

Traumatic Narration: A Case Study of Toni Morrison's *Beloved*

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I. Abstract

This paper examines Laurie Vickroy's (2002) main traumatic narrative strategies of intimacy, fragmentation, the dissociation of the character's identity, images and dialogical conceptions of witnessing. Therefore, at first, it defines trauma theory and its importance to the analysis of trauma narratives. Then, as a case study, it focuses on Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987) in terms of its trauma narrative structure and themes that come from three different real stories. It mainly shows how Vickroy's strategies work to uncover *Beloved's* traumatic themes of mother-daughter (s) relationship, memory, community, slavery and freedom through traumatic narration of testimony and fragmented narrative structure. Eventually, this paper explains the meaning of slavery and freedom, racial violence and racial reconciliation in *Beloved* through its traumatic narration and structure.

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الملخص

يهدف هذا البحث الى دراسة الإستراتيجيات الروائية التراومية الرئيسة للمنظرة لوري فيكوري (٢٠٠٢) و المتمثلة بالتقارب، التجزئة، تفكك الهوية الشخصية، الصور و المفهوم الحوارى للشاهد. لذلك يُعرف هذا البحث نظرية التراوما و أهميتها في الدراسات النقدية لتحليل النصوص الروائية التراومية. و بعد ذلك، كدراسة حالة، يركز على تحليل الأفكار التراومية والبناء أو التركيب الروائي التراومي لرائعة توني موريسون المحبوبة (١٩٨٧). و يهتم البحث بالدرجة الاولى بإستخدام استراتيجيات فيكوري في تحليل المحبوبة ليوضح كيف موريسون إقتبست ثلاثة قصص حقيقية مختلفة لتعالج الأفكار التراومية كعلاقة الأم و البنات، الذاكرة، المجتمع، العبودية والحرية من خلال السرد الروائي التراومي للشاهد و البناء الروائي المجزء ليشرح في النهاية معنى كلاً من العبودية و الحرية من جهة و العنف العنصري والمصالحة العنصرية من جهة أخرى.

II. Introduction

Trauma theory and narrative approach is an important field in literary criticism for its role to unveil the traumatic relationships and their effects on the traumatic families and communities. Thus, trauma theory according to Laurie Vickroy (2002, 33), functions “from traces of memory and history, not positioning full reconstruction but rather elaborating the dynamic relationship between individual and collective memory”. Therefore, trauma theory paves the way for writers to deal with many traumatic issues and constructs them through traumatic narratives factors in which a unique traumatic narrative structure can be offered. In *Beloved*, Morrison is captured by a real life story of a former slave along with two artistic pieces to shape the main plot that deals with the traumatic past of the African American community. Specifically, Morrison shapes *Beloved*’s plot depending on Margret Garner’s story along with the photo story of Van der Zee’s picture and Own Dodson’s poems in response to that picture. In this respect, Vickroy (2002, 11) suggests that the possible ways by which the traumatic experiences can be re-invented and re-created can be found in trauma narratives. Regarding this, to link these collected ideas; Morrison uses the traumatic narrative strategies along with the traumatic themes. Hence, this paper analyzes the traumatic narrative strategies through the main themes in Morrison’s *Beloved* to explore the traumatic relations and their effects on individuals and the American national community. It consists of three main points along with an abstract, introduction, conclusion and bibliography. Being they, the first point mainly provides a historical background on trauma theory and narrative approach, their emergence, adherents, definitions, interests, importance and aims. As far as the second point is concerned, it is dedicated for the historical background beyond *Beloved*’s narration. It explores Morrison’s interest, her motive, inspiration and the traumas that lead to *Beloved*’s traumatic narration. The last point analyzes *Beloved* as a traumatic narration through its themes revealing the mother-daughter (s) (and sister) relationship, “slavery and freedom” and “memory and community”. This can be undertaken through the representation of both *Beloved* and Denver in relation to their mother (Sethe) on one side and the whole national community in America as both “national amnesia” and “repressed memory” on the other. Also, it can be carried out

through the representation of Denver's maturity in relation to community in a form of collective memory. Consequently, in *Beloved*, Morrison not only intends to make the reader familiar of what has happened to the African American in the enslavement era represented by racial violence and slavery, but also how they have got their liberty along with a vivid treatment that unveil the end of racial violence. Actually, Morrison's *Beloved* treats national conflicts between the need to both "remember" and "forget" the traumatic past. And thus, Ashraf H. A. Rushdy (1999, 39) claims that Morrison and her narrative in *Beloved* reveal the "tension between needing to bury the past and needing to revive it, between a necessary remembering and an equally necessary forgetting". Finally, this paper concludes that through the traumatic narrative structure and themes, Morrison has been able to shed high lights on an important issue in the history of America that is slavery and its traumatic relations and effects on individuals and the whole community.

