



Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi

The Journal of International Social Research

Cilt: 5 Sayı: 20 Volume: 5 Issue: 20

Kış 2012 Winter 2012

www.sosyalarastirmalar.com Issn: 1307-9581

BELOVED AND KRISTEVAN MELANCHOLIC SUBJECT

Camelia TALEBIAN SADEHI*

Helen OULIAEI NIA**

Abstract

Julia Kristeva considers the melancholic subject as the one who has a sense of loss and is not able to share it with other people. S/he cannot express her/his feeling as s/he considers it private; however, s/he should use language in order to get rid of her/his sense of loss. In *Beloved*, Toni Morrison deals with the dark side of slaves' lives and its mental-physical effects. This article intends to apply Julia Kristeva's theory of melancholic subject to Toni Morrison's *Beloved* and shed light on the fact that through language the characters deal with their past.

Key Words: Julia Kristeva, The Melancholic Subject, Toni Morrison, *Beloved*, Language, Loss.

1. Introduction

Julia Kristeva is a prominent theorist concerned with different disciplines such as feminism, linguistics, psychology, etc. Her works catch the eyes of many critics and many readers and each year new readers are fascinated by her revolutionary ideas. Barthes describes Kristeva as the one who "always destroys the latest preconception, the one we thought we could be comforted by, the one we could be proud" (Lodge, 2000: 206). She published many books such as: *Revolution in Poetic Language*, *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia* and *Strangers to Ourselves*. This article intends to apply Julia Kristeva's theory of the melancholic subject to Toni Morrison's *Beloved*.

In *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia*, Julia Kristeva talks about the melancholic subject. Kristeva's theory of melancholia fits Freud's theory of loss. Moreover, her emphasis on self-identity and specifically her connection between melancholia and narcissism follow Freud. By considering Freud's theory of death wish with melancholia she formulates the notion of depression. As she claims, she shall "speak of depression and melancholia without always distinguishing the particularities of the two ailments but keeping in mind their common structure" (Kristeva, 1980: 10-11). She admits that depression is the "hidden face of narcissus, the face that is to bear him away into death, but of which he is unaware while he admires himself in mirage" (ibid., 5). Therefore, like Freud, Kristeva considers melancholia as a disorder of self-identity and a sense of loss.

* M.A. of English Literature, University of Isfahan.

** Assistant Professor of English Literature at University of Isfahan.

However, she connects melancholia with the mother, the fact that Freud has never mentioned in his theories.

In the *chora*, the child is in the mother's embrace. In this psychic space, there is no difference between the child and the mother; moreover, the child's needs are satisfied without asking them. As there is no need to ask for the needs, the child does not speak. If by accident the child loses her/his mother, s/he will learn language in the future, but s/he cannot articulate her/his loss. The sad child suffers this loss, but s/he cannot express it. In fact, there is no adequate word, which can substitute this sense of loss, and this loss can "neither be replaced nor forgotten" (Iannetta, 2002: 196).

The child king becomes irredeemably sad before uttering his first words; this is because he has been irrevocably, desperately separated from the mother, a loss that causes him to try to find her again, along with other objects of love, first in imagination, then in words (Kristeva, 1980: 6).

S/he may behave normally in her/his early life, but gradually one can recognize the effect of this loss in her/his life. For example, the child speaks little, or s/he sleeps most of the time. Kristeva defines melancholia as:

Abys of sorrow, a noncommunicable grief that at times, and often on a long term basis, lays claims upon us to the extent of having us lose all interest in words, actions, and even life itself (ibid., 3).

The child is mourning for his/her lost mother. As this lost object is part of her/him, s/he thinks that s/he is incomplete without it. As the result of such an emotion, the child becomes unable to use language, and this is the first symptom of melancholia. From Kristeva's view, "the collapse of the symbolic is a tell-tale sign of melancholia" (Sabo, 2010: 57). This sense of incompleteness results in the sadness and noncommunicable grief. The melancholic subject considers this grief as a private feeling and s/he cannot share it with other people, neither could s/he put it into words. Even the melancholic subject speaks a dead language; s/he is foreigner to her/his maternal language. As Kristeva admits "the depressed speak of nothing, they have nothing to speak of: glued to the Thing, they are without objects" (Kristeva, 1980: 51). Sometimes, the melancholic subject speaks but his/her "sentences outgrows grammatical/linguistic structure, it breaks out of language and denies its sense" (Iannetta, 2002: 221). His/her speech is repetitive and monotonous. Moreover, Kristeva states that:

*They utter sentences that are interrupted, exhausted, come to stand still. Even phrases they cannot formulate. A repetitive rhythm, a monotonous melody emerges and dominates the broken logical sequences, changing them into recurring, obsessive litanies. Finally, when that frugal musicality becomes exhausted in its turn, or simply does not succeed in becoming established on account of the pressure of silence, the melancholy person appears to stop cognizing as well as uttering, sinking into the blankness as *asymbolia* or the excess on unorderable cognitive chaos (Kristeva, 1980: 33).*

When the child recognizes the distinction between herself/himself and her/his mother, s/he enters the symbolic. In fact, s/he uses language to express her/his needs and desire for her/his mother. However, the melancholic subject loses her/his mother before s/he can perceive the difference between herself/himself and her/his mother. In other words, the child does not enter the symbolic realm. As the consequence, the child is not able to name or to symbolize what s/he has lost and the lost object remains unnamable. Since the melancholic subject loses what s/he loves, s/he loses her/his motivation to speak.

Through the symbolic realm and use of language, the child becomes a unified subject and s/he becomes able to express her/his individuality as 'I'. The child moves from the realm of plenitude to the symbolic realm and distinguishes herself/himself from her/his mother and her/his surroundings. When the child leaves her/his mother behind, s/he brings her back to life in signs and language (Sabo, 2010: 63).

As a result, he becomes an "I" through language. In fact, a traumatic separation from object of love is the necessary foundation of human identity. As a product of individuation, this crisis is in essence individual and is therefore timeless and unrecorded in the history (Iannetta, 2002: 194-195).

If the child does not enter the symbolic realm, s/he will not have a unified subjectivity; therefore, s/he remains a heterogeneous subject.

The early ego largely lacks cohesion, and a tendency towards integration alternates with a tendency towards disintegration, a falling into bits...the anxiety of being destroyed from within remains active. It seems to me in keeping with the lack of cohesiveness that under the pressure of this threat the ego tends to fall into pieces (Kristeva, 1980: 19).

In Kristeva's view, the melancholic subject does speak, but in an imaginary and creative ways. As Sabo states, "unlike the true psychotic the melancholic has not lost the use of signs together" (Sabo, 2010: 60). The melancholic poets and writers recognize their imaginary father and they express their sadness and sense of loss within language. In order to share her/his sense of loss with other people, the writer reaches the realm of signs and gives name to the object that s/he mourns. As Kristeva mentions, the writer must at one time or another had the experience of loss in order to write about it (Rice and Waugh, 1989: 133).

In *Black Sun*, Kristeva deals with some poets and novelists such as Nerval, Duras and Dostoyevsky. "The text of Marguerite Duras are about suffering, the experience of sadness, death, suicide. As are the texts of Dostoyevsky. The texts of Nerval, with all their references to the cultural tradition, show us to what extent sadness and suffering can be themes" (Rice and Waugh, 1989: 133). As she analyses Nerval's poem, Dostoyevsky's and Duras' novels, one can understand that the writers' biographies are important in their writings. All these writers show their sense of loss and their suffering within their works. Therefore, one should be familiar with the writer's biography and trace its reflection within his/her works. One can consider Toni Morrison as the melancholic writer who suffers from the pain of racial discrimination and now intends to cure herself through writing the novels. She uses language and explains her suffering; therefore, gains a unified and stable subjectivity through using language.

2. Discussion

Chloe Anthony Wofford was born in 1931, in Ohio. She got her degrees from Howard and Cornell Universities. Then, she became a college teacher, later on she became an editor. In 1970, she published her first novel *The Bluest Eye* and it gained great success among the readers and the critics. In 1975, *Sula* was nominated for the national book award. In fact, her novels caught the eyes of national attention. Later on, she received the Pulitzer Prize for *Beloved*. The most important award that she received, was the Nobel Prize in literature in 1993. "Louis Gates Jr, a well known scholar of African American studies, reached to the news of her noble prize by saying: 'just two centuries ago the African American literary tradition was born in slave-narrative. Now our greatest writer has won Nobel Prize'" (Pal, 1994: 2440). About Morrison's art of novel writing, Crichlow and Mc Carthy state:

Morrison speaks repeatedly about the aesthetic of black art and the character of black language that she wants her reader to hear in her novel. Language is the distinguishing feature in the work of any story-teller: "anybody can think up a story. But trying to breathe life into characters, allow them space, make them people whom I care about is hard. I only have twenty-six letters of the alphabet; I don't have color or music. I must use my craft to make the reader see the colors and hear the sounds." (Crichlow and Mc Carthy, 1995: 309).

