Beloved in Search of an Identity: A Reading of Beloved by Toni Morrison, Based on Homi K. Bhabha’s Theories

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Abstract

This study holds written from a post-colonial theoretical stance that Beloved by Toni Morrison, is a novel of ambivalence and resistance which questions the established boundaries between Self and Other. It is attempted to examine this novel by Morrison based on theories of poststructuralist theorist, Homi K. Bhabha, who challenges the notions of fixed identities, undermines the binary opposition between oppressed and oppressor and emphasizes the role of language in identity construction. The concepts stereotype and uncanny, derived from Bhabha’s theories, are applied to the novel, and the main focus has been on the unhomely nature of the colonial world and the ambivalent nature of colonial relationships, which leads to resistance on the part of the colonized.

Key Terms: Beloved, Unhomely, Uncanny, Stereotype, Morrison, Black, Novel

I. Introduction

Post-colonialism consists of a set of theories in philosophy, economy, politics and literature and it didn't become a major force in literary studies until the early 1990s. It analyzes literature produced by cultures developed in response to colonial domination, from the first point of colonial contact that started with European domination of the new world in the late 15th century to the present. Post-colonialism mostly discusses that although the colonizers retreated and left the lands they had invaded, they left behind a deeply cultural colonization.

In places like United States, the former slave population of displaced Africans who created their own tradition of writing and many works of them, from the poetry of Langston Hughes to the novels of Toni Morrison and Alice Walker, tried to make sense of their history and their constant experience of racism. African American studies as an influential intellectual, social and political movement, not only affected the U.S but also influenced many people who suffered from racial oppression in other parts of the world. African American studies is the study of diasporic people who were moved against their own will from their homelands to serve the economic needs of empires that evolved from the wave of European expansion from the
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sixteenth century onward. And, of course, it is the study of the history and continuing effects of specific processes of race-based discrimination within U.S society. Bernard Bell in his book notes that no other ethnic or social group in America has shared anything like the experience of American Blacks, they experienced kidnapping, the Middle Passage, slavery, Southern Plantation Life, Emancipation, Reconstruction, Post- Reconstruction, Northern Migration, urbanization and ongoing racism" (Bell, 1987, p.5).

Chloe ArdeliaWoffor, known to the world as Toni Morrison, is an American editor, professor, and Nobel Prize winner for her novel Beloved. She was born in Ohio, in the 1930s. Her family during the Great Migration, had first moved to North America, and then headed to Ohio in search of better economic opportunities and greater freedom. Her maternal grandparents and parents were among her early influences. Her stories are imbued with a sense of place, community, purpose and identity under the influence of her parents' response to the world and her grandparent's stories (Gillespie, 2008, p.4). Leaving Lorain High school in 1949, Morrison pursued an undergraduate education at Howard University, a quite color and class conscious environment, in Washington, D.C. Upon graduation, Morrison moved to Ithaca, New York, to earn a master degree from Cornell University. After teaching in several American universities such as Houston, Morrison started her writing career by publishing her first novel, The Bluest Eye (1970). Her first novel was followed by Sula (1974), Song of Solomon(1977) and Beloved(1987).Toni Morrison's work has the great capacity of translating the inner, personal and communal life of black people into words and images, but her work is also a consequence of a national awareness of black people's artistic production which has started the Black and Feminist Movements.

Beloved, the story of this study, sets off after American Civil War and is inspired by an African American slave, Margaret Garner, who escaped slavery during 1856 in Kentucky by fleeing to Ohio, a free state. When her owner and a posse arrived to retrieve her and her children, she killed her two year old daughter rather than let her be recaptured. Beloved's main character, Sethe, kills her daughter and tries to kill her other children when a posse arrives in Ohio and wants to return them to Sweet Home, a plantation in Kentucky.