III. Trauma Theory & Narrative Approach in Literary Studies

Trauma as a theory and narrative approach is an important area in literary studies to its great role in discovering the effects of trauma on people and their culture. It is known that the term "trauma theory" has first appeared in Cathy Caruth's *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* (1996). Agreeably, Trauma Studies have appeared in the United States as a critical trend during the 1990s and becomes an important branch of the critical discourse. Then, Sonya Andermahr and Silvia Pellicer-Ortín (2013, 1) clarify that they have been launched by some contemporary critics in Yale University including Cathy Caruth and Shoshana Felman who try to analyze the narrative texts through the adaptation of some medical thoughts on "psychic traumatic processes". Therefore, Vickroy (2002, 2) claims that trauma as a narrative approach has appeared in the form of fictional works that is meant with the representation of the traumatic events and experiences through analyzing post colonially the psychological effects of racism and colonization in one hand, and through testimony and theorizing of the Holocaust, Vietnam and incest in the other. So, Trauma Theory can be defined by Susannah Radstone (2001, 194) as the work that deals with the personal and collective catastrophic experiences and Holocaust's experiences

of survivors along with their methodological and theoretical approaches that can be applied to literary studies. Being this, Cathy Caruth (1996, 7) suggests that the story of trauma is a survival's relationship and it is double telling stories that represents "the oscillation between a crisis of death and the correlative crisis of life: between the story of the unbearable nature of an event and the story of the unbearable nature of its survival". Thus, traumatic narratives become of immense interest among contemporary writers including Toni Morrison, Larry Heinemann, Dorothy Alison and many others. Moreover, Susannah Radstone (2007, 21) states that trauma theory is mainly concerned with "testimony and witness" that relies on the "turn to memory", which is applicable to the practice of history and discipline because according to Caruth (1996, 24), the perfect way through which we can implicate in each other's trauma is history. For this reason, Shoshana Felman and DoriLaub (1992, 204) define the terms "Testimony" or "Testimony Narratives" to be mainly concerned with the representation of the individuals and their responsibility and relationship to others beyond their personal interests; instead they are represented as a united group or social class. In this respect, Andermahr and Pellicer-Ortín (2013, 3), argue that the individual trauma and the formation of memories of the individual's mind that have been encouraged by psychological practices lead to the configuring of the collective and cultural thoughts of trauma and memories. That's why, the traumatic narrative is constructed through a complicated operation that links Vickroy's (2002) main strategies in the traumatic narration that are: "intimacy" (11), "fragmentation" (24), the characters' identities "dissociation" (28), "images" (31) and "dialogical conceptions of witnessing" (175). Hence, Andermahr and Pellicer-Ortín (2013, 2) confirm that the individual and collective traumas in the contemporary age find cultural and literary texts as a fertilized ground for their representation thereby traumatic memories can be transferred through narrative memories. However, Vickroy (2002, 5) declares that these narrative memories in testimonial literature avoid the "normal modes of artistic representation" or the "normal chronological narration" in presenting the survivors' experiences. Consequently, trauma becomes an important part in cultural memory studies because Astrid Eril (2008, (389, 391)) presents novels as one source for the

media of cultural memory through which the collective imagination of the past can be shaped and so literature can be a medium, which observes and constructs memory simultaneously. Regarding this, Radstone (2007, 24) finds out that “trauma analysis appears to dispense with the insights of [...] literary studies concerning the complex processes of meaning negotiation that take place between texts and their various spectators/readers, and invests the analyst with immensely and conclusively authoritative interpretative capacities”. As a result, Vickroy (2002, 5) discovers that the twentieth-century culture has largely affected by both testimony and testimonial literature that uncover the collective catastrophes and bring the social and political marginalized witnesses into the surface. Nevertheless, Harold Bloom (2004, 17) lists the most traumatic themes that can be recognized in the narrative texts of this kind of testimonial literature to be “slavery and freedom”, “memory and community” and motherhood. However, Vickroy (2002, 4) proposes that the narrative texts of this kind of testimonial literature are basically involved with

mother/child relations [...] particularly with daughters deeply identified with their mothers, provides a locus for considering many sociocultural aspects of trauma [...] As their identities are formed in these circumstances, daughters feel a conflicted protective fearfulness toward their mothers and a dread of relieving their mothers’ traumas.