In addition, they continue,

Morrison puts this art of language in motion... Morrison's metaphor of the dance for language is one of the most often cited images in discussions about orality and literacy in this novel (ibid., 310).

One should notice that Morrison's great achievements were based on her attempt to bring Afro-Americans in American literature. She intended to make the black visible, as they were invisible in the past. She considered Afro-American as the subjects not the objects; therefore, she focused on their life, emotions, and experiences. Through language, she permitted them to articulate their physical and psychological pain.

As she observed the blacks' condition in American society and their marginalization, she set the black characters at the center of her novels. She wishes the American literature could have a wider landscape; she regrets that the American literature is ignorant of Afro-Americans in the United States. Besides, she claims that the Afro-Americans are fabricated by the Americans to serve their purpose and she calls these imaginative Afro-Americans "American Africanism" (Rivkin and Ryan, 2000: 924). She asserts that the white writers imagine the blacks' situation and write whatever they have imagined; this fabricated story is dishonest and ludicrous. As she was conscious of the blacks' marginalization, "she started valuing her peripheral existence because 'it was deeper, more complex, it has a tension, it related to the center but was not the center'" (Pal, 1994: 2439).

Her novels are exploration of the meaning of blackness. What does it mean to be black in white American? To be a black woman in a white male hegemonic society? (ibid., 2439).

She observed how her parents were influenced by the racism; moreover, she heard their speech about discrimination; therefore, she decided to reflect all these tensions in her novels. She permitted the black people to come to their consciousness. She displayed how the American ideologies and the whites' mastery over the black tortured the black all these years. She displayed all the blacks' lives; moreover, she allowed them not only to cope with their memories, but also to take action against all racial discriminations.

One should notice that, *Beloved* is a historical novel based on Margaret Garner's true-life story. Margaret Garner was a slave and she did not wish her children to live as slaves as she did; therefore, she decided to murder them rather than to see them as slaves. Garner emphasizes that she "would much rather kill them at once and thus end their suffering, than have them taken back to slavery and be murdered by piecemeal" (Peterson, 2008: 17). She had killed her two-year-old daughter and Morrison selects her story, but modifies it based on her purpose. She changes "names, dates, details and narrative outcomes" of Garner's story (ibid., 19).

Morrison selects Garner's story to describe the painful slaves' experience and their life after abolition of slavery. She recognizes that unlike whites, blacks were silent throughout American history and literature; therefore, she intends to give blacks voice to express their pain in her novels. She challenges the dominant white and Eurocentric discourse by referring to the African and Afro-American presence in the U.S. literary history (Jung, 2009: 41).

The blacks were abused throughout the history of slavery but their sufferings are not articulated. It is Morrison's purpose to give voice to these voiceless people. Therefore, the characters can express their psychological shock. To show the horror of the slavery, she juxtaposes infanticide and slavery and indicates how slavery consumes the slave's body and soul.

Instead of forgetting the past, Morrison reminds the slaves how they have passed their life and how they have dealt with the horror of the slavery. In other words, this novel displays the tension between forgetting and remembering past experiences: "through unspoken memory, Morrison demonstrates the multiple feelings suppressed by dominant discourse of American slavery's history" (ibid., 54). In addition to *Beloved's* presence in the novel, one should notice the presence of all Afro-American slaves who lost their subjectivity under the forces of white narratives. In other words, *Beloved* represents the "collective unconscious of African Americans"

(Bloom, 2004: 105). In fact, *Beloved* "presents a portrayal of racial ideology and its presence in underclass discourse" (Cranwell, 2010: 59).

Toni Morrison in Playing in the Dark writes that race has become metaphorical_ a way of referring to and disguising forces, events, classes and expressions of social decay and economic division for more threatening to the body politic than biological "race" ever was... racism is as healthy as it was during the enlightenment (ibid., 59).

