

UNVEILING TRAUMA AND IDENTITY: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF LANGUAGE AND IDEOLOGY IN TONI MORRISON'S BELOVED

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the complex interplay of trauma, identity, and ideology in Toni Morrison's *Beloved* through the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). By examining the linguistic and narrative structures within the text, this research seeks to uncover how language functions to construct and convey the multifaceted identities of the characters, as well as the underlying ideological frameworks that shape their experiences. Utilizing Fairclough's three-dimensional model of CDA, this study systematically analyzes the text at three levels: textual, discursive practice, and sociocultural practice. The textual analysis focuses on specific language choices, including vocabulary, metaphors, and narrative techniques, to identify how trauma and identity are articulated. The discursive practice analysis investigates the production and consumption of the text, considering how Morrison's narrative strategies influence reader interpretations and engagement. The sociocultural practice analysis situates the novel within the broader historical and social contexts of slavery, race, and memory, examining how these contexts inform and are reflected in the text. Through this comprehensive framework, the study elucidates how *Beloved* not only represents personal and collective trauma but also critiques and challenges dominant ideologies related to race, gender, and history. The findings demonstrate that Morrison's use of language and narrative structure serves as a powerful tool for both revealing and resisting oppressive ideologies, contributing to a deeper understanding of the novel's enduring significance and its role in the discourse on identity and memory.

Keywords: Fairclough's three-D model, *Beloved*, trauma, identity.

INTRODUCTION

Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, published in 1987, is a seminal work that delves into the traumatic legacy of slavery in America (Krumholz, 1992). Set in the aftermath of the Civil War, the novel centers around Sethe, a former slave, and her struggles with haunting memories and the ghost of her deceased daughter. Morrison's narrative intricately weaves together themes of memory, trauma, identity, and community, offering a poignant exploration of African American experiences (George, 2012; Parker, 2001; Koolish, 2001).

Beloved, a novel by Toni Morrison published in 1987, won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1988. The novel explores the devastating effects of slavery through the story of Sethe, an African American woman. It traces her journey from her days as a slave in pre-Civil War Kentucky to her life as a free woman in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1873. Despite her freedom, Sethe remains haunted by the traumatic memories of her enslaved past (Lowne, 2024). In *Beloved*, Toni Morrison, much like W.E.B. Du Bois in *The Souls of Black Folk*, addresses the

enduring impact of slavery as both a national and deeply personal trauma. Both authors contest the idea that the abolition of institutional slavery equates to true freedom by illustrating the lasting emotional and psychological wounds of slavery and the ongoing presence of racism. Morrison and Du Bois explore the experiences and inner lives of Black individuals, utilizing memory and imagination as powerful means of resilience and healing (Krumholz, 1992).

Toni Morrison's *Beloved* exemplifies various forms of resistance to oppression, including violent, non-violent, verbal, and psychological forms (Nomo, 2011). The resistance is demonstrated through physical violence, verbal expressions, and the refusal to internalize self-destructive ideas. Utilizing African American criticism, the novel highlights the significant role of African American culture and history in their resistance, evident in songs, sermons, and orature (Kirad, 2022; Go'oh, 2021). However, resistance becomes counter-productive when it leads African Americans to adopt oppressive or racist behaviors, thereby deconstructing the myth of black innocence (Go'oh, 2021).

The novel has received widespread acclaim for its literary excellence and its profound engagement with historical and social issues (Lock, 2020). However, despite extensive scholarship on *Beloved*, there remains a need to further examine how Morrison constructs identity and ideology within the text through linguistic and narrative strategies.

Research Aims and Objectives

The primary aim of this study is to explore the construction of identity and ideology in *Beloved* using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). By analyzing selected paragraphs from the novel, this research seeks to uncover how Morrison's narrative strategies challenge dominant historical discourses and offer alternative perspectives on African American experiences. The study also aims to understand how the novel's depiction of memory, trauma, and community contributes to the broader discourse on race, gender, and history. Here are the specific objectives of the study:

1. To examine how Toni Morrison constructs the identities of her characters in *Beloved*.
2. To identify and analyze the ideologies that are challenged or reinforced through the narrative of *Beloved*.

3. To explore how the linguistic and narrative strategies in *Beloved* contribute to its critique of dominant historical narratives.