Lastly, Andermahr and Pellicer-Ortín (2013, 2) affirms that taking into consideration the traumatic elements that are set in cultural practices and texts, reveal the role of art in representing pain and suffering in both conscious and an unconscious way to be directly engaged with the treatment processes of the traumatized individual or group through narrative and storytelling.

IV. A Historical Background on Beloved’s Narration

Morrison’s Beloved tells the story of Sethe, a former slave and her traumatic life after slavery that shows the inner life and relations of the

individuals in the African American community and how it is developed to be a national issue. For, Vickroy (2002, 33), "In creating beloved, Morrison focused on what was undeveloped in the nineteenth century slave narratives, that is, slavery's effects in the inner lives of survivors". That's why, ÖzcanAkşak (2008, 250) discovers that Morrison's Beloved is a real life story where Morrison recreates the past to remind the readers with the forgettable past of the African American people. In this case, to write Beloved, Morrison has relied on a real-life story of Margret Garner along with Van Der Zee's picture and Own Dodson's "living" poem in The Harlem Book of the Dead (1978). Moving on, in a conversation with Gloria Naylor (Conversation, 1985, (584-85)), Morrison has said that the story of Beloved has been inspired from "two or three little fragments of stories [...] heard from different places". The first story, in regard to both Bloom (2004, 12) and Morrison (Conversation, 1985, (583-84)) is inspired from a newspaper article that she has read which is about a former slave named; Margaret Garner in 1851 has fled from slavery with her children from Kentucky to Ohio. And just when the U. S. marshal has informed her owner to bring her back to slavery, she threatens "Before any of my children will be taken back into Kentucky, I will kill every one of them [...] I will not let those children live how I have lived". Regarding this, Rushdy (1999, 39) shows that Garner prefers to die she and her children "her most beloved" and not taken back to the institutionalized dehumanization of slavery. Thus, Bloom (2004, 12) narrates that Garner has cut the throat of her three-year old daughter in order not to be returned back to slavery in Kentucky due to the federal Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 thereby Garner has been accused for the murder of her daughter and has been sent to jail. Therefore, Morrison (Conversation, 1985, 585) states that the reading of this story has made her fully aware that of what "makes us sabotage ourselves" is nothing but "the best thing that is in us". In this respect, Garner's story shapes the plot of Beloved when Morrison creates Sethe to picture Garner's life story in escaping the horror of slavery and slaying her little daughter Beloved, rather than taking to be a slave. Accordingly, both Garner and Sethe refer to a woman that Morrison (Conversation, 1985, 584) regards as "A woman loved something other than herself so much [...] That the woman who killed her children loved her

children so much; they were the best part of her and she would not see them sullied". Eventually, Bloom (2004, 12) claims that Morrison considers Garner's story her starting point for writing *Beloved*, but she deliberately stays away from any further details in order to present Sethe as a "fully-imagined character". Instead, Morrison (Conversation, 1985, 584) confirms that she has been inspired by James Van der Zee's *The Harlem Book of the Dead* (1978), which includes photographs of Harlem funerals. Nevertheless, the picture that has overtaken Morrison as she has said reveals a "young girl lying in a coffin" and Van Der Zee says that the photostory is about eighteen years old girl who has been shot with a silence gun while she has been dancing in a party and when the people in the party has asked her "What happened to you?" She said, "I'll tell you tomorrow. I'll tell you tomorrow." [...] And she kept saying, "I'll tell you tomorrow" because she wanted him to get away. And he did, [...] anyway, she died" (Conversation, 1985, 584). From this, in the foreword to *The Harlem Book of the Dead*, Morrison (1978, foreword) describes the picture of having "narrative quality" and "intimacy" that show how the portrayal of this picture is so "living" and so "undead" thereby renews the life of the dead. In *Beloved*, Morrison does this when she revives *Beloved* from the dead because Homi K. Bhabha (1994, 5) assumes that "Morrison's *Beloved* revives the past of slavery and its murderous rituals of possession and self-possession [...] that is at the same time an affective, historic memory of an emergent public sphere of men and women alike." Further, Rushdy (1999, 41) argues that to give voice for the revived from death, Morrison has been inspired by Own Dodson's "living" poems on Van Der Zee's picture in *The Harlem Book of the Dead* (1978, (52-53)):

They lean over me and say:

"Who deathed you who,

who, who, who, who...