In addition to slavery and racism, sexism is another issue discussed in the novel (Bloom, 2004: 53). Women are "marketable body" and have different husbands (Dobbs, 1998: 564). They become pregnant, but they are deprived of taking care of their own children; even they do not have the permission to nourish their children with their own milk. These children are "taken" as slaves or "chased" throughout their life (Morrison, 2004: 6). As Li mentions, "slavery prevented individuals from trusting in personal relationships, because at any time family members could be sold" (Li, 2010: 78).

Theory of melancholia is well applicable to the novel since the novel represents the black bodies under suffering. Peterson confirms this point:

They are... physically and notionally free but not psychologically free. They have just managed to escape from the fact of slavery but have not been released from its effects (Peterson, 2008: 25).

Beloved conveys the unrecorded, brutalized slaves' experience and the way they cope with their past. Morrison displays the effect of slavery despite the passage of many years after abolishment of slavery (Mounsey, 2010: 48); one can still conceive blacks' otherness even in the postmodern age. Morrison heals the chronic infectious wound of slavery through writing about slavery and its aftermaths; moreover, she shows the "interior life of people" (Amian, 2008: 120).

As Morrison herself has suffered a lot from the experience of racism, she can beautifully represent its pain in her novels. In fact, "because of the shameful and traumatic subject matter of *Beloved*, Morrison thought that the novel would be the 'least read' of her works" (Pass, 2006: 117). "However, many people are attracted to the novel because of healing that ultimately follows the shame and trauma" (ibid., 117). In fact, in Morrison's *Beloved*, one can trace out the suffering and sadness, which are symptoms of melancholia. Morrison's *Beloved* beautifully exemplifies characters' suffering from racism; in fact, racism becomes the source of all the painful feelings the characters have to tolerate.

Thus, the reader has to plunge into the character's consciousness and melancholia. *Beloved's* presence is the illustration of Sethe's repressed memories. When she is not able to express her traumatic past, *Beloved* represents all the "unspoken memories" (Rogers, 2010: 187). Moreover, she "reenacts sexual violation and thus figures the persistent nightmares common to survivors of trauma" (Bloom, 2004: 71). Therefore, one can claim *Beloved* as the collective unconscious of the black people. Sethe's process of self-understanding and facing the past as part of her life can be generalized to all the black slaves who have confronted their past and now learn to deal with it. Villeta believes that *Beloved* as the collective unconscious of the black has great power over those who want to "forget her" (Villeta, 2009: 44).

The recovery of history as both a national and a personal necessity "admitting and exploring the reality of slavery is necessarily painful for a black American but only by doing so can he or she begin to understand himself or herself and American and Afro-American culture in general." (Krumholz, 1992: 395).

Not only *Beloved's* presence, but also Sethe's injured back can show the horrid memories with which she cannot come to terms. Her injured back is not just the representation of the physical violation, but also the psychic wound she has had suffered these years. As Bell states, the psychic

effect of slavery is much more important than its physical manifestation (ibid., 395). Besides Beloved's presence, Paul D's presence "serves as a catalyst to rekindle Sethe's memories, as well as her awareness of the present" (Rogers, 2010: 189). Although the characters suppress themselves, they want to permit other characters perceive their hard times. They consider their past as private, but they want to cope with their past.

As the novel begins, Sethe remembers Baby Suggs' words:

I had eight. Every one of them gone away from me. Four taken, four chased, and all, I expect, worrying somebody's house into evil Baby Suggs rubbed her eyebrows. My first-born. All I can remember of her is how she loved the burned bottom of bread. Can you beat that? Eight children and that's all I remember (Morrison, 2004: 6).

She has expressed her sense of loss. She could not take care of her children, as they were slaves; moreover, she could not remember their habits and it has teased her motherly feeling. Besides, Sethe remembers how her children were beaten and she is tortured by its memory. In fact, in this novel the characters are inarticulate as they have suffered a lot during the slavery and the only thing they can do is brooding over the past events.

