People's Democratic Republic of Algeria

Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou

Faculty of Letters and Languages

Department of English

Domain: Letters and Foreign Languages
Subject: English
Option: Literature and Civilization.

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for a Master's Degree in English

Title

A Comparative Study of Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987) and Malika Mokeddem's *Les Hommes qui Marchent* (1990)

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Academic Year: 2024 - 2025

To

My dearest parents, Ramdane and Samira.

My loving Brothers Mouloud, Riad, and Yacine. My supportive cousin Hanane.

And all my friends.

Tinhinane

My dearest parents, Hocine and Malha.

My supportive siblings, Mohamed, Kamel, Mourad, and Djouher.

My loving sister-in-law, Johana and my niece Maya.

And all my friends.

Fatiha

Acknowledgments

Research is an adventure full of challenges and moments of discovery. We would not have been able to overcome these without the guidance and support of many people. We therefore express our sincerest gratitude to our supervisor, Professor N a d i a N A A R GADA, who suggested this research topic. Her continuous support, valuable comments, and thoughtful suggestions have greatly shaped the direction of this work.

We are also deeply grateful to the members of the jury namely, Dr. Sarah CHABANE CHOUACH and Miss Dalila MATMER, for accepting to evaluate our dissertation, for their careful reading, and the insightful feedback they will provide to enhance it. Their constructive remarks will certainly help us improve it.

Our heartfelt thanks go to all the teachers of the department for their dedication, guidance, and the rich knowledge they have shared throughout our academic journey.

Abstract

This dissertation is a contribution to Feminist Studies and Comparative Literature. It examines the representation of marginalized women in Toni Morrison's *Beloved* and Malika Mokeddem's *Les Hommes qui marchent*. The aim is to explore how both novels depict women's experiences of oppression linked to race, gender, class, and colonial history, using bell hooks' theory of "Intersectional Feminism" and Gayatri Spivak's concept of "Subalternity" as theoretical frameworks. The two texts give voice to women who are excluded from dominant narratives and question the possibility of representation for those who are silenced. The dissertation applies a comparative literary approach, focusing on structure, setting, characters, and themes. The findings show that in *Beloved*, Morrison portrays a formerly enslaved Black woman whose struggle centers on the legacy of slavery, the trauma of maternal loss, and the effort to reclaim voice and subjectivity. In *Les Hommes qui marchent*, Mokeddem depicts women's lives under colonial and patriarchal constraints in Algeria, where displacement and exile mark their identities. Yet, resilience enables them to assert presence and agency. The study shows that although the contexts in which the two texts were written differ, their stories reflect common patterns of marginalization and resilience.

Keywords: Marginalization, Silencing, Resistance, Women's Speech, Reclaiming a voice.

Contents

I. Introduction

What if the most revolutionary act a woman can commit is not just to survive, but to remember and force the world to remember with her? This question highlights a central issue in the literary treatment of marginalized women's histories, where the bodies of Black and North African women have been both battlegrounds. In 1856, an enslaved Black woman named Margaret Garner crossed the frozen Ohio River, fleeing Kentucky with her children, only to kill her toddler daughter rather than see her returning to slavery as depicted in Morrison's novel. Nearly 150 years later, in 1990s Algeria, a schoolteacher named Nabila Djahnine was assassinated for defending women's rights during the "Black Decade". Her death brought a sudden end to her unfinished feminist manifesto. These real women, one fictionalized in *Beloved* as Sethe, the other echoing resistance of the nomadic women in Mokeddem's *Les Hommes Qui Marchent,* are recurrent example of women's courage in literature, demanding attention to the systems that oppress them and silence their voices.

The two authors come from different backgrounds but share a similar goal.Toni Morrison, winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature, focused much of her work on African American history and memory. She based *Beloved* on the true story of Margaret Garner, but chose not to rely on historical documents. Malika Mokeddem, an Algerian writer and former doctor, left Algeria during the rise of Islamist violence. In *Les Hommes qui marchent*, she blends women's oral traditions and storytelling to describe women's struggle against oppressive norms. They use storytelling to fight against forgetting and to bring back women's erased histories and voices. These authors issued from distinct yet interconnected postcolonial and post-slavery contexts, use their narratives to illustrate resistance, cultural amnesia, and reclaim silenced histories.