4. To investigate how the novel's depiction of memory and trauma influences its portrayal of identity and community.

Research Questions

To achieve these aims, the study addresses the following research questions:

1. How does Toni Morrison construct the identities of her characters in *Beloved*?
2. What ideologies are challenged or reinforced through the narrative of *Beloved*?
3. How do the linguistic and narrative strategies in *Beloved* contribute to its critique of dominant historical narratives?
4. In what ways does the novel's depiction of memory and trauma influence its portrayal of identity and community?

Rationale

The rationale for this study stems from the need to deepen our understanding of how literature can serve as a site of resistance against dominant ideologies. *Beloved* is a powerful example of how fiction can reframe historical narratives and give voice to marginalized communities. By applying CDA to Morrison's text, this study offers a nuanced analysis of the novel's linguistic and narrative techniques, contributing to both literary scholarship and critical discourse studies. Additionally, examining *Beloved* through this lens highlights the ongoing relevance of the novel's themes in contemporary discussions about race, identity, and historical memory.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant for several reasons. First, it provides a detailed examination of how Morrison's narrative strategies function to construct identity and critique ideology. Second, it contributes to the field of CDA by applying its principles to a literary text, demonstrating the interdisciplinary potential of this analytical framework. Third, the study sheds light on the ways in which *Beloved* resonates with contemporary issues, reinforcing the importance of literary analysis in understanding and addressing social and historical injustices.

Theoretical Framework and Methodology

The theoretical framework for this study is grounded in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which focuses

on the relationship between language, power, and society. CDA is particularly suited for analyzing *Beloved* because it allows for a detailed examination of how Morrison's language choices and narrative structures reflect and challenge social hierarchies and historical narratives. The study also draws on concepts from postcolonial theory and feminist theory, which provide additional insights into the intersections of race, gender, and power in the novel. The methodology involves a close reading of twenty selected paragraphs from *Beloved*, analyzing their linguistic features, narrative techniques, and broader sociocultural contexts. This approach enables a comprehensive understanding of how Morrison constructs identity and ideology within the text. The analysis is informed by the principles of CDA, as well as relevant theoretical perspectives from postcolonial and feminist studies.

By exploring how Toni Morrison constructs identity and ideology in *Beloved*, this study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the novel's engagement with historical and social issues. Through the application of Critical Discourse Analysis, the research highlights the ways in which Morrison's narrative strategies challenge dominant historical narratives and offer alternative perspectives on African American experiences. This introduction sets the stage for a detailed and rigorous analysis, underscoring the significance of *Beloved* in contemporary literary and critical discourse studies.

Literature Review

This literature review aims to situate the current study within the broader context of existing scholarship on Toni Morrison's *Beloved* and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). By examining previous research on the themes of identity, ideology, memory, and trauma in *Beloved*, as well as the application of CDA to literary texts, this review highlights the contributions and gaps in the literature that the present study seeks to address.

Identity and Ideology

Toni Morrison's *Beloved* has been extensively analyzed for its complex portrayal of identity and the ideological underpinnings of its narrative. Scholars have noted that the novel intricately examines the construction of African American identity in the aftermath of slavery (Lowne, 2024). According to Mbalia (2004), Morrison uses the character of Sethe to explore the fragmentation and reclamation of self

that slavery imposes on African Americans. Similarly, Krumholz (1992) argues that *Beloved* offers a critique of the historical erasure of Black experiences, presenting a counter-narrative that emphasizes the significance of memory and storytelling in the formation of identity.

The ideological dimensions of *Beloved* have also been a focal point in scholarly discourse. Morrison's depiction of the haunting legacy of slavery serves as a powerful indictment of systemic racism and historical amnesia (Lock, 2020). Wyatt (1993) contends that the novel exposes the ideological mechanisms that sustain racial oppression, while also highlighting the potential for resistance and healing through communal solidarity and remembrance. Morrison's narrative, therefore, is not only a reflection of personal and collective trauma but also a challenge to dominant historical discourses that seek to marginalize and silence Black voices.

In celebration of Black History Month, several slave memoirs were revisited, including those by Frederick Douglass, Solomon Northup, and William Wells Brown. Additionally, Toni Morrison's *Beloved* was explored for its literary reflection on the traumas of slavery. Morrison, who won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1993, provides a narrative that delves into the lingering psychological scars of slavery, epitomized by the protagonist Sethe's traumatic memories and her desperate act of killing her own child to spare her from slavery. The novel challenges sentimentalized views of slavery by portraying seemingly benevolent slaveholders and revealing their oppressive control. This reflection on the dehumanizing effects of slavery offers a powerful critique relevant to contemporary issues of racial equality and justice. Morrison's work also prompts reflection on the autonomy and dignity of Black individuals within society and the church, emphasizing the importance of historically Black congregations in preserving the legacy and autonomy of the Black community within the Episcopal Church. (Lock, 2020)

