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Toni Morrison's *Beloved*: A Neo-Slave Narrative

"I got a tree on my back and a haint in my house, and nothing in between but the daughter I am holding in my arms. No more running—from nothing. I will never run from another thing on this earth. I took one journey and I paid for the ticket, but let me tell you something, Paul D. Garner: It cost too much! Do you hear me? It cost too much." (*Beloved*, 15)

I. Introduction

Toni Morrison is a novelist of African-American literature. She was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1993 and she received the National Book Critics Circle Award and a Pulitzer Prize. She is author of eight novels that defined into two groups. *The Bluest Eye* (1970), *Sula* (1973), and *Song of Solomon* (1977) compose the first. The second more recent group begins with *Beloved* (1987), *Jazz* (1992) and *Paradise* (1988).

Beloved, Morrison's remarkable, the Pulitzer Prize winning novel, published in 1987, set after 1873 after the American Civil War (1861–1865). The story of the novel based on the true story of the African-American slave Margaret Garner, who temporarily escaped slavery during 1856 in Kentucky to Ohio, a free state. Mobs arrived to get back her and her children under the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, which gave slave owners the right to pursue fugitive slaves across state borders. When she was about to be captured she tried to kill her children, apparently believing that death would be better for them than a life of slavery. However, Margaret able to killed only one child, her two-year-old daughter rather than allow her to be bring back to the world of slavery. However, she had no repentance for her deed. She said, "Unwilling to have her children suffer as she had done". The same story reprinted on the paper is *Beloved*. The protagonist, Sethe, kills her daughter and tries to kill her other three children when a posse arrives in Ohio to come back them to Sweet Home, the plantation in Kentucky from which Sethe escaped. In general, *Beloved* is a novel that tells the story of woman and mother that has been discriminated and seriously mistreated because she is slave woman and of her skin color.

Racism and Slavery-Significant Element

Morrison wanted to write about the people who suffered from heartless treatment, discriminated and subjugated by white folks. Because she desired to expose these issues to the reader, would understand that slaves were not something 'other' or something dissimilar and space invader from the rest of humanity. For that, she began to read dairies of plantation owners, and she does research. As Sanna puts in the Biography of Morrison:

She began her research and found that America had whitewashed its memory of slavery. Even slave museums, she realized tended to focus on the periphery of the life, such as the quilt slaves had made, rather than on the dreadful conditions the slaves had endured. White Americans weren't the only ones who wanted to forget these grim aspects of U.S. history, she found; African Americans didn't want to be reminded of slavery, either (p.24).

According to Sanna, in a diary, she read the words of one slave owner who described putting a bit on his slave Jerry 19 times in six months the bit being a kind of metal tongue that made speech impossible in such a way as to leave mouth harsh even two days after the device's removal. Another woman had been made to wear a bell, so that her owner could hear her wherever she went. Further more in Sanna's words, Slaves who cut sugarcane were made to wear masks to keep them from eating the crop; the masks were so hot that when they were removed the skin often came with them. These devices were not intended as instruments of torture; at the time, they were ways to control a

slave's behavior while she worked. Morrison turned to the diaries of slave -ship captains. She read that slave ships had had trouble in navigating the Congo River in Africa because the river was so jammed with bodies the corpse of Africans who had captured by slaveholders and then died before they could even leave the continent. The slave traders assumed that at least half of their human cargo would die on every trip; if they asked to deliver 400 slaves, they would pack 800. (p.26)

Throughout history, race has affected black forks' lives from day to day. Beloved's main theme is twisting around segregation and slavery. According to Moglen (1993), "Beloved's story is a story of personal and collective loss: the deprivation of home, abandonment by an enslaved mother, the erasure of a disinherited father, the alienation of her body in rape and of her mind in the shattering of the mirror of identity" (p. 23).

The concluding pages of the Beloved, in which she writes, Everybody knew what she was called, but nobody anywhere knew her name Disremembered and unaccounted for, she cannot be lost because no one is looking for her, and even if they were, how can they call her if they don't know her name? Although she has claim, she is not claimed... It was not a story to pass on ...

So they forgot her. Like an unpleasant dream during a troubling sleep...
This was not a story to pass on.