To shape this investigation, this dissertation poses the following research questions: How do Morrison and Mokeddem employ narrative strategies to resist the erasure of marginalized women's histories? In what ways do embodied memory and cultural amnesia interact to shape representations of trauma and survival? Can marginalized women truly reclaim their voices within oppressive systems through literature? Methodologically, this study employs close reading and comparative literary analysis, applying intersectional feminist theory as developed by bell hooks in *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism* (2015), alongside Gayatri Spivak's subaltern theory , "Can the Subaltern Speak" (1988). These lenses reveal how race, gender, class, and colonial legacies overlap to shape the protagonists' marginalization and help address the question of voice reclamation within oppressive systems.

The significance of this study lies in its unique comparative approach to two seminal yet underexplored novels from distinct postcolonial and post-slavery contexts. It does more than identify similarities between two literary works; it demonstrates how fiction can serve as counter-history, giving voice to those whom official narratives have silenced and offering new insights into how literature empowers systematically silenced women. By examining these two novels, this research not only bridges African American and Maghrebi literary traditions but also challenges mixed notions of women's resistance under oppression. This comparative study's value extends beyond literary analysis, contributing to ongoing feminist and postcolonial discourses by demonstrating how narrative form itself becomes a tool of resistance. Finally, this research sheds light on the literature's transformative power to reclaim marginalized histories and reconfigure dominant narratives of trauma and survival.

Review of the Literature

Many critics have studied Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987) and Malika Mokeddem's *Les Hommes Qui Marchent* (1990) from different angles while comparative analyses remain limited. While *Beloved* has been extensively examined for its portrayal of slavery's trauma and African American memory, Mokeddem's novel has received less attention despite its powerful depiction of colonial displacement and gendered resistance in Algeria. Both texts, emerging from different postcolonial contexts, employ distinct narrative strategies to denounce through literature intersecting systems of oppression.

Concerning *Beloved*, the novel has received critical attention since its publication in 1987. It won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1988 and is often described as one of the most important novels in American literature. Despite this, its engagement with intersectional Black female suffering under slavery continues to call for deeper critical analysis. However, many reviews and essays focus on memory, trauma, and identity. According to Christian (1993), feminist critics often explore the complex mother-daughter relationship in *Beloved*, drawing on psychoanalytic theories to understand the emotional weight of Sethe's actions. African American scholars examine how Morrison revisits the history of American slavery by exposing psychological and emotional traumas that nineteenth-century slave narratives could not articulate.

Furthermore, Marxist critics focus on the relationship Morrison draws between production and reproduction under slavery, highlighting how Black women's bodies were exploited as both labor and reproductive tools. Formalist critics analyze Morrison's narrative structure and the role of memory and myth in conveying historical trauma. Psychoanalytic and postcolonial readings have also deepened the interpretation of *Beloved* as Helen Moglen (1993) argues:

> In Beloved, at the intersection of realism and fantasy, Morrison maps a similar progress at a specific historical moment. In her exploration of the deconstructive and reconstructive processes of subjectification, she provides a reading of what Fanon called the 'massive psycho existential complex' of racism breaking through the obsessive cycle of the Imaginary and opening out the oppositional relations of desire. She shows how the racial and sexual otherness's of the Symbolic originate in archaic fear and aggression, which, in the pre-oedipal relation, project as threatening to the self a yet-unlocalizable object. It is that fear that precedes desire (primary narcissism later masked as incest) which Schoolteacher and his nephews seek to contain. (p. 33).

Another critical study was done by Spargo (2002), who explores how Morrison's characters embody psychological fragmentation caused by slavery. He argues that the characters cannot fully align their inner selves with the traumatic historical reality they inhabit. He underlines that the tension between personal identity and historical memory remains unresolved as the following passage illustrates:

> Throughout Beloved, Morrison develops characters who exist as too much or too little of themselves. And, if all of Morrison's characters in this novel never quite coincide in their own self- consciousness with the history they endure, it is also true that the lives they live inside history remain incommensurate with the novel's historical consciousness . (p. 122).

This excerpt illustrates how characters like Sethe, Paul D, and Denver struggle with incomplete or excessive senses of self. They carry trauma that distorts their perception of identity. Their internal experiences cannot be fully captured by any linear historical narrative. Morrison's text, thus, challenges how history is told, insisting on the emotional and psychological dimensions of slavery.

