

## The Duality of Magic and Memory as the Structure of Narrative Repetition in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*

Abdalahdi Nimer Abdalqader Abu Jweid<sup>[a],\*</sup>

<sup>[a]</sup> Assistant professor of English literature at Department of English, Faculty of Educational Sciences & Arts, FESA, UNRWA, Amman-Jordan.

\*Corresponding author.

Received 4 May 2021; accepted 7 June 2021

Published online 26 June 2021

### Abstract

This paper examines the repetitive narrative structure in Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987). Morrison writings focus on colonial issues and its relative issues. She deals with the colonial subjects that influence the world since the beginning of colonialism up to the present day. In her fiction, she depicts many thematic issues that have a universal appeal. One of these issues is color. This issue is of paramount importance since it relates to the treatment of black people in different ways. Before the mid-twentieth century, color was a great subject to the public opinion in all over the world. The black people were deprived of their human dignity. They are treated in a lower position that affects their identity and human dignity. There were no serious steps to be taken in order to limit the treatment of black people in inferior positions. So, color was interrogated many times during the first part of the twentieth century because the colonial and imperial plans were spreading all over the world. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to explore Morrison's repetitive narrative structure as a magical site of memory in *Beloved* (1987).

**Key words:** Colonialism; Magic; Memory; Morrison; Narrative repetition; Postcolonialism

Abu Jweid, A. N. A. (2021). The Duality of Magic and Memory as the Structure of Narrative Repetition in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. *Higher Education of Social Science*, 20(2), 25-32. Available from: URL: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/hess/article/view/12164> DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/12164>

### INTRODUCTION

The issue of color is sustained with the issue of power in Morrison's writings. She portrays the colonial power that is used to construct hegemony over the black people (Zauditu-Selassie, p.76). The colonial powers do not leave the colonized people alone. They are exploited in an inhuman manner. They do not have any chance to build their own nation. They are completely restricted by the colonial power (Abu Jweid, 2020a, p.8). Colonialism, thus, causes sufferings for the colonized people. These sufferings take the shape of internal and external representations. The internal representation of colonialism is their psychic influences; and the external representation is the physical sufferings (Abu Jweid, 2020b, p.7). Both of them exemplify the negative practices of colonialism.

The internal representation of power make the colonized people suffer from psychic complexities (Eckard, p.113). They do not have a sense of belonging to their homelands. They lack the resisting power. They are interrupted by the colonial hegemony (Durrant, p.14). The colonized blacks are not as equal as their colonial whites. As a reaction, the colonized blacks need psychic compensation. They use their own ability to oppose colonialism. This is the core of the internal representation of colonialism (Abu Jweid, 2020c, p.15). The blacks develop psychic problems which culminate in their psyches and do not have outlets for their dilemmas.

The external representation of colonial power is the physical sufferings. The colonized people are tormented by the colonizers (Abu Jweid and Sasa, 2020, p.339). They are exploited for domestic drudgery. They do not have any choice to be free of this torture. The white colonial masters do not allow them to be free. The blacks, here, undergo pain and sufferings. They are both psychically and physically suffering (Abu Jweid, 2021b, p.6). These sufferings leave their apparent impact upon their individuality. They lose their confidence in their national ideals because they do not have the resisting

power. Morrison presents this power in a weak position (Abu Jweid and Sasa, 2014, p.170). The colonized blacks are subjugated for labor. Consequently, all what they think is to get rid of this daunting labor. They do not invent resistant strategies to cancel their colonial treatment. They lose integral human features.

Identity is one of the human features that Morrison deals with in her novels. The loss of identity belittles the black ability to be equal to their colonial counterpart (Zauditu-Selassie, p.80). They are "relative" to their colonial masters. Here, the word "relative" means dependent; that is, the colonized blacks become dependent on their white colonizers (Abu Jweid and Kaur, p.3). They are not able to depend on themselves to get rid of their colonial presence over their lands. Morrison portrays the issue of identity in a historical context. Identity is one of the most complicated issues since the start of colonialism (Abu Jweid, 2020d, p.95). The issue of identity paves the way for other issues treated in Morrison's writings.

This issue is slavery. Morrison has an implicit tragic, and blameful, voice in her writings. She indicts slavery does not recognize slavery (Abu Jweid, 2020f, p.104). There is not proper justification for slavery. It has destructive agendas. It brings about plights and sufferings upon the enslaved people's lives (Abu Jweid, 2016, p.530). Her fictional characters and narrators refuse slavery as they do not want to surrender or yield to colonial powers. Moreover, the issue of slavery is connected with racism. Racism is the tangible exemplification of slavery (Abu Jweid, 2020e, p.209). Morrison has an implicit voice that tries to reject racial segregation against the black people. Racism leaves psychological harmful memories in the colonized people's experiences (Abu Jweid, 2021a, p.12). They become a victim for their conditions under slavery. Racism, therefore, does not make them normal human beings. This essay will study the colonial features in Morrison's *Beloved* (1987) through exploring magic and memory as the dual nature of the novel's narrative repetition. Before discussing these features, I will introduce the main studies conducted on the novel.

