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## TRACES OF SLAVERY IN COLLECTIVE MEMORY: COMMON THEMES IN TONI MORRISON'S *BELOVED* AND HARRIET BEECHER STOWE'S *UNCLE TOM'S CABIN*<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

From the establishment of the United States of America to the mid-20th century, the institution of slavery significantly affected African American society, resulting in profound consequences related to marginalization, racism, racial discrimination, and, most notably, collective memory. In human experience, certain moments or events are sometimes impossible to forget, even when one wishes to do so. Nevertheless, certain events or experiences remain indelibly etched in memory; despite attempts to forget them, they persist in one's consciousness and prevail. Among these concepts, collective memory has been the one that came into prominence among black slaves, even after their freedom. The black society tried to ignore and forget their horrible memories. Two important American writers, Toni Morrison and Harriet Beecher Stowe, have tried to draw attention to the mental and physical damage caused by slavery through their novels. In the novels of both writers, slavery has been abolished, and the protagonists have attained freedom; however, readers' attention is directed by various narrators through flashbacks and recollections to the period during which they were enslaved. This study aims to examine the differences and similarities between these two antislavery literary works focusing on the treatment of collective memory.

**Keywords:** Slavery, Collective Memory, Negroes, *Beloved*, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Racism.

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## **Köleliğin Toplumsal Hafızadaki İzleri: Toni Morrison'ın *Beloved*'i ve Harriet Beecher Stowe'un *Uncle Tom's Cabin*'inde Ortak Temalar**

### **Öz**

Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nin kuruluşundan 20. yüzyılın ortalarına kadar kölelik kurumu Afro-Amerikan toplumunu önemli ölçüde etkilemiş, ötekileştirme, ırkçılık, ırk ayrımcılığı ve en önemlisi de kolektif hafıza ile ilgili derin ve olumsuz sonuçlara yol açmıştır. Aslında, insanın zihninde bazen asla unutmak istemediği bir an ya da olay vardır. Bununla birlikte, bazı olaylar veya deneyimler hafızada silinmez bir şekilde kazılı kalır; unutma çabalarına rağmen, kişinin bilincinde kalmaya ve hüküm sürmeye devam eder. Bu kavramlar arasında kolektif hafıza, siyah kölelerde özgürlüklerinden sonra bile ön plana çıkmaktadır. Korkunç anılarını görmezden gelmeye ve unutmaya çalışmışlardır. Amerikalı iki önemli yazar olan Toni Morrison ve Harriet Beecher Stowe, romanları aracılığıyla köleliğin insanlarda meydana getirdiği ruhsal ve fiziksel tahribatlara dikkat çekmeye çalışmışlardır. Her iki yazarın romanlarında da kölelik kaldırılmış ve kahramanlar özgürlüğe kavuşmuştur; ancak okuyucuların dikkati, çeşitli anlatıcılar tarafından geriye dönüşler ve köleleştirildikleri döneme ilişkin hatırlamalar yoluyla yönlendirilmektedir. Bu çalışma, bu iki kölelik karşıtı edebi eser arasındaki farklılıkları ve benzerlikleri kolektif bellek açısından incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kölelik, Toplumsal Bellek, Zenciler, *Beloved*, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Irkçılık.

### **THE CONCEPT OF MEMORY IN *BELOVED* AND *UNCLE TOM'S CABIN***

During the 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, there was a great wave of emigration from Africa to America, which would later leave an enormous impact on almost the whole continent and its people. As a result, within one hundred years, there appears to be a horrible and longtime issue: slavery. This issue not only affects their social lives, relationships, but also their collective memory to the greatest extent. Black people were colonised and transported to America under harsh and inhumane conditions. They were treated as if they were animals on board. Howard Zinn described this brutal and terrible transportation as follows:

*As the slaves come down to Fida from the inland country, they are put into a hut or prison near the beach; when the Europeans are to receive them, they are brought out onto a large plain, where the ship's surgeons examine every part of everyone, to the smallest member, men and women, being stark naked. The strong and healthy ones were set aside, and their chests were branded with a branding*

*iron, heated over a fire, with the brand of the French, English or Dutch company... After this process, the branded slaves were taken back to their huts and sometimes waited for 10-15 days to be taken on board the ships. (Zinn, 2018, p. 34)<sup>3</sup>*

