

***UNCOVERING THE TRAUMATIC
CHARACTERS IN TONI MORRISON'S
BELOVED
(SETHE & PAUL D)***

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I. Introduction

The psychological issue of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Syndromes is not restricted to individuals, but rather it is a communal issue in which the traumatic experiences of an individual is understood through its social and cultural context. For this reason, trauma and its effects become of an immense interest among writers and critics to expose the traumatic experiences for different communities in order to be healed. However, trauma is meant with “memory”, which proposes that when an individual is under stress, memory can’t work properly. Therefore, Sandra L. Bloom (1999, (2,5)) argues that being under stress, alters the ways by which an individual can remember things, access old memories or even process new ones thereby causes a psychic trauma, which is revealed through the unexpected or unparalleled reactions for the individual’s body and mind. Eventually, this leads to configuring new ways of remembering that are different from the normal ones in which the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder symptoms appeared. Nevertheless, Sonya Andermahr and Silvia Pellicer-Ortín (2013, 3) finds out that the main aims of “‘writing through’ a traumatic experience would be, then, to articulate an unbearable psychic wound that the subject or group is not able to communicate or exteriorise, that is to say, what cannot be spoken may be at least represented and mediated through cultural practices”. Thus, Morrison has been one of the most important authors who treats trauma in most of her major literary works. In *Beloved*, Morrison

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reveals trauma and its physical and psychological effects on the characters and suggests ways of healing. It is through focusing on trauma, Morrison has been able to achieve her goal in writing *Beloved* to revive the traumatic history of the African American community and narrate their stories of tortures, sufferings, dehumanizing, humiliation and pain in an attempt of healing those wounds that have been caused by slavery. Hence, this research is going to uncover trauma in Morrison's *Beloved* through its traumatic characters Sethe and Paul D. It consists of three main sections along with an abstract, introduction, conclusion and bibliography. Being they, the first section is dedicated for Morrison and her most powerful novel, *Beloved*. It shows how Morrison has interested in writing *Beloved*, the Motive of why she writes *Beloved* along with an abbreviated plot, critical reviews and prizes. As far as the second section is concerned, it is going to show what trauma is and how it works and how it comes to the literary and critical fields along with the main responses of trauma that are the belated acts out and work through responses. Then, the last section analyzes how trauma works in Morrison's *Beloved* through "rememory" of traumatic characters Paul D and Sethe who represent the whole African American community. From this, Linda Krumholz (1999, 108) claims that if the "individual memories exist in the world as fragments of a historical memory, then, by extension, the individual process of recollection or "rememory" can be reproduced on a historical level". As a consequence, Morrison confronts the ghost of slavery and trauma for both Paul D and Sethe through acting out and "rememory" and presents trauma as a working through its narrative and healing. Finally, this research concludes that Morrison uses the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in order to reveal the physical and psychological traumatic effects of slavery and suggests ways for recovery.

II. Trauma & Literature

Trauma is an important case in psychological studies in the sense that it may affect any person in response to particular traumatic events, which fill with violence in its different shapes.

Judith Herman (1997, 33) defines trauma as either an intimate personal involvement with death and violence or it is the threat of life and physical integrity. From this, Lenore Terr (1990, 8) argues that the external traumatic events are rapidly affecting the mind to shape the psych trauma, which takes place when a series of the outside overwhelming, unexpected, and intense emotional assaults or blows affect the person. That's why, Bessel Van der Kolk (1989, 393) confirms that "Traumatization occurs when both internal and external resources are inadequate to cope with external threat". Further, Susan Y. Najita (2006, 18) claims that "In its classical definition, trauma is a symptom of, or delayed response to, an overwhelming event". Such delayed response of trauma leads to Caruth's term (1996, 4), the "Belatedness of Trauma" in addressing the story of wounds, which is crying out to narrate the unavailable truth in its "belated address" and "delayed appearance" that is not only related to "what is known", but also to "what remains unknown" as well. Thus, Ruth Leys (200, (4-5)) defines the Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), as a "symptom of history" in which the traumatized can't fully possess the "belated sign" of history that is impossible; yet, that history or past possesses the traumatized person. Therefore, it is according to Caruth (1996, 4), a double wound, which is not recognized in the first instance, but rather, comes back to "haunt the survivor later on" in an unassimilated nature. For this reason, Najita (2006, 18) suggests "The Pathological Aspects of Trauma" to be inherited in its reception's moment because the traumatizing event is just "remembered" belatedly with unconscious control and not "fully experienced". Hence, the belatedness of trauma has physical effects and productions because Bloom (1999, 11) clarifies that "Victims of chronic trauma, abuse and neglect often suffer from a multitude of physical disorders not directly related to whatever injuries they have suffered". Nevertheless, both Najita (2006, 18) and Bloom (1999, 3) see that trauma's belatedness does not only have physical effects, but psychological ones as well such as behavioral reenactments, post-traumatic dreams or nightmares, psychic numbing, disturbing and recurrent hallucinations, body memories and flashbacks.