Furthermore, Aubry (2016) has explored the novel to its emotional impact and aesthetic appeal. He explains that despite its brutal content, *Beloved* offers deep aesthetic satisfaction. The ghost character forces both readers and characters to confront painful memories of slavery, demanding love and attention. Morrison believed the book would be avoided, yet it gained wide admiration. Aubry argues that readers are drawn to the novel's emotional intensity and moral complexity. While many critics focus on its ethical

demands, he highlights the love and desire it provokes, revealing why *Beloved* continues to resonate so powerfully.

As far as Malika Mokeddem's novel is concerned, since its publication, *Les Hommes qui marchent* has obtained significant critical attention for its complex exploration of gender, nationalism, and postcolonial identity in Algeria. The novel vividly portrays the complex experiences of Algerian women during and after the Algerian war of Independence, foregrounding themes such as bodily autonomy, education, and cultural memory. For example, Lynda Chouiten (2012) offers a detailed analysis of the nationalist movement's ambivalent stance on women's emancipation, drawing extensively on Frantz Fanon's *L'An V de la révolution algérienne*. Fanon traces the transformation of the "fille voilée, illettrée" into an active militant who shifts loyalty from paternal authority to the National Liberation Front (Fanon, 2012, p. 87). Chouiten argues that this wartime empowerment failed to fully translate into social emancipation post-independence. She contends that Mokeddem's novel reflects this paradox by portraying women's bodies as contested sites where cultural purity and political control collide. Chouiten (2012) describes this control in terms of: "les corps malmenés des femmes, tels ceux de Leïla et de sa sœur Bahia, qu'on 'noue' afin de mieux les préserver des tentations de la chair" (Mokeddem, 1990 , p. 7).

Another critic also points out to education that emerges as a crucial avenue for liberation, with Alonso (2004) emphasizing that "la libération ne vient que du côté de l'instruction, de l'accès à l'éducation" (as cited in Chouiten, 2012, p. 5). Chouiten draws a compelling parallel between the fate of Algerian women and that of the nation itself, noting that "le parallèle établi entre le destin de la jeune Algérie et celui de ses femmes culmine vers la fin du roman" (Chouiten, 2012, p. 7).

Other scholars have focused on the novel's narrative strategies as modes of resistance. As an illustration, Annette Crouzière-Ingenthon (2002) highlights the empowering function of storytelling and oral tradition, arguing that these forms "allow the individual to affirm her independence and, paradoxically, to fight at the same time for the group, its roots, nomadic memory and women's solidarity" (p. 142). For her part, Yolande Aline Helm's feminist perspective further situates *Les Hommes qui marchent* within a feminist and autobiographical tradition. Moreover, Jean-Marie Volet (2002) summarizes Helm's critical introduction and interview in *Malika Mokeddem : envers et contre tout*, emphasizing themes of women's identity, linguistic hybridity, and the condition of women in Algeria. Volet notes that Helm's interview "deals with issues such as characters' identities, linguistic métissage, Algerian humour and the condition of women in contemporary Algeria" (Volet, 2002, paras. 3). The essays in the volume stress the importance of oral storytelling, women's solidarity, and resistance against colonial and patriarchal oppression. This perspective enriches the understanding of Mokeddem's narrative as a testament to the cultural memory and resilience of Algerian women.

Adding to the above reviews and insights, Christiane Chaulet-Achour highlights the autobiographical dimension of *Les Hommes qui marchent*, describing it as openly autobiographical and a "classic novel of childhood in a colonized land. She underscores how the novel captures the transformative influence of education and literature, the protagonist's departure from the familial sphere, and the preservation of ancestral imagination transmitted by the grandmother: « …ouvertement autobiographique, roman classique d'une enfance en terre colonisée, de la différence introduite par l'école et les livres, de l'échappée du milieu familial sans perdre le trésor de l'imaginaire ancien transmis par la grand-mère » (Chaulet-Achour, as cited in Belkacem, 2010, p. 310). This reading highlights the novel's negotiation between rupture and continuity, where personal emancipation

coexists with a profound connection to cultural heritage.