These expressions highlight the dehumanizing and brutal nature of the slave trade, treating people as commodities to be branded, inspected, and sold. We can see cruel process of buying and selling enslaved people. They are piled like wood, regardless of whether they are men, women, or children. Even at the beginning of the shipment to America, torture and abuse had already begun. The ships in which they are captured have many small cabins, and even a small child cannot move peacefully. In these terrible conditions, they cannot breathe and many die or have to be killed in order to get vacant places. Unfortunately, these behaviors, which should not be even towards the worst criminals, are towards blacks. Black people living in this brutality are not able to forget all this brutal scene and remove it from their collective memory even after slavery abolition and freedom:

*During the journey, the ship is full of pitiful signs of distress, smell, fumes, horrors, vomiting, various kinds of sea sickness, fever, dysentery, headaches, heat, constipation, boils, scurvy, cancer, mouth rot, and similar afflictions, all of them caused by the age and the highly salted state of the food, especially of the meat, as well as by the very bad and filthy wate. Add to all that shortage of food, hunger, thirst, frost, heat, dampness, fear, misery, vexation, and lamentation as well as other troubles. On board our ship, on a day on which we had a great storm, a woman about to give birth and unable to deliver under the circumstances was pushed through one of the portholes into the sea. (Zinn, 2018, p. 49)*

This description is actually a reflection of cruel treatment of one race by another, which cannot be forgotten or easily removed from memory. Even a free and wealthy man or woman cannot forget such a brutal scene, let alone those who have lived it. The slaves' torture does not reach an end when they arrive in America, and worse conditions wait for them there. There appears the problem of race, inferiority to the whites, physical appearances and differences, and the categorization of their color: Colored, Black, Negroes, Nigger, Mulatto, and African Americans. Africans are described as brutal, ruthless, and ugly. They have been described as such by colonisers because colonisers needed to depict

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<sup>3</sup> Unless otherwise stated, this and subsequent references to Turkish works have been translated into English by us for the purposes of this study.

someone else like this to prove their existence and superiority. Furthermore, Edward Said states that White men assert that this is a burden on their shoulders to civilise and govern these people even though they do not want them to do so (2008, p. 43). Said states that the White describe the American as red, choleric, erect, the Asiatic as yellow, melancholy, rigid, and the African as black, phlegmatic, and lax (2008, p. 129). All these negative and inhumane descriptions leave an ugly portrayal of Africans and their way of life. They have no right to vote or property. They are excluded from almost every human right and stuck in a very limited area, where they are not able to express themselves freely. Therefore, their situations are reflected in the Afro-American literature. In the Colonial Period, African literature was mostly oral and rich in poetry, including gospel music rap and spirituals. Because they are not free, they do not have settled literature. However, in the mid-and late 18<sup>th</sup> century, some writers and poets appeared in African literature. One of them is Phillis Wheatly, the first African American writer to publish a book and gain an international reputation. She was captured and sold as a slave at the age of seven. She was brought to America to be owned by a Boston merchant, where she improved her English to an advanced degree. Her poetry gained great praise, even by President George Washington, thanking her for the poem she wrote in his honor. Unfortunately, some whites have difficulty believing that a black woman can write such an outstanding poem, which may be a great moment to remember permanently. In the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a new and very influential genre developed in African American literature: slave narratives, written to describe slaves' horrific lives under slavery and their struggle for survival and freedom. Of these narratives, the most impressive was Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which is the most printed book after the Bible. Harriet Beecher Stowe was an American writer. She was from a religious family. Although she was white and American, she was an abolitionist, taking a significant part in abolitionist literature. She was a pillar figure in the 19<sup>th</sup> century abolition movement, considering women's rights, just as Graham expresses: "And if there were a writer capable of considering the condition of women in relation to theories of enslavement it would be Stowe, whose novels of the 1850s were instantly recognized as monuments of abolitionist literature" (2010, p. 175). As she is against slavery, she tries hard to draw attention to abolishing slavery both through her heart and her literary works, especially in her novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. She is so active in abolishing the black slaves that she is called "a nigger-worshipper" (Graham, 2010, p. 176). When the book was published in 1852, great attention and disillusionment was felt noticeably throughout America, it, "somehow managed to become the most famous and well-known text in international antislavery debates almost immediately upon its first publication as a series in the Free-Soil party journal