The only remaining child that Sethe has, is Denver and Denver is not content with her life: "the tears she had not shed for nine years wetting her far too womanly breasts," Denver is melancholic (ibid., 17). She suffers from being alone in 124 and not having any intimate friend. Denver is sad not only because she is alone, but also because "mother had secrets--things she wouldn't tell; things she halfway told" (Morrison, 2004: 45). Sethe cannot talk about the poignant memories anymore. As the words cannot express the deep sadness she feels, she prefers to keep silent:

...every mention of her past life hurt. Everything in it was painful or lost. She and Baby Suggs had agreed without saying so that it was unspeakable; to Denver's inquiries Sethe gave short replies or rambling incomplete reveries. Even with Paul D, who had shared some of it and to whom she could talk with at least a measure of calm, the hurt was always there--like a tender place in the corner of her mouth that the bit left (ibid., 69).

As the past is painful for Sethe and she cannot bear its burden, she resolves to forget it and not to talk about it. She forces herself to forget the past and to bury it in her mind. For example, she does not want to talk about her lost earrings, "gone" she says. "'Long gone' and she wouldn't say another word" (ibid., 71).

Let us keep in mind the speech of the depressed_ repetitive and monotonous. They utter sentences that are interrupted, exhausted, come to a standstill. Even phrases they cannot formulate. A repetitive rhythm, a monotonous melody emerge and dominate the broken logical sequences, changing them into recurring, obsessive litanies (Kristeva, 1980: 33).

She refuses to talk as she thinks her past is private and no one can feel the pain she has undergone.

Like Sethe, Paul D is not able to talk about his past as he cannot find proper words to express it "I just ain't sure I can say it. Say it right" (Morrison, 2004: 85). "He would keep the rest where it belonged: in that tobacco tin buried in his chest where a red heart used to be. Its lid rusted shut" (ibid., 86). He prefers to keep silent, as he cannot share it with Sethe. Moreover, "Paul D's reluctance to tell Sethe about Halle's end is an attempt to forget the past" (Dauterich, 2005: 37). In addition, Beloved has the sense of loss as she remembers how her mother has "left" her "behind" (Morrison, 2004: 89). She is sad that she has lost her mother in the past and nothing can compensate this loss.

Sethe sometimes remembers the milk she has had, "enough for all," but the boys have stolen it (ibid., 118). She represses this memory, but it comes to the surface repeatedly and bothers her. In Sabo's words,

The child feeds on the mother's body, but the inevitable withdrawal of this nourishment whether it is from natural process of weaning or the failure of the mother to produce milk makes the mother the target for a sense of betrayal and rage. In this sense, the mother becomes both the object of desire and frustration (Sabo, 2010: 55).

In this sense, Sethe is forced to leave her children alone and not to nourish them; therefore, both the children and the mother suffer from this event. As Tait holds, Sethe does not master language "to give her own pain meaning, her suffering is defined by others" (Tait, 2008: 47). She continues that "Sethe receives the description of her body from two representative power structure: a white woman and a black man; their definitive gazes construct Sethe's perception of her body" (ibid., 47). In fact, Sethe remembers her past, but she cannot express it through language. She is angry not only about her milk but also about her rape. As Elliott holds, "for Sethe, fetishization of her body by the white schoolteacher and his nephews causes psychic fragmentation that continues to thwart the development of her subjectivity after she leaves slavery" (Elliott, 2000: 186). As Sethe feels the loss of her milk, Beloved feels the loss of her mother, "She don't love me like I love her. I don't love nobody but her," and she thinks that she is not important for her mother (Morrison, 2004: 137). In fact, Beloved does not have any subjectivity without her mother; therefore, she has forced Paul D to "call" her "name", in fact, she wants to gain identity by hearing her name (ibid., 137).

The melancholic subject prefers death to life. As Sethe is sad about her past and has not reconciled with her past memories, she thinks that "Death is a skipped meal compared to" be alive and to observe her child is dead (ibid., 145). Although Sethe is weak in confronting reality, Paul D considers her very strong and he cannot say that he has had an affair with Beloved and not able to confess that he is "not a man" (ibid., 151). He resists telling the truth as the truth is painful.

As mentioned before, Sethe cannot reconcile with whatever she has done in the past; therefore, "Circling, circling, now she was gnawing something else instead of getting to the point" (ibid., 191). She beats around the bush and refuses to talk about the main points: "I don't have to remember nothing. I don't even have to explain" (ibid., 216). She does not explain anything, as she cannot share her painful experience with others. It is something private and unspeakable.