---

## LITERATURE REVIEW

---

Elza De Fatima Dissenha Costa, in *Unspeakable Things (Un)spoken: The Representation of Black Women in Toni Morrison's Beloved* (1999), claims that Morrison uses magic as a means of spiritual empowerment. The blacks resort to magic in order to be free of colonial confines (20). The blacks feel that they are inferior to their white colonizers. As such, they begin searching for salvation from colonialism (24). Therefore, they use magic for the sake of peace and "psychological tranquility" that they long lost during the colonial attacks. The novel's colonial atmosphere offers gloomy hints about colonialism and how it might negatively affect the colonized people psyches (p.24). As a sequence, colonialism imposes sever

psychological complication that gradually destruct the colonized people's psyches. In this sense, colonialism is depicted as the main source of psychic complication that should be amended by using "traditional" tools of resistance (p.26).

Magic, therefore, is the most vital tool to get rid of colonialism. The colonial atmosphere takes several forms. Yet, the most conspicuous form relates to psychology. In this regard, Morrison uses magic as a remedy for colonialism. This is because the colonized blacks do not have the suitable military artillery to resist colonialism. They only have traditional tactics that would help them eradicate colonialism in a different manner (Costa, p.26). Accordingly, they relied on magic since they believe that magic would lead to their survival. Consequently, Morrison uses magic as a survival strategy to enable the black to gain their independence, or at least, self-autonomy from their colonizers.

Magic does not frankly deal with colonialism in its extreme agendas i.e., colonial bloody attacks, killings, imprisonment; it has a more implicit colonial peculiarities. These peculiarities are subjugation, exploitation and destruction (Costa, p.28). The novel treatment of destruction lies in its portrayal of psychological retardation when black minorities suffer from colonial oppression (p.27). For this reason, they directly resort to magic, which is a part of their traditional culture, as a vehicle of resistance. This traditional resistance could be so vital in mitigating the colonial spiritual confines that the black people suffer from. Morrison, who is an astounding literary representative of colonial conflicts in her fiction, uses magic to empower the black people identity (p.29). That is, they lack autonomy and independence. Hence, they utilize their traditional magic to repudiate colonialism at all costs.

Marjan Marchand Argues that Morrison deals with magic to restore the lost identity. There are some historical hints in the novel that indicates identity and its reformulation (p.86). The colonized minorities lose their identity when they are suppressed by colonial powers. These powers belittle the colonized people to be as free as their colonial counterparts. The lost identity makes the colonized a bit inferior to their colonizers (p.86). There is no opportunity for them to be equal. Accordingly, they use magic as a way of "self-expression" (p.86). The term "self-expression" is used to illuminate the way by which the colonized people are depicted. They are completely different from their colonizers (p.86).

There is no possible way to distinguish or infer the relationship between the colonized and the colonizer (Marchand, p.87). To illustrate, the colonizer mix and intermingle with the colonized people. Then, there is no a sole way to deduce the colonial interactions between them. The colonized put their effort to the limits to gain their liberty. They could not be free as their colonizers. The colonizers, on the other hand, do not allow them to be

independent. In this case, there is no common compromise between the colonized and the colonizer (p.87). However, Morrison does not blatantly describe this colonial relationship. She focuses on the colonial peripheries that encompass the collective ground for both the colonized and the colonizer. To put it simply, the colonized and the colonizer do not recognize each other (p.88).

Consequently, a sense of disintegration comes out. This disintegration does not have a balance to organize the relationship between them (Marchand, p.90). At this point, power plays an essential role in discerning their relationship. The only side that has power is the colonizer. As a matter of fact, the colonizer has the ideal power to harness the colonized people for colonial benefits (p.90). They begin suppressing the colonized people through colonial practices. These practices incur inferiority and ordeals. These ordeals embody the physical sufferings of the colonized people. The colonial power bring about new changes. One of these changes is identity change. The colonized people change according to their colonial cultural customs and traditions (p.91). These changes include ways of life, language, conventions and social manners. They are limited and controlled by the colonizers' ability to create drastic changes to the colonized vernacular identity. Yet, the colonized people use magic to put an end to this change. They exploit their magical powers as to a reaction to colonialism (p.92). In so doing, Morrison provides magic with universal contexts i.e., magic is a traditional reaction to colonialism that changes the colonized people's identity.