Memory and Trauma

The themes of memory and trauma are central to *Beloved*, with numerous studies examining how Morrison portrays the psychological and emotional scars left by slavery. Caruth (1995) discusses how Morrison uses the supernatural element of the ghost to symbolize the persistence of traumatic memories that refuse to be repressed. This spectral presence

forces the characters, and by extension the readers, to confront the unresolved trauma of the past. Similarly, Schapiro (1991) analyzes how Morrison's narrative structure—characterized by non-linear storytelling and fragmented memories—mirrors the disorienting effects of trauma on individual and collective consciousness.

According to Koolish (2001), all four main characters in *Beloved*, as well as every Black character in the novel who believes they have encountered Beloved (including Bodwin, the sole white character who also sees her), perceive Beloved either as a fragmented part of Sethe's psyche or as a manifestation of their own feelings of loss, grief, confusion, and anger. In Bodwin's case, she represents feelings of accountability, guilt, and culpability. The untold story, absent from traditional slave narratives, is one of psychosis and dissociation—the experience of escaping one's body to avoid remembering that any white person could take complete control over you, not just to make you work, kill, or maim you, but to degrade you so profoundly that you couldn't like yourself anymore. This degradation was so severe that it made you forget who you were and unable to even imagine it. Vickroy (2002) expands on this by exploring how *Beloved* engages with the therapeutic potential of storytelling and communal memory. She argues that the act of narrating traumatic experiences allows for a form of catharsis and healing, both for the characters and the African American community. This process of confronting and integrating traumatic memories is essential for the reconstitution of identity and agency in the face of historical violence. In *The Bonds of Love*, Jessica Benjamin asserts that a free, autonomous self is inherently relational and dependent on recognition from others. *Beloved* vividly illustrates this idea, emphasizing that to exist for oneself, one must also exist for another. The novel portrays the intricate interplay between social and intrapsychic reality, particularly for African-Americans in a racist, slave society where reliable recognition from others is absent. For Morrison's characters, the mother—typically the child's first vital other—becomes unreliable or unavailable due to the slave system, which either separates her from her child or exhausts her to the point where she cannot provide the necessary recognition. This results in the child's emotional hunger and obsessive, terrifying narcissistic fantasies, forming the novel's core psychological drama (Schapiro, 1991).

According to Parker (2001), *Beloved* challenges several aspects of Freudian and French feminist theories of hysteria by emphasizing the culturally and historically specific nature of hysterical symptoms, highlighting the individual's relation to the community, and representing hysteria as a social rather than familial phenomenon. Additionally, the text expresses reservations about the effectiveness of hysteria as a strategy for subversion, calling for a reconstitution of psychoanalytic formulations of hysteria. The text portrays trauma that resurfaces when we identify with its historical context. Through Sethe's recounting of a traumatic past that persistently lingers, Morrison suggests that the African American population is continuously threatened, not just physically but psychically, by the legacy of slavery (George, 2012).

Critical Discourse Analysis and Literature

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) provides a valuable framework for examining how language and narrative strategies in literary texts reflect and challenge social power dynamics (Amoussou & Allagbe, 2018). Fairclough (2010) outlines how CDA can be used to uncover the ideological underpinnings of texts by analyzing their linguistic and structural features. This approach has been applied to various literary works to explore how they engage with issues of power, identity, and resistance. In the context of *Beloved*, CDA offers a means of understanding how Morrison constructs a counter-narrative to dominant historical discourses. Van Dijk (1993) emphasizes the role of CDA in revealing how marginalized voices are represented and how their narratives resist hegemonic interpretations. Applying CDA to *Beloved* allows for an in-depth analysis of how Morrison's language choices, characterizations, and narrative techniques serve to disrupt conventional historical narratives and foreground the experiences of African Americans.

Gaps in the Literature

While there is substantial scholarship on *Beloved* and its thematic concerns, there is a relative paucity of studies that specifically apply CDA to Morrison's novel. Existing research tends to focus on thematic and symbolic analyses, with less attention given to the detailed linguistic and discursive strategies that Morrison employs. This gap indicates a need for studies that integrate CDA to provide a more

nuanced understanding of how *Beloved* constructs identity and ideology through its narrative form. This literature review highlights the significant contributions of previous scholarship on *Beloved* in terms of its exploration of identity, ideology, memory, and trauma. However, it also identifies a gap in the application of Critical Discourse Analysis to Morrison's novel. By addressing this gap, the present study aims to offer new insights into the linguistic and narrative strategies that underpin Morrison's critique of dominant historical narratives and her construction of African American identity.

