025) propose that haunting in *Beloved* is explainable as a neurofeminist metaphor of a trauma in cognition and memory systems. All these works portray haunting as something not superstitious but as a structural manifestation of the historical colonial unresolved past and the psychological resistance.

Memory as a Disruptive Epistemology of postcolonial trauma narratives

In postcolonial literary works, memory is not considered as an inert re-enactment of the past but as an epistemological act which challenges historical writing in the colonial context. Alogaili (2024) contends that Morrison demolishes linear historical reasoning in building memory as a fragment and recursive entity, in which the past constantly seeps into the present to disrupt any form of chronological sequence. This interruption is not only stylistic but highly political in that it opposes the colonial archive to repair enslaved lives incomplete and dehumanizing archives. Likewise, Mati (2025) argues that the narrative form that Morrison employs turns memory into a form of counter-knowledge, which restores agency to enslaved subjects, prioritizing lived experience over the written history. Collectively, these readings reveal that memory in *Beloved* serves as an epistemic break, revealing the boundaries of Western historical rationality and creating a place where subaltern ways of knowing that are embodied, emotional, and nonlinear may flourish.

Gendered Trauma, Black Womanhood, and the Politics of Embodied Memory

The gendered aspects of trauma in *Beloved* have been the subject of a major vein of recent feminist literary criticism, most notably with regard to the subject of Black womanhood as a slave. Researchers believe that Morrison builds trauma as not only a historical state of being but also a highly gendered process that is written on the female body. The psychological fragmentation of Sethe, emphasized by Ajmal et al. (2025) cannot be discussed without the bodily violation, proving that the trauma is neurologically and physically integrated into the experience of a female. This perception agrees with Kumari (2021), who stresses that enslaved women in *Beloved* undergo trauma as an individual and an extended experience of collective trauma where motherhood itself becomes a locus of pain, opposing, and memory. Moreover, Baram Mohammed and Berzenji (2023) examine the symbolic meaning of maternal suffering in the novel, especially the case of infanticide in Sethe as an expression of the extreme boundaries of agency in oppressive systems. All these studies posit that *Beloved* reinvents Black womanhood with the convergence of trauma, memory, and survival, which predicts the body as an archive of colonial violence and postcolonial survival.

Space, Memory, and Ecocritical Aspect of Trauma

More than a psychological or historical approach, more recent ecocritical thought has broadened the understanding of *Beloved* by considering the contribution of space and environment to the building

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of traumatic memory. The novel by Morrison is more and more read as an entrenchment of memory in physical landscapes, in which natural and domestic space is an active contributor to the story of trauma. According to El Mitry (2025), spaces like 124 Bluestone Road are considered memory geographies, in which history is not only recalled but also re-enacted through spatial haunting. This memory of space turns the surrounding into a witness of violence and the line between human consciousness and the physical space is unclear. Lalithambika (2025) builds on this interpretation by proposing that the instability of space in the novel can be seen as postmodern uncertainty where space loses its impartiality and is loaded with emotional and historical overtones. Additionally, Mati (2025) points out that the ecological images used by Morrison, especially land, water, and domestic spaces are a narrative tool to recount the hidden histories of displacement and forced migration. All these ecocritical approaches prove that trauma in *Beloved* does not reside in the mind only, but is shared out over spaces and that environment is a vital channel through which postcolonial memory is transmitted to be sustained.

Language, Silence, Semiotics of Unspeakable History

The other significant area of recent literary scholarship on *Beloved* is the importance of language to convey unspeakable trauma and the boundaries of articulation in postcolonial situations. The intentional mode of fragmentation, repetition and silence used by Morrison has been broadly construed as a formal representation of the disintegration of communicational formations in the face of slavery. Kumari (2023) also supports this notion, proposing that the post-memory narratives are based on the indirect modes of expression, such as gestures, omissions, and symbolic representation, to express inherited trauma. All these sources point to the fact that Morrison reformulates the language as both a locus of oppression and resistance, and silence itself is a form of semiotic pressure that bears the burden of historical violence. *Beloved* in this manner does not allow the assumption that trauma can be entirely verbalized, but provides meaning as fragmented, embodied and inaccessible in part.