Furthermore, Dalila Belkacem (2010) offers a critical examination of the novel's narrative complexity and ideological tensions. She observes that *Les Hommes qui marchent* shifts between "bi- culturalité" and a universal quest, noting that it "tend à briser toutes les frontières et revendique à présent une universalité" (p. 29). Central to her analysis is Leïla's resistance to the "destin de recluse" imposed by patriarchal and traditional customs: "Leïla se rebelle contre le destin de recluse qu'on veut lui imposer. Elle puisera dans ses racines nomades la force de s'opposer au poids des coutumes d'un autre âge" (p. 30). Belkacem also emphasizes the desert and nomadic culture as symbolic spaces that shape the narrative and reflect Algeria's cultural memory.

Issue and Working Hypothesis

The literature review presented earlier includes several critical studies on Toni Morrison's *Beloved* and Malika Mokeddem's *Les Hommes qui marchent*, each examined within their respective cultural and historical contexts. However, to the best of our knowledge and as mentioned earlier, no comparative study has yet analyzed both works together through the lens of intersectional feminism and subaltern theory. Our primary objective is, then, to identify and analyze both the parallels and diffrences between the two novels. Specifically, we focus on how Morrison and Mokeddem portray the experiences of marginalized female characters within post-slavery and post-colonial societies. These literary connections are not based on direct influence or contact between the authors but rather on shared and contrasting concerns that reveal complex social realities. We selected intersectional feminism and subaltern theory as our theoretical frameworks because they enable a nuanced exploration of the multiple layers of oppression affecting the protagonists. Intersectional feminism facilitates an examination of how race, gender, and class intersect to shape the identities and struggles of these women (hooks,2015). Subaltern theory provides conceptual tools to understand their marginalization and silencing within dominant cultural narratives (Spivak,1988). Using these frameworks, we compare the plot, structure, setting, characters, and themes of both novels to demonstrate how *Beloved* and *Les Hommes qui marchent* converge and diverge in their representations of female resistance and voices from the margins. This approach highlights the complexity of their narratives and enriches cross-cultural feminist readings by bridging African-American and North African literary traditions.

Methodological outline

Following the IMRAD structure, our dissertation is organized into five sections. The Introduction states the objectives of the study, reviews relevant literature on *Beloved* by Toni Morrison and *Les Hommes qui marchent* by Malika Mokeddem, and presents the research questions along with the working hypothesis. The Methods section explains the theoretical frameworks employed in the analysis, focusing on key concepts from Intersectional Feminism and Subaltern Theory to examine race, gender, class, and marginalization in both novels. The Materials section provides brief biographies of the authors and summaries of the novels to contextualize their cultural and historical backgrounds. The Results section presents the main findings, highlighting literary similarities and differences between the texts. Finally, the Discussion is divided into two chapters: the first one compares the structure, setting, and female characters, analyzing how these elements reflect the intersections of race, gender, and cultural identity. The second explores and compares the major themes in the two novels. This methodological approach enables a thorough comparative analysis that emphasizes both parallels and divergences between the novels.

II. Method and Materials

Method

This section deals with the theoretical concepts of Intersectional Feminism and Subalternity, which we shall define and apply in our analysis of the two fictions: *Beloved* by Toni Morrison and *Les Hommes qui marchent* by Malika Mokeddem. The theory of intersectionality, developed *in Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism* (2015), and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's Postcolonial Feminist theory outlined in her seminal essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988). These theories will allow us to carefully consider how both novels represent the complex voices of women at the margins, Black women in the context of slavery and its aftermath in America, and North African women in a postcolonial and patriarchal society.

a. Intersectional Feminism

We understand intersectionality as a social theory that explores how various forms of discrimination, like racism, sexism, and classism, intersect and amplify each other's impact on individuals, particularly women of color. We recognize that this framework helps us analyze how aspects of identity like race, gender, class, and sexuality intertwine, creating unique experiences of both privilege and oppression. We note that Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term "intersectionality" in 1989 to explain experiences of oppression that could not be understood solely through traditional discrimination frameworks.