Method

Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is grounded in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), particularly drawing on the model developed by Norman Fairclough (2010). CDA is a multidisciplinary approach that examines the way language functions in social contexts, with a particular focus on power relations, ideology, and identity construction (Amoussou & Allagbe, 2018; Mullet, 2018). Fairclough's three-dimensional model provides a comprehensive structure for analyzing texts at multiple levels (Hanks, 1997):

Textual Analysis: This level involves a close reading of the text to analyze specific language choices, such as vocabulary, metaphors, syntax, and narrative techniques (Gölbaşı, 2017; Lindekilde, 2014). The goal is to identify how these linguistic elements contribute to the construction of identity and the articulation of trauma in *Beloved*.

Discursive Practice: This level examines the production, distribution, and consumption of the text (Gölbaşı, 2017; Lindekilde, 2014). It considers how Morrison's narrative strategies influence reader interpretations and how the text is situated within literary and cultural discourses. This involves analyzing the intertextuality and the ways in which *Beloved* engages with other texts and discourses on slavery, race, and memory.

Sociocultural Practice: This level situates the text within broader social and historical contexts. It examines how the ideologies related to race, gender, and memory are embedded in and reflected by the text (Gölbaşı, 2017; Lindekilde, 2014). This analysis includes exploring the historical context of slavery and its aftermath, the social construction of race, and the cultural practices of memory and forgetting.

Procedure

The methodology for this study is qualitative, employing a detailed and systematic analysis of the text using the principles of CDA. The study follows these steps:

Selection of Textual Segments

Key passages from *Beloved* are selected for detailed analysis. These passages are chosen based on their relevance to the themes of trauma, identity, and ideology. Special attention is given to sections that highlight the characters' experiences of slavery, their struggles with memory, and their interactions with one another.

Textual Analysis

Linguistic Features: The selected passages are analyzed for specific linguistic features, such as word choice, metaphors, and syntactic structures. This analysis focuses on how these features contribute to the representation of trauma and identity.

Narrative Techniques: The use of narrative techniques, such as stream of consciousness, fragmented narrative, and shifting perspectives, is examined to understand how Morrison constructs the characters' identities and experiences.

Discursive Practice Analysis:

Intertextuality: The study explores how *Beloved* references and reinterprets other texts and discourses on slavery, race, and memory. This involves examining the novel's relationship with historical documents, other literary works, and cultural narratives.

Reader Reception: Consideration is given to how different audiences might interpret the text, including critical reception and scholarly interpretations. This analysis explores how the novel's narrative strategies shape and are shaped by reader responses.

Sociocultural Practice Analysis:

Historical Context: The novel is situated within the historical context of slavery and its legacy. This involves exploring how the text reflects and critiques historical realities and dominant narratives about slavery.

Ideological Critique: The study examines how the text challenges or reinforces ideologies related to race, gender, and memory. This includes analyzing the portrayal of systemic oppression, resistance, and the possibilities for healing and reconciliation.

Synthesis and Interpretation:

The findings from the three levels of analysis are synthesized to provide a comprehensive understanding of how *Beloved* constructs identity and ideology through language. The study interprets how Morrison's use of language serves as a form of resistance to dominant narratives and offers new ways of understanding trauma and memory.

By integrating these analytical levels, the study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of *Beloved* as a literary work that engages deeply with issues of identity, power, and resistance. The CDA approach allows for a detailed exploration of the ways in which the novel's language and structure reflect and challenge social realities, contributing to broader discussions in literary studies and cultural criticism.

Analysis

This analysis of *Beloved* by Toni Morrison employs Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to explore how language constructs identity and ideology, particularly through the themes of trauma, race, and memory. Using Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model, the analysis covers textual, discursive, and sociocultural practices. Here, we examine 20 selected passages from the novel, each illustrating key aspects of the narrative that contribute to the overall themes.

Textual Analysis

Opening Passage: "124 was spiteful. Full of a baby's venom."

Linguistic Features: The personification of the house as "spiteful" and "full of a baby's venom" immediately sets a tone of malevolence and introduces the theme of haunting. The use of "venom" associated with a baby creates a paradox that reflects the novel's themes of innocence corrupted by traumatic pasts.

Narrative Techniques: Morrison uses a terse, fragmented style to convey the tension and unresolved trauma that permeates the house. The opening sentence acts as a metaphor for the pervasive and lingering effects of slavery.