Research methodology

Overview

The current study has a systematic and discursive approach to research as it critically examines the *Beloved* by Toni Morrison focusing on re-memory, postcolonial identity formation, historical trauma and subaltern resistance. The paper is anchored by the theory of literary criticism and culture, and it aims to explore how the heritage of slavery is not merely represented but constantly re-enacted by such narrative devices as fragmentation, haunting, repetition, and nonlinear temporality. Instead of viewing slavery as a past event, this study places it as a psychological and cultural state that persists into the present and defines the generation of identity. The methodology is aimed at studying the ways in which Morrison recreates suppressed histories by the concept of rememory that criticizes traditional historiography and linear perception of time. Moreover, the paper explores the way the novel addresses the postcolonial systems of power that have traditionally suppressed the voices of the slaves, thus turning *Beloved* into the place of protest and reclaiming the narrative. As the research is centered on the meaning, interpretation, and theoretical interaction, it does not involve any empirical measurement, but the profound textual analysis is based on the postcolonial, psychoanalytic, and trauma-based theories. It is in this way that the study seeks to generate a subtle insight into the use of literature as a tool to rebuild historical

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consciousness and subaltern subjectivity.

Qualitative Method

The given work is based on the qualitative research methodology that is based on interpretive and critical literary analysis and is especially applicable to analyze such complex themes as trauma, memory, identity, and historical violence in *Beloved*. Qualitative research is essentially interested in the meanings, experiences and interpretations but not the quantification of data and this is why it is suited to the analysis of literary texts which are rich in symbolism, metaphor and narrative form. Qualitative analysis in this study enables a close study of the language used by Morrison, methods of narration, and development of themes in the text in an attempt to identify the underlying ideological and psychological aspects that can be found within the text. The literature is based on the epistemological framework of interpretivism which presupposes that meaning is not predetermined but is created during the process of text-reader interactions within certain cultural and historical contexts. This allows the study to explore how Morrison works to depict the mental disintegration of the enslaved people and the memory of slavery as a whole through non-linear narration and changing point of views. Moreover, qualitative approach enables one to deal with theoretical approaches like postcolonial theory, trauma theory, and subaltern studies, and the researcher can interpret the functioning of power, silence, and resistance in the novel. This approach to study guarantees that analysis is flexible, context-sensitive and immerses itself in the intricacies of literary representation.

Data Collection Method

This research uses a purely document-based method of collecting data and is mostly dependent on text and scholarly sources. The principal primary source is a novel *Beloved* by Toni Morrison that is the main object of examination. The systematic close reading of the novel is used to extract data, which is analyzed based on the main textual components, including narrative structure, character formation, symbolic representations, recurring motifs, and linguistic patterns in terms of memory, trauma, and identity. The passages that reflect the re-memory, haunting, fragmentation, and psychological impacts of slavery are given specific attention. Besides the main text, secondary sources are gathered through peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, critiques, and research publications published in the last five years, 2020-2025, to make sure to include the recent academic viewpoints. These sources are chosen on the basis of their applicability to the postcolonial theory, trauma studies, feminist literary criticism, and Morrison scholarship. The gathered material is subsequently arranged into thematic groups like collective trauma, subaltern silence, historical memory and narrative resistance. Such a systematic classification makes it possible to interpret the data in a systematic way and make sure that the analysis is focused and theoretically based.

Research Design

The study is based on descriptive-interpretive qualitative research, which is popular in the field of literary and cultural studies to examine texts in their historical, social, and theoretical context. The descriptive part of the design will include determining and listing the main themes of *Beloved*, which include re-memory, trauma, identity fragmentation, haunting, and resistance. This level is concerned with tracing how Morrison develops meaning by using narrative strategies and symbolism. These themes are then critically analyzed in terms of the established theoretical

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frameworks, namely, the postcolonial theory (Bhabha, Spivak), the trauma theory (Caruth), as well as the memory and haunting theory (Derrida, Gordon). This two-pronged solution enables the studies to go beyond the description that is on the surface and examine ideological and philosophical implications of the text that lie beneath it. The design is non experimental in the sense that there is no manipulation of variables or hypothesis test in a scientific sense, but more of a critical reading and theoretical interpretation. It is also in the contextual analytical approach that the work of *Beloved* is explored as a literary artifact, but also as a cultural and historical reaction to the slavery and its afterlives. By this design, the study can guarantee a coherence between theories, written evidence, and interpretive analysis so that the end result is a holistic idea of how Morrison recreates trauma and identity using narrative form.