Through these words, imply the complexity of telling the story of women's experience of slavery. The ghost of baby girl, beloved remains not lost, but 'disremembered' and 'unaccounted' for, because no one is even looking for her. The story of Beloved's murder by Sethe, her own mother, which implicated slavery in its entirety, including the other members of the community of slaves .she says it was difficult story to tell. This was not a story to pass on-forgot but a story to pass on (forward) to others to remembered the reality of slavery.

In Beloved, according to Linda Krumholz Morrison constructs a parallel between the individual processes of psychological recovery and a historical or national process. Sethe depicts the relationship between the individual and the history:

I was talking about time. It's so hard for me to believe in it. Some things go. Pass on. Some things just stay. I used to think it was my rememory. You know. Some things you forget. Other things you never do. But it's not. Places, places are still there. If a house burns down, it's gone, but the place -the picture of it- stays, and not just in my rememory, but out there, in the world. What I remember is a picture floating around out there outside my head. I mean, even if I don't think it, even if I die, the picture of what I did, or knew, or saw is still out there. Right in the place where it happened."(43)

Thus, Sethe's process of curing in Beloved, her process of learning to live with her past, is a model for her community who confront her past as part of their own past. In her writing, Linda Krumholz is quoting, Arnold Rampersad's W.E.B. Du Bois's The Souls of Black Folk, saying that 'the repression of the historical past is as psychologically damaging as the repression of personal trauma.' Both works defy the notion that the end of institutional slavery brings about freedom by depicting the emotional and psychological scars of slavery as well as the persistence of racism. In addition, both Morrison and Du Bois used memory and imagination as tools of strength and healing.

Slave holders considered slaves as an object, as an animal, and as a commodity. To explain this point we take character of Baby Suggs who has seven children but all are taken from her. The schoolteacher considers Sethe as animal because of her deed and Paul D as a tobacco teen. Sethe need to destroy and killed her children because, "that anybody white could take your whole self for anything that came to mind. Not just work, kill, or maim you, but dirty you. Dirty you so bad you couldn't like yourself no more. Dirty you so bad you forgot who you were and couldn't think it up. And though she and others lived through it and got over it, she could never let it happen to her own."

Confronted by Stamp Paid with the newspaper report of Sethe's action, Paul D rejects to believe that the woman who killed her baby could be Sethe. "That ain't her mouth". "You forgetting I knew her before," Paul D was saying. "Back in Kentucky. When she was a girl. I didn't just make her acquaintance a few months ago. I been knowing her a long time. And I can tell you for sure: this ain't her mouth. May look like it, but it ain't." (p.185) but Paul D never asks Sethe directly if she killed her baby because his love and trust does allow him to do that. For Paul D slavery meant the need to

protect yourself and love small. Under slavery, you picked " the tiniest stars out of the sky to own; lay down with head twisted in order to see the loved one over the rim of the trench before you slept." so that your love would not be challenging with that of the men who owned the guns. "Brass blades, salamanders, spiders, woodpeckers, beetles, a kingdom of ants. Anything bigger wouldn't do. A woman, a child, a brother-a big love like that would split you wide open in Alfred, Georgia." Of course, Paul D "knew exactly what she meant: to get to a place where you could love anything you chose-not to need permission for desire-well now that was freedom." (p.191)

Sethe's explanation of her murder as confirming her baby's safety shows Paul D was wrong. "This here Sethe was new. The ghost in her house didn't bother her for the very same reason a room and board with new shoes was welcome. This here Sethe talked about love like any other woman; talked about baby clothes like any other woman, but what she meant could cleave the bone. This here Sethe talked about safety with a handsaw. This here new Sethe didn't know where the world stopped and she began." (p.193) suddenly, Paul D saw what Stamp Paid had wanted him to see: "More important than what Sethe had done was what she claimed. It scared him." Paul D tells Sethe that her love is too thick, "your love is too thick," furthermore, Paul D insists that, what she did is wrong; there could have been some other way. When Sethe asked Paul D ,what way, without thinking he reply, "you got two feed, Sethe, not four," and right then a forest sprang up between them; trackless and quite." (p.194)

Sethe's deed makes Paul D to think as the schoolteacher says Sethe's deed as an animal. Sethe 's ultimate act of killing her child claiming her love of mother but for Paul D this deed is a result of her madness, her impact of slavery.

What is Slave Narrative?