I don't have to remember the slaughterhouse and the Saturday girls who worked its yard. I can forget that what I did changed Baby Suggs' life. No Clearing, no company. Just laundry and shoes. I can forget it all now because as soon as I got the gravestone in place you made your presence known in the house and worried us all to distraction (ibid., 217).

Her sentences are monotonous even sometimes repetitive and this way of speaking shows the great anxiety and sadness she has to tolerate.

Deliberately using a fragmented and repetitive narrative structure to convey the disrupted, obsessive world of the trauma victims, Morrison circles around and around the shameful secrets that haunt her character: Sethe's paralyzing and dirtying memories of the physical and psychic assaults on her humanity she suffered as a slave, memories that are too awful to speak of directly and can only be told incrementally, in bits and pieces (Bloom, 2004: 92).

Rogers mentions that "in some cases Sethe deliberately represses or silences memories; in other cases, she would like to forget but cannot, and still other moments, she would like to remember but cannot" (Rogers, 2010: 184). In fact, silence is a mechanism, which signifies forbidden knowledge or process of concealment (ibid., 186).

Not only Beloved, but also Sethe has lost her mother. "They hanged" Sethe's mother and she feels her mother's absence in her life (Morrison, 2004: 240). In fact, "Sethe is haunted by the

knowledge that her mother was hanged" (Koolish, 2001: 183). She is sorry she could not have her mother beside her when she was a child and needed her most. In Keizer's words, Sethe has never got enough milk from her mother, and this traumatic event forces her to act as super-mother for her children, even kill them instead of let them live as slaves (Keizer, 1999: 112). "At the same time that she longs for the mother who expelled her, she feels the presence of the daughter she abandoned" (Iannetta, 2002: 229). She worries not only about her lost mother, but also about her lost daughter, that is why she cannot reconcile with her past as the memories force her to face things she cannot tolerate.

Beloved explains:

Sethe is the face I found and lost in the water under the bridge. When I went in, I saw her face coming to me and it was my face too. I wanted to join. I tried to join, but she went up into the pieces of light at the top of the water. I lost her again, but I found the house she whispered to me and there she was, smiling at last. It's good, but I cannot lose her again (Morrison, 2004: 253).

As Sethe has murdered Beloved, she has lost her mother, but now she returns to claim her presence and to have her mother forever. She has felt the loss for a long time and it is time to have her mother. As Holloway states,

If Beloved is not only Sethe's dead daughter returned, but the return of all the drowned but remembered faces of mothers and their children who have lost their being because of force of Euro American slave history, then she has become a cultural mourning place, a moment for reclamation and for mourning (Holloway, 1990: 522).

Beloved

You are my sister

You are my daughter

You are my face; you are me

I have found you again; you have come back to me

You are my Beloved

You are mine

You are mine

You are mine (Morrison, 2004: 255).

As their identity is related to one another and they feel incomplete without the other, the text reflects the mixed identities through the mixed sentences.

According to psychoanalytic interpretation, Sethe and Beloved are trapped in the pre-oedipal mother-daughter symbiosis where differentiation between self and other is not possible: Sethe over-identifies with her daughter and does not allow her psychic individuation (O'Reilly, 2004: 85).

That is the main reason why in this part, as the characters have lost their individuality in the absence of other subjects, no one can recognize the true speaker of each sentence.

As Beloved tortures Sethe,

Sethe pleaded for forgiveness, counting, listing again and again her reasons: that Beloved was more important, meant more to her than her own life. That she would trade places any day. Give up her life, every minute and hour of it, to take back just one of Beloved's tears (Morrison, 2004: 284).

In fact, "Beloved seems to bent on consuming her mother out of both love and hate" (Eckard, 2002: 69). Sethe has death drive because without Beloved as one part of her existence, life is meaningless for her. Everything loses its meaning in her eyes, as she blames herself for her past actions. Kristeva has mentioned that melancholic subject is sleepy and listless; besides she moves slowly, here Sethe is the same Kristevan melancholic subject (MacAfee, 2004: 59). "Listless and sleepy with hunger Denver saw the flesh between her mother's forefinger and thumb fade" (Morrison, 2004: 285)... "Sethe no longer combed her hair or splashed her face with water. She sat

in the chair licking her lips like a chastised child while Beloved ate up her life, took it, swelled up with it, grew taller on it" (ibid., 295). Sethe cannot come to her senses, as she feels guilty about murdering her daughter. Instead of soothing Sethe, Beloved tortures her for whatever she has done.