Theoretical Framework

This theoretical framework is based on the postcolonial literary theory, trauma theory and memory studies, which together offer a critical view through which Toni Morrison and *Beloved* can be analyzed. These frames would be fundamental in realizing how literature portrays historical violence, cultural displacement, and identity formation within the context of slavery and colonial domination. Postcolonial theory assists in studying the persistence of power structures that were left behind as a result of colonialism in the process of representation, language, and identity, and trauma theory describes the impact of severe violence on the continuity of memory, perception, and narrative. This analysis is further elaborated by the studies of memory especially re-memory which studies how the past continues to be present in the present in the form of psychology, space and culture. Combined, these theoretical approaches make it possible to have a multidimensional approach to *Beloved*, where history is not viewed as a fixed archive but a living, fragmented, and repeating experience. Another theme of the framework is the significance of the subaltern voice and marginalized identities and the way Morrison recreates the subjugated histories with narrative experimentation. Together with these theories, the study develops a complex analytical framework of comprehending the workings of trauma, memory, and resistance in the novel.

Postcolonial Theory

Postcolonial theory is a critical scholarship, which focuses on cultural, political and psychological implications of colonialism to the societies that have been colonized. It is concerned with the way in which colonial power structures still influence the identity, language, production of knowledge and representation despite the formal independence. The major theorists who have made a significant contribution to this area include Edward Said, Homi K. Bhabha, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, who examine how colonial discourse creates the Other, creates hybrid subjects, and muted the voices of subalterns. The notion of Orientalism by Said describes the historical representation of the West towards the non-Western societies as inferior and exotic in order to legitimize domination. Bhabha also creates the concept of hybridity and liminality, and underlines the fact that the postcolonial identities are neither completely colonized nor completely freed, but they exist in the in-between spaces through negotiation of cultures. The question posed by Spivak, *Can the subaltern speak?* Points out to the challenge of marginalized groups to voice their opinions in the prevailing ideological structures. The postcolonial theory is applied in literary analysis to redefine the meaning of texts in terms of power relations, resistance, and reclaiming oppressed histories. It is also especially helpful in the analysis of the narratives that address slavery,

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

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migration, and cultural memory because it reveals the legacies of colonial violence on identity formation and the patterns of narratives.

Postcolonial Theory Applied to this research

This study utilizes postcolonial theory as the main analysis tool to understand how *Beloved* by Toni Morrison can be regarded as the historical trauma of slavery and the development of fragmented identities of the former slaves. The theory is applied to examine how colonial regimes of power persist to affect the psychological and cultural lives of the characters like Sethe, Denver and Paul D who have identities based on both memory and oppression. The paper examines the existence of these characters in the liminal spaces between the past and the present through the idea of hybridity by Bhabha, who shows that freedom does not necessarily eliminate the psychological consequences of slavery. The concept of subaltern silence by Spivak is used to interpret how the voices of the slaves are often dismembered or subdued in the narrative but still manage to surface by means of re-memory, symbolism and haunting. Also, the notions of discursive power by Said can be used to explain how historical accounts of slavery have been dominated by the dominant institutions, and how the novel by Morrison attempts to question and re-write these histories as an insider. The usage of the postcolonial theory also enables the study to point out how *Beloved* is utilized as a counter-discourse that opposes the erasure of history and reclaims the voice of the marginalized. On the whole, this theoretical application will help to better comprehend how the novel reforms identity, memory, and resistance in the wake of the colonial and slave past.