"After the Civil War, former slaves continued to record their experiences under slavery, partly to ensure that the people in the future did not forget what had threatened its existence, and what happen in the past to these formal slaves."

In other words, Neo-Slave narrative is "a current fictional work set in the slavery era by contemporary authors or substantially concerned with depicting the experience or the effects of enslavement in the New World. The authors use their imagination, and research in oral histories and existing slave narratives to create such stories."

The slave narratives are important for discussion between blacks and whites about slavery and freedom. These texts and narrative techniques are hoisting questions on social justice, race, oppression, and the meaning of freedom. In the last decades of the twentieth century, a number of African-American writers have shown their attention in the slave narratives of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and have recovered the narrative structure and takes some themes from them. The slave narratives written and published before the Civil War that generally uses as tools of the abolitionist movement against slavery. According to Phillips, 'slavery was a civilizing factor for blacks, who lived as savages in Africa.'

Characteristic of Slave Narrative

- Talking about Family/Master
- Description of Suffering and mistreatment.
- Attempted to arouse the sympathy of readers.
- Showed the dominant white society
- Emphasized the cruelty of slave owners.
- Exposes physical and emotional abuses of slavery: scenes of beating, sexual abuse, starvation, especially of women and children
- Description of attempt to escape,
- Journey of a slave sale, of families being separated and destroyed.

Earlier Writing of Slave Narratives

In the 1840s and 1850s, the writers reveal the struggles of African American in the North, as fugitives from the South. After the Civil War, former slaves continued to record their experiences under slavery. Some of the classic texts of American literature, including the two most influential nineteenth-century American novels, Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin (1852), Harriet

Jacobs' *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861). Furthermore notable work of Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* (1884), and prize-winning contemporary novels as William Styron's *The Confessions of Nat Turner* (1967), as well as Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987), describes the direct influence of the slave narrative. "Slave narratives and their fictional characters have played a major role in national debates about slavery, freedom, and American identity that have challenged the conscience and the historical."

Similar to as Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Toni Morrison's *Beloved* also contains the features of slave narrative by the narrations about the triumphed situation of blacks. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* included the single aspects of black torments where as *Beloved* contains the different aspects of black culture. Sethe, as an ex- slave represents the historical background of the African Americans. In novel, the path of slavery and racism both have hunted the characters and other all members of black community. In the novel, all the characters worked hard to evade their sour past. Sethe is really trying to hide her past and she is trying to keep their children safe from the brutality of the slave owner. The novel contains the qualities of black narrative not only from the perspective of the protagonist but other characters are also important to depict the qualities of black narratives other characters such as Paul D, Baby Suggs, Denver, *Beloved* and Sixo. Sixo is a slave who known as wild man because, on one hand, he was black and on the other he was slave. When he tried to escape from the slavery, caught and burnt alive. Through him, reader knows about situation of capture slaves.

Frazier illustrated in *The Negro Family in the United States* (1939), the history of the African-American family life as a chain of yanking dislocations: "Probably never before in history has a people been so nearly completely stripped of its social heritage as the Negroes who were brought to America" (p.15). Lacking a culture, slaves were forced to adapt, the culture imposed by their masters. After this change, emancipation arrived as a second apocalyptic cultural break- "a crisis in the life of the Negro that tended to destroy all his traditional ways of thinking and acting. To some slaves who saw the old order collapse and heard the announcement that they were free men, emancipation appeared 'like noting' but de judgment day'" (p.73). The third major disruption in black cultural life came with the great migrations to northern cities in which rural blacks, "uprooted from the soil," lost their "roots in a communal life and [broke] all social ties" (p.224). For Frazier, these overarching cultural traumas had specific results destructive to black family life-illegitimate births, the abandonment of families by men, households headed by single women, and thus a family structure Frazier classified as matriarchy. (p. 412-413).