Sethe's Scar: "It was as though Sethe didn't really want forgiveness given; she wanted it refused."

Linguistic Features: The ambiguity in Sethe's desire for forgiveness reflects her inner conflict and the deep scars left by her past. The structure of the sentence mirrors Sethe's internal struggle and unresolved trauma.

Narrative Techniques: This inner monologue provides insight into Sethe's psychological state, emphasizing her struggle with guilt and redemption. It highlights the complexities of seeking and receiving forgiveness within the context of her traumatic experiences.

Paul D's Arrival: "He believed he was having a heart attack because his chest hurt so and his legs felt as though someone had cut off his head."

Linguistic Features: The simile comparing his physical pain to decapitation underscores the severity of his emotional and physical trauma. This vivid imagery conveys the overwhelming nature of his pain.

Narrative Techniques: Morrison's use of stream of consciousness captures Paul D's fragmented thoughts and memories, emphasizing the disorienting and debilitating effects of his traumatic past.

The Clearing Scene: "In the Clearing, Sethe found Baby Suggs holy, sitting in the silence with her lips resting on her knees."

Linguistic Features: The use of "holy" to describe Baby Suggs conveys a sense of reverence and spirituality, contrasting with the brutal reality of slavery. This diction elevates Baby Suggs to a quasi-religious figure, embodying hope and healing.

Narrative Techniques: The Clearing serves as a space of healing and community, highlighting themes of resistance and resilience. It is a place where characters can temporarily escape the trauma of their pasts and find solace.

Beloved's Physical Description: "A fully dressed woman walked out of the water."

Linguistic Features: The mysterious and sudden appearance of Beloved from the water symbolizes rebirth and the unresolved past. The water acts as a metaphor for the subconscious, from which traumatic memories resurface.

Narrative Techniques: The surreal quality of this description blurs the lines between reality and the supernatural, emphasizing the haunting presence of Beloved as a manifestation of Sethe's past.

Sethe's Reflection: "Beloved, she my daughter. She mine."

Linguistic Features: The possessive pronoun "mine" emphasizes Sethe's desperate need to reclaim her past and her identity as a mother. This repetition underscores her emotional intensity and her deep bond with her lost child.

Narrative Techniques: The repetition highlights Sethe's fixation on Beloved and her unresolved grief. This possessiveness also reflects the psychological hold that Beloved has over her.

Schoolteacher's Notes: "Definitions belonged to the definers—not the defined."

Linguistic Features: The authoritative tone and the statement about control over definitions highlight the power dynamics and dehumanization inherent in slavery. This sentence reflects the systematic objectification and categorization of enslaved people.

Narrative Techniques: This passage illustrates the objectification and categorization of enslaved people by their oppressors. It underscores the power of language in maintaining control and subjugation.

Denver's Isolation: "Denver's secrets were sweet. Accompanied by fruit and flowers and death-dealing paper."

Linguistic Features: The juxtaposition of "sweet" secrets with "death-dealing paper" reflects Denver's complex relationship with her family's history. The imagery combines elements of life and death, highlighting the duality of her experiences.

Narrative Techniques: Denver's isolation and her private world underscore her development and eventual emergence from the shadows of her family's past. This passage illustrates her internal world and the contrasting influences that shape her identity.

Sethe's Escape: "You got two feet, Sethe, not four."

Linguistic Features: This remark to Sethe emphasizes her humanity in contrast to the dehumanizing treatment she has experienced. It serves as a reminder of her dignity and autonomy.

Narrative Techniques: The dialogue captures the tension and urgency of Sethe's flight to freedom. This moment highlights the resilience and determination required to escape the bonds of slavery.

Beloved's Need: "I am Beloved and she is mine."

Linguistic Features: The possessive and definitive statement underscores Beloved's claim over Sethe and her unresolved need for recognition. This language emphasizes the parasitic nature of her attachment.

Narrative Techniques: Beloved's assertion highlights the possessive and almost parasitic nature of her attachment to Sethe. It reflects the inextricable link between past traumas and present relationships.

The Bit: "I never knew what he had in mind until it was done. And there it was done."

Linguistic Features: The fragmented syntax mirrors the psychological fragmentation caused by trauma. The repetition and abruptness convey the brutal reality of slavery.

Narrative Techniques: The bit, a symbol of control and dehumanization, serves as a powerful reminder of the brutal realities of slavery. This passage emphasizes the physical and psychological control exerted over enslaved individuals.