I whisper: "Tell you presently...

Shortly . . . this evening...

Tomorrow..."

Tomorrow is here

And you out there safe.

I'm safe in here...

Hence, Rushdy (1999, 41) states that in 1987, *Beloved* becomes an elegy for rebirthing because Morrison makes beloved “giving the dead voice” and “remembering the forgotten”. Being this, in *Beloved*, Morrison uses trauma narrative, according to Sun et al. (2007,1) in order to “think of literature as something that gives expression to the voiceless or to that which could not make itself heard before”. Then, to link Garner’s story to the photo story of Van Der Zee’s and the previous poetic lines of Own Dodson, Morrison claims that “I just imagined the life of a dead girl which was the girl that Margaret Garner killed, the baby girl that she killed [...] And I call her *Beloved*” (Conversation, 1985, 585). And thus, in order to construct *Beloved*’s plot(s) from these fragmented pieces and stories, Morrison uses the main strategies of traumatic narratives and themes. For this reason, Bloom (2004, 17) explains that Morrison’s *Beloved* “does not follow a linear, chronological plot, but instead circles from past to present, with a series of flashbacks that gradually reveal the central characters’ stories”. Agreeably, Lotta Sirkka (2011, 5) affirms that “Morrison did not use a chronological timeline as a narrative strategy instead she built a mosaic image, piece by piece. By using this narrative strategy the story at first came across as haphazardly told, however it grew to be an effective vehicle to display the irrational and fast roller-coaster ride the characters were forced to take in order to emotionally come to terms with their past”. Actually, this haphazard narration is confirmed with the arrangements of the chapters that have divided into three parts with unnumbered chapters. Yet, Benedicte Alliot (2001, 89) reveals that, in the narration of *Beloved* Morrison uses “disjointed fragments of narratives” along with multiple authorial voices that come from its various characters and the uncertain representations of “unthought” things or “thought pictures”. As a result, Bloom (2004, 16) concludes that *Beloved*’s “multiple and fragmented plot lines and shifting points of view create a layered and complex narrative structure”.

V. The Traumatic Narrative Techniques and Themes in *Beloved*

As a way for rescuing her children from the horror of the enslavement, Morrison in *Beloved* makes Sethe hurts her two sons, slays her elder daughter Beloved and isolates the younger one Denver in the isolated property of 124. Thus, to narrate *Beloved*, Morrison uses intimacy, fragmentation, images, dialogical conceptions of witnessing along with the dissociation of the characters' identities through Mother-daughter(s) (and sister) traumatic theme to reveal the meaning of *Beloved*'s death (slavery and racial violence) and Denver's birth ((partial) freedom and racial reconciliation). Then, the traumatic narrative is continued with fragmentation and storytelling through collective memory and community to reveal Denver's maturity ((continued and complete) freedom). Thus, recovery is experienced with the merit of the traumatic fragmented narration, which suggests storytelling as a way of healing through Denver's maturity.

A. Beloved's Death & Denver's Birth:

Morrison uses the traumatic narrative strategies to show the effects of the traumatic experiences of slavery on the individuals and the whole community through constructing a vivid picture for the complicated relationships between Sethe and her two daughters (Beloved and Denver). Actually, Morrison delivers these traumatic connections as a puzzled image through integrating them with each other in which the reader according to Charles W. Scheel (2009, 165), must cut the separated, fragmented puzzled images in order to shape the whole one. Being this, Morrison narrates Sethe's story through her daughters' intimacy and their representation as "the voice of repressed memory" and "the voice of collective amnesia". However, intimacy occurs among the "the character's/narrator's memory and consciousness" in one hand and the readers with the text on the other "by positioning readers in the narrative in the midst of the characters' various, even agitated, levels of consciousness" (Bloom; 2004, 25) and (Laurie Victory; 2002, 11). Nevertheless, such intimacy is revealed through the use of "dialogical conceptions of witnessing" when Morrison makes Beloved as a witness for her Death and Denver's birth thereby reveal their dissociated identities. Accordingly, Jago Morrison (2003, 131) states that Beloved and Denver represent "the voice of repressed memory" and "the voice of collective amnesia" in Morrison's *Beloved*. From this, Beloved represents