Narrative Techniques

Morrison uses techniques such as the fragmentation of plot and shifting narrative voices. She also introduces oral narrative techniques such as repetition, multiple voices, storytelling and poetry. As Linda Krumholz says, Morrison uses Modernist and oral techniques in conjunction with specifically African-American cultural referents, both historical and symbolic, to create a distinctly African-American voice and vision which, as in Baby Suggs's rituals, invoke the spiritual and imaginative power to teach and to heal.(p.81)

As narrative technique, remembrance, in Morrison's words, is "a journey to a site to see what remains has been left behind and to reconstruct the world that these remains imply." (*Beloved: A Womanist Neo-slave narrative*, Bernard W.Bell). For example, in *Beloved*, Sethe says:

Worked hard to remember as close to nothing as was safe. Unfortunately, her brain was devious. She might be hurrying across a field, running practically, to get to the pump quickly and rinse the chamomile sap from her legs. Nothing else would be in her mind... Then something. The plash of water, the sight of her shoes and stocking awry on the path where she had flung them; or Here Boy lapping in the puddle near her feet, and suddenly there was Sweet Home rolling, rolling, rolling out before her eyes, and although there was not a leaf on that farm that did not make her want to scream, it rolled itself out before her in shameless beauty. It never looked as terrible as it was and it made her wonder if hell was a pretty place too. Fire and brimstone all right, but hidden in lacy groves. Boys hanging from the most beautiful sycamores in the world. It shamed her -remembering the wonderful souging trees rather than the boys. Try as she might to make it otherwise, the sycamores beat out the children every time and she could not forgive her memory for that.

The technique of the novel *Beloved* recognized as neo-slave narrative, even it is best example of

varying narrative technique. However, the novel is very third person point of view. She is using repetition, shifting narrative voice, re-memory and repeated disclosing of past events. These kinds of techniques helps narrator to catch the attention of the reader. Neo-slave narratives, however, attract a different audience and convey a far deeper message.

Through Beloved's questions, we know about Sethe's past, her wedding, her masters' sweet home etc. During that time, black people did not allow to get married; they do not have any family or relationship with each other. Sethe remembered her wedding without ceremony, without preacher. Sethe says:

"I never saw a wedding, but I saw Mrs. Garner's wedding gown in the press, and heard her go on about what it was like. Two pounds of currants in the cake, she said, and four whole sheep. The people were still eating the next day. That is what I wanted. A meal maybe, where Halle, all the sweet Home men, and me sat down and ate something special. Invite some of the other colored people..." (p.70). Even they do not have money to buy anything. On their wedding day, Sethe manage to have a wedding dress of stolen scraps of material, "I took to stealing fabric, and wound up with a dress you wouldn't believe."

After the coming back to the past, the conversation takes place between, Denver and Beloved. This is the Second incidence where beloved asking to Sethe about her mother, "Your woman she never fixes up your hair?" was clearly a question for Sethe... "My woman? You mean my mother? If she did I don't remember." (p.72) Sethe has seen her mother a few times out in the fields. Then, when she is working indigo. Sethe's mother Ella is a conductor on the Underground Railroad. She has spent her puberty time in a house where she has been used sexually by both a father and his son. She has many children but she 'thrown them all away' because she has been raped by the white gang or white person. Sethe is only one child Ella has kept with her because Sethe's father is Blackman. As a slave mother, she has no time for Sethe to care of her. Even she does not sleep in the same cabin where Sethe sleeps. As Sethe says: "right on her rib was a circle and a cross birth in the skin. She said, this your ma'am. This, and she pointed 'I am the only one got this mark now the rest dead. If something happens to me and you can't tell me by my fact, you can know by this mark'. Scared me so."

Beloved stimulates Sethe's memory of her mother's hanging. Sethe's story of the hanging marks the first time Denver has ever heard about her mother's mother, she only knows her grandmother Baby Suggs. In addition, as a reader we know about past of Sethe which she repressed her mother's memory. Not only had this she cannot remember her native language spoken by her mother, which is indicates the lack of cultural and social relationship between these black people.

Beloved as a character inspires the growth of other characters in the novel. Personally Paul D did not like Beloved, he always suspicious about her presence. But, after his sexual encounters with Beloved, open the lid of his "tobacco tin" heart, allowing him to remember, feel, and love again. Paul D's engagement with Beloved may be representative of the intense encounter with his past. By this encounter with Beloved Paul D's heart come alive, "Red heart. Red heart. Red heart" (p.137).