Elaine Van Der Geld contends that hegemony is the main stimuli of magic. Morrison portrays magic in the context of colonial hegemony. Yet, this hegemony does not relate to psychological or physical concerns (p.112). It is associated with the hegemonic abilities in the novel. There are two kinds of hegemonic abilities. One of them is connected with the black people and the other kind is connected with the white people (p.112). On the one hand, the white people use their power and colonial abilities to have hegemonic existence in the blacks' territories. They are stronger than the black people since they have the most "stout means of colonial power" (p.113).

This power, henceforth, is resisted by the other forms rather than power. It is connected with the black people (Geld, p.114). The black people need technical advancement in order to emulate the colonial existence over their lands. But they do not have the sufficient means of resistance. They practices magic to face the colonial power. In this regard, colonial hegemony would fade away (p.114). The black people, in turn, will be able to counter-resist the colonial hegemonic enterprises. Morrison, here, positions magic in the opposite place of hegemony. It is the resistance of colonial hegemony. Therefore, the whites' hegemony would not be successful. It would encounter failure and retardation (p.115). This is because magic is equal power against colonial hegemony.

The blacks could maintain their position in their lands although they are colonized. The colonial hegemony is faced by magic and will; whereby the blacks' sufferings end. The colonial existence in the blacks' territories will also fade away by the same way as magic proceeds being resisting the whites' hegemony (p.115). Thus, the blacks are no more inferior to the whites' hegemony. They are sustained by their magic; and Morrison presents this magic via a fictional atmosphere that resembles the real colonial world (p.116).

This essay, however, will study magic and its relationship with slavery and racism in Morrison's *Beloved* (1987). It will primarily depend on Morrison's arguments about magic and its postcolonial aspect in colonial literature. It will demonstrate how Morrison uses the repetitive narrative structuring as a means of critiquing colonial hegemony over the black slaves. Thus, it will explore the slavery and racial attributes of the novel.

---

## MAGIC IN MORRISON'S *BELLOVED*

---

Morrison's *Beloved* (1987) is set in Cincinnati, Ohio. It hinges on the story of Denver and her mother Sethe. The plot sheds light on their lives after escaping the harsh life of slavery. Halle is Sethe's husband. They live together with Sethe's husband's mother Baby Suggs. The novel apparently includes magical elements since Sethe's home is continuously haunted by a visible ghost; a revenant who seems to be a live apparition of Sethe's daughter. The phantom of the ghost teases the home by throwing objects around the house's rooms. Denver is a bashful girl who forlorn. She does not develop any interactive relations with companions and other people. She is isolated and housebound. Howard and Buglar, who are Sethe's two sons, fled from the home. At this stage, they are thirteen years old. They escape the home just before the death of Baby Suggs in her bed. The novel tells the story of several slaves; among whom are Paul D, Halle, Baby Suggs and many others. They represent the black community which is bitterly enslaved by colonial hegemony.

In postcolonialism, Magic and its narrative dimensions are used as survival strategies. It is utilized as a way of obliterating colonialism and the colonial enterprises. In essence, magic includes supernatural elements that defy common sense. It does not undergo the laws of nature. The postcolonial appropriation of magic is to reject colonialism in a form of non-military contact. Magic is the proper tool to encounter colonial events and how to underscore the national sense of belonging. It is concerned with the narrative depiction of survival. The oppressed people seek refuge of colonialism through magic (Morrison, p.82). This is due to their lack of ability to accept colonialism as reality. Magic, as this point, serves as a vehicle of empowerment. The oppressed people are empowered with magic. Yet, the author is the ideational creator of this empowerment. The fictional characters are

empowered with magic by the author who also tries to reject colonial hegemony (p.82). In *Beloved* (1987), it is evident in when Denver and Paul D comment on their ghost of the father: "Knew him. Knew him well" (p.7). Here, the repetition of "Knew him" is connected with slavery because they suffer from racism and lost their father.

In *The Site of Memory* (1995), Morrison claims that magic is used simultaneously with the repetitive narrative moments. It is used in this fictional fashion to render the characters special from empowerment. By using magic, the characters could escape their negative destiny. This destiny could be the colonial slavery. Colonialism might be resisted by utilizing repetitive narrative structuring (p.83). This structuring is saturated with magical moments. As such, the narrative repetitive structuring is the authorial reflection in the plot. Morrison further maintains that magic is a decisive agent against colonialism. When the enslaved people are presented in colonial atmospheres, they might be portrayed in slavery places (p.83). In *Beloved* (1987), the magical repetition is also clear when the black comment on the ghost by using repetitive phrases, like rebuked: "Rebuked. Lonely and rebuked" (p.8).