*National Era* in 1852" (Wallace, 2000, p. 141). The initial print sold 5,000 copies in a very short time. In less than a year, the book sold an unprecedented 300,000 copies, being the second most printed book after the Bible, and paves the way to the Civil War of the US and Stowe to be "immediately recognized as a leading antislavery spokesperson" (Wallace, 2000, p. 142) as the president of that period Abraham Lincoln smiles down at Mrs. Stowe and exclaims: "So you are the little woman who wrote the book that made this great war!" (Roppolo, 1957, p. 346). The book is about harsh, brutal, and inhumane conditions of enslaved African Americans in a sentimental way to try to make people more emphatic towards the black people who are forced to be slaves and abolish slavery. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* "was instrumental in giving slavery a human face for audiences all over the world" (Wallace, 2000, p. 142). It mainly focuses on abolition and the horrible slavery system, so it is not welcome in the South, unlike the North, causing the writer to be in dichotomy: "Then to the North Mrs. Stowe was a heroine, an instrument of God; but to the South she was a monster, an instrument of the Devil, the natural object of a violent and strangely personal hatred that developed as rapidly as *Uncle Tom's Cabin* achieved popularity" (Roppolo, 1957, p. 347).

The book traces the story of a good, pious, strong, and loyal slave in Kentucky, named Tom. He was a middle-aged man living with his family on a plantation owned by Mr. Shellby, his master. Mr. Shellby is a good man for his slaves. From the beginning of the book, he depicts Tom in a rather good way and explains Tom's loyalty:

*I mean, really, Tom is good, steady, sensible, pious fellow. He got religion at a camp meeting four years ago, and I believe he really did get it. I have trusted him, since then, with everything I have,— money, house, horses,—and let him come and go around the country; and I always found him true and square in everything.* (Stowe, 2016, p. 4)

His being trustworthy and loyal to his master is to such a great degree that the master can entrust his everything to Tom without any doubt. He could even send Tom to some missions to bring back something valuable without thinking of his escape or keeping it for himself. Tom's biggest weakness is religion. He did not want to do anything wrong, which would upset his master. So, he obeys his master and remains loyal to him until the day he dies because he is promised to be set free by his master, and as a good and righteous Christian, he is waiting for his freedom, which is a great moment and event in one's life to be remembered. Unfortunately, things begin to change against Tom, which would not be worth remembering later. Mr. Shellby's business is worsening because of his debt to a

harsh and ruthless man, Haley, who does not care about slaves or their family relationships. In return for his debt, Mr. Shelby must sell Tom and Eliza's small boy. Haley wants the boy for some market business and Tom for hard work, because Tom is well-built and strong. Although he has the opportunity to run away at any time, he stays with his master and runs all the errands, from farming to keeping money. When sent for any mission, he would come back on time without thinking running away and say, "Ah, master trusted me, and I couldn't" (Stowe, 2016, P. 63). He is very happy with his family and master's plantations. He would not be unthankful to his master. Tom could not forget his master's kindness towards his family. Moreover, he knows that if he runs away, other slaves will be sold instead of him. As "Tom is a deeply religious man who thinks first of others, black or white" (Wallace, 2000, p. 145), he sacrifices himself to save all other slaves on the plantation and his master's dignity and honor. Although he is just a slave, he provides many people with freedom, being the children's Uncle Tom, who would be remembered with pride, thankfulness, and dignity. Another important characteristic is that of Eliza, a young quadroon woman. The patient was 25 years old. "Eliza was brought up by her mistress, from girlhood, as a petted and indulged favorite" (Stowe, 2016, p. 16). Actually, she is treated well by both Mr. Shelby and Mrs. Shelby as their own daughter. There is nothing wrong with her and her life on plantation until she hears that her little boy would be sold to Haley. Upon hearing this shocking news, she runs to Mrs. Shelby, begging her desperately to save her little boy.

*Eliza started. "O, missis!" She said, raising her eyes; then, bursting into tears, she sat down in a chair and began sobbing. "Why, Eliza child, what ails you?" said her mistress. "O! missis, missis," said Eliza, "There 's been a trader talking with the master in the parlor! I heard him." "Well, silly child, suppose there has." "O, missis, do you suppose mas'r would sell my Harry?" The poor creature throws herself into a chair and sobs convulsively. (Stowe, 2016, p. 14)*

We can see how desperate she was. Eliza, first of all, is a mother and cannot bear such a horrible thing as to let her son fly away from her hands. So, she resorts to run away with her son at the first opportunity, leaving a letter for her mistress by expressing her thanks for all what she has done for herself. Actually, she feels guilty to leave her mistress, but as a mother, she has to do so to save her little son from being captured, tortured, abused, and deprived of his freedom for the rest of his life. As a little boy, Eliza's son will always remember what he has lived with his mother, because of the cruel slavery system. In addition, he never forgets his mother's desperate struggles to save him. He is always proud of his mother. Taking all this into consideration, we can claim that Eliza represents the best

mother model that is worth remembering on account of her courage in this harsh system. All of the black slaves –women and children particularly–have left a great impression on their past and future lives, which is not so easy to forget or remove from their mind permanently, and also a leading cause that forces the writer –as she is both a woman and mother–to produce this worldwide masterpiece *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Stowe herself expresses her main reason for doing something worthy of the horrible slavery system:

*She recalled for one of her grown children, "I well remember the winter you were a baby and I was writing 'Uncle Tom's Cabin.' My heart was bursting with the anguish excited by the cruelty and injustice that our nation was showing to the slave, praying God to let me do a little and to cause my cry for them to be heard. I remember many nights weeping over you as you lay sleeping beside me, and I thought of the slave mothers whose babies were torn from them. One of the seven children died while still being an infant. She said, 'it was at his dying bed and at his grave that I learned what a poor slave may feel when her child is torn away from her.'* (Ammons, 1977, p. 161)

As seen above, the slavery system is so brutal and inhumane that the scenes – particularly those of mothers and children–cannot be forgotten permanently. Stowe felt deeply troubled by the cruelty and injustice of slavery in America. Her empathy for enslaved mothers grew even stronger when one of her own seven children died as an infant. This personal loss helped her understand more deeply the pain that enslaved mothers felt when separated from their children. Stowe realized that her own grief over losing a child was similar to what enslaved women experienced when their children were sold away from them. Through these experiences, Stowe developed a strong emotional connection to the subject of her novel, which became a powerful critique of slavery in the United States. There are many such brutal scenes, almost everywhere as follows:

*A young black woman whose baby is stolen and sold drowns herself in Mississippi, her only obituary an entry in a slave trader's ledger under 'losses'. A middle-aged slave, her twelve children auctioned away, drinks to silence memory of her thirteenth baby who was starved to death; drunk once too often, the woman is locked in a cellar until the smell of her corpse satisfies her owners' wrath.* (Ammons, 1977, p. 167)

These memories highlight the extreme cruelty and inhumanity of the slave system, showing how enslaved people, especially women and mothers, suffered intense emotional and physical trauma. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* contains many

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unworthy remembering moments and horrible scenes through main characters such as Tom and Eliza. However, perhaps the most important character, who would leave a lifelong impact, is a little girl named Topsy, because unlike the other characters she is depicted as "No character illustrates Stowe's charge more starkly than Topsy" (Ammons, 1977, p. 167). She is a Negro girl at the age of eight or nine. Stowe depicts her appearance, which could permanently remain in one's mind, as follows:

*She was one of the blackest of her race, and her round-shining eyes, glittering as glass beads, moved with quick and restless glances over everything in the room. Her mouth, half-open with astonishment at the wonders of the new Mas'r's parlor, displayed a white and brilliant set of teeth. Her woolly hair was braided in sundry, small tails, which stuck in every direction. The expression of her face was an odd mixture of shrewdness and cunning, over which was oddly drawn, like a kind of veil, an expression of the most doleful gravity and solemnity. She was dressed in a single filthy, ragged garment made of bagging, and stood with her hands demurely folded before her. Altogether, there was something odd and goblin-like regarding her appearance.* (Stowe, 2016, p. 317)

Topsy, apart from her different appearances, is a slave girl. Whatever she is asked, her reply is just: "Dun no, Missis." (Stowe, 2016, p. 322), with her vernacular language, which is also a sign of her illiteracy. She was used to running the errands. When Miss Ophelia had difficulty with her, she would almost scream:

*"Topsy!" She would say, when at the end of all patience, "what makes you act so?" "Dunno, Missis, -- I spects cause I wicked!" "I don't know anything what I shall do with you, Topsy." "Law, Missis, you must whip me; my old Missis allers whipped me. I an't used to work in ' unless I get whipped.' "Why, Topsy, I don't want to whip you. You can do well if you have a mind to, and what is the reason you will not?" "Laws, Missis, I 's used to whippin'; I spects it's good for me." (Stowe, 2016, pp. 333-334)*

Topsy says that she cannot do anything without getting whipped and thinks that whipping is good for her. She sees herself as 'wicked.' As can be inferred from this quote, Topsy, until this age, is raised with whipping, and she could not do anything without getting whipped, which clearly shows that her memory is deeply affected by this way of punishment. She would remember past life and try to build and shape her present and even future life in the same way. Topsy has a dual position, representing two completely opposite societies: she is the real face of a

slaveholder society that ruins black lives, and she is the psychology and ignorance of black nation because she "has been crippled psychologically by an entire social structure purposely designed to strip her (and her black brothers) of all sense of human selfhood" (Ammons, 1977, p. 167).