At last, Sethe joins the black community. Beloved stands alone on the porch "now her hand is empty. Sethe is running away from her, running, and she feels the emptiness in the hand Sethe has been holding. Now she is running into the faces of the people out there, joining them and leaving Beloved behind. Alone. Again" (ibid., 309). She feels empty and incomplete without her mother. Beloved loses her mother again and remains alone. "The imagined re-enactment of her mother's suicide and the ensuing feelings of loss, emptiness and betrayal overwhelm Beloved to such an extent that she instantaneously disappears" (Holden-Kirwam, 1998: 418).

Although Sethe joins the black community, she feels sick because she has not reconciled with her past yet. Therefore, Denver is worried about her mother's health, she says to Paul D she thinks she has "lost" her "mother" (Morrison, 2004: 314). Sethe is still sick because "the belated mourning always reconnects" her "to the unspoken wounds, pains and losses under slavery which are to be transferred" (Jung, 2009: 65). As Denver feels anxious and fearful about her mother, Paul D decides to visit Sethe. When he enters the house, he sees Sethe is in Baby Suggs' bed; therefore, he states "Don't you die on me! This is Baby Suggs' bed! Is that what you planning"? (Morrison, 2004: 320). Sethe has death drive, but Paul D's kindness returns her to life.

In brief, the burden of the past has crushed all the characters. They should express their pain to be relieved. As Iannetta states, "there is a trauma in the past that is reactivated in the present of the text" (Iannetta, 2002: 231). In this case, characters can face the trauma and attempt to heal the traumas through the help of language. As Rogers holds,

Beloved as a character exists as a representation of Sethe's pain, both the pain that she suffered as a victim of schoolteacher and others at Sweet Home, as well as pain and regret of having killed her child in order to spare her the same suffering. Beloved is a representation of Sethe's need to work through the events of her past and the complications of memory and emotion that arise from attempting to revisit such trauma (Rogers, 2010: 183).

In *Beloved* one can notice the social trauma of slavery, the white's brutality and the white's abuse of blacks and all these events cannot be explained in detail, but the author attempts to give voice to her characters and to permit them to express the unspeakable events. In fact, they are afraid of talking about their past, as its memory tortures them repeatedly, but "the collective sharing of information heals the individual and the collective" (Darling, 1988: 5). In general, one can trace out three stages in *Beloved*. As Krumholz mentions, in the first stage, the characters repress their memory, the second stage, they learn to reconcile with their memory and finally, in the third stage they are cleared from all the painful experiences and have a rebirth (Krumholz, 1992: 397).

Conclusion

In Kristeva's view, sometimes the subject does not want to communicate with other people. S/he suffers from her/his pains in life and considers them as private; therefore, s/he refuses to talk with other people. In *Beloved*, characters, as Kristeva's melancholic subjects, sometimes refuse to talk. *Beloved* displays a racist society and the effect of slavery on the blacks' body and soul. Throughout the novel, the characters start to express themselves and reveal their memories. They have faced reality and they have learned how to deal with it. Morrison heals her emotional wounds through writing this novel. As she is very much influenced by racism, and along with her family condemning the whites for what they have done to blacks, she vents her feelings in her novel. In fact, *Beloved* is not a story, but the reality that represents the slaves' lives. One should note that Sethe is not the only character who laments her past, but all the characters should learn to come in

terms with the history of slavery; the same as Morrison herself learns to cope with the memory of slavery through writing *Beloved*.