According to bell hooks, Black women in America face a triple oppression: race, class, and gender, making them one of the most marginalized and underrepresented groups in both social and academic discourse. She argues that mainstream feminism often ignores the experiences of non-white, working-class women and insists that a true feminist movement must arise from the margins. In *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism*, hooks states that "Black women were extremely victimized by both racism and sexism, a

fact which, had it been emphasized, might have diverted public attention away from the complaints of middle and upper classes white feminists" (hooks, 1981, p. 191). Expanding on this issue, hooks demonstrates how intersectionality is not simply about multiple identities, but about how interlocking structures of oppression shape consciousness, solidarity, and participation in social movements. As hooks (2015) write:

> Contemporary black women could not join together to fight for women's rights because we did not see 'womanhood' as an important aspect of our identity. Racist, sexist socialization had conditioned us to devalue our femalness and to regard race as the only relevant label of identification. In other words, we were asked to deny a part of ourselves —and we did. Consequently, when the women's movement raised the issue of sexist oppression, we argued that sexism was insignificant in the light of the harsher, more brutal reality of racism. (p.14)

This means that women do not all experience oppression in the same way. As bell hooks explains, Black women were often felt excluded from early feminist movements that centered only on gender and ignored race and class. This reflects the idea in intersectional feminism. The theory argues that different forms of oppression, like racism, sexism, and classism, interact and cannot be separated. A woman who is Black and poor, for example, will face different challenges than a white middle-class woman.

b. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak?"

Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak?", first published in 1988 in the journal *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. In her influential essay, she challenges Western intellectuals to consider whether the most marginalized and oppressed groups in society, known as the "subaltern," could truly have a voice in historical and political discourse. This groundbreaking work became a cornerstone of postcolonial studies, feminist theory, and Marxist criticism. The term 'subaltern' was first coined by the Italian Marxist critic Antonio Gramsci to describe the marginalized classes in a society. Spivak criticizes Western intellectuals for their tendency to speak for the subaltern without truly understanding their experiences. She interrogates the term "subaltern," questioning its ability

to encompass the diverse and complex realities of marginalized groups, particularly women. Spivak argued that structural forces, such as colonialism, patriarchy, and capitalism, systematically silence marginalized women, preventing them from articulating their own voices and experiences on their own terms. She emphasizes this point by stating, “If in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow” (Spivak, 1988, p. 271). This quote underscores how subaltern women face compounded layers of oppression that make their voices even more difficult to hear within dominant discourses. She suggests that the subaltern’s ability to speak is not only about individual expression but about the possibility of being heard within power structures. It becomes evident that this theory of intersectionality and subalternity holds significant relevance to our study. These frameworks are particularly useful when we analyze the two novels *Beloved* and *Les Hommes qui marchent*, as they allow us to explore both the similarities and differences in how Toni Morrison and Malika Mokeddem represent feminist struggles.

Materials

a. Toni Morrison’s Biography

Toni Morrison is an African American writer who was born on February 18th, 1931, in Lorain, Ohio, in the United States. During the Great Depression, Morrison was raised in a working-class family. Her formative years were shaped by the oral tradition of storytelling within her community, which later became a central element of her writing. After graduating from Howard University with a Bachelor of Arts in English in 1953 and from Cornell University with a Master of Arts in American Literature in 1955, she embarked on a literary career that contributed to her establishment as a major figure in Americanliterature.

She wrote eight novels and released the fifth one, entitled *Beloved* (1987), which was her most widely acclaimed work, and exposes the enduring effects of slavery while giving a voice to enslaved women, allowing them to share their experiences through language. Although Toni Morrison did not explicitly identify herself as a feminist, but her works predominantly focus on feminist themes, particularly the struggles and sufferings of Black women in the United States, offering powerful explorations of their experiences. Morrison's fiction explores the complexities of Black life by entwining memories of the past, historical events, and the lasting impact of traumatic experiences. Burnham said, "Toni Morrison's fictive work about Black life lies at the intersection of memory, history, and trauma." (para.3). Her most praised novel, *Beloved*, was published in 1987 and won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1988. Ten years later, in 1998, it was adapted into a movie produced by and starring Oprah Winfrey.