In this study, it has been attempted to apply the theories of poststructuralist theorist, Homi K. Bhabha. Bhabha is one of the most important thinkers in postcolonial criticism. He has contributed a set of challenging concepts, such as: Hybridity, Mimicry, Ambivalence, the Stereotypes, the Uncanny, the Nation, Otherness, etc. to postcolonial theory. All these concepts reflect the colonized people's ways to resist the unsecured power of the colonizer. Bhabha succeeds in showing colonialism's histories and cultures that intrude on the present demanding to transform our understandings of cross-cultural relations. He states that we should see colonialism not only as straightforward oppression, domination, and violence but also as a period of complex and varied cultural contact and interaction. His writings bring resources from literary and cultural theory to the study of colonial archives.
Discussion

II.I. Beloved: A Deconstructive Reply to Western Canonical Texts

Bhabha's work in post-colonial theory owes much to post structuralism. We observe the great influence of Jacques Derrida and deconstruction; Jacques Lacan and Lacanian psychoanalysis; and the works of Michel Foucault. Homi Bhabha theorizes the discourse of colonialism as a site of hybridization. One question which is addressed in the work of Bhabha is what actually happens in the cultural interaction between the colonizer and the colonized. For Bhabha the encounter always affects both. Bhabha explains that: "Colonialism, with displacements and terrible uncertainties that it brings, is such a radically unsettling "effective experience of marginality" that the colonized subject's plight can be seen as prefiguring poststructuralist indeterminacy and fragmentation "(qtd. In Bertens, 2008, p.166).

Deconstruction theory has had a widespread influence on all forms of literary criticism including Bhabha's theory of identity. He and other deconstruction theorists define the self as a fragmented collection of selves and the same notion is repeated by Bhabha's key influence, Lacan, when he discusses that the subjectivity, the way a person experiences himself and the world, is inherently unstable. The identity of the colonized and the colonizer is not self-sufficient; it is constructed through interaction. As in Lacan, identity is constructed in interaction with others (Mansfield, 2000, 38).

The other concept proposed by deconstruction theory and applicable to post-colonial theory of Homi K. Bhabha is the concept of center and periphery as illusory concepts. As Barbara Christian observes, "the abstract discourse of deconstruction, which argues that such concepts as "center" and "periphery" are illusory and which allows those few who are especially fluent in deconstruction “to control the critical scene,” emerged “just when the literature of peoples of color . . . began to move to ‘the centre’ " (qtd. in Tyson, 2006, 365).

The other influential post-structuralist procedure derived from Derrida is the innumerable binary oppositions. Concerning the binary opposition between white and black and the elaboration of African American aesthetic, Toni Morrison is engaged with the project of deconstructing colonizing Western master narratives. Binarism, which was first established by Saussure, talks about the signs which mean by their difference from other signs. Binary oppositions like man/woman, birth/death, and black/white are very common in the cultural construction of reality. These binary oppositions deny the interstitial spaces' existence, spaces which Bhabha believes without them identities and meaning never materialize. Most of post-structuralist and feminist theorists argue that these binary oppositions entail a violent hierarchy, in a way that one term of this opposition is always dominant and any activity that does not fit the binary opposition is subject to repression. For instance, the state between the binary opposition of colonizer/colonized will evidence the signs of extreme ambivalence manifested in mimicry or various kinds of hybrid identities.
Bhabha sees the colonial unhomely world a site of hybridization and ambivalence. This hybridization offers a resistance on the part of the colonized and it emerges from the interstices of an unstable boundary that discriminates the subject from the non-subject. It is primarily the difference that provides the ambivalence for the colonial presence. The difference which Bhabha argues about suggests that cultural authority doesn't reside in determined and fixed objects. He insists that meaning emerges in the "Third Space of Enunciation" which is something like the idea of deferral in post-structuralism.

Morrison and many of post-colonial novelists find the text of English Book, which is defined by Bhabha as a Bible to non-English people and teaches them about the dominant values and assumptions which they should follow, insufferable. It is in the text of this English Book that the non-West, blacks and women are denigrated and marginalized; therefore, in this study it is attempted to show that *Beloved* is written in reaction to this kind of realist novel, and the novel meets the three dynamics of hybridization process proposed by McCarthy.