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Consequently, Bloom (1999, 2) states that the impact of the traumatic experience effects the entire person through the way of learning, remembering, feeling about oneself or others and the way of making sense of the world, as they are all extremely distorted by the traumatic experience. Accordingly, to understand the physical and psychological effects of trauma on the traumatized person, it is important to be fully aware for the mechanism of human's memory systems. In this regard, Van der Kolk (1996), in his article "Trauma & Memory", discovers that human's brain has "two different memory systems": "Verbal Memory", which is devoted for normal remembering and learning through using words and "Nonverbal Memory". Bloom (1999,5) explains that both systems are working in an integrated way in normal condition; therefore, normal memory consists from using words, but if it is affected by high levels of stress, it works differently. Because of this, traumatized people lose their ability of speech when they are overwhelmed of fear and thus, the mind alters to a mode of thinking without words (Bloom, 1999,5). Reasonably, Traumatic experience in the words of Laurie Vickroy (2002, 11), "can produce a sometimes indelible effect on the human psych that can change the nature of the individual's memory, self-recognition, and relational life". And so, Bloom (1999,5) affirms that when the mind in the mode of thinking, the verbal memory system stop working thereby the nonverbal memory system works fully alone to shape the "visual, auditory, olfactory, and kinesthetic images, physical sensations, and strong feelings". In this respect, Vickroy (2002, 12) notes that the basic for the traumatic experience "is that past lingers unresolved, not remembered in conventional sense, because it is not processed like nontraumatic information, either cognitively or emotionally". But , Bloom (1999,5) declares that under the conditions of serious danger, these strong feelings, images and sensations are imprinted so strongly than the normal memory in a way that is impossible to erase. As a result, Andermahr and Pellicer-Ortín (2013, 3) find that using psychological practices in dealing with trauma, paves the way for theories to configure the collective memories through the

formation in the individual's mind memories, but therapies modify the original methods to heal the traumatized people through narrating their traumatic experiences; thereby, the interest of trauma has marched its first steps into the critical sphere. Yet, Caruth (1991, 2) confirms that starting "to hear each other anew in the study of trauma [...] because they are *listening* through the radical disruption and gaps of traumatic experience". Moreover, the belatedness of trauma can be experienced along what LaCapra (1999, (716-717)) identifies as both "acting out" and "working through" responses and while "melancholia" is considered as a form of the former, "Mourning" represents one form of the latter. In this, Shu-li Chang (2004, 106) proposes that "literature may indeed be a site of the symptomatic acting out, as well as the critical working through, of traumas, even though we should not expect narratives to heal them all". So, according to LaCapra (1999, 716) acting out occurs when "the past is performatively regenerated or relived as if it were fully present rather than represented in memory and inscription, and it hauntingly returns as the repressed". On the other side, in regard to traumatic losses LaCapra (1999, (716-717)) finds out that "acting out may well be a necessary condition of working through [...] Possession by the past may never fully be overcome or transcended, and working through may at best enable some distance or critical perspective that is acquired with extreme difficulty and not achieved once and for all". For that reason, Susannah Radstone (2007, 22) shows that trauma analysis for the testimonial texts "positions itself by analogy with the witness or addressee of testimony to trauma and understands its task as that of facilitating the cultural remembrance and working-through of those traumas whose absent presence marks the analysed text/s". Yet, Najita (2006, 62) assumes that testimony can be revealed in the form of storytelling, which maintains the working through process and healing.