Morrison accentuates memory as the site where magical moments might take place (p.82). These moments are characterized by phantoms or ghosts that appear to the main characters. The characters use their magical power, or magical situations, to express their ability to be free of slavery and its relative sequences (p.85). The supernatural apparitions, like phantoms, accompany the magical moments in the narrative structuring. Again, in *Beloved* (1987), the repetitive phrases appear when magical moments come out: "If he don't object to me I don't object to him" (p.8).

Morrison supports her claims by the "publically variable" moments of magical situations. She contends that magic occurs to characters who suffer from isolated of psychic dilemmas (Morrison, p.87). The psychological dimension is one part of the magical moments in the repetitive narrative structuring. The narrative is harnessed by the postcolonial author to emphasize the colonized ability to obtain freedom. This freedom might come in the form of escape. The colonized people escape their lands for the sake of psychological relief. They are severely oppressed and are not given any chance to remain in their lands. Just so, the psychological aspect of magic is carried out through the characters memories and living places (p.88). In *Beloved* (1987), black slaves repeat some works when they interact with supernatural creatures, like ghosts: "I can't no more. I can't no more" (p.9).

The site of memory, according to Morrison, encompasses the places where the colonized people suffer a lot. The other power, who is the colonizer, plays an integral role in shaping the narrative magical moments (Morrison, p.89). The colonial powers make the colonized

leave their homelands for other lands. They are displaced from their national residences. Henceforth, the magical supernatural phenomena happen, like the appearance of dead persons. The dead persons might be one of the relatives, like a daughter or a son. These magical apparitions embody the magical moments in the repetitive narrative structuring (p.89). Most importantly, memory works when magical moments begin to happen. Feeling or seeing the ghost of a dead person comes out when one of the relative remembers that dead person before death. Consequently, magic intermixes with reality. The magical moments are different from the reality of dead people. To explain, dead persons do not appear as they used to be. There are several differences between their life after death and their reality before death. There are inherent differences among them. This is because there are two experiences for that person. Morrison describes the experience before death as the reality experience, and the ghost apparition is the magical experience. Both experiences take place in magical moments. These moments are conveyed in the repetitive narrative structuring of fictional plots (p.90). In *Beloved* (1987), black characters remember their ancestries by using repetitive words; for example Denver and Sethe recall their past when Sethe refers to something on Denver's back: "What tree on your back? Is something growing on your back?" (p.10).

Slavery is an ethnical phenomenon in the human history. It developed through different stages according to the nations' need for slaves and domestic issues. Slave master tried to bring slaves from several world regions to satisfy their needs and to build a well-organized society which they aspire to achieve. In this case, the masters and their slaves gain relations on the ground of racial matters (Rego, p.36). They appreciate and judge each other on the basis of power and control. The slaves, on the one hand, feel that they are subjugated and exploited by their powerful masters. On the other hand, the masters feel that they have absolute control over their slaves. In the mid of this relation, a new colonial sense springs out. The sense is the mutual reciprocation between the masters and the slaves. This reciprocation is a scrutiny of the masters as "controlling power" and the slaves as the "controlled" minority (Mehta, p.104). In *Beloved* (1987), the slaves are controlled by the whites: the white brother and sister who gave Stamp Paid, Ella and John clothes, goods and gear for runaways because they hated slavery worse than they hated slaves" (p.78).

Consequently, slavery resulted in many socio-cultural changes. One of these changes is identity change. The slaves feel that they are completely colonized and controlled by their masters (Laitin, p.82). They do not have any choice to abandon their masters since they do not have the minimum requirements of life to return back to their homelands. Therefore, they find themselves obliged to cope with their master's cultural traditions. They change according to their colonial surroundings. The colonial milieu around them do not offer them any chance to be free of



colonialism (Huggan, p.69). Morrison depicts this slavery in *Beloved* (1987); where "Sweet Home, except in his company, was not so much because of the law, but the danger of men-bred slaves on the loose" (p.80).

Identity change carries out other changes. Cultural change is one vital change caused by identity change. The masters do not experience any change in order to adapt to their slaves' culture. Instead, they are free of identity's change "chains" which are implicitly imposed over their slaves. Accordingly, the slaves find themselves culturally changes in the course of their life with colonial masters. This change is a sort of subjugation. However, some slaves resist their masters, and the result is that they are persecuted more than ever. The panoramic view of this colonial resistance is violence scenes as the slaves and their masters combat with each other (Femia, p.107). This identity, in Morrison's *Beloved* (1987), changes according to the whites' dominion in the blacks' territories: "Slaves not supposed to have pleasurable feelings on their own; their bodies not supposed to be like that, but they have to have as many children as they can to please whoever owned them" (p.118).