First, as McCarthy argues, "the subject matter of these novels have a socio-political resonance that takes up beyond the problem and adventure of an individual, and leads us toward an exploration of problems associated with the relationship of the individual to community"((McCarthy et al., 1995, p. 251). Centered on the memory and history of the Reconstruction era in 1873, *Beloved* explores the psychological and physical devastation wrought by slavery. As a commentary on the psychological and historical legacy of slavery, the novel straddles the line between fiction and history. In her novel, Morrison tries to recover the voices of people who historically have been denied the power of language and forced to be silent. Anita Durkin in her essay "Object Written, Written Object" declares that the scars of characters especially Sethe's "tree" on her back have multiple resonances, but the most prominent interpretation which is suggested by her and other scholars is the idea of scar as an emblem of communality. In "Devastation and Replenishment: New World Narratives of Love and Nature" Windy Faris focuses on the scar's power to link Sethe with Amy Denver in an unusual relationship of female healing. For Faris, Sethe's injury, soon to be a scar, acts as a locus drawing Amy, namer of the scar, and Sethe together. (qtd. in Durkin,2009, p.188). Similarly, is Caroline Rody believes that the scar indicates the connection between Sethe and her literal kin to her broader family, "the sixty million or more" (ibid. 189). Therefore, Sethe carries the family tree on her back as a symbol of the pain the other mothers and daughters bore through the history of the slavery; in other words, Sethe's scar on her back is a generational bond between Sethe, *Beloved*, her mother and all of African mothers. With the same interpretation, Michele Bonnet Maintains Sethe's scar relate the immediate community to the broader community. As enumerated in the post-colonial fiction's dynamics, *Beloved* with its historical resonance transcends the problem of a few characters, but the novel links the individuals' sufferings and traumas with their community. And as these individuals transfer the ordeals of their larger family or community, they also need the support of their community to
survive. Sethe for the first time develops her sense of self during her twenty-eight days of freedom as a part of Cincinnati's community. Denver achieves her sense of self when she leaves 124 and becomes a part of society. Paul D and his fellow prison inmates were able to escape only by working together. Cincinnati's black community's failure to alert Sethe to Schoolteacher's approach results in the subsequent events and murder of Sethe's daughter. And at the end of the novel, the community makes up for its past misconduct by gathering at 124 and exorcising Beloved. Therefore, Beloved, a post-colonial novel, is the story of individuals who were lost, and when they were lost, all the members of their society were lost; it is the story of kept-silent-individuals who try to retell their story, the community's story, to get along with their past and to be heard.

The second dynamic of post-colonial fiction according to McCarthy is "a self-reflexive and conscious attitude toward the use of language". An additional concern here is the role of language in the elaboration of unequal identities (McCarthy et al., 1995, p. 251). The past is very important in the construction of the novel. In order to construct the story, different characters should remember the horrible experience of slavery even though they do not want to. Their memories are sometimes so horrific that the language ceases its capacity to convey their depth. So the language of the novel sometimes becomes fragmented. The novel also has multiple plot lines and shifting points of view which create a layered and complex narrative structure. This fragmented structure encourages the reader to interpret the characters' stories and fill in the gaps. Beloved does not follow a linear, chronological plot, but instead circles from past to present, with a series of flashbacks that gradually reveal the central characters' stories. Morrison uses different techniques (like different layers of narration, different points of view, providing half of a story and demanding the reader to discover the rest) to show the unpresentable miseries of slavery and the Middle Passage. Actually the sufferings the slaves had gone through are woven in the structure of the novel.

As the African-Americans had an oral tradition with no written type, they could not write their history and as a result they remained silent. The truth about them was never revealed because they did not have the necessary means: the language. To present the unrepresentable, Morrison does not use the usual language of novel or documentary writing (as her story hinges on both of these fields). While in their discussions of narrative in Beloved, both Koolish and Dobbs focus solely on the use of oral tradition which provides Sethe an opportunity to narrate her own and people's story, Durkin and Atkinson have different views. Atkinson suggests that writing inherently is not a medium readily conducive to the African American and African tradition of orality; as a result, the African American author's entrance into writing demands some negotiation between the legacy of oral narrative, of storytelling, and publication in written aesthetic form (qtd. in Durkin, 2009, p.183). And Anita Durkin in her controversial essay "Object written, Written Object" considers "the act of scarring as an act of writing, in so far as it involves a marking of the body that functions in a manner very similar to that of linguist
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sign, introduces an interesting wrinkle to the construction of identities, both black and white, by slave owners". For if the marks on a body function as linguistic signs, then "the body transforms into a site of writing, into the written object; it becomes, in other words, a textual body" (188).