Analysis and discussion

Overview

This study explores the idea of re-memory, postcolonial identity construction and historical trauma as it is employed in *Beloved* by Toni Morrison. It is centered on the way Morrison creates the concept of memory not as a passive recollection but as a dynamic, intrusive and spatial event that creates the identity of the individual and the community. The novel interferes with the traditional way of writing history by depicting slavery as a constant psychological and cultural state, and not a closed past event. By employing fragmented narration, interchangeable time frames, and the supernatural, Morrison forms a story in which lines between the past and present are broken down, and characters are compelled to endure trauma over and over again. Re-memory is a psychological baggage and a way of engaging with suppressed pasts, especially those that have been swept away by the official colonial archives. It also examines how this process creates subaltern identity through voicing historical experiences that have been marginalized or unspeakable. Sethe, Denver, and Paul D represent the consequences of historical violence, in which memory is no longer distinguishable between reality and memory. The paper goes further to show how Morrison employs haunting and repetition to portray trauma as something that lives on beyond death, language, and time. On the whole, the discussion points out how *Beloved* turns the memory into the place of resistance, making remembering the practice of reclaiming the identity and the fight against historical erasure.

Re-memory as Reclamation of the Suppressed History

Re-memory within *Beloved* is an influential tool towards re-appropriating suppressed historical experience, in this instance, the lived experience of the enslaved whose past was systematically

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denied. Morrison clearly states what re-memory is by defining it in the explanation of Sethe: Some things you forget. Other things you never do. But it is not. Places, places are still there This assertion supports the fact that memory is not internal but external in space, that is, the past events can be recalled and re-experienced. The plantation Sweet Home turns into a similar place in which memory is maintained across time. The fact that Sethe cannot get rid of these mental returns serves to show how re-memory interferes with any effort to achieve a historical closure. The past is not remote, it is built structurally within the lived reality. According to the narrative of Morrison, colonial history is not able to completely forget the experiences of the slave since enslavement is inscribed in space and the psyche. Hence, re-memory is a kind of resistance of the past, enabling the re-appearance of oppressed black experiences in disjointed yet irrefutable manifestations.

Haunting as the Physical Manifestation of Re-memory

The theme of re-memory in *Beloved* is tightly linked to the haunting, in which the trauma is embodied both literally and supernaturally. The opening line of the novel is a shocking one: 124 was venomous. Full of the venom of a baby (Morrison, 1987) which immediately sets up the house as a living memory and unresolved trauma. The 124 haunting signifies the re-emergence of the suppressed past, in which the past cannot be confined. This haunting is heightened by the coming of *Beloved*, which is a kind of a personification of the traumatic memory of Sethe. Sethe is rightfully recognized, by the line, *Beloved*. She is mine, making the boundary between memory and reality collapsible, and indicating that re-memory is not metaphorical, but a material thing. The house is made into a time place where violence in the past is re-experienced. Morrison therefore employs haunting to explain how trauma continues even after death and how it still defines an identity to date. This shift of memory into a living being proves that re-memory is not a psychological phenomenon but an in-depth embodiment, a spatial living.

Identity Fragmentation by Mechanism of Re-memory

Re-memory is a key element of fragmenting identity in *Beloved*, especially in the psychological aspect of Sethe. Intrusive memories are constantly disrupting Sethe by making her unstable in forming her identity in the present. Morrison embodies this instability by nonlinear narration when the past and the present are intertwined without any distinction. The events at Sweet Home, the escape of Sethe, and the act of infanticide are not memories but living experiences that are felt as emotions that are in the present. The re-memory creates a fractured consciousness due to the psychological burden of re-memory that does not allow closure. This disunity is also enhanced by the presence of *Beloved* that mixes the boundaries of daughter and memory, self and other. This collapsing identity structure can be seen in the statement of Sethe, *Beloved*, she my daughter. She mine. This amalgamation is employed by Morrison to illustrate the disruptive nature of trauma on stable subjectivity and identity as an ongoing process of reconstructions under the influence of memory.

Motherhood and the mental load

An important aspect of re-memory in *Beloved* is that it is related to motherhood and psychological burden that it puts on the slave women. Sethe is a mother whose identity has been strongly influenced by her traumatic experience, especially when she kills her daughter to rescue her daughter off slavery. This act turns to be a key re-memory that recursively comes back in

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

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fragmented and intrusive forms and this impacts her emotional and psychological being. The motherhood in the novel is not utopian but is depicted as a place of unbearable contradiction, where love cannot be separated with violence and protection cannot be mixed with destruction. This maternal re-memory is enhanced by the reappearance of Beloved, compelling Sethe to face unreconciled guilt, grief, and attachment. Morrison depicts slavery as motherhood that becomes dehumanizing through the system of slavery, where enslaved women are deprived of rights to their own children, and made to make impossible moral decisions. Re-memory is therefore a process according to which the trauma of the mother is recurrently re-aroused, showing the way that historical violence breaks the ties of family relationships and reconstitutes maternal identity as both nurturing and traumatic.