In postcolonial terms, slavery represents the whites in the position of strong colonial forces. The whites have a complete control over the blacks. In *Transatlantic Memories of Slavery: Reimagining the Past, Changing the Future* (2015), Elisa Bordin and Anna Schacci claim that colonial slavery is made when the whites have "an entirely superiority over the blacks" (p.53). In this case, the blacks embody the weak colonized nations "at the hands of their white counterparts" (p.54). The blacks are invaded by the whites and are made a subject to exploitation. In other words, the white masters bequeath their posterity, such as sons and grandsons to take colonial sovereignty over the blacks (Ashcroft et al., p.67). Consequently, the white masters could torment the blacks; and they could trade in the blacks' children because they have a colonial power. In *Beloved* (1987), the colonized nation is the slaves: "In Maryland, he met four families of slaves who had all been together for a hundred years: great-grands, grands, mothers, fathers, aunts, uncles, cousins, children" (p.124).

Colonial slavery also includes the whites' control over the blacks' families. When the whites have domination and superiority over a black individual, they also have superiority over his family members, such as father, mother, husband, sisters, brother and so forth. Nicola Frith and Kate Hodgson tackle the whites' domination over the blacks' families in *At the Limits of Memory: Legacies of Slavery in the Francophone World* (2015). Frith and Hodgson argue that the whites are "blessed with colonial force which provides them with a total domination over the blacks' families" (p.116). The whites practice powerful exploitation of the blacks in a way that enables them to take hegemonic leadership upon the blacks and their relatives (p.117). Being that so, colonial slavery entails the whites' oppressive colonization of the blacks'

family members. These enslaved families are conspicuous in *Beloved* (1987); they are a mixture of old and young people: "Boys younger than Buglar and Howard; configurations and blends of families of women and children, while elsewhere, solitary, hunted and hunting for, were men, men, men (p.31). Again, the repetition of the word "men" is an indication of anti-colonial narrative structuring.

As argued earlier, slavery grows out of the whites' subjugation of the blacks and their families. In *The Fiction of Imperialism: Reading between International Relations and Postcolonialism* (1998), Phillip Darby describes the colonial relations between the whites and blacks in terms of an imperial domination (p.15). The whites have imperial powers since they could control the blacks for slavery. Yet, the whites need time to have an "overwhelming occupation of the blacks and their families" (Coker, p.96). The whites are in a progressive process to involve the blacks in their colonial plantations (colonial settlements). This subjugation relates to the blacks in *Beloved* (1987): "The Yankees in control left the Rebels out of control. They got to the outskirts of Mobile, where blacks were putting down tracks for the Union that, earlier, they had torn up for the Rebels" (p.152).

Kirsti Bohata discusses the destructive slavery agendas done by white colonizers in *Postcolonialism Revisited* (2004). Bohata maintains that when the whites oppress the blacks, they "imprison them in places which symbolize colonial slavery" (p.19). According to Bohata, these places "might be prisons, cabins, and ditches" (p.20). The whites use such places to belittle the value of the slave as a human being (p.68). As the black slaves are confined in these places, they lose their human true identity; and consequently, they become subhuman (p.68). To illustrate, the whites' imprisonment of the blacks is an indication of the whites' oppressive superiority over the blacks. Consequently, the blacks are gradually tamed by this treatment and become submissive to the whites. In *Postcolonial Comics: Texts, Events, Identities* (2015), Binita Mehta and Pia Mukherji assert that the whites deprive the black slaves of learning (p.26). The purpose behind this deprivation is to prevent the slaves from progress to be equal to the whites (p.74). These agendas are created by the whites in Morrison's *Beloved* (1987): "the white commander had to figure out what to command them to do instead of kill other white men" (p.152).

The whites can hinder the blacks' education by warning them against education (Mehta, p.83). They can also decrease the blacks' educative consciousness by torment in case they refuse to abide by the whites' orders. They have the power to "impose torture upon the blacks to make them more obedient to their colonial mentality" (p.171). In this regard, slavery culminates in the blacks ignorance and torment at the hands of the whites. In a similar fashion, Rufus and his father torment the blacks by a whip. In post-colonialism, the unfair enslaving

of the blacks might cause destruction to the white colonizer (p.18). As a matter of fact, the blacks' feeling of oppression and exploitation results in a certain resistance of the whites. The whites could be resisted by burning their belongings, like money and houses (p.76). The whites are responsible for enslaving the blacks in *Beloved* (1987): "Coloredmen and white, their faces wrapped to their eyes, picked their way through the meadows with lamps, listening in the dark for groans of life in the indifferent silence of the dead" (152).