Another important African American writer who wrote slave narratives from the bottom of her heart, who felt the past of the society she belonged to in all its painful aspects, and who wrote about the wailful events experienced by those unfortunate people with pain is Toni Morrison. She was born in Lorain, Ohio, United States. Her name was Chloe Anthony Wofford. However, because of some mispronunciations in her name at the university, she changed her name to Toni Morrison. She majored in English at a university. She had a brilliant writing career. She was the first female African American Nobel Prize winner in 1993. She also won another important prize, the 1988 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction. She died in 2019 in New York, the United States. Her novel *Beloved* (1987), which may be her best novel, describes slavery through extraordinary memories of the past. Broadly, the novel traces the story of Sethe, a black female ex-slave, who has to kill her baby rather than see her captured and abused as a slave. The book began in 1873, after the abolition of slavery and the Civil War. The story has just started after Paul D comes and stays with Sethe and her daughter Denver at 124. Much of the information in the novel spins around these characters. It has many painful scenes just as Göncüoğlu expresses: "*Beloved* centers around an unforgettable story including a lot of gothic elements and scenes of terrible violence" (2013, p. 146). Pınar Süt Güngör depicts Toni Morrison as a writer who "provides access to unearth the concepts of trauma (collective and historical), healing, transformation, and repetition to revise the notions of black identity and community" (2023, p. 1248). According to Helene Moglan, "*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" (1993, p. 23). However, to understand the atmosphere in the book and what the characters have lived under slavery, a brief chronological summary of the book would be helpful.

Baby Suggs (the grandmother) leaves Sweet Home plantation in Kentucky and settles in Cincinnati, Ohio. After her son, Halle gets his freedom from his owner, Mr. Garner. Sethe moves to Sweet Home instead of Baby Suggs. One year later, she marries Halle and has three children: two sons and one daughter at Sweet Home. When Mr. Garner dies and his wife becomes ill, she wants the schoolteacher (whose name is never pronounced throughout the book) to run Sweet Home. However, things go wrong at Sweet Home from now on because the schoolteacher is cruel and ruthless, treating and abusing slaves like animals.

Therefore, everyone is planning to run away. Sethe sends her children to Ohio and waits for her husband to come, because he does not know where they would meet. While she waits for husband for days, the schoolteacher arrives and keeps Sethe, who is pregnant with her fourth child (Denver), with his nephew. When they take her to the barn, the nephew takes her milk and nurses her breasts. She was beaten badly by a cowhide the following day. However, she was able to run away the night on her own. On the way to Ohio, a white girl helps her pass the Ohio River, where she gives birth to her fourth baby Denver. The next day, Sethe arrives at Baby Suggs 124 and reunites with her other children. However, approximately one month later, the schoolteacher arrived at 124 and forced them to return to Sweet Home. Fearing that her children would be sold as slaves and be abused like animals, Sethe murders her first daughter by cutting her throat with a saw and injuring her sons before she is stopped by anyone. After she exits the jail, she encounters a baby's grave headstone with the name, 'Beloved.' The baby's ghost appeared constantly at 124, and Sethe's two sons ran away when Baby Suggs was in her death bed. She died in 1865 when Paul D arrived in 1873. Sethe, Paul D, and Denver began to live together until Beloved appears from nowhere. Sethe takes her in. Beloved gradually attaches to Sethe, and Denver is devoted to Beloved, as she thinks that Beloved is her baby sister's ghost who comes to life to live with her. In addition, Sethe begins to be convinced that she is her baby ghost when seeing scars on her throat. In her this novel, as can be clearly seen, Toni Morrison focuses on the past events of the characters that have a great impact on their present lives. She goes deep into the psychological effects of her characters and unveils the psychological damage of the slavery on the black people, which haunts them for a long time as she claims: "I thought this got to be the least read of all the books I'd written because it is about something 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, it is a national amnesia" (Bonnie, 2003, p. 3). This clash between the past and the present is described by Kocabıyık as follows:

*Some disturbing memories may haunt us for years, as is the case with Sethe and Paul D in Toni Morrison's Beloved. Trying to ignore their past by avoiding related confrontations, they try to forget their terrible memories in Beloved. However, one might think that forgetting is temporary and lasts only until the smallest event prompts memory, and then the formidable past is experienced once again, sometimes as painful as it once was. Morrison continues Sethe on a journey from being a woman who identifies herself only with motherhood to a woman who begins to identify herself as a human*