Morrison, by seeing the world through a language and history that privileges the magical reality of black people, offers new possibilities of interpretation. There is a blend of imagination and reality in Beloved. At the end of the novel we are still in doubt whether Beloved was a real fleshly person or a ghost. This kind of uncertainty resulting from the magical reality of the novel helps Morrison to present the unpresentable. Beloved does not depend on chronology. The disruption of chronology in the novel stands against the chronology of traditional slave narratives and works as a way to claim a people's possession of their own history. Morrison sticks to the historical unpresentable which defines the sublime aesthetic of Beloved, for while her text strives to "rip the veil" that is drawn over the "unspeakable thoughts, unspoken" (199) of the slave narratives, it also scrupulously embodies this unspeakable in the ghostly unreadable figure of Beloved herself. In Beloved, we deal with dream-like monologues, events, and characters. The language used to present the unpresentable is not the language of the realist novel, but the language of dream, the dream world comes into the real world.

And finally, the third characteristic of post-colonial fiction according to McCarthy is a deliberate deflation of characterization and the installation of anti-heroic, flawed, or broken personas at the epicenter of the novel's discursive field (McCarthy et al., 1995, p. 251). Damaged identities and alienation are two permanent effects of slavery which continue to haunt the characters even when they are free people. Sethe, the protagonist of the novel and survivor of slavery, runs from Sweet Home plantation to Cincinnati in the hope of a free life, but her twenty eight days of free life is shattered when her master comes to reclaim her and her children. Her devotion to her children and unwillingness to relinquish her children to the psychological and physical traumas she suffered as a slave leads her to cut her daughter's throat and to attempt to kill the other children. Sethe, who has always been treated like an animal and subhuman, doesn't find any way except killing her children. But the past and its traumas never let her rest and lead her to contend that these traumas can never really be eradicated. Paul D, one of the Sweet Home men who helps Sethe to survive the memories of her past life, is so alienated that at one point he cannot say that he could possibly be a real man or not. Denver, Sethe's eighteen-year-old daughter who survives the infanticide, is a solitary and imaginative girl who conflates her identity with her sister's, Beloved.

II.II. Unhomely "124"

"We are all haunted houses."

H.D

The term, unhomeliness, refers to the experience of displacement due to the imperial occupation or maybe a result of transportation from one country to another by slavery,
imprisonment, invasion or settlement; it also may be a consequence of willing or unwilling movement from a known place to an unknown location. Bhabha argues that "to be unhomed is not to be homeless, nor can the ‘unhomely’ be easily accommodated in that familiar division of social life into private and public spheres. The unhomely moment creeps up on you stealthily as your own shadow" (Bhabha, 1994, p.13).

This unhomely moment is all over the story; all the people in 124 could sense it, even a newcomer like Paul D: "he followed her through the door straight into a pool of red and undulating light that locked him where he stood" (Beloved4). 124’s recesses of the domestic space become sites for history’s most intricate invasions. In that displacement, the borders between home and world become confused, and, uncannily, the private and the public become part of each other, forcing upon us a vision that is as divided as it is disorienting (ibid. 13).

Morrison in her essay "Unspeakable Things Unspoken" (1988), talks about her intentions for naming of this unhomely house 124 in numerals rather than spelled out numbers. She named the house 124 with numerals because numbers "have no adjectives, no posture of coziness or grandeur or the haughty yearning of arrivistes and estate builders for the parallel beautifications of the nation they left behind, laying claim to instant history and legend" ("Unspeakable Things Unspoken",1988,160). Numbers without any modifiers constitute an address for slaves who owned nothing. By starting the novel in-medias-res and confronting the reader with what must be immediately incomprehensible in that simple and declarative sentence of "124 was spiteful", Morrison tries to unsettle and place the reader into an environment completely foreign and unhomely. The readers are snatched just "as the slaves were snatched from one place to another, from any place to another, without preparation and without defense" (ibid 161).

Spiteful and full of baby venom, 124 on the outskirts of Cincinnati is a house in which characters are living their half-lives. In this mumbling house, you hear the undecipherable language of the black and angry dead; the voice of Toni Morrison's Beloved, the thoughts of the women of 124, unspeakable thoughts, unspoken (Bhabha, 1994, p. 14).

Beloved, a mysterious woman who arrives at 124, goes through various identities: an infant, a sister and a lover. Bhabha defines Beloved's character in The Location of Culture (1994) as a daughter who returns to Sethe so that her mind will be homeless no more; she is the sister that returns to Denver, and brings hope of her father's return, the fugitive who died in his escape, and she is the daughter made of murderous love who returns to love and hate and free herself. Her words are broken, like the lynched people with broken necks; disembodied, like the dead children who lost their ribbons (25).