Re-memory and the Inescapability of psychological return

The concept of re-memory in *Beloved* works as a psychological rebound which constantly interferes with Sethe trying to live in the present. Morrison depicts this by the failure of Sethe to distinguish lived reality and intrusive memory where past trauma continually re-emerges in fragmented and uncontrollable bits. This is greatly manifested in the recognition by Sethe of the continuity of memory: nothing ever dies (Morrison, 1987) which reflects the central reasoning of re-memory as a continuing psychological state but not a historical occurrence. The term implies that slavery experiences are still lively in the mind, and they are unwilling to be confined or solved. Repetition thus shapes the mental world of Sethe in which traumatic moments re-emixture without any prior warning and the boundaries between recollection and reliving are broken. This repetitive re-memory is a way of proving that survival, Morrison explains, is a psychological form of survival and is, at the same time, a source of pain that cannot be resolved through closure. *Beloved* does not remember the past, it re-experiences it, which supports the notion that trauma is deeply ingrained in identity.

Re-memory, Identity Reconstruction, and the Struggle for Selfhood

Re-memory ends up defining the battle of identity formation in *Beloved*, in which the characters are trying to reconstruct themselves amidst the burden of inherited and personal trauma. The fragmented identity of Sethe is brought about by the fact that she is a person who is in a continuous negotiation with memory particularly when she attempts to come to terms with motherhood, survival, and guilt. Morrison describes this unsteadiness by the fact that Sethe perceives some internal division: "Me? Me?" Her fractured sense of self under the strain of re-memory (Morrison, 1987). Such a repetition of self-doubt is an example of how identity is no longer fixed but is constantly being re-created through the process of traumatic recall. Re-memory compels Sethe to live as two or three women at the same time the enslaved woman, the one who fled, and the one who has made an irreversible decision. Morrison implies that identity in post-slavery life is never lost but is rebuilt by means of facing traumatic memory. Therefore, re-memory is also destructive and generative in that it dismantles the established identity as well as provides the opportunity of redefining it by recognizing the past.

Re-memory Ethical Narrative Intervention against Forgetting

Morrison employs re-memory as an ethical narrative intervention as something that opposes cultural amnesia and questions the responsibility of the reader to historical trauma. The novel is insistent on several occasions that the past should not be washed away or smoothed out even when

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

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it is a painful thing to face. This moral aspect is reflected in the haunting warning: This is not a story to pass on (Morrison, 1987), which is also a hint to the weight of memory and the risk of forgetting. Re-memory compels characters and readers to stay vigilant to the pasts of the violence that have been perpetuating the present. Instead of providing a sense of closure, Morrison places memory in the role of an ethical requirement that requires acceptance of suffering and its protracted effects. With this approach, the story does not fall into the trap of whitewashing slavery into something in the past but rather portrays it as a moral and psychological fact that has been with us. Re-memory is thus a narrative practice as well as an ethical requirement, which makes the historical trauma visible, recognized and critically addressed in individuals and collective consciousness.

Re-memory and Postcolonial Reconfiguration of Subaltern Identity

Re-memory in *Beloved* is imperative in rebuilding the identity of the subalterns by replacing the previous enslaved people as active participants of historical consciousness and not victims of colonial history. Morrison creates identity not as a fixed or unitary category but as a reconstruction that is constantly rebuilt by recalling traumatic events. The identity of Sethe, say, is not determined by a particular historical event but through recurrent visits to slavery, escape, and maternal violence. This is consistent with the postcolonial concept of subjectivity as fragmented in the colonial rule whereby identity is constructed in terms of resistance and psychological disjuncture. Re-memory enables subaltern characters to re-write lost or falsely told histories that are now erased or misinterpreted, and it is, in the process, the reconstruction of the identity as a result of recalling. This reconstruction is, however, not healing in a traditional sense, but it is an ongoing negotiation with pain, loss and historical violence that is still a part of the consciousness.