This is because resisting the whites is a very challenging endeavor for the blacks (Mehta, p.64). The blacks who live in long slavery time could not change their existential relationships with the white colonizers overnight. They necessarily need some daring changes to prove their identity as human beings. In *African Realism?: International Relations Theory and Africa's Wars in the Postcolonial Era* (2015), Errol Henderson tackles the way in which the blacks fail to get independence of the whites' slavery domination. Henderson contends that the blacks "live in an everlasting contest with the whites and they would not become autonomous because they comply with the self-other relationship" (p.164). The blacks have haunting thoughts of the whites who might torment them if they do not comply with their rules. In *Beloved* (1987), these changes take place when the white colonialism dominates the black minorities: "The Yankees in control left the Rebels out of control. They got to the outskirts of Mobile, where blacks were putting down tracks for the Union that, earlier, they had torn up for the Rebels" (p.152).

As a rule of thumb, the blacks lose their dignity as human beings when they are humiliated (Henderson, p.46). The whites' tremendous hegemony makes the blacks in a continual fear and unrest. This is the notion of losing human dignity (p.15). The whites try to impose fearful domination to prove being strong. In this way, they keep their colonialism. On the other hand, the blacks remain submissive and obedient to save their lives. As such, in *Beloved* (1987), the blacks are killed by the whites; and this is an indication of dignity loss: "a dead nigger could not be skinned for profit and was not worth his own dead weight in coin" (p.85).

In essence, the black slaves sympathize with their compatriots, and the white masters appreciate each other and marginalize their black slaves. This sympathy is tackled in Alexander Anievas et al.'s *Race and Racism in International Relations: Confronting the Global Colour Line* (2015). Anievas et al. claim that the colonial whites exert racial segregation via hostility (p.61). They whites "appear hostile and aggressive to the blacks and do not allow them to interact with them in their colonial peripheries" (p.61). The whites are ruthless and creating racial discrimination against the slaves. This kind of sympathy is similar to Sethe's sympathy with other slaves in *Beloved* (1987): "If he trembled like Lot's wife and

felt some womanish need to see the nature of the sin behind him; feel a sympathy, perhaps, for the cursing cursed, or want to hold it in his arms out of respect for the connection between them, he too would be lost" (p.67).

Racial segregation encompasses the preference of some blacks to other blacks. To illustrate, when the whites perform racial segregation, they tend to choose some slaves and disregard the others. The choice of the preferred slaves is pursued on the basis of, for example, education (Huggan, p.15). But, all the slaves are the same according to the whites. Serge Moscovici approaches the dimension of such racism in *Social Representations: Explorations in Social Psychology* (2001). Moscovici maintains that the blacks "become the work agents utilized by the whites to do household traditional affairs, among them are cooking and harvesting agricultural crops. They are not given any sympathy by their white colonizers. Other blacks lend a helping hand for them to be less tired of work; this is the extreme notion of racism" (p.22). The blacks are exploited severely for the whites' interests. The whites do not allocate any rest time for them. They have to achieve the whole domestic work. But, other blacks assist them to give them some rest of work. The whites ignore helping the blacks because they feel that they are inferior and do not deserve help. In so doing, they exert racial discrimination against the blacks. Such kind of racial segregation could be found in *Beloved* (1987) when black men and women are tormented and suppressed by immoral practices, like rape: "Eighteen seventy-four and whitefolks were still on the loose. Whole towns wiped clean of Negroes; eighty seven lynchings in one year alone in Kentucky; four colored schools burned to the ground; grown men whipped like children; children whipped like adults; black women raped by the crew; property taken, necks broken" (p.100).

Belittling human dignity is deemed precarious in post-colonialism (Mehta 194). The unjustified exploitation and marginalization of the blacks would result in disastrous human relations. There could be no any reconciliation between the whites and the blacks if the whites proceed treating the blacks in an unethical way. In *Beloved* (1987), the exploitation of black girls is a kind of losing dignity: "The people of the broken necks, of fire-cooked blood and black girls who had lost their ribbons" (p.101).

In *Transculturation and Aesthetics: Ambivalence, Power, and Literature* (2014), Joel Kuortti et al. argue that the blacks' freedom abolishes slavery and racism (p.58). When the blacks got their complete independence, they remember their slavery experience as a harsh reality (p.58). They feel cheerful and delighted because they do not suffer from demanding orders and daunting work. The blacks lead a new luxurious life devoid of racial segregation. Ultimately, they try to document their tragic racial experience in books, papers, journals, diaries and the like. The colonial ambivalence is the chief reason of this transitional entity (p.59). This luxurious life us

absent in *Beloved* (1987) because there is much racial segregation: “The day Stamp Paid saw the two backs through the window and then hurried down the steps, he believed the undecipherable language clamoring around the house was the mumbling of the black and angry dead” (p.113).