And who is Sethe? She is the survival of slavery that is now living with her daughter in 124. Eighteen years ago she escapes the Sweet Home plantation when she was pregnant to Denver. When her master comes to reclaim her, she cuts the throat of her youngest daughter and attempts to kill the other. Outcast and isolated, she is living with her daughter, Denver, in
124 but the memories of the past intrude by Paul D and Beloved's arrival. The uncanny, as Freud in his classic essay, "The uncanny", explains, is kept from sight; it is the repressed emotions which were hidden but they come into sight at last. Linda Krumholz contends that Morrison uses ritual as a model for the healing process from the repressed effects of slavery on Beloved's characters. To make the novel work as a ritual, Morrison uses some techniques such as fragmentation of the plot and a shifting of narrative voices; in this way she compels the reader to construct an interpretive framework. Krumholz divides the novel into three parts in which the characters and Sethe confront their past which has intruded upon their present.

In the first part with Paul D and Beloved's arrival, Sethe is confronted with her past in her incompatible roles as a slave and as a mother. In the second part, isolated in her house with Beloved, she is enveloped by her past and is forced by Beloved to suffer over and over. And the last part tells the story of Sethe's clearing; in this part Sethe is helped by the women of the community to cast out Beloved, and she experiences a scene of trauma with a difference. This time she aims her murderous hand at the white man who threatens her child.

Finally, while Beloved can be read as a ritual of healing, there is also an element of disruption and uncanny in the novel, embodied in the character of Beloved. As an eruption of the past and the repressed unconscious, Beloved catalyzes the healing process for the characters and the reader; thus, she is a disruption necessary for healing (Krumholz, 2004, p. 59).

II.III. Ambivalent Nature of Resistance

Ambivalence, developed in psychoanalysis, means fluctuation between one thing and wanting its opposite. It was adapted into colonial discourse by Homi K. Bhabha and describes the attraction and repulsion between colonized and colonizer. Bhabha sees the relationship between colonizer and colonized in three ways ambivalent: first, some of colonized subjects are complicit and some of them are resistant, so fluctuation between resistance and complicity exists within colonial subjects; second, the colonial discourse may be exploitive and nurturing, or represent itself as nurturing, simultaneously; third, ambivalence is fluctuating between mimicry and mockery which is fundamentally unsettling to colonial dominance. The problem with colonizer is that he wants to create compliant subjects who regenerate his assumptions, values, or habits—that is, mimic the colonizer. But it introduces ambivalent subjects whose mimicry is never very far from mockery (Aschroft, et al., 2007, p.10).

In Bhabha's theory, ambivalence disrupts the clear-cut authority of colonizer because it undermines the simple relationship between colonizers and colonized and suggests that because colonial relationship is always ambivalent, it generates the seeds of its destruction. Bhabha discusses that colonial relationship is going to be disrupted, regardless of any resistance or rebellion on the part of the colonized. However, in Beloved this rebellion and resistance materializes through Sixo's resistance, first in physical resistance and then in a song,
or Sethe and Sweet Home's men attempt to escape and at last Sethe's infanticide. In this way colonizer's superiority is disrupted both by the ambivalent nature of colonial relationship and resistance.

II.III.I. Is Infanticide the Art of Resistance?

As mentioned earlier, the ambivalent nature of colonial relationship leads to resistance on the part of the colonized person. In *Beloved*, Sethe's murder of her baby daughter to save her from slavery is a seminal event. The whole novel spirals around this event and its consequences. A startling disruption of normative maternal function, commingling the mother's nourishing milk with child's blood, the murder of *Beloved* "places maternal power at the forefront of the novel and forces the reader to consider complex issues of identity, responsibility, and mortality" (Beaulieu, 2003, p. 177). Infanticide is Sethe's only choice when her children are threatened with the same sufferings slavery has wrought upon her. And as she later recalls, "it was all I could think of to do" (101) and "had to be done quick. Quick. She had to be safe and put her where she would be. But my love was tough" (106). According to Stamp Paid, such a rough love is not Sethe's symptom of being crazy but her upright effort to confront violently the inhuman system of slavery, by means of which "she was trying to out hurt the hurter" (124). For Sethe, it turns out clearly a most powerful and effective gaze she could manage, for "by the time she faced him (Schoolteacher), looked him dead in the eye, he took a backward step and realized that there was nothing to claim" (87). *Beloved* forces the reader to confront Sethe's dual identity.