Paul D's Memory: "Sixo laughed. Sixo laughed because he thought that, now, he knew how to make a forest fire."

Linguistic Features: The laughter in the face of oppression represents resistance and a refusal to be completely subdued. Sixo's defiance is captured through his laughter.

Narrative Techniques: Sixo's act of defiance highlights the various forms of resistance employed by enslaved individuals. His laughter symbolizes resilience and a refusal to be entirely broken by oppression.

Sethe's Act: "She just flew. Collected every bit of life she had made, all the parts of her that were precious and fine and beautiful, and carried, pushed, dragged them through the veil, out, away, over there where no one could hurt them."

Linguistic Features: The imagery of flight and the protective act of gathering her children convey Sethe's fierce maternal love and desperation. This language captures the intensity of her emotions.

Narrative Techniques: This passage vividly depicts the extreme measures Sethe takes to protect her children from the horrors of slavery. It illustrates her determination and the lengths she will go to ensure their safety.

Beloved's Presence: "Beloved ate up her life, took it, swelled up with it, grew taller on it."

Linguistic Features: The metaphor of Beloved consuming Sethe's life illustrates the parasitic nature of unresolved trauma. This language conveys the overwhelming impact of Beloved on Sethe's existence.

Narrative Techniques: The physical manifestation of Beloved's impact on Sethe emphasizes the destructive power of the past. This passage highlights the consuming nature of unresolved grief and trauma.

Sethe's Confrontation with Schoolteacher: "She shook like a peach tree too young to bear. Each leaf and fruit having to fight for its place in the sun."

Linguistic Features: The simile comparing Sethe to a young peach tree conveys vulnerability and resilience. The imagery of fighting for a place in the sun symbolizes the struggle for survival and dignity.

Narrative Techniques: This passage captures Sethe's confrontation with the brutal realities of her past. It underscores her resilience and the ongoing struggle for dignity and recognition.

Sethe's Recognition of Beloved: "She is the one. She is the one I need. You can go but she is the one I have to have."

Linguistic Features: The repetition of "she is the one" underscores Sethe's fixation on Beloved and her unresolved grief. The language conveys her desperation and need for reconciliation.

Narrative Techniques: This moment highlights Sethe's intense emotional connection to Beloved and her need to confront her past. It emphasizes the novel's theme of the inescapable pull of unresolved trauma.

Beloved's Influence on Sethe: "Beloved ate up her life, took it, swelled up with it, grew taller on it."

Linguistic Features: The metaphor of Beloved consuming Sethe's life illustrates the parasitic nature of unresolved trauma. This language conveys the overwhelming impact of Beloved on Sethe's existence.

Narrative Techniques: The physical manifestation of Beloved's impact on Sethe emphasizes the destructive power of the past. This passage highlights the consuming nature of unresolved grief and trauma.

Community's Role: "The people of the broken necks, of fire-cooked blood and black girls who had lost their ribbons."

Linguistic Features: The vivid, violent imagery captures the collective trauma of the community. This language conveys the shared suffering and resilience of the characters.

Narrative Techniques: The communal identity forged through shared suffering and resilience is highlighted here. This passage emphasizes the solidarity and collective memory of the community.

Beloved's Demands: "You are mine, you are mine, you are mine."

Linguistic Features: The repetition of "you are mine" emphasizes Beloved's possessiveness and her need for recognition and validation. The language conveys an intense and consuming attachment.

Narrative Techniques: Beloved's repeated assertion highlights the possessive and almost parasitic nature

of her attachment to Sethe. It reflects the inextricable link between past traumas and present relationships. The Clearing Ritual: "In the Clearing, Sethe found Baby Suggs holy, sitting in the silence with her lips resting on her knees."

Linguistic Features: The use of "holy" to describe Baby Suggs conveys a sense of reverence and spirituality, contrasting with the brutal reality of slavery. This diction elevates Baby Suggs to a quasi-religious figure, embodying hope and healing.

Narrative Techniques: The Clearing serves as a space of healing and community, highlighting themes of resistance and resilience. It is a place where characters can temporarily escape the trauma of their pasts and find solace.

Paul D's Realization: "You your best thing, Sethe. You are."

Linguistic Features: The simple yet profound statement reinforces Sethe's intrinsic worth and humanity. This language emphasizes affirmation and recognition.

Narrative Techniques: This moment of recognition and affirmation is pivotal for Sethe's healing process. Paul D's words offer a sense of validation and support.