In *Colonial America* (2015), Enzo George argues that colonial slavery has many destructive agendas. One of these agendas is the cultural traditions. The white colonizers force the blacks to follow their cultural traditions and conventions. But, the whites sometimes force the blacks to follow their cultural traditions indirectly (p.75). When the whites bring with them new cultural “symbols,” like cloths and culinary gadgets, they make them gradually prone to the whites’ culture (p.76). The blacks ultimately become a part of the whites’ cultural traditions. In this respect, George’s main focus is on the white’s ways of life including customs and traditions, namely food and clothes. In *Beloved* (1987), the destructive agendas are associated with the whites’ hegemony over the blacks: “The more colored people spent their strength trying to convince them how gentle they were, how clever and loving, how human, the more they used themselves up to persuade whites of something Negroes believed could not be questioned, the deeper and more tangled the jungle grew inside. But it wasn’t the jungle blacks brought with them to this place from the other (livable) place” (p.113).

P. Sanal Mohan, in *Modernity of Slavery* (2015), maintains that slavery does not last for a long time. Slavery imposes itself over the slaves for a long time, and then it disappears. The reason of its disappearance is the blacks’ hatred of this slavery. Slavery is against all human virtues though brings civilization to the slaves or black people (p.82). It is the destructive power used by the whites to subjugate the blacks. The blacks have no way to escape this slavery. They are suppressed and persecuted. However, they can escape this slavery by “hatred.” The slaves might hate the whites to get rid of their hegemonic suppressive powers. Morrison depicts this destructive power in terms of the white mixing with the black communities in *Beloved* (1987): “Half white, part white, all black, mixed with Indian. He watched them with awe and envy, and each time he discovered large families of black people he made them identify over and over who each was, what relation, who, in fact, belonged to who” (p.124).

Furthermore, colonial slavery involves the loyalty to the white colonizers. The whites have the strong force to order the blacks to follow them and obey their rules. They are the powerful authority. This authority could be practiced in the blacks’ territories. In *Eighty-eight Years: The Long Death of Slavery in the United States, 1777-1865* (2015), Patrick Rael discusses the colonial loyalty. He contends that colonial loyalty is the authorizing power used by the whites to harness the blacks. The blacks are

the victims of this loyalty because they do not have any other choice. They should follow and do the whites’ orders to save their lives. Otherwise, the whites would exterminate all the black for the purpose of colonizing the blacks’ territories (p.185). Rael’s discussion of colonial loyalty is an integral idea of slavery i.e., the blacks sympathize with other blacks to help each other bear the hard conditions of colonial loyalty. This colonial loyalty is carried out by using repetitive words in *Beloved* (1987): “What you think? What you think?” (p.124).

In postcolonial studies, death stands for slavery (McIlvenna, p.37). Yet, death is not depicted directly by postcolonial fictional authors (p.38). It takes place gradually in the course of the fictional plots. The whites feel proud and braggart that they could exterminate the blacks. They could annihilate the existence of the blacks (p.38). As such, the death of the blacks conveys “the inherent meaning of slavery renewal” (p.38). The whites want to renew the blacks’ generations to have other strong and well-built slaves. In *Beloved* (1987), the death of some slaves indicates the racial annihilation of black people: “the death spasms that shot through that adored body, plump and sweet with life--Beloved might leave. Leave before Sethe could make her realize that worse than that--far worse- - was what Baby Suggs died of, what Ella knew, what Stamp saw and what made Paul D tremble” (p.141).

---

## CONCLUSION

---

This essay has studied Morrison’s *Beloved* (1987) from a postcolonial perspective. The study has concentrated on the colonial issues in the novel. It has demonstrated how Morrison uses magic to treat the issue of slavery and racism in the novel. Being a postcolonial author, Morrison depicts the colonial complexities in her novel by discussing the most vital issues of colonialism and its influence over the colonized people. Accordingly, she uses magic to tackle the position of the colonized blacks in their communities. For this reason, the analysis, for most part, accentuated the slavery and racial aspects of the novel.

The study, moreover, has analyzed the blacks’ minor, or inferior, position in the novel. The blacks’ inferiority is brought about the colonial domination in their territories. They do not have the proper means to face this kind of colonialism. Therefore, they recall their past actions or persons. In this regard, memory plays an integral role in discerning the lower position of the blacks because they are not able to emulate their white counterparts. The white mainstream does not allow them to be equal to them. As a result, some magical peculiarities come out in the course of the novel’s events. These magical appearances are associated with supernatural creatures, like ghosts. Morrison portrays these appearances by using repetitive words in the novel’s narrative structuring.