History Trauma Injury and the Formation of Identity

Beloved by Morrison shows that the formation of subaltern identity cannot be discussed outside the context of ongoing historical trauma which constantly disrupts any bid towards psychological stability. Re-memory does not send the event of trauma in to the past but rather it is present in the current process of self-construction. The inability to forget the past is thus what shapes Sethe as the past keeps re-emerging in sensual and emotional ways. Such perseverance is indicative of the larger state of postcolonial subjectivity where historical violence remains present in the structuration of lived experience despite post-formal emancipation. The subaltern subject in the novel is not a free subject but rather a continuation of its psychological aftermaths. Morrison demonstrates through re-memory that identity cannot be constructed independently of history but is considerably bound up in it, so trauma is a part and parcel of subaltern selfhood, and not something imposed upon it.

Re-memory as Subaltern Resistance and Reclaiming of Subaltern Voice

Re-memory is also an effective device of reclaiming subaltern voice in *Beloved*, as the characters in this book are able to express a voice that has been historically suppressed. Given that the enslaved people were not granted formal representation in the archives of the colonies, Morrison recreates the voices of the slaves through the memory fragmentation, emotionality and symbolism embodiment. Re-memory enables suppressed past to be rediscovered indirectly, making the silence meaningful. Though the characters have difficulty in articulating their experiences, their memories are expressed in terms of narrative disruption, repetition, and haunting presence. This is in line with the issue of postcolonial theory about the silencing of the subaltern and the challenge of speaking out the voice of the oppressions in the mainstream discourse. Morrison confronts this silence by

Liberal Journal of Language & Literature Review

Print ISSN: 3006-5887

Online ISSN: 3006-5895

establishing a space of narration in which memory is speech, in which subaltern identity is created by expressing emotion and psychological voice instead of by using institutional discourse.

Re-memory and Fragmentation of Collective Subaltern Identity

Although re-memory is the means to construct identity, it also displays the fractured identity of the collectivity of subalterns that has to be pressed by the forces of slavery and its consequences. Collective identity in *Beloved* is not cohesive, but is dispersed within various traumatic memories which are incoherent. The overlapping but unfinished histories of characters like Sethe, Denver, and Paul D evoke the way slavery broke down the communal structures and substituted them with the isolating psychological one. Re-memory reveals these fractures through an ongoing repetition of bringing unresolved histories to bear in the present, making it impossible to construct a coherent collective identity. Nonetheless, Morrison also hints that this fragmentation per se is also a sort of common experience since characters acknowledge their plight in the memories of other characters. In this way, subaltern identity is fragmented and meshed together by re-memory, creating a loose yet important network of collective historical consciousness.

Re-memory as Ambivalent Identity Reconstruction but Transformative

Re-memory eventually brings about an ambivalent form of identity reconstruction in *Beloved* where both the healing and suffering exist side by side without resolving. Although memory enables subaltern subjects to re-experience suppressed pasts and to demand narrative presence, it also leads to open wounds that cannot be completely healed. The conflict between Sethe and *Beloved* exemplifies this contradiction, where identity is being transformed by the hurtful recognition as opposed to reconciliation. According to Morrison, postcolonial identity is not concerned with the process of wholeness but rather learning to exist in the state of fragmentation. Re-memory is the process by which this fractured identity is continually negotiated, enabling characters to live in between past trauma and present survival. In this regard, subaltern identity in *Beloved* is not reinstated but reconstituted in the course of constant interaction with the memory and thus trauma becomes an inseparable aspect of self-definition in the post-slavery state.

Re-memory and the Reclamation of Maternal Silenced Memories

The concept of re-memory in *Beloved* is closely connected to the re-construction of subaltern identity based on the restoration of silenced maternal memory, especially that which was erased under the violence of slavery. Morrison locates black motherhood as a place where identity has been violently shaken, and painfully rebuilt through memory. The role of a mother cannot be discussed outside of the traumatic experience of Sethe who recalls killing her daughter to avoid her being sent back to the slavery. This act is not a one-off historical event but a repetitive re-memory that keeps on redefining her identity. The maternal identity is disrupted between protection, guilt and survival and this is the manifestation of how slavery destabilized even the closest human relations. Morrison uses re-memory to re-emerge the repressed maternal experiences and make motherhood a narrative space in which subaltern identity is constructed and challenged. This is a process which exposes maternal identity under slavery to be not natural or stable but historically constructed through violence and resistance.