“the voice of repressed memory” not just for Sethe, but also for the whole community and become “a haunting, like unfinished business, [...] returns irresistibly out of the margins of the past and the margins of contemporary consciousness” (Jago Morrison; 2003, 131). Therefore, Ritashona Simpson (2007, 95) claims that “Beloved (the ghost?) represents the memories of Sethe's past that never have to be spoken aloud: it is recorded in the unspeakable unspoken language mentioned at the apex of the novel”. Thus, Sethe deliberately represses all her past's memories regarding her horror from slavery that leads her to murder her younger daughter, Beloved (Morrison; 2003, 131). For this reason, Sethe's repressed memory is symbolized by Beloved's death, which is the unforgettable past that she wants to forget: “I was talking about time. It's so hard for me to believe in it. [...] it was my rememory. [...] Some things you forget. Other things you never do. But it's not. Places, places are still there” (Beloved, (35-36)). As a result, Morrison uses Beloved's death to represent the past of slavery that she and the whole national community want to forget. In this regard, in an interview with Bonnie Angelo (1989, 68), Morrison declares that the subject matter of Beloved “has been the subject of willful forgetting [...] it is about something that the characters don't want to remember, I don't want to remember, black people don't want to remember. I mean, it's national amnesia”. That's why, KlayBaynar (2007, 4) argues that “Beloved represents racial violence in America, [...] If traumas are repressed and not worked out, their effects will never go away. By repressing a historical trauma, it is allowed to return”. Hence, the representation of Beloved as Sethe's repressed memory is portrayed through the “intimacy” between Denver and Beloved when Morrison revives Beloved from death and gives her flesh and voice to be then, “the voice of repressed memory”. This can be fully described in the scene when Denver asks Beloved: “What's it like over there, where you were before? Can you tell me?” and Beloved in a direct “dialogical conception of witnessing” witnesses and narrates “Dark,” [...] “Hot. Nothing to breathe down there and no room to move in.” [...] “Heaps. A lot of people is down there. Some is dead.” (Beloved, 75). With such vague description and answer Denver can be sure that Beloved is her murdered sister comes back in flesh from the womb of the grave to penalize their mother (Sethe) (Bloom,

2004, 25) and (Rushdy; 1999, 53). Regarding this, Denver seems both aware and horrified from her mother's past represented by the harshness of her mother's act of slaying Beloved, therefore, she thinks that "Sethe was trying to make up for the handsaw; Beloved was making her pay for it. But there would never be an end to that, and seeing her mother diminished shamed and infuriated her" (Beloved 251). Because of this, Denver becomes dissociated and confused between her love for and horror from her mother "I love my mother but I know she killed one of her daughters, and tender as she is with me, I'm scared of her because of it. She missed killing my brothers and they knew it" (Beloved 205). However, Morrison(2003, 131) reveals that Denver's dissociation and confusion towards her mother (Sethe) makes her represents "the collective amnesia" that Morrison has referred to before because Denver does not want to know anything about her mother's past regarding her mother's act of murdering Beloved: "I don't know what it is. [...] I need to know what that thing might be, but I don't want to" (Beloved, 205). But rather, Bloom (2004, 21) confirms that the only thing that Denver likes to hear and remember about her mother's past is her own birth because it is a story of kindness and hope.

Consequently, Morrison challenges Beloved's murder (Sethe's repressed memory) through bearing her as a witness for Denver's birth when she brings Beloved from the water from where Denver has been born: "A fully dressed woman walked out of the water" (Beloved 74). Doing this, Morrison says that her "original intent in the novel [...] was to develop the narrative of Beloved into the narrative of Denver [...] to extend her life, [...] her search, her quest, all the way through as long as I care to go, into the twenties where it switches to this other girl" (Conversation; 1985, 585). Nonetheless, the fragmentation in narrative is revealed when Morrison has used flashback to break the intimate scene between Beloved and Denver in order to portray Denver's birth when Denver according to Bloom (2004, 25), start to see through the eyes of Beloved and imagines her mother (Sethe):

Denver was seeing it now and feeling it—through
Beloved. Feeling how it must have felt to her
mother. Seeing how it must have looked. And the

more fine points she made, the more detail she provided, the more Beloved liked it (Beloved, 78).