III. Toni Morrison & *Beloved* (1987)

Morrison's *Beloved* is an outstanding novel in the contemporary fiction because of its plot and its historical purpose. Harold Bloom (2004, 10) reveals that Morrison's popularity has

flourished with *Beloved's* publication in spite of her ability to preserve a place for her as a respected novelist from the publication of her first novel *The Bluest Eye* (1970) thereby her critical appreciation and readership have been arouse constantly. This is because of the fact that, according to Özcan Akşak (2008, (250,257)), in *Beloved*, Morrison sheds light on what has happened to the African American individuals under the “institutionalized slave system” and what does it mean to live as a slave in an attempt to understand and uncover painful buried experiences in the African American history. Regarding this, Klay Baynar (2007, 1) claims that Morrison devotes *Beloved* to show that the psychological effects of slavery has an immense damages on the individuals than the physical sufferings. Thus, Bloom (2004, 16) states that Morrison's *Beloved* documents the destruction lives of the African American survivals men and women, and discovers the permanent impact of slavery on them and their community along with the sixty million or more that have been died in the Middle Passage. Therefore, Akşak (2008, 250) finds that Morrison's *Beloved* depicts thoroughly the tortures and horrors of slavery, which occurs in the African American history. In this regard, both Jill Matus (1998, 1) and Mae G. Henderson (1999, 63) affirms that in *Beloved*, Morrison questions trauma and memory in their historical context in order to both “express stories repressed” and “resurrect stories buried”. To do this, Vickroy (2002, 27) notes that in *Beloved*, Morrison uses “many voices, emotions, and experiences intermingle to introduce individual and collective memory to counteract and forgetting. [...] employ multiple narrators who give first person testimony, bear witness for characters silenced by trauma, provoke the protagonist's resistance memory, or suggest collective sufferings”. Accordingly, *Beloved* tells the story of Sethe, the slaved woman who has been pregnant when she has tried to escape from the plantation of the Sweet Home thereby her master Schoolteacher has made his nephews rape and milk Sethe and then whip her back. After that, Sethe has managed to run away from the Sweet Home and she has given the birth for her daughter Denver in her way to her mother's

in law Baby Suggs, house to reunite with her children Beloved, Buglar and Howard. Nevertheless, Schoolteacher has come to bring her back to enslavement with her children thereby Sethe has got mad and tried to kill all of her children. She has hardly beaten her sons' heads with a shovel, cut the throat of Beloved and tried to kill Denver too, but Stamp Paid and baby Suggs have stopped her. That's why, Stephanie Li (2010, 73) asserts that Morrison has used *Beloved* in order to depict "the complexities of maternal love" along with "the dehumanizing effects of slavery". Consequently, Sethe has been taken to jail till the Bodwins who assist the slavery's abolition has made their effort in Cincinnati for Sethe to be imprisoned instead of being sentenced to death. After the imprisonment, Sethe has returned with Denver to Baby Sugg's home, on the 124 Bluestone Road, which is haunted by the spirit of Beloved. Thereby, she has been isolated because the community has rejected her act of killing her daughter; therefore, she suffers from trauma, physically and psychologically exhausted. Hence, Bloom (2004, 16) discovers that "Many critics have addressed how *Beloved* revises and revives the slave narrative tradition. While traditional slave narratives typically document the slave's physical escape and their journey to freedom, Morrison enriches this structure by depicting how the slaves survive the psychological trauma". Then, scaring from their murdered mother and Beloved's spirit, Sethe's sons run away and the former slave, Paul D, comes to visit Sethe in the 124 property. Being away from each other, Sethe and Paul D have much to share as they both have tried to bury their memories of enslavement in the Plantation of Sweet Home for about eighteen years since they have seen each other for the last time. Paul D 's memories regarding the Sweet Home shows how he has been tortured, chained, raped and dehumanized and decreased to an animal. Later on, the spirit of Beloved has conveyed to a young woman that has come to Sethe's house but behaves as a child to represent Sethe's murdered daughter that has come to punish her mother. Yet, the black community has united to help Sethe to exclude Beloved's spirit forever. In this respect, Baynar (2007, 1) sees that "by focusing *Beloved* on the infanticide committed by a

newly freed black mother”, Morrison reveals “the importance of which spans from the Reconstruction era in the antebellum South to racially charged issues in modern America”. Eventually, such rich plot makes *Beloved* in Charles W. Scheel’s words (2009, 168), the most magnificent book of the American literature in the twentieth century. Also, Bloom (2004, 13) says that Morrison has been thinking that *Beloved* is going to be the least of her appreciated and read books because of the “national amnesia” concerning slavery, but in the same week of its appearance in bookstores, it has also appeared on the bestseller list of the *New York Times*. For this reason, Li (2010, (1, 73)) declares that *Beloved* is often regarded to be the masterpiece of Morrison’s all works in the sense that it has been named the Best Work of American Fiction of the Last 25 Years by the *New York Times* in 2006. It has received the Melcher Book Award, the Pulitzer Prize, the Elmer Holmes Bobst Award for Fiction and the Robert F. Kennedy Book Award in 1988.