Infanticide has existed at all times and in all societies, and it seems that it mostly occurs in oppressive societies in which women are closely monitored or controlled. It may have different reasons; for example, in early modern England and America, the sexually active women who got pregnant out of wedlock killed their newborn babies to avoid shame. However, infanticide within marriage is far more unusual, and it doesn't occur in an attempt to avoid shame of motherhood or out of spite, but it sometimes occurs out of sense of duty as mothers.

Abolitionist writings offer two explanations for infanticide: first, mothers kill their children because they identify them with their oppressive masters. This first explanation is depicted in Elizabeth Barrett Browning's poem "The Runaway Slave at Pilgrim's Point" (1848), when she says "Why, in that single glance I had/ Of my child's face… I tell you all, / I saw a look that made me mad/The master's look…"(Beaulieu, 2003, p. 178). Morrison represents this type of infanticide with portrayal of Sethe's mother, who rejects to feed and nurse children fathered by her white owners until they die. The second explanation of infanticide is to free the baby from the tyranny of slavery. The actual instance of this kind is Seth's killing of her baby *Beloved*.

Infanticide, a romanticized heroic act, remains problematic in Morrison's *Beloved*. It may be defined as a form of resistance to slavery, a way for mothers to redefine their infants as their own rather than properties or commodities to be used by slave owners. Infanticide in slavery
can avert white gaze of objectification, and as a result maintains black Americans’ dignity and identity as human beings. By killing *Beloved*, Sethe puts her on the other side where whites can no longer reach her, let alone dirtying her because Sethe believes that whites "will dirty you so bad you couldn't like yourself anymore"(132).

II.IV. The Schoolteacher’s Book and Stereotypical Discourse

Stereotypes are a means to explain the inferiority and stupidity of the colonized through racist jokes, writing, and cinematic images. The stereotypes fix individuals in place and deny their sense of identity and presume to understand people based on constructed prior knowledge. However, Bhabha sees the discourse of stereotype ambivalent in this way that “the stereotype is a form of knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is always in’ place’, already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 95).

In this way the bestial characteristics of Sethe need no proof but in fact cannot be proved.

Schoolteacher, the representation of scientific racism, is a white slave master who divides up Sethe's animal and human characteristics and stands for the creation of the knowledge from a priori and racist hypotheses. By writing Sethe's animal and human characteristics, he makes a body of truth to be passed down to later generations and later on the nephew's milking Sethe like a cow and taking her baby's milk materializes this lesson which has been passed down. Stereotypical knowledge, which presumes to understand the individuals and groups on the basis of prior knowledge, fixes them in one place and denies them their own sense of identity. Even the names of the characters can be interpreted in stereotypical terms because they play a significant role in the novel and depict the way the black characters are viewed by their white masters. As Genevieve Fabre noted in “Genealogical Archaeology or the Quest for Legacy in Toni Morrison’s Song of Solomon”:

> Names are an essential part of the legacy (of black people), and names have stories which, incongruous, preposterous as they are, must be cared for . . . Blacks receive dead patronyms from whites . . . names are disguises, jokes or brand names- from yearnings, gestures, flaws, events, mistakes, weaknesses. Names endure like marks or have secrets they do not easily yield (qtd. in Lyles-Scott, 2009, p. 196).

Stereotypes which circulate about the stupidity and bestiality of the oppressed supposedly fix them in place; with this explanation in mind, it is quite apparent that giving the characters identical names is significant in *Beloved*. For example, Paul D's D at the end of his name denotes his being fourth in a succession of a series of Pauls who were named alphabetically by their previous master before they were bought by Mr. Garner. By being given the same name, with an alphabetical character to distinguish between them, the Pauls are effectively disposed of their individuality and their own distinctive claim to an identity. Their names do not celebrate accomplishments, personality traits, or family conventions. The
designations are solely for the benefit of the slave masters and not the self-identification of the male slaves (Lyles-Scott, 2009, p. 197).