At this moment, “The monologue became [...] a duet as they lay down together, Denver nursing Beloved’s interest like a lover whose pleasure was to overfeed the loved” (Beloved, 78). In this respect, Vickroy (2002, 33) finds that Morrison uses monologue in Beloved to invent an emotionally, unfinished and recurrent narrative away from the familiar realized one to offer the reader the opportunity to assume “a new consciousness of history” in considering the traumatic past. This leads to reveal the dissociation of Beloved’s identity when she for both Denver and the readers becomes Sethe who accesses Denver’s birth story: “Everybody knew what she was called, but nobody anywhere knew her name [...] how can they call her if they don’t know her name? [...] the girl who waited to be loved and cry shame erupts into her separate parts (Beloved 274). And thus, Harold Bloom (2004, 25) notices that “Morrison again transports the reader back to the scene with Sethe, near death and pregnant, and the white girl, Amy Denver”:

Panting under four summer stars, she threw her legs over the sides, because here come the head, as Amy informed her [...] “Push!” screamed Amy. “Pull,” whispered Sethe. [...] Coming to, [...] theafterbirth shot out. Then the baby whimpered and Sethe looked. (Beloved 84)

In this point, Bloom (2004, 25) affirms that “being born in a boat with the Ohio River’s water washing over her” Denver’s birth can represent “the first generation of freedom”. Also, according to Stephen Metcalf (2006, 2), Denver’s birth refers to the “hope for racial reconciliation” when Morrison narrates that through the Ohio River “two lawless outlaws—a slave and a barefoot white woman with unpinned hair—wrapping a ten-minute-old baby in the rags they wore [...] There was nothing to disturb them at their work. So they did it appropriately and well” (Beloved (84-85)). As a consequence, Beloved’s death represents the repressed memory of slavery and racial violence, which is only returned and revived to be forgotten with the

presence of Beloved who according to Rushdy (1999, 41) embodies “the past that must be remembered in order to be forgotten; she symbolizes what must be reincarnated in order to be buried, properly”. Therefore, Morrison makes her a witness for her death and Denver’s birth, which is considered the first step towards freedom initiated for Sethe’s and the whole community to suggest the starting end of racial violence. And so, Rushdy (1999, 54) discovers that Sethe’s freedom is restricted in twenty eight days, which represent the time between Denver’s birth while she has been crossing the Ohio River and the time of murdering her daughter, Beloved. This means that freedom is just begun with Denver’s birth, but it is suspended with Sethe’s act of killing Beloved thereby both Sethe and Denver become imprisoned with this horrible truth and past. Also, this indicates that the African American community has not experienced their freedom fully, but they partially continue their enslavement with their traumatic experiences and repressed memories, which even affect their new free born children. That’s clarifies why “Denver is not able to avoid the past for long, though, because the past becomes an immediate pain to her present life and an incipient danger to her future” (Rushdy; 1999, 48). Because, according to Denver, imagining her birth story as a first step towards freedom is conflicted with being isolated in the 124 house and dissociated towards her murderer mother. Ironically, Sethe’s attempt to protect Denver from enslavement in isolating her has eventually enslaved her. In this, Harold Bloom (2004, 21) proposes that because of “her mother’s haunted memories” and “the isolation of the house”, Denver becomes enslaved in spite of being born free. As a result, the dissociation of Denver’s identity alienates her from her mother’s and own experience because Vickroy (2002, 33) insists that “Morrison’s narrative [...] fragments memory and identity, thereby alienating individuals from their own experience and from others”.