IV. Traumatic Characters in *Beloved*

The representation of Trauma in Morrison’s *Beloved* can be expressed through the characters’ traumatized experiences to reveal the belated response of trauma in ways of acting out and working through responses. In this respect, Morrison shows how the acting out trauma can pave the way for working through or healing not just for the individual characters, but also for their national historical parallelization. Thus, according to Lotta Sirkka (2011, 5), Morrison treats the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder symptoms in *Beloved* by focusing on the traumatized families because uncovering the physical and/or psychological trauma can lead to symptoms of disorder that can be represented by “emotional numbing with a decreased responsiveness in the ability to feel, or even an inability to feel” and trauma’s “recurrent flashbacks and memories”. Therefore, in *Beloved*, Bloom (2004, 28) claims that Morrison creates the characters to represent the African American individuals who suffer from years of humiliation, tortures and dehumanization under the institution of slavery. In this respect, in *Beloved* according to Akşak (2008, 257) “Narrating the story of Sethe, Morrison

focuses on the dehumanizing effect of slavery by emphasizing sufferings of slaves. The novel shows us what happened to Sethe, her family and other slaves working on the plantation”. Further, as *Beloved* belongs to testimonial literature as stated above, Morrison bears Paul D and Sethe as witnesses for each other’s trauma that go back to the time of their enslavement in the Sweet Home 18 years before, to reveal the belated response of their *unspeakable* traumas, which are presented in a way of acting out that leads to the process of healing or working through trauma. From this, both Sethe and Paul D have traumatized experiences that make them suffers from the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder that leads to marvelous physical and psychological effects. From this, Susan Bowers (2004, 104) argues that Morrison’s novel *Beloved*, “opens with characters still traumatized many years after their escapes from slavery. They are numb, almost incapable of emotion because they have suffered so deeply and seen such terror”.

A. Sethe & Scars

Sethe, her trauma can be revealed through her back’s scars, which Henderson (1999, 86) believes as “Traces of the past that Sethe represses (but can neither remember nor forget) have been gouged into her back by the master's whip [...] the scars function as an archaeological site or memory trace”. Therefore, Teresa N. Washington (2009, 64) states that “The very existence of *Beloved*, let alone our reading the work, becomes a cosmic application of a necessarily stinging bluestone for every Africana person who bears but has ignored the genetic scars of slavery in order to survive but must remember every fragmented affliction in order to heal and evolve fully”. For this reason, Henderson (1999, 87) asserts that Sethe’s challenge for her traumatic repressed past is revealed through the numbness of “her back skin” (*Beloved* 18) that she can’t feel because it “had been dead for years” (*Beloved* 18). Regarding this, Sethe represents the African American community because Sirkka (2011, 9) suggests that the “chronic stress eventually caused Sethe’s inability to feel [...] Her emotions were turned off so Sethe

could survive everyday-life, to prevent insanity. This was symptomatic throughout the community because all were afflicted by the anxiety disorder and all were experiencing the symptoms and consequences of emotional numbing”. However, this repressed past returns with the return of Paul D, a former slave which represents “the return of the repressed” (Henderson, 1999, 86). In this, because Joanna Jeskova (2009, (10, 29)) finds that when Paul D comes to Sethe’s house, he starts to trace her scars, bear a witness for her sufferings and advise her to narrate her story asking her to “Go as far inside as [...] need to” (*Beloved* 46) to deeply examine her pain. Thus, Paul D asks Sethe to remember and tell her story: “Reminds me of that headless bride back behind Sweet Home. Remember that, Sethe?” (*Beloved* 13). The repressed memory is revealed in her reply: “How could I forget? [...] How come everybody run off from Sweet Home can’t stop talking about it? [...] All together. Comes back whether we want it to or not” (*Beloved* (13-14)). In this regard, Krumholz (1999, 107) declares that Morrison writes *Beloved* to describe the connection between “the individual and the historical unconscious” through the character of Sethe thereby creates an analogous line between a “historical or national process” and “the individual processes of psychological recovery”. Accordingly, and when Sethe is cooking biscuits, the belated response of trauma is revealed when her memory is hauntingly recalled in a way of acting out in order to narrate her story as a form of working through or healing from her repressed past. Being this, through a cluster of quick images and flashbacks, Sethe angrily acts out her traumatic experience when she narrates how her back is whipped by one of Schoolteacher’s nephews “Schoolteacher made one open up my back, and when it closed it made a tree. It grows there still” (*Beloved* 17). This kind of “Rememory” can be defined according to Stephen Metcalf (2006, 1) as “a kind of psychic haunting in which the specifics of a traumatic incident are told and retold, even as the teller tries to block their full emergence into the conscious mind”. Continuously, in the belated response of trauma, the first part of the quotation belongs to “what is known” for Sethe that she has been