REFERENCES

- AMIAN, Katrin (2008). *Rethinking Postmodernism(s)*, New York: Rodopi, 2008.
- AGNELO, Bonnie, and Toni Morrison (1989). "Toni Morrison: The Pain Of Being Black: an interview", *Time Magazine*, May 1989, Web: <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,957724,00.html>
- BELL, Bernard W. (2011) "Beloved: A Womanist Neo-Slave Narrative; or Multivocal Remembrances of Things Past", *African American Review*, 26.1 (1992), pp. 7-15, Academic Research Library, ProQuest, Web. 6 Aug. 2011.
- BLOOM, Harold (2004). *Bloom's Guides Toni Morrison's Beloved*, USA: Chelsea House Publishers.
- DARLING, Marsha J. and Toni Morrison (1988). "In the Realm of Responsibility: A Conversation with Toni Morrison", *The Women's Review of Books*, 5.6. (Mar., 1988), pp. 5-6, Web: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4020269>
- ECKARD, Paula G. (2002) *Maternal Body and Voice in Toni Morrison, Bobbie Ann Mason, and Lee Smith*, Columbia: University of Missouri Press.
- EDWARD Dauterich (2005). "Hybrid Expression: Orality and Literacy in Jazz and *Beloved*", *The Midwest Quarterly* 47.1 (2005): 26-40. Academic Research Library, ProQuest. Web. 6 Aug. 2011.
- HOLLOWAY, Karla F. C. (1990) "Beloved: A Spiritual", *Callaloo* 13.3, (Summer, 1990), pp. 516-525, Web: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2931334>
- IANNETTA, Maria Elena (2002). *Literary melancholia, or the refusal to mourn: Amnesia and anamnesis, Memories of love, loss, and abjection in feminine writing*, Diss. University of California, Santa Cruz, 2002. Dissertations & Theses: Full Text, ProQuest, Web: 6 Aug. 2011.
- JUNG, S. (2009). *Dialogism and multiculturalism in the work of Morrison, Silko, Anzaldua, and Vizenor*, Diss. The University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee, 2009, Dissertations & Theses: Full Text, ProQuest, Web: 6 Aug. 2011.
- KRISTEVA, Julia (1980). *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- KRUMHOLZ, Linda (1992). "The Ghosts of Slavery: Historical Recovery in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*", *African American Review*, 26.3, pp. 395-408.
- LODGE, David (2000). *Modern Criticism and Theory*, United States of America: Pearson Education.
- LYNDA, Koolish (2001). "'To be loved and cry shame: A psychological reading of Toni Morrison's *Beloved*." *MELUS*, 26.4, pp. 169-195, Academic Research Library, ProQuest. Web. 6 Aug. 2011.
- MARY, Jane Suero Elliott (2000). "Postcolonial experience in a domestic context: Commodified subjectivity in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*", *MELUS*, 25.3/4, pp. 181-203, Academic Research Library, ProQuest. Web. 6 Aug. 2011.
- MCAFEE, Noelle (2004). *Julia Kristeva*, New York: Routledge, 2004.
- MORRISON, Toni (2004). *Beloved*, USA: Vintage Books.
- O'REILLY, Andrea (2004). *Toni Morrison and Motherhood, a Politics of the Heart*, USA: University of New York Press.
- PAL, Sunada (1994). "From Periphery to Center: Toni Morrison's Self Affirming Fiction", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 29, pp. 2439- 2443. Web: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4401756>
- PASS, Olivia McNeely (2006). "Toni Morrison's *Beloved*: A Journey through the Pain of Grief." *J Med Humanit* 27, pp. 117-124, Web: <http://www.springerlink.com/content/g01k765tn8133366>
- PETERSON, Nancy, J. (2008). *Beloved Character Studies*. Great Britain: MPG Books.
- RICE, Philip and Patricia Waugh (1989). *Modern Literary Theory A Reader*, Great Britain: Edward Arnold.
- RIVKIN, Julie and Michael Ryan (2000). *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, USA: Blackwell Publisher.
- ROGERS, K. (2010). *Trauma and the representation of the unsayable in late twentieth-century fiction*. Diss. University of Colorado at Boulder, Dissertations & Theses: Full Text, ProQuest, Web: 6 Aug. 2011.
- SABO, P. (2010). *Impossible mourning: Lamentations as a text of melancholia*, Diss. University of Alberta, Dissertations & Theses: Full Text, ProQuest. Web. 6 Aug. 2011.
- TAIT, A. (2008). *Redefining women's beauty through Toni Morrison: A black feminist reading*. Diss. Morgan State University, 2008, Dissertations & Theses: Full Text, ProQuest, Web: 6 Aug. 2011.
- VILLETA, D. (2009). *Daring to love: Emotional economics and the culture of survival in the fiction of Toni Morrison*. Diss. Georgetown University, Dissertations & Theses: Full Text, ProQuest, Web: 6 Aug. 2011.