B. Denver’s Maturity and Liberty:

Morrison’s traumatic narration is continued in a form of fragments and storytelling through collective memory and community as a way of healing for traumatic individuals and community. In this regard, Karla F. C. Holloway (1999, 67) declares that in Morrison’s Beloved, the “narrative structures have been consciously manipulated through a complicated

interplay between the implicit orature of recovered and (re)membered events and the explicit structures of literature". Thus, being isolated, alienated and dissociated Denver knows that "She would have to leave the yard; step off the edge of the world [...] and go ask somebody for help" (Beloved 243). However, to do so, she must according to Rushdy (1999, 48), "remember" and not only revise her own memory and history, but her mother's history as well in "a collective anamnesis". Therefore, the fragmentation in the narrative is revealed when Morrison breaks the scene in the present time going back to the time when in a flashback Denver remembers her mother's conversations with her grandmother Baby Suggs about their history in the Sweet Home, which suggests that it is dangerous to be outdoors when Baby Suggs says "This ain't a battle; it's a rout" (Beloved 243). On the other side, Denver also remembers her conversation with Baby Suggs advising her to know that there is no defense outside and get out "Know it, and go on out the yard. Go on" (Beloved 243). Eventually, Denver decides to challenge her isolation by leaving the 124 property and go "Out there" (Beloved 243). What is worth mentioning in this is the fact that getting out means that freedom is lastly continued because Denver's decision reveals that she is growing up and understands that she must break her own enslavement from her mother's repressed past (slavery) represented by Beloved's return and the isolated place 124 house. And then, not only Denver is freed, but also the whole community because in "a collective anamnesis". Rushdy (1999, 53) states that Denver tells the community about the story of Beloved's murder and Sethe's punishment represented by Beloved's return. For this reason, Metcalf (2006, 1) suggests that "the return of Beloved, and the enduring curse of slavery itself, rememory is both a reconciliation and a vexation, both a healing and a wounding". That's because of the fact that "Being able to reflect upon past traumas of oppression allowed the community and the individual to move towards a less traumatic future" (Baynar; 2007, 4). This is revealed when Janey Wagon has told the other colored women in the community that "Sethe's dead daughter, the one whose throat she cut, had come back to fix her" (Beloved 255). That's why, Vickroy (2000, 26) argues that "Trauma narratives concepts of radical individualism through identification and subject-fragmenting conflicts in mother/daughter

relationships and in the important of the extended family or community for the possibility of healing”. Thus, leaving the house and in a “collective anamnesis”, telling the story to the community lead to Denver’s own healing and maturity. From this, Rushdy (1999, 54) reveals that Denver becomes mature, fully aware for her shared history with her family, community and culture. As a consequence, the ultimate sense of freedom has been only practiced with narration and storytelling as a way of healing because Vickroy (2002) proposes that the traumatic narrative can be an important way of healing the traumatized persons and communities. Obviously, Denver’s maturity and personal healing can be revealed through her conversation with Paul D because she seems fully aware of whom Beloved really is when Paul D asks:

“You think she sure ’nough your sister?”

“At times. At times I think she was— more [...] But who would know that better than you, Paul D? I mean, you sure ’nough knew her” Denver replies

He licked his lips. “Well, if you want my opinion—”

“I don’t,” she said. “I have my own.”

“You grown,” he said.

“Yes, sir.”

(Beloved 266-267)

Hence, the narrating, communicating and involving with the community do not only heals Denver and makes Denver more familiar with her life, but also heals Sethe and the whole community. Reasonably, Rushdy (1999, 53) agrees with Denver when she narrates her mother’s story to Janey Wagon because Sethe’s story should be told “for its subjects to be cured” because “Nobody was going to help her unless she told it—told all of it [...] So Denver told this stranger what she hadn’t told Lady Jones” (Beloved 253). Astonishingly, Denver represents the meaning of freedom when it is started with her birth and completed along with her maturity and growing up. She is according to Morrison, “the girl of history”, “the other girl” and “the site of hope” in Beloved (Conversation; 1985, 585). As a result, the community responses and all the colored women have come to exclude the fleshed ghost of Beloved:

Together they stood in the doorway. [...] The singing women recognized Sethe at once and surprised themselves by their absence of fear when they saw what stood next to her. The devil-child was clever [...] And beautiful (Beloved 261)

In this respect, Baynar (2007, 1) claims that Morrison devotes Beloved to reveal how the African American community bonds to reclaim their selfhood through confronting their traumatic past. So, in this moment when the women have seen Beloved and they carry on their song and hymn, Sethe recognizes Schoolteacher standing behind them. Therefore, she runs towards the women with the ice pick in her hand to kill Schoolteacher (slavery) instead of killing her daughter Beloved, but the ice pick has been vanished: proceed