Interestingly Denver benefits the most from Beloved's presence, but indirectly. At first, she feels isolated and friendless as she says, "I can't live here. I don't know where to go or what to do, but I can't live here. Nobody speaks to us. Nobody comes by. Boys don't like me. Girls don't either." After coming of Beloved, she totally depended on Beloved. She thinks that in Beloved's absence she has no "self" of her own. Afterward in the novel, Beloved's spiteful behavior and actions awake Denver to the dangers of the past that Beloved represents. The feeling of separation and loneliness does not only affect Denver but also the whole community of blacks who thinks that they are isolated and not able to do anything outside of their home. In the end, Beloved's oppression over Sethe forces Denver to leave 124 to find out a job for independence and self-possession and become more confident, "... suddenly she leveled her eyes at his, "but who would know that better than you, Paul D? I mean, you sure enough knew her." 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". (p.314) and search for help in the community and Denver's exile from 124 marks the beginning of her social relations.

In the end of the novel, the narrator removes Beloved, but she is never gone, may be her story forgotten by the people even her own community but preserved by the novel she remains. Through Beloved, the narrator represents a destructive and painful past. In the third part Beloved introduced in her point of view says that, "I am Beloved and she is mine", here she describes her desire and

wanting to live with Sethe. She says, "I lose her again, but I found the house she whispered to me and there she was, smiling at last" Through her expression of feeling the narrator trying to connect the slaves with their black community: "I will not lose her again. She is mine."

In the article, "Narrative and Community Crisis in *Beloved*," D. S. Hinson examines Morrison's use of the narrative and communal collapse reflected in *Beloved*'s monologue, "Beloved's narrative crisis manifests itself not only in temporal or chronological collapse, but also in the collapse of difference among narrative voices. Eventually the narrative crisis reaches a point at which the identity of the narrators is impossible to determine" (p.153). He says that shifting of the narrative points of view creates confusion to the reader for their (particular narrators') identity. For example, when *Beloved* appears on the scene, so Denver decides to tell *Beloved* the story of her birth. The narration is "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" (p.91).

However, through mixture of the characters' voices, Morrison combines the past and present by connecting the consciousnesses of her characters. There are many episodes where she describes the flashback techniques. There are no boundaries of time and space. In the novel, Morrison trying to saw that past and present related to each other.

Morrison describes the characters narration of their experiences affected by their traumatic memory. For example, "Not a house in the country ain't packed to its rafters with some dead negro's grief. We are lucky this ghost is baby...do not talk to me .You lucky. You got three left. Three pulling at your skirts and just one raising hell from the other side. Be thankful, why don't you? I had eight. Every one gone from me..." Other characters have same miserable experience of trauma. As Paul D has been put an iron bit in his mouth, chained together with forty-five slaves in Alfred and Georgia. Sethe being abuse by her schoolteacher and the two boys, Sethe says, "I got a tree on my back and a haint in my house, and nothing in between but the daughter I am holding in my arms." During pregnancy they raped on her, they took her milk and beat her, not all these incidences are forgettable for Sethe. In addition, because of this trauma Halle becomes mad and leaves Sethe and Denver alone. The arrival, departure and return of Paul D provide the frame for Sethe' realization of personal existence in community. With the arrival of Paul D at 124, Sethe is thinking about her past, her sweet home of plantation and Halle. After that, in the third part of the novel when Paul D returns to 124 for take care of Sethe. He looks on Sethe, holds her hand, and tells her that she is her best thing and that "... we got more yesterday than anybody. We need some kind of tomorrow." Moreover, when Paul D reminds her, "You your best thing, Sethe," (p.322), to which she replies, "Me? Me?" Through Paul D, Sethe realize her power and importance of self.

Morrison also uses the literary devises such as irony, satire and figure of speeches. For example, "I got a tree on my back", and "Iron bit in his (Paul d) mouth", indicates the suffering of these people.

Morrison presents Sethe's chaotic internal life through a process of "rememory," a kind of psychic haunting in which the facts of a traumatic incident are told and retold. The innermost traumatic episode of *Beloved*, to which the narrative returns repeatedly, is a traumatic memory of twenty years earlier, Sethe killed her baby *Beloved* rather than allow her return to slavery. However, the technique of rememory befalls a bridge between past and present.