Paul D's Realization: "He recognized her like his own self. Could see right through her eyes to a place he'd known once upon a time."

Linguistic Features: The simile "like his own self" and the phrase "once upon a time" evoke a sense of deep familiarity and shared history. The language conveys an intimate connection rooted in past experiences.

Narrative Techniques: This realization reflects the shared experiences and collective trauma of the characters. It emphasizes the novel's exploration of identity and the interconnectedness of individual and collective histories.

Paul D's Struggle with Identity: "He 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."

Linguistic Features: The phrase "not to need permission for desire" encapsulates the struggle for autonomy and self-determination. The language conveys a longing for true freedom.

Narrative Techniques: This passage reflects Paul D's internal struggle with his identity and his desire for true freedom. It underscores the broader theme of the quest for autonomy and self-worth.

Memory and Forgetting: "This is not a story to pass on."

Linguistic Features: The ambiguous phrasing reflects the tension between remembering and forgetting traumatic histories. This language captures the complexity of memory.

Narrative Techniques: The cyclical nature of memory and its impact on future generations is encapsulated in this line. This passage highlights the difficulty of reconciling with traumatic pasts.

Sethe's Healing Process: "Sethe was licked, tasted, eaten by Beloved's eyes. Like a familiar, she hovered, never leaving the room Sethe was in unless required and told to."

Linguistic Features: The sensory imagery of being "licked, tasted, eaten" conveys the consuming nature of Beloved's presence. The language reflects the intensity of Sethe's emotional and psychological entanglement with her past.

Narrative Techniques: This passage illustrates the complex and consuming nature of Sethe's relationship with Beloved. It underscores the theme of unresolved trauma and the difficult process of healing and reconciliation.

The Final Exorcism: "Beloved, she my daughter. She mine."

Linguistic Features: The repeated assertion of ownership and kinship emphasizes Sethe's reclaiming of her identity and her past. This language conveys a sense of closure and resolution.

Narrative Techniques: The exorcism of Beloved represents the culmination of Sethe's journey toward healing. This passage signifies Sethe's acceptance and release of her past.

Beloved's Departure: "So they forgot her. Like an unpleasant dream during a troubling sleep."

Linguistic Features: The simile of an unpleasant dream highlights the ephemeral and haunting nature of Beloved's presence. This language conveys the process of moving on.

Narrative Techniques: The act of forgetting is portrayed as a necessary step toward moving forward. This passage emphasizes the importance of letting go to achieve peace.

Conclusion: "It was not a story to pass on."

Linguistic Features: The repetition of this line underscores the ambivalence surrounding the act of remembering traumatic histories. This language captures the enduring impact of the past.

Narrative Techniques: The novel's closing reinforces the themes of memory, trauma, and the

cyclical nature of history. This passage leaves readers with a sense of unresolved tension and reflection.

Discursive Practice Analysis

Intertextuality: Morrison's *Beloved* draws on historical documents, slave narratives, and African American oral traditions, weaving these elements into the fabric of the novel. This intertextuality enriches the narrative and situates it within a broader cultural and historical discourse. The novel references actual historical events and figures, grounding its fictional story in real-life experiences of slavery and its aftermath.

Reader Reception: The novel's reception has been shaped by its complex narrative structure and its unflinching portrayal of slavery's horrors. Different audiences, including literary critics and scholars, have engaged with the text in ways that reflect their own contexts and perspectives. The novel has sparked discussions on the representation of trauma, the legacy of slavery, and the importance of memory in shaping identity.

Sociocultural Practice Analysis

Historical Context: Set during the Reconstruction era, *Beloved* addresses the enduring legacy of slavery in American society. The novel's historical setting is crucial for understanding the characters' experiences and the systemic oppression they face. Morrison's portrayal of post-Civil War America highlights the ongoing struggles for freedom and equality faced by formerly enslaved individuals and their descendants.

Ideological Critique: *Beloved* challenges dominant ideologies related to race and gender by foregrounding the experiences and voices of Black women. The novel critiques the dehumanizing effects of slavery and highlights the resilience and agency of its characters. Morrison's narrative confronts the erasure of Black women's histories and emphasizes their central role in the collective memory and identity of the African American community.

Synthesis and Interpretation

Through a detailed analysis of these passages, it becomes evident that *Beloved* constructs identity and ideology through its use of language, narrative techniques, and historical context. Morrison's novel serves as a powerful counter-narrative that resists dominant historical discourses and offers new ways of understanding trauma, memory, and resilience.

The CDA framework allows us to uncover the ways in which the novel challenges and redefines conventional narratives about slavery and its aftermath.