*being. Morrison brings this picture to life by letting Sethe face her past and bring to mind the events that she had worked extremely hard to suppress or forget; denying her past seems impossible for Sethe. (2016, p. 344)*

In this quote, it seems difficult for Sethe to clean her memory completely. Her past events would sometimes reappear according to her relationships with other characters, especially Beloved. She remembers almost all her enslaved days. Her life at Sweet Home was cruelty, torture, and wrath. The schoolteacher and his nephews whip her back, leaving the shape of chokeberry tree, which was a sign of her slavery, and her stolen identity as Göncüoğlu states: "She and other slaves experienced things both physically and mentally that no modern person could ever imagine; her identity was stolen, and she was whipped by a chokecherry tree to concretize idea of her being a property labeled as any animal" (2013, p. 152). When she explains all of these to Paul D, she feels the same situation. Her memory is full of past events that she wants to forget or remove, but she cannot. Actually, she is a strong woman who survives despite every torture, abuse, and sorrow she has under slavery. She is now trying to make a new life with her daughter. Kocabyık describes her struggle to forget her past, as follows:

*Sethe was desperate to forget not only the bad memories but also the things she once had allowed herself to feel and to have, such as love and hope, these she tried to leave behind. This was intended to keep her from getting mad by being captured by her terrible past. Sethe tries hard to forget her past slavery and starts living anew. At 124, she seeks to make a fresh start, cleansing her thoughts and working for 'beating up the past' and trying to create a shiny future. (2106, p. 346)*

She does not want to remember anything about her past anymore because when Denver asks about her mother's life, she avoids telling anything about the past. She just wants to speak about hopeful things concerning her present and future life. She tries to exclude dark, gloomy, and terrifying things from her past, even though she remembers every moment in her harsh and tough times. However, in the end, she triumphs thanks to her courage and struggles. On the other hand, Paul D is Sethe's opposite side, whose feminine side prevails, even though he is a man. He and Sethe once have the same past, so he does not have much to talk about, as Sethe already knows. All he has a tobacco tin, in which he gathered all his sorrow and bad moments. He fears that his past will be unveiled and haunt him again. However, when Beloved suddenly appeared from nowhere, she caused them to remember and unearth their horrible past, which shows that no prevailing

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memories could be forgotten or removed from the mind easily because "Beloved is the incarnation of Sethe's baby girl and of her most painful memory-the murder of her daughter to protect her children from slavery" (Krumholz, 1992, p. 400). Through Beloved's reactions and appearance, especially the scar on her throat, Sethe is convinced enough to confess that she has killed her daughter, who is now Beloved, to save her from the brutal slavery system. She is able to remember almost every detail about her daughter: "Your face is mine" (Morrison, 1988, p. 215). The sentence 'Your face is mine' shows that Sethe's memory is very fresh to remember Beloved, though many years have passed. Her daughter is now with her, and she can reunite with Beloved. Sethe's recalling brings her daughter back and gives her peace in her new life. However, Beloved's seduction of Paul D – who later becomes pregnant–gives rise to awakening from the past. It is difficult for Paul D to overcome his desires, which gives him momentary freedom from his past. Beloved is a baby ghost who haunts 124 people. Therefore, she should be removed through exorcism as soon as possible to end these horrible memories of slavery and have a peaceful life from then on. They all gather at 124, and through a collective ritual, they wipe out Beloved; she flies away and disappears forever, leaving no traces from their past:

*They forgot her like a bad dream. After they made up their tales, shaped and decorated them, those that saw her that day on the porch quickly and deliberately forgot her. It took longer for those who had spoken to her, lived with her, fall in love with her, to forget, until they realized that they couldn't remember or repeat a single thing she said, and began to believe that, other than what they themselves were thinking, she hadn't said anything at all. So, in the end, they forgot her. (Morrison, 1988, p. 274)*

By removing Beloved from their lives, they clean their memories from terrible past events. Beloved is also a reflection of the black community under slavery. Through her exorcism, they try to rebuild and reshape their lives by trying to completely forget her.