whipped, but the second part of the quotation after the comma belongs to “what remains unknown” for Sethe because obviously Sethe could not see her whipped back. As a consequence, it remains unknown for her saying that Amy Denver has seen it and described it as “Trunk, branches, and even leaves. Tiny little chokecherry leaves. But that was eighteen years ago. Could have cherries too now for all I know” (*Beloved* 16). Nevertheless, the “tree” refers not only to an important physical symptom of trauma, but also in Bloom’s words (2004, (19-20)) it is “one of many physical reminders of the horror of slavery”. As a result, numbness is revealed as psychological response for the physical injury of Sethe’s back in the sense that Jeskova (2009, 8) affirms that numbness is experienced through Sethe’s inability to feel her back. This can be manifested when Paul D’s “cheek was pressing into the branches of her chokecherry tree” and Sethe has “straightened up and knew, but could not feel” (*Beloved* 17). That’s why, Jeskova (2009, 8) claims that Sethe suffers from analgesia, which is shown when she “dissociates herself from her back” because “the image of a tree the inhuman markings remaining from slavery in appropriately separate terms from her natural body, and because she can no longer feel the scars of her back as part of her being, and can therefore only claim it as something other from which she has dissociated herself”. Because of that, Akşak (2008, (153,156)) notes that when Sethe tells Paul D about her back’s scars, she has not told him about her pain that she has suffered and still suffering to the extent that she can’t recall her memories at the Sweet Home consciously. Then, as a result of acting out her story when her repressed memory has haunted her, Sethe is able to work through its narration as a tool of healing. This is because of the fact that, when Paul D tries to comfort Sethe saying “I share your wounds [...] He rubbed his cheek on her back and learned that way her sorrow, the roots of it; its wide trunk and intricate branches”, she has “wept” (*Beloved* 17). Later on in the novel, “Sethe feels her eyes burn” (*Beloved* 261) indicating that she reacquired her ability to feel too. In this respect, Vickroy (2002, 32) says that considering Sethe’s scars “as traumatic memories are fully available to their owner, and

it is essential that what they signify be interpreted and understood by others as part of collective mourning and healing process". And so, Jeskova (2009, 33) believes that the "prominent source of enrichment and healing throughout *Beloved*" is achieved through both "exchanging experiences" and "sharing stories". For this, according to Sethe, it is just through "trust and rememory [...]. Her story was bearable because it was his (Paul D) as well—to tell, to refine and tell again. The things neither knew about the other—the things neither had word-shapes for—well, it would come in time" (*Beloved* 99).

B. Paul D & The Gang Chain in Alfred

Paul D's trauma is represented by his "repressed memories" regarding the humiliation he has experienced in the time of slavery. From this, both Baynar (2007, 2) and Bloom (2004, 28) claim that Paul D represses his memories when he has decided "to wander and put the past far behind him [...]. until he reunites with Sethe". Thus, Paul D's reunion with Sethe makes it possible to recall his repressed memories making Sethe as a witness for Paul D's trauma because for Sethe, "rememory" can be perceived as follows:

If a house burns down, it's gone, but the place—the picture of it—stays, and not just in my rememory, but out there, in the world [...]. Someday you be walking down the road and you hear something or see something going on [...]. And you think it's you thinking it up[...] But no. It's when you bump into a rememory that belongs to somebody else. (*Beloved* 36)