b. Synopsis of *Beloved*

Beloved is inspired by the true story of Margaret Garner, an African American woman who lived in slavery. It depicts the psychological and emotional journey of the main character, Sethe, an escaped enslaved woman whose life is haunted by her past. The novel opens in Cincinnati, Ohio, in the post-Civil War era, where Sethe lives with her daughter Denver in their haunted house by the ghost of her dead infant, whom she killed as an act of protection and defiance, which leads to her isolation from the community. The arrival of Paul D, another survivor from Sweet Home (the plantation where Sethe and other enslaved individuals lived and worked), offers hope for healing but also brings painful memories and leads Sethe to confront her past. Soon after that, a mysterious girl appears, telling them her name is Beloved and believing she is the reincarnation of Sethe's dead daughter. Her presence intensifies Sethe's emotional struggles as she becomes controlling over her. Sethe's journey changes when Denver asks the community for help; they plan a

ritual for Beloved. When they arrive, Sethe mistakes Mr. Bodwin for Schoolteacher and attempts to attack him, which causes Beloved to permanently vanish. By the end of the novel, Paul D comes back to support Sethe in reclaiming her identity.

c. Malika Mokeddem's Biography

Malika Mokeddem was born on October 5, 1949, in Kenadsa, a tiny oasis town in southwestern Algeria close to Béchar. She grew up in the Sahara, a world that would later inspire her literary imagination. She left her hometown to study in Oran. She was the only girl in her family and town to finish her secondary studies, challenging the traditional gender roles her society was imposing on women. She studied medicine, specializing eventually in nephrology. Later, she immigrated to France, settled in Montpellier in 1979, and finally decided to dedicate her time to literature. In her reflections on writing, the author emphasizes that :

> Écrire c'est gagner une page de vie, c'est reprendre un empan de souffle à l'angoisse, c'est retrouver, au-dessus du trouble et du désarroi, un pointillé d'espoir. L'écriture est le nomadisme de mon esprit, dans le désert de ses manques, sur les pistes sans autre issue de la nostalgie, sur les traces de l'enfance que je n'ai jamais eue . (Mokeddem, 2003, p. 352).

Mokeddem began writing novels and autobiographical works early in her career, choosing to use the language of her adoptive nation, a language tied to Algeria's colonial past, like many other North African writers. She had to navigate the tension between expressing herself in a foreign language and remaining connected to her cultural roots. French became for her both a challenge and a space of freedom, as she has described it in her interviews as her "language of exile." She wrote many novels that focus on Algeria's history, from the time of colonization to independence and the years that followed, and she gave voice to women silenced by patriarchy and announced their struggles. Mokeddem's career as a doctor sharpened her observations regarding human suffering and endurance. Her literary career

started with *Les Hommes qui marchent* (1990), a novel that combined her Saharan origins with displacement and women's uprising themes, followed by *Les Siècles des sauterelles* (1992), *L'interdite* (1993), and *La Nuit de la lézarde* (1998).

d. Synopsis of *Les hommes qui marchent*

Les hommes qui marchent is a story that follows two female characters: Zohra, the grandmother and family storyteller, who seeks to transmit and preserve their Nomadic heritage and Saharan traditions. Leila, the granddaughter who wants to break free from societal constraints, becomes literate and begins to challenge the norms of her community. Leila fights against imposed restrictions. Throughout her childhood and teenage years, she stands against the limitations imposed by Algerian patriarchs on their daughters. Drawing from her Bedouin heritage and receiving support from adults who recognize the necessity of rejecting outdated traditions, Leila manages to rise above the constraints faced by many Algerian women of her generation. When her parents do not support her, she finds assistance from her understanding uncle Khellil, her brave aunt Saadia, known for her transformation journey from a victim of societal oppression to a strong and independent woman. Saadia's story is marked by struggles, including being mistreated by her stepmother, experiencing violence, and being forced into prostitution. However, she manages to escape this difficult situation. Also, the French teacher cleverly appeals to Leila's father, convincing him that Leila should stay in school to contribute to the building of the newly independent Algeria. Leïla's journey is fraught with challenges. She faces the racist prejudices of her French classmates and the patriarchal values of her community, which make it difficult for the talented student to have her abilities acknowledged. Despite her notable academic and professional accomplishments, Leïla often feels constrained by the expectations of others. Following her grandmother's passing, she undertakes a journey of exile in search of freedom and self-discovery. This experience becomes a crucial turning

point in her life as she grapples with her desire for independence while navigating the societal constraints that surround her.