She hears wings. Little hummingbirds stick needle beaks right through her headcloth into her hair and beat their wings. And if she thinks anything, it is no. No no. Nonono. She flies. The ice pick is not in her hand; it is her hand (Beloved 262)

Being this, the scene shows Sethe's confrontation for her conscious and past ghosts represented by Beloved behind her at the doorway and Schoolteacher in front of her. Agreeing with Stephanie Li (2010, 73), "Morrison describes Sethe's struggle to keep her slave memories from consciousness along with her need to confront the ghosts of her past". And then, Beloved's ghost that represents the ghost of slavery disappears: "Beloved is truly gone. Disappeared, some say, exploded right before their eyes" (Beloved 263). From this, Beloved's disappearance frees Sethe and the whole community from the racial violence represented by Schoolteacher and practices the meaning of "racial reconciliation".

VI. Conclusion

The traumatic narration is that narration which has adopted to reveal the inner life of survivors from trauma and their attitudes, behaviors and feelings through a disjointed narration. In Beloved, Morrison has used a real life story along with an artistic picture and poem as a basis for her novel. First, Morrison uses Sethe as vivid picture of Margret Garner's story, which is

about a former slave who slays her three-year old daughter instead of taking her back to slavery. Second, Morrison has been inspired by Van der Zee's picture that shows the "intimacy" and the "revive from death" along with according to Rushdy (1999), Own Dodson's poems that "give voice for the dead". Doing this, in *Beloved*, Morrison uses fragmented narrative structure as puzzled images, which are narrated through intimacy and dialogical conceptions of witnessing causing in dissociation in the characters' identities. Therefore, Mae G. Henderson (1999, 90) states that "Narrativization" helps in the construction of "a meaningful life-story from a cluster of images, to transform separate and disparate events into a whole and coherent story". Thus, Morrison uses intimacy between Denver and *Beloved* and the meaning of *Beloved*'s death and Denver's birth to reveal the "national amnesia" and "repressed memory" in the American society. Morrison does this when in separate scenes, brings *Beloved* to life from the water and makes her witness for both her death and Denver's birth thereby she represents the repressed memory of Sethe of slavery and racial violence when she narrates that she comes for the grave. Further, Morrison narrative fragmentation is shown when she dissociates *Beloved*'s identity when she becomes Sethe in another scene to narrate Denver's birth on the hand of Amy Denver, the white woman as a kind of racial settlement. On the other side, Denver as national amnesia is shown in her wish to know nothing about her mother's past especially *Beloved*'s murder (slavery), but she likes to hear her birth story because it has been when her mother has been in her way towards (freedom), and thus she becomes dissociated in her feelings towards her mother. Moreover, Denver's birth only suggests that freedom is started but not fully experienced because it has been postponed from the moment when Sethe has killed *Beloved* thereby both Sethe and Denver become enslaved and imprisoned by Sethe's repressed memory and the isolated property in 124. However, freedom is completed when Morrison's fragmented narration and storytelling treats the collective memory and community theme through Denver's maturity. In this respect, Denver's maturity is revealed when she leaves her isolated place and life and in "a collective anamnesis" and storytelling, she has been able to free herself, Sethe and the whole community as well from the traumatic repressed past of slavery represented by *Beloved*'s ghost.

Consequently, whereas the meaning of “slavery” and “racial violence” is represented in Beloved’s death, the meaning of “freedom” and “racial reconciliation” is represented partially with Denver’s birth and it is completed with Denver’s growing up and maturity. As a result, Vickroy (2002, 33) clarifies that ‘Morrison’s narrative is structured on traumatic experience through characters’ fragmented memories, their sensory and bodily responses, and by foregrounding testimonial voices and emotional inaccessibility in historical analysis’. In conclusion, this research has analyzed the techniques of the traumatic narrative structure of intimacy, fragmentation, images, dialogical conceptions of witnessing, the dissociation in the characters’ identifies along with storytelling through the treatment of the traumatic themes of mother-daughter (s) relationships, slavery, freedom, memory and community. Doing this, it reveals the traumatic relations caused by slavery and discusses their effects on individuals and the larger American nation.

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