The other character whose name is significant and reminds the reader of the role of stereotypical discourse in the colonial world is Sethe's mother who is unnamed in the novel except for the nickname Ma'am, which is given to her by Sethe's nurse, Nan. She is also identified by a circle with a cross burned beneath her breast to mark her physically and psychologically. The purpose of this mark is not to identify the slaves, but to brand them as the property of someone else. This mark and other marks on the bodies of the slave act like both signified and signifier. It is signifier since it announces to other slave owners that these people are their properties; but these scars and marks are a little more than the ownership they signify. These brands on Sethe's body, her mother, and other slaves indicate that the writing on black bodies is both a signifier of identity and construction of identity. Since the identification of the "Other" is also an identification of the self, writing on the black body is not only the construction of the black identity but also the creation of white identity which is well depicted in Mr. Garner's characterization. In the novel, calling Sweet Home's men as men, "Y'all got boys," he told them. "Young boys, old boys, picky boys, stroppin boys. Now at Sweet Home, my niggers is men every one of em. Bought emthataway, raised emthataway. Men every one"(5). And receiving beatings from the other slave owners represents this process of identification.

What is really significant here is that in constructing the "Other's" identity, Garner is constructing his own identity. Garner's ability to make his identity is also severely limited as long as he continues to call Sweet Home men "men", for this label is his oddity among other whites, his distinguishing characteristic, and in this sense, Garner remains a "marked" man (Durkin, 2009, p. 178).

Conclusion

Colonial struggle is not dead and ex-colonials were left with psychological traumas, negative and alienated self-images. As Fanon discusses in his seminal work, The Wretched of the Earth (1986), "the mere achievement of independence from empire was insufficient to remove the colonialists' distorting mirror and to return the subjected peoples to their rightful sense of identity" (qtd. in Richards 13). In fact, this colonial rupture had made a "constellation of delirium" which renders the colonial subjects silent, invisible, unformed since language, law, civil society, culture now consist of the replicated divisions of colonial identity (ibid. 13).

Beloved is the story of unhomely world of characters that live in feverish stillness of 124 which becomes a site for the history's most intricate invasions. They live in a house which doesn't offer any coziness or homeliness, in a place where the borders between home and world become confused and the private and public become part of each other. Spiteful and full of baby's venom, 124 is the house of black people who are living their half-lives, black people who neither belong to 124 nor to Sweet Home Plantation; Beloved who belongs to this world
and the other world; it is the story of people who carry their pasts with themselves. It is about the repressed emotions which were hidden but they come into sight at last.

Bhabha undermines clear-cut authority of the colonizer by agency and resistance on the part of the colonized, and he finds them inherent in the colonial relationship. In *Beloved*, this rebellion and resistance materializes through Sixo’s resistance, Sethe and Sweet Home’s men attempt to escape and at last Sethe’s infanticide. In this way, colonizer’s superiority is disrupted both by ambivalent nature of colonial relationship and resistance. *Beloved*, as a memory and history of the Reconstruction era in 1873, straddles the line between fiction and history; it also relates the characters stories and scars to other members of their communities or even to the colonizers. The novel is a story of what happens in silences of traumas and retells the story of characters that are marked by the legacy of the American slavery. This study attempted to reconstruct the characters’ shattered identities based on Bhabha’s theories concerning post-colonial identity.
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المعشوق في البحث عن الهوية
(قراءة في رواية «المعشوق» لـ "توني موريسون" على ضوء نظرية (همي كي بابا)

عبدالحسين جودکی
آستاذ مساعد في اللغة الإنجليزية وادابها بجامعة لورستان- إيران

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طالبة الماجستير في اللغة الإنجليزية وادابها بجامعة لورستان- إيران

الملخص

تُرمي هذه المقالة من منظور النقد ماراء الاستعماري إلى تبيان رواية «المعشوق» لـ "توني موريسون" على أنها رواية مقاومة كشرت الحدود بين الذات والأخر. في هذا البحث نسعى إلى دراسة رواية «المعشوق» على ضوء نظريات النقد ما بعد النتيجي "همي كي بابا". يتحدى "بابا" في آثاره المفاهيم الثابتة في مجال الهوية ويبضرب الثنائية الضدية بين المستعمّر والمستعمر عرض الحائط ويوجّد على دور اللغة والخطاب في تكوين هويتهما.

تطبيق هذه الدراسة هذه رواية المعشوق مفهومي" الصورة النمطية "و"الخارق للطبيعة " من نظريات "همي كي بابا" مع التركيز على دراسة الطبيعة البشعة والعلاقات المتآرجحة لعالم الاستعمار التي أدّت إلى المقاومة من جانب المستعمر.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الهوية، رواية المعشوق، همي بابا، الآخر.
References


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