Therefore, Bloom (2004, 18) notes that "Although neither Sethe nor Paul D actively wants to remember the past, the emotions have taken root in their homes, bodies, and minds". Regarding this, in his conversation with Sethe about her husband Halle, Paul D acts out belatedly one of his repressed memories in a form of working through when he narrates to Sethe his sorrow for not being able to help Halle because his mouth has been chained with a bit and thus, Bloom (2004, 24) asserts that "The image stirs up their anger and humiliation and pain". Reasonably, this image has been of "what is

known” for Paul D that provokes “what remains” unknown is represented by the rest of his repressed forgettable memories that comes one by one. In this, Henderson (1999, 86) labels this way of memorizing “rememory” in which the individual acts out his memories that seems as “something that possesses (or haunts) one rather than something that one possesses. It is, in fact, that which makes the past part of one's present”. Being this, Bloom (2004, 24) affirms that it is “rememory”, which “moves the narrative back and forth between past and present; it is a way to reconstruct what has been forgotten”. And so, in a series of flashbacks, Paul D recalls his belated forgetting memories in the chain gang in Alfred when he has chained with other slaves and treated as something less than an animal. Regarding this, Bloom (2004, (28-29)) states that “The men, bound by the chain looped through their ankle cuffs” and “While on the chain gang, the only way the men can confront the horror of their situation is through “call and response.” The leader issues a “call,” the group responds, and then the leader issues a new call that incorporates the initial communal response, and a new cycle begins”. However, if this “call,” comes from the Master who owns these slaves along with the horror and the physical pain caused by the chain affects Paul D and makes him tremble: “Out of sight of Mister’s sight, away, praise His name, from the smiling boss of roosters, Paul D began to tremble” (*Beloved* 106). In this scene, Morrison shows how the slaves are slaves, who do not have any control on their lives and selves when she uses the “call” in reversed way through the character and name of Paul D. Actually, the “call” that comes from the leader with the chained slaves is different from the Master’s “call”, which is related to Paul D as a name of a salve. Whereas the previous “call” indicates the shared pain and suffering of the slaves, the latter reveals the possession of the Master to the slave through his name “Paul D” revealing the dehumanizing aspect that leads to chronic physical and psychological pain. Hence, Cynthia Lyles-Scott (2009, 197) discovers that for the Master, slaves are nothing but a series of names and in *Beloved*, Morrison discusses this through the name of Paul D, which is the fourth name in the alphabetical succession of male slaves all called Paul before

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they have been sold to Mr. Garner. In this respect, Barbara Hill Rigney (1988, 145) shows that “a slave’s name, such as Paul D’s and the other Pauls, did not designate an individual as self so much as a ‘segment of community, an identity larger than self’”. For this reason, Lyles-Scott explains:

By being given the same first name, with only an alphabetical character to distinguish between them, the Pauls are effectively dispossessed of their individuality and their own distinctive claim to an identity. Their names do not celebrate accomplishments, personality traits, or family conventions. The designations are solely for the benefit of the slave masters and not the self-identification of the male slaves. (2009, 197)

As a result, being possessed and chained physically and spiritually, Paul D suffers from psychic numbness and loses his ability to feel the pain of his chained body and psych. For the reason that according to Sirkka (2011, 7), the “chronic stress can explain how the emotional numbing was a survival tool, to prevent insanity, as slavery forced the black population to shut down emotionally to survive the atrocities white men and women subdued them to”. This is revealed “When he turned his head [...] turned it as much as the rope that connected his neck to the axle of a buckboard allowed, and, later on, when they fastened the iron around his ankles and clamped the wrists as well, there was no outward sign of trembling at all” (*Beloved* 106). Nevertheless, Jeskova (2009, 27) argues that the traumatic experience in Albert’s chain gang makes Paul D suffers from analgesia. As a consequence, when Paul D has been horrified from the tortures of the iron chains he deliberately turns off his emotions and numbs to be able to survive; therefore, he has dissociated himself from his chained body thereby he becomes analgesic through absencing the sense of pain consciously. Yet, when Paul D reunites with Sethe in the 124 house and confronts his repressed memory and pain, he reacquires his ability to feel. In this regard, Bowers (2004, 104) finds that depending on a contemporary research in Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, the most important part