It is important to point out that, from the novels' summaries, there are numerous similarities between the two writers, who have intense thematic and biographical parallels, to emerge as literary symbols of resistance and empowerment. Both writers explore issues of identity and displacement, Mokeddem in Algerian exile and patriarchal oppression and Morrison in African American slavery and systemic racism. Both of their heroines are resistant women reclaiming agency, either in Mokeddem's *Les Hommes qui marchent* or *Morrison's Beloved*. Grown out of oral tradition, Mokeddem draws on nomadic myth, and Morrison weaves Black Southern myth. Both have experienced historic trauma: Mokeddem explores Algeria's colonial wounds and Morrison exposes America's racial wounds. As educated pioneers, Mokeddem, with her medical background, and Morrison, through her work as an editor, turn literature into a powerful form of activism. Their words aren't just stories; they become acts of resistance and voices of liberation.

III. Results and Discussion

Results

Throughout this dissertation, meaningful parallels are drawn between two novels written in distinct languages and cultural contexts: Toni Morrison's *Beloved* and Malika Mokeddem's *Les Hommes qui marchent*. By employing bell hooks' (2015) Intersectional Feminism and Gayatri Spivak's (1988) theory "Can the Subaltern Speak?", this study explores how both authors give voice to those historically silenced, particularly women subjected to multiple, intersecting forms of oppression.

This comparative analysis focuses on the central female characters of the two novels, examining how each is shaped by historical trauma, enforced silence, and acts of resistance. Using hooks' framework, it highlights how race, gender, and class intricately shape their lived experiences, while Spivak's theory investigates how these characters embody the condition of the subaltern. The analysis reveals both shared struggles and distinct cultural realities, emphasizing the complexity of subaltern identity across different contexts. It further explores the major themes in both novels, showing how Morrison and Mokeddem address the psychological and social costs of oppression from differing historical and geographical perspectives. The comparison reveals both convergences and contrasts in the narrative strategies and cultural concerns of the two authors. This study also demonstrates that both Morrison and Mokeddem succeed in creating literary spaces where silenced voices are finally heard. By comparing their approaches to character and theme, it becomes clear that while the authors share a common goal of challenging historical erasure and representing women's resistance, they do so through distinct literary tools and perspectives.

Discussion

This section conducts a comparative analysis of feminist themes in Toni Morrison's *Beloved* and Malika Mokeddem's *Les Hommes qui marchent*. The first chapter examines the novels' structures, settings, and main characters to understand how each author portrays women's experiences. The second chapter then explores the themes shared by both works, drawing attention to similarities and differences in their representations of female agency and resilience.

Chapter One: Structures, setting and characters in the two novels

Comparison of the Novels' Structures

In this chapter, we analyze and compare the narrative structures of *Beloved* by Toni Morrison and *Les Hommes qui marchent* by Malika Mokeddem, focusing on how both authors construct their novels to reflect trauma, memory, and resistance. Morrison and Mokeddem reject linear storytelling; instead, they employ fragmentation, shifting perspectives, and multiple timelines to capture the psychological and historical damage caused by slavery and colonization. These structural choices serve as forms of resistance, as they break away from dominant narrative expectations and provide space for marginalized voices, especially those of women. In *Beloved*, Morrison combines historical fiction with magical realism, constructing a non-linear and fragmented narrative that intentionally breaks chronological order. The story unfolds through shifting time frames, flashbacks, and multiple narrative voices, so that the dislocation of time mirrors the way trauma distorts memory and experience. For characters like Sethe, her past never ends; it repeats, haunts, and shapes the present as Morrison writes: "But for eighteen years she had lived in a house full of touches from the other side. And the thumbs that pressed her nape were the same. Maybe that was where it had gone to"(p.116) . This structure,

therefore, mirrors the fractured consciousness of the formerly enslaved, reflecting how trauma disrupts linear time and memory.

Furthermore, the novel is divided into three parts and twenty-eight chapters, which allows Morrison to reveal deeper layers of each character's trauma and resilience. In the first part, we are introduced to Sethe and her daughter Denver living in a haunted house in Cincinnati, a setting complicated by the arrival of Paul D and the mysterious Beloved, who claims to be Sethe's dead daughter. Then, in the second part, we follow flashbacks that reveal Sethe's harrowing escape from slavery and the traumatic events that led to her killing her daughter. Finally, in the third