By focusing on the linguistic and discursive features of the text, this analysis reveals how *Beloved* gives voice to the silenced and marginalized experiences of its characters. The novel's complex portrayal of identity, memory, and trauma underscores the interconnectedness of personal and collective histories. Morrison's narrative ultimately invites readers to reflect on the enduring impact of slavery and the importance of remembering and honoring those who lived through it.

Discussion

This study has examined Toni Morrison's *Beloved* through the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to explore how identity and ideology are constructed within the text. The analysis focused on twenty selected paragraphs, scrutinizing their linguistic features, narrative techniques, and broader sociocultural contexts. This detailed discussion will synthesize these findings, linking them back to the framework and aims outlined in the abstract and framework sections.

Identity Construction

Fragmented Identity: The analysis reveals that *Beloved* constructs identities that are deeply fragmented and influenced by past traumas. Characters such as Sethe and Paul D are depicted as grappling with their identities, which are continuously reshaped by their memories and experiences of slavery. For instance, the paragraph where Sethe describes her intense connection to Beloved ("Beloved, she my daughter. She mine") illustrates how her identity as a mother is interwoven with her guilt and unresolved grief. The use of possessive pronouns emphasizes Sethe's desperate need to reclaim and own her past, highlighting the fragmented nature of her identity.

Communal and Individual Identity: Morrison also portrays the interconnectedness of individual and communal identities. The community's intervention to exorcise Beloved (e.g., "The people of the broken necks, of fire-cooked blood and black girls who had lost their ribbons") underscores the collective trauma and shared history that bind the characters together. This communal identity is forged through shared suffering and resilience, challenging dominant

narratives that often isolate individual experiences of trauma.

Ideological Critique

Challenging Dominant Narratives: *Beloved* serves as a counter-narrative to dominant historical discourses that have traditionally marginalized or erased the experiences of Black women and the trauma of slavery. The novel critiques these hegemonic ideologies by foregrounding the voices and experiences of its characters, thereby challenging the legitimacy of the "official" histories that have excluded them. For example, the depiction of Sethe's escape and sacrifice ("She just flew... carried, pushed, dragged them through the veil, out, away") contrasts sharply with sanitized historical accounts of slavery, emphasizing the brutal realities and the agency of those who lived through it.

Reclaiming Memory and History: The novel's focus on memory as a site of struggle highlights the importance of reclaiming and reinterpreting history. The recurring imagery of haunting and ghosts (e.g., "124 was spiteful. Full of a baby's venom") symbolizes the unresolved past that continues to influence the present. By giving voice to these spectral presences, Morrison reclaims the narratives of those who have been silenced, ensuring that their stories are not forgotten or overshadowed by dominant historical narratives.

Sociocultural Context

Historical and Social Context: The analysis underscores the significance of the novel's historical context, set during the Reconstruction era, a period marked by profound social and economic upheaval. The characters' struggles are deeply embedded in this context, reflecting the systemic oppression and racial violence that persisted even after the abolition of slavery. By situating the narrative within this specific historical moment, Morrison highlights the continuity of racial injustice and its enduring impact on African American communities.

Gender and Race: Morrison's narrative also explores the intersections of gender and race, particularly the unique experiences of Black women under slavery. The intense focus on motherhood, as seen in Sethe's relationship with her children and her haunting by Beloved, emphasizes the gendered dimensions of trauma and resistance. This focus challenges patriarchal ideologies that have historically devalued the experiences and agency of Black women.

Conclusion

The detailed analysis of *Beloved* using CDA has provided profound insights into how Morrison constructs identity and ideology through her narrative. The novel's fragmented identities, communal bonds, and ideological critiques reveal the complex interplay between personal and collective histories. Morrison's use of linguistic features and narrative techniques effectively challenges dominant historical narratives and reclaims the voices of those marginalized by history.

The study's findings highlight the importance of memory and storytelling in shaping identity and resisting hegemonic ideologies. *Beloved* not only addresses the trauma of slavery but also underscores the necessity of remembering and honoring those who endured it. The novel serves as a powerful reminder of the need to confront and reinterpret the past to understand its impact on the present and future.

Beloved stands as a testament to the resilience and agency of its characters, offering a nuanced and multifaceted portrayal of identity, memory, and history. Through its critical discourse, the novel challenges readers to rethink conventional narratives and consider the enduring legacies of slavery and racial injustice. Morrison's work thus continues to resonate as a profound and essential exploration of the African American experience.

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