Re-memory as a Framework to Recreate Psychological Subjectivity

Re-memory can be very important in the reconstruction of the subjectivity of the psyche of

subaltern identity, revealing the way in which the inner world of the enslaved people is torn apart by the trauma. Subjectivity in *Beloved* is disintegrated and inconsistent; rather it is formed by intrusive memories that continually disrupt current consciousnesses. This fragmentation is evidenced by Sethe who often switches between current survival and past trauma with no clear distinction in her thoughts. Re-memory turns out to be the mechanism of the formation of the psychological identity, as well as its destabilization as the long-term cognitive consequences of slavery. The subjectivity that Morrison introduces is continuously under construction and rather than being guided by continuity, it is guided by emotional memory. This dislocation indicates the postcolonial mental states in which the violence of colonialism is still haunting mental constructions even after the freedom of the body. Morrison re-creates subaltern subjectivity through re-memory as extremely fragile and yet enduring, in a state of perpetual compromise between memory and survival.

Re-memory and Rewriting of the Historical Consciousness in Subaltern Identity

The re-memory used by Morrison also helps in the rewriting of historical consciousness through subaltern lens, which is a challenge of the overarching colonial narratives that obliterate or misrepresent slave experiences. In *Beloved*, history is not objective, linear, but a crumbly, emotional, and subjective thing. Re-memory enables characters to create their own version of history, which is based upon lived experience and not on official records. This rewriting is critical to form subaltern identity since it reinstates the agency of people who were historically not part of historical production. The memories of Sweet Home that Sethe shares, e.g., are counter-histories, that defy the sanitized plantation life narratives. Morrison has changed historical consciousness into a form of resistance through re-memory, in which remembering is a form of re-writing the past in the sense of the oppressed. This operation makes sure that subaltern identity is rooted in recovered memory and not historical silence that is imposed.

Re-memory and the Collective Dimension of Subaltern Identity Formation

Re-memory in *Beloved* is not just a representation of individual identity but also a creation of collective subaltern consciousness formed through a common trauma and fragmented memory. The novel shows that slaves do not have to traumatize alone, instead, their memories are linked by the collective histories of violence, displacement, and endurance. Sethe, Paul D, and Denver are characters who represent various pieces of a shared historical experience that slavery has broken. Re-memory is a means by which these fragmented experiences come into play and engage with one another to create a collective identity, which is both unstable and vastly interrelated. Morrison demonstrates that such collective identity is neither founded on unity nor coherence, but on shared suffering and recognition of trauma. Subaltern identity is re-memory because it is a communal form of memory whose individual memories are amalgamated to a broader historical consciousness, despite their incompleteness or contradictions.

Re-memory as a Space of Emotional Negotiation of Identity Formation

Re-memory is also the emotional negotiation space, in which the subaltern identity is formed in a constant state of tension between the pain and the survival. In *Beloved*, memory is not neutral, it has a strong emotional coloring that affects the way the characters view themselves and others. The emotional reactions of Sethe to memory as guilty or fearful or maternal desire all show that identity is made out of affective experience as opposed to rational thought. Re-memory causes characters to constantly interact with emotional pain, and identity formation is a constant process of facing and

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having to cope with trauma. This emotional intensity is used by Morrison to indicate that subaltern identity is not only a historical event but also the way historical events are internalized and re-experienced emotionally. In this process, re-memory is a dynamic field of emotions in which identity is in a continuous process of formation through the interaction of suffering, remembrance, and endurance.

Re-memory and Paradox of Identity Fragmentation and Resistance

Finally, in the case of re-memory a paradox is created in the identity formation of subalterns, fragmentation is a source of suffering and resistance. Morrison does not display fragmented identity as a problem that has to be solved but rather as a state of the historical reality of slavery. The fragmented identity of Sethe shows that trauma does not allow full psychological assimilation, but this fragmentation is the only way to enable the past to still be seen and moving. Re-memory also makes certain that identity is never complete or complete, and which opposes the colonial need to define and classify subaltern subjects. Meanwhile, this fragmentation provides a possibility to survive as characters can exist in more than one temporal and emotional state at the same time. Morrison therefore introduces subaltern identity as a fragile yet resistant one, which is formed by the continual negotiation of memory, trauma and survival.

