

Trauma and Memory in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*

E. Chellsiya Rajam

III B. A. English Literature

St. John's College, Palayamkottai.

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the human mind in *Beloved*, written by Toni Morrison. The novel shows how past trauma affects a person's thoughts, emotions, and identity. Sethe, a former slave, is affected by her painful past. Even after escaping slavery, her memories continue to trouble her mind. *Beloved* represents Sethe's hidden guilt and painful memories from the past. Through this character, Morrison shows how the human mind struggles to overcome or forget traumatic experiences. The story does not move in a straight line; instead, it shifts between the past and the present, which reflects the confused and disturbed mental states of the characters. This paper argues that *Beloved* is not only a story about slavery but also a psychological novel. It explains how trauma, memory, and emotions shape a person's inner life. Through its narrative style, the novel effectively presents the deep struggles of the human psyche. Ultimately, *Beloved* helps readers understand how literature can portray the inner struggles of the human mind and the lasting impact of trauma.

Keywords: Trauma, Memory, Human psyche, Slavery, Identity.