in order to heal from trauma is not just through caring of and supporting the victims, but rather it is through facing the original trauma in an “unavoidable confrontation” and “feeling the pain again”. This is manifested when Paul D makes sense of his body and feels the trembling of his legs when Beloved’s ghost attacks the house “Paul D had not trembled since 1856 and then for eighty-three days in a row. Locked up and chained down, his hands shook so bad he couldn’t smoke or even scratch properly. Now he was trembling again but in the legs this time” (*Beloved* 18). In this scene, the chain can be represented by Beloved’s spirit, which evokes Paul D’s sensations and feelings. For this, in *Beloved*, Bowers (2000, 216) suggests that “in relating to Beloved, each character addresses her or his most profound individual anguish, whatever lies at the core of each identity. [...] for Paul D, his ability to feel [...] Their individual reactions to her reflect their respective voids and reveal their deepest selves”.

V. Conclusion

The Post Traumatic Disorder Syndromes is a recent psychological issue that has been captured by a lot of literary writers. Morrison’s *Beloved* provides a significant treatment for the traumatic past of the African American people under the institution of slavery. Doing this, Morrison has manifested the effects of trauma on both individuals and the whole national community. She represents the African American traumatic experiences for both men and women through the characters Sethe and Paul D. Thus, whereas she reveals Sethe’s traumatic experience through her back’s scars caused by the whipping of her master when she has been a slave, she presents Paul D’s trauma when he has chained with other slaves from his legs in the chain gang in Alfred. As a matter of fact, Morrison has made both Sethe and Paul D witness each other’s repressed memories from the time of their enslavement in the Sweet Home before approximately eighteen years. And so, Morrison uncovers the belated response of Sethe’s traumatic experience when she reveals Sethe acts out her trauma when a quick flashback haunts her and narrates that what she has known is that her back has been whipped leaving what she has not known “A chokecherry tree”

(*Beloved* 16) to the extent that she can't feel her back. From this, her back becomes numbed and dead thereby she has wept and works through her traumatic repressed past and then she reacquires her ability to feel as well. Nevertheless, Morrison presents Paul D's traumatic experience in its belated response when he expresses his sorrow because he hasn't been able to rescue Sethe's husband Halle because he remembers that he has been chained in his mouth. Thereby, with a series of flashbacks he acts out the remnant of his repressed forgettable past when he turns off his emotions and becomes numbs to bear the tortures and the dehumanization of his chained body and psych when he stop trembling for years. However, now, when he reunites with Sethe and starts to remember his traumatic past in a way of acting out, he trembles and works through his trauma while *Beloved's* spirit attacks the house. Hence, it is just through working through the repressed memories; Paul D and Sethe have been able to be decolonized and throw the past away and move on to future because according to Baynar (2007, 2), "The decolonization of the African American people required the retrieval of past traumas". Therefore, Jeskova (2009, 30) suggests that Paul D and Sethe have been able to support each other to heal from their traumatic experience because they have been in the same boat of the slavery's oppression. In conclusion, this research has unveiled the traumatic experience for the African American community through Morrison's *Beloved*. It shows the physical and psychological effects of trauma on the individuals and the whole national community represented by both Sethe and Paul D and suggests that acting out trauma can lead to working through its narration or healing.

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الكشف عن تأثير الصدمة على شخصيات سيث و بول دي في رواية المحبوبة لتوني
موريسن
م.م.هدى الحساني
المستخلص

يوضح هذا البحث كيف توني موريسن عالجت تجارب الشعب الأمريكي
الأفريقي تحت مؤسسة العبودية بواسطة تصوير الصدمات والآثار النفسية و
الجسدية التي تسببت بها لأفراد و مجتمع هذا المكون من خلال شخصيات سيث
و بول دي المجددة في رائعتها الأدبية الروائية المحبوبة (١٩٨٧). لذلك هذا
البحث يقدم الأدب شاهداً و معالجاً أساسياً لهذا النوع من الصدمات و الأمراض
النفسية وتأثيراتها السلبية التي ترافق المريض لوقت لاحق عن وقت حدوثها. فضلاً
عن ذلك يوضح هذا البحث التعريفات العامة لهذه الأمراض النفسية و يركز بصورة
أساسية على تعريفات كاثي كاروث (١٩٩١ و١٩٩٦) من خلال مصطلح
"الاستجابة المتأخرة" ويعتمد طريقة دومينيك لاكابرا (١٩٩٩) في استحضار هذه
الاستجابات المتأخرة من خلال ردات فعل جسدية كعلاج نفسي فعال.