The novel *Beloved*, insists throughout that it is a historical as well as ghost story. However, as Malmgrel noted in his article, *Mixed Genres and the Logic of Slavery in Beloved*, that, "if *Beloved* is both a ghost story and a historical novel, it can also be characterized as a love story, exploring what it means to "be-loved."" (p.66) in various places, the novel advocates a mixture of possible relation between lovers, between self and other. For instant, Ella tells Sethe, "If anybody was to ask me I'd say, don't love anything For Paul D, love for slave and ex-slave is "to love small": "the best thing, he knew, was to love just a little bit; everything, just a little bit, so that when they broke its back, or shoved it in a croaker sack, well, maybe you'd have a little love left over for the next one." The most important theme is the challenging of love especially maternal love between mother and child, between children's present and future. As a reader we examines that in what circumstances Sethe's love become murder. The tragic and dangerous action that Sethe takes against her children, for that she feels, "was right because it came from true love".

Just as Morrison describes the dehumanizing treatment of womanhood, she portrays the violation on manhood. Therefore, suffering and violation is part of both, man and woman's life in the African

American Literature. For example under the arrogantly smiling eyes of the rooster mister is eventually struck Paul D that schoolteacher had defeated him like the rest of Sweet Home's male slaves: "when I saw mister I knew it was me too. Not just them, me too. One (Helle) crazy, one Paul F sold, one Paul A missing, one Sixo burnt and me licking iron. The last of the sweet home men." (89)

Some scholars are interested to compare *Beloved* with the Bible. As Dhanasekaran mention her article *The Significance of Biblical Paradigms in Toni Morrison's Beloved*, "the name of the protagonist of the novel, Sethe is associated with Biblical Seth, who was the child of Adam and Eve. It is also unique as a name for a female slave because it is described from the names of Egyptian and Biblical males. Morrison uses names to add the masculinity of Sethe's character. Sethe's ability to overcome the overwhelming tragedies and challenges such as her escapes from slavery in Kentucky and the gruesome murder of her child identifies her with this quality" (p.186).

In *Beloved*, the symbol of chokecherry tree that stands the living testimony representing the evils of slavery and the scars of Sethe's past. "Chokecherry tree provides a bitter fruit, in contrast to what people normally think to cherry trees that produce something sweet and tantalizing." The name of Sethe's plantation home, "Sweet home", when we read the name something like sweet home may think that the condition and situation of sweet home slaves and other members are sweet and happy. However, when we go through in their inner life then we realize that what is mean by sweet, which is bitter than poison. The third Biblical feature mentions in *Beloved* is, the four horsemen-schoolteacher, nephew, slave catcher and a sheriff are referred to as four horsemen a clear parallel to the four horsemen of the Apocalypse in the Bible. "The four horsemen are the symbolic representations of the destructive forces, namely 'Antichrist, War, Famine and Death' (Dake). Their arrival signifies the end of the world just as the four horsemen make an end to twenty-eight days of happiness Sethe has enjoyed.' Morrison manages to show light on the biases of the white men." (192)

The theme of rape is also significant in this novel. Actually, the story of *Beloved* is merging around theme of rape. See Sethe kills her baby girl because no white men will "dirty" her. Further, she says no young man with "moss teeth" will ever hold the child down and suck her breasts (p.251). As Barnett notes in her article, *Figuration of Rape and the Supernatural in Beloved*, "Toni Morrison's *Beloved* is haunted by history, memory, and a specter that embodies both; yet it would be accurate to say that *Beloved* is haunted by the history and memory of rape especially" (p.193) .

In the novel, the narrator refers a number of times to the incident that, "two moss-toothed" boys hold Sethe down and suck her breast milk. Even Sethe's exchange of ten minutes' sex with man for the engraving on her baby's tombstone. Additionally, Ella Sethe's mother locked up and repeatedly raped by father and son. Even she is "taken up many times by the crew". Baby Suggs is forced to have sex with her boss for not sell her child but later he breaks his promise. Being victim of rape, these women (Baby Suggs and Ella) rejects to nurse babies conceived through raped by whites.

To conclude this paper I would like to say that Morrison brings together the African American oral and literary tradition to create a powerful representation of slavery in America. Her purpose to write *Beloved* is to critiques historical slavery system in America. Through telling a real story of ex-slave mother, Morrison exposes of unequal social and cultural system in United States. The concept of racism and slavery is clearly portrayed in this novel. Really, Morrison knows how painful it is to remember the horrors of slavery, which present in this novel. Once she has said in an interview that quoted by Susan Bowers, "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, white people don't want to remember. I mean, its national amnesia" (Susan, 43).

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