In conclusion, *Beloved* and *Uncle Tom's Cabin* represent significant novels that depict the lives of African Americans under slavery, with a focus on female protagonists. The authors employ vivid imagery, compelling scenes, and poetic language which may leave a lasting impression on readers. Through powerful narratives, both authors demonstrate the importance of familial bonds, particularly between child and mother, in survival and maintaining unity. Stowe selects a male protagonist who is devout, benevolent, and consistently loyal to his master. He does not contemplate the possibility of betrayal, despite plenty of

opportunities for escape. Through this empathetic character, Stowe attempts to evoke a sentimental response to slavery. She also introduces a prominent female character whose name is Eliza, that undertakes considerable risks to protect her young son from the brutality of slavery. In this context, Eliza serves as a counterpoint to Tom. Throughout the novel, Stowe illustrates the harsh and inhumane conditions endured by enslaved individuals. She also conveys implicit messages advocating for the abolition of the slavery system. To the contrary, Morrison draws attention to the same issues through lively descriptions of African Americans' anguish, isolation, torture, and struggle against slavery. She employs historical context to elucidate and solidify events. Morrison portrays a dominant, strong, and engaged black mother who fiercely opposes brutal slavery to protect her children, sacrificing herself, and a vulnerable and sentimental male character who fears the resurgence of his past. Throughout her novel, Morrison demonstrates the negative results of slavery on the lives of Paul D, Denver, and Sethe. She also explicitly illustrates how slavery profoundly affects the memories of African Americans, which they find challenging to forget or permanently delete. Both literary works illuminate the indelible past experiences of African Americans through vivid scenes and raise awareness of the inhumane and merciless nature of the slavery system.

Both *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe and *Beloved* by Toni Morrison stand as monumental novels that delve deep into the harrowing experiences of African Americans under the institution of slavery. These literary works, while separated by more than a century in their publication, share a common thread in their focus on female protagonists and their exploration of the profound effect of slavery on families, communities, and individuals. The writers employ masterful literary techniques to engage their readers and convey the gravity of their subject matter. Through poetic language, compelling scenes, and lively imagery both Stowe and Morrison create lasting impressions that resonate long after the final page is turned. Their skillful use of these devices allows readers to immerse themselves in the characters' worlds, fostering empathy and understanding for the plight of enslaved individuals. A central theme in both novels is the paramount significance of familial bonds, particularly the mother-child relationship, in the face of overwhelming adversity. These connections are portrayed not only as a source of comfort and strength but also as a crucial element in maintaining unity and identity within the dominant system of slavery. The authors emphasize how these relationships become both a source of resilience and a vulnerability for their characters.

Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, published in 1852, features a male protagonist, Uncle Tom, who embodies qualities of benevolence, devotion, and unwavering loyalty

to his master. Despite numerous opportunities for escape, Tom never contemplates betrayal, a characterization designed to evoke a sentimental response to the institution of slavery from Stowe's predominantly white readership. This portrayal, while controversial in modern interpretations, was intended to humanize enslaved individuals in the eyes of those who might otherwise view them as property rather than people. Contrary to Tom, Stowe introduces the character of Eliza, a young mother who risks everything to protect her son from the brutalities of slavery. Eliza's desperate flight across the frozen Ohio River with her child in arms serves as a powerful counterpoint to Tom's passive acceptance, illustrating the lengths to which a mother will go to safeguard her child's freedom. Through these divergent characters, Stowe presents a multifaceted view of the enslaved experience, challenging her readers to confront the moral implications of the institution. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* paints a vivid picture of the inhumane conditions endured by enslaved individuals, from physical abuse and family separation to the denial of basic human rights. Through these depictions, Stowe implicitly supports for abolition, appealing to her readers' moral sensibilities and Christian values to argue against the continuation of slavery.

Morrison's *Beloved*, published in 1987, approaches similar themes with a different lens, informed by over a century of historical perspective and the evolving discourse on race in America. This novel draws attention to the isolation, torture, anguish, and struggle against slavery through visceral, often haunting descriptions. Morrison grounds her narrative in historical context, using experiences and real events to elucidate the lasting trauma of slavery on individuals and communities. At the centre of *Beloved* is Sethe, a dominant, strong black woman who fiercely opposes the brutal system of slavery to protect her children. Sethe's character stands in stark contrast to the more passive Uncle Tom, embodying a fierce maternal love that drives her to extreme actions. Her wishfulness to sacrifice herself for her children's freedom presents a complex moral dilemma that forces readers to grapple with the impossible choices faced by enslaved parents. Morrison also introduces Paul D, a male character who, unlike Uncle Tom, is portrayed as vulnerable and deeply impacted by his past experiences. Paul D's fear of confronting his traumatic history serves as a poignant illustration of the long-lasting psychological effect of slavery, even on those who have physically escaped its bonds. One of the most striking aspects of *Beloved* is Morrison's explicit demonstration of how slavery profoundly affects the memories and psyches of African Americans. The novel suggests that these experiences are not easily forgotten or deleted, but rather continue to haunt individuals and communities during decades. This theme is embodied in the

character of *Beloved* herself, a manifestation of the past that declines to be silenced or forgotten.