Discussion of the Study

The results of this study show that re-memory in *Beloved* by Toni Morrison is a primary narration and psychological process that constitutes the representation of postcolonial trauma as well as its reactivation. It is shown in the analysis that Morrison does not see slavery as a past event but as a continuum that is imprinted in the minds of the formerly enslaved people. Re-memory disturbs the traditional historical time by contracting the past and present into one experience curve, where traumatic experiences continually break into the formation of present identity. This substantiates the claim of trauma theory that extreme violence cannot be completely assimilated into the memory, but manifests itself in fragmented, intrusive forms. This coming back is not abstract in *Beloved* but it is concrete in the sense that it is reflected in the experiences of characters, in particular the repeated psychological relivings of Sweet Home and infanticide by Sethe. The discussion thus validates that the narrative strategy of Morrison is what turns memory into a place of both trauma and historical reclamation where the process of remembering cannot be separated with the continued experience of trauma.

The study also shows that the construction of subaltern identity in *Beloved* is not based on coherence but fragmentation, mainly due to the disruptive nature of re-memory in the stability of the psyche and narrative. The characters lack cohesive or linear identities; rather, their sense of self is constantly being reconstituted as fragments, overlapping and in many ways contradictory memories. This disjunction is a manifestation of the greater postcolonial state where the enslaved subjects did not receive a stable form of representation in historical discourse. As noted in the discussion, Morrison deliberately uses the nonlinear narration, changing perspectives and fragmented narration to present this identity destabilization. Subaltern voices are not voiced directly but rather voiced through traces of memories, repetition of emotions, and symbolic haunting. Consequently, the identity in *Beloved* is not an aspect of recovering and restoring but an aspect of continuously rebuilding with the help of traumatic memory. This helps to prove the thesis that postcolonial subjectivity is precarious but constantly developing with the help of remembering.

Conclusion

The study concludes that *Beloved* by Toni Morrison introduces the idea of re-memory as the key narrative and psychological process according to which historical trauma is constantly being experienced, re-created and re-interpreted. Instead of describing slavery as a historical phenomenon, Morrison depicts it as a continuous phenomenon that exists in personal and societal minds. It is shown that re-memory interferes with linear temporality by erasing lines between past and present and thus portrays how traumatic experiences can be still at work even many years after the occurrence of the traumatic event. The novel through characters like Sethe, Paul D, and Denver reveals that memory is not a fixed cognitive process but an fragmented, intrusive and embodied phenomenon. This validates the fact that post-slavery trauma cannot be explained within the traditional historical paradigms, but needs to be examined as a lived-in psychological reality which continues to define identity formation and perception.

The results also confirm that re-memory has great influence in fragmenting as well as reconstructing subaltern identity in *Beloved*. The analysis shows that identity within the novel is not predetermined and single but is constantly restructured by the re-emergence of traumatic memory. A sense of self, such as that of Sethe, is constantly shaken by the flashbacks of slavery and motherhood on the other side of the border, and she is unable to preserve psychological continuity. It is, however, not only this disintegration which is destructive; it facilitates some reconstruction in which identity is reconstituted through confrontation with the past. The paper has concluded that Morrison employs narrative fragmentation on purpose to indicate the fragmented state of postcolonial subjectivity, and that identity in the aftermath of trauma is never complete, but is always in the process of change, and is strongly tied to memory. In this way, re-memory is destabilizing as well as a redefinition mechanism.

Suggestions and Recommendations

According to the discoveries made in this study, there is a recommendation that further research is needed to explore *Beloved* in other interdisciplinary approaches like neuropsychology and cognitive trauma studies to better understand the embodiment aspect of re-memory. Also, comparative analysis of works by Morrison and other postcolonial writers may enhance the understanding of the role of the trauma narratives in other cultural and historical contexts. Researchers are also advised to explore the place of gender in a more direct manner, especially the way the Black female identity is formed with the help of intergenerational trauma and memory. Moreover, the ethical consequences of representation of trauma could be developed in future research, in particular concerning education and historical pedagogy, to learn how literature can help to build collective memory and social consciousness.

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