## REFERENCES

- (1995). *The site of memory*. New York: Routledge.
- Abu Jweid, A. (2016). The fall of national identity in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. *PERTANIKA*, 23(5), 529-540.
- Abu Jweid, A. (2020a). Aversion and desire: The disruption of monolithic ambivalence in Octavia Butler's *Kindred*. *Studies in Literature and Language*, 21(1), 6-15. Print.
- Abu Jweid, A. (2020b). Autobiographical peculiarities in James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. *Studies in Literature and Language*, 21(3), 5-9.
- Abu Jweid, A. (2020c). Fear mechanism in Edgar Allan Poe's *The Tell-Tale Heart*. *Studies in Literature and Language*, 21(2), 12-18. Print.
- Abu Jweid, A. (2020d). Naguib Mahfouz's *Arabian Nights and Days*: The allegorical sequel of *The Arabian Nights*. *Studies in Literature and Language*, 21(2), 91-100.
- Abu Jweid, A. (2020e). Regional Commitment in Eudora Welty's "Petrified Man". *International Journal of English Language, Literature and Translation Studies (IJELR)*, 7(3), 206-214.
- Abu Jweid, A. (2020f). Time travel as a tool of satiric dystopia in Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five*. *International Journal of English Language, Literature and Translation Studies (IJELR)*, 7(3), 100-107.
- Abu Jweid, A. (2021a). The reception of *The Arabian Nights* in world literature. *Studies in Literature and Language*, 22(1), 10-15.
- Abu Jweid, A. (2021b). Women individuality: A critique of patriarchal society in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*. *Studies in Literature and Language*, 22(2), 5-11.
- Abu Jweid, A., & Kaur, H. (2018). War allegory in Narayan Wagle's *Palpasa Caf e*. *PERTANIKA*, 26(T), 1-12.
- Abu Jweid, A., & Sasa, G. (2014). "Dunyazadiad": The parody of *The Arabian Nights*' Frame Tale. *Jordan Journal of Modern Languages and Literatures*, 6(1), 163 - 178.
- Abu Jweid, Nimer, A., & Sasa, G. (2020). Models of the fantastic in Flann O'Brien's *The Third Policeman*. *Dirasat, Human and Social Sciences*, 47(1), 337-351.
- Anievas, A., Manchanda, N., & Shilliam, R. (2015). *Race and racism in international relations: Confronting the global color line*. London: Routledge.
- Ashcroft, B., & Ahlwalia, P. (2013). *Postcolonial studies: The key concepts*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.
- Bohata, K. (2004). *Postcolonialism revisited*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.
- Bordin, E., & Schacci, A. (2015). *Transatlantic memories of slavery: Reimagining the past, changing the future*. Amherst, New York: Cambria Press.
- Coker, J. (2015). *James in postcolonial perspective: The letter as nativist discourse*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.
- Costa, Elza De Fatima Dissenha (2017). *Unspeakable things (un)spoken: The representation of black women in Toni Morrison's beloved*. Universidade Federal Do Parana.
- Darby, P. (1998). *The fiction of imperialism: Reading between international relations and postcolonialism*. London: Cassell.
- Durrant, S. (2004). *Postcolonial narrative and the work of mourning: J. M. Coetzee, Wilson Harris, and Toni Morrison*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Eckard, P. G. (2002). *Maternal body and voice in Toni Morrison, Bobbie Ann Mason, and Lee Smith*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press.
- Femia, J. (1981). *Gramsci's political thought: Hegemony, consciousness and the revolutionary process*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Frith, N., & Hodgson, K. (2015). *At the limits of memory: Legacies of slavery in the francophone world*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.
- Geld, E. V. D. (2017). *American exceptionalism in Toni Morrison's Beloved and Paradise*. McMaster University.
- George, E. (2015). *Colonial America*. New York: Cavendish Square Publishing.
- Henderson, E. (2015). *African realism?: International relations theory and Africa's wars in the postcolonial era*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc..
- Huggan, G., & Tiffin, H. (2015). *Postcolonial eco criticism: Literature, animals, environment*. New York: Routledge.
- Kuortti, J., Collier, G., & Barras, A. (2014). *Transculturation and aesthetics: Ambivalence, power, and literature*. New York: Rodopi.
- Marchand, M. (2017). *Toni Morrison and the Journey Homeward. An analysis of beloved and paradise*. Universiteit Gent.
- McIlvenna, N. (2015). *The short life of free Georgia: Class and slavery in the colonial south*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Mehta, B., & Mukherji, P. (2015). *Postcolonial comics: Texts, events, identities*. New York: Routledge.
- Mohan, P. S. (2015). *Modernity of slavery: Struggles against caste inequality in colonial Kerala*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Morrison, T. (1987). *Beloved: A novel*. London: Picador in association with Chatto & Windus.
- Moscovici, S. (2001). *Social representations: Explorations in social psychology*. New York: New York University Press.
- Rael, P. (2015). *Eighty-eight years: The long death of slavery in the United States, 1777-1865*. Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press.
- Rego, M. (2015). *The dialogic nation of Cape Verde: Slavery, language, and ideology*. Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books.
- Zauditu-Selassie, K. (2009). *African spiritual traditions in the novels of Toni Morrison*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.