Both literary works employ lively scenes to elucidate the indelible past experiences of African Americans and raise awareness of slavery's merciless and inhumane nature. However, they vary significantly in their approach to this shared goal. Stowe's work, reflective of its time, employs a more implicit abolitionist message, relying on sentimental appeal and moral suasion to sway her readers. Morrison, writing from a post-Civil Rights era perspective, offers a more explicit and visceral portrayal of slavery's emotional and physical toll, challenging readers to confront the raw reality of the institution and its lasting legacy. These powerful novels serve as enduring testaments to slavery's effect on American society and the collective memory of African Americans. They compel readers to confront the inhumanity of the institution and its long-lasting impacts, which continue to reverberate through generations. By giving voice to the experiences of enslaved people and their descendants, both *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Beloved* play crucial roles in shaping our understanding of this dark phase in American history and its ongoing relevance to contemporary discussions of identity, race, and social justice.

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### EXTENDED ABSTRACT

This text provides a comprehensive comparison and analysis of two seminal novels that explore the harrowing experiences of slavery in America: Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. These novels, separated by more than a century, offer profound insights into the brutal realities of slavery and its lasting impact on African American lives and American society as a whole. Both novels masterfully depict the lives of African Americans under the oppressive system of slavery, with a particular focus on female protagonists and the crucial importance of family bonds, especially the powerful connections between mothers and their children. The authors employ lively imagery and construct compelling scenes that leave indelible impressions on readers, effectively conveying the unimaginable cruelty and inhumanity inherent in the institution of slavery.

Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, published in 1852, features a male protagonist named Tom, who is characterized by his unwavering loyalty and deep religious devotion. The novel also introduces Eliza, a mother who risks everything, including her own life, to save her young son from being sold into slavery. Stowe's primary aim was to evoke sympathy for enslaved people and present a powerful argument for the abolition of slavery. The novel employs a more

sentimental approach, which was typical of literature in the mid-19th century, to appeal to the emotions of its readers and inspire them to take action against the injustice of slavery.

In contrast, Morrison's *Beloved*, published in 1987, centers on Sethe, a strong and determined mother who fiercely opposes the dehumanizing effects of slavery. The novel delves deep into the psychological trauma and long-lasting effect of slavery on people and societies. Morrison's approach is more explicit and visceral in its portrayal of slavery's impacts, offering a raw and unflinching examination of the physical and emotional scars left by this inhumane system. *Beloved* also explores the complex ways in which slavery impacts memory, identity, and the ability to forge meaningful relationships in its aftermath.

While both works highlight the profound inhumanity of slavery and its devastating effects on African Americans, they differ significantly in their approaches, largely due to the different time periods in which they were written. Stowe's novel, published before the Civil War, aimed to galvanize public opinion against slavery and contribute to the abolitionist movement. Morrison's novel, on the other hand, written more than a century after the abolition of slavery, seeks to explore the lingering psychological and social impacts of this traumatic period in American history. These literary works serve as crucial novels that have shaped our understanding of slavery's legacy and continue to inform contemporary discussions on identity, race, and social justice. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* played a significant role in mobilizing anti-slavery sentiment in the years leading up to the Civil War, while *Beloved* has become a cornerstone of African American literature, offering a nuanced and powerful exploration of the enduring trauma of slavery.

Both Stowe and Morrison employ various literary techniques to engage their readers and convey their messages effectively. Stowe relies heavily on sentimentalism and melodrama, using emotional appeals to generate sympathy for her characters and outrage against the institution of slavery. Morrison, in contrast, utilizes a more complex narrative structure, incorporating elements of non-linear storytelling and magical realism to reflect the fragmented nature of memory and the psychological effect of trauma. These works also differ in their portrayal of African American characters. While Stowe's depictions were groundbreaking for her time, they have been criticized in later years for perpetuating certain stereotypes. Morrison's characters, on the other hand, are more fully realized and complex, offering a more nuanced and authentic representation of African American experiences and perspectives.

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In conclusion, *Beloved* and *Uncle Tom's Cabin* stand as powerful testaments to the enduring impact of slavery on American society and literature. Through their lively portrayals of the human cost of slavery, both novels go on to challenge readers to confront the dark legacy of this institution and its ongoing repercussions in contemporary society. By examining these works side by side, we gain a deeper understanding of how our perception and discussion of slavery have evolved over time, and how literature can serve as a powerful means for social change and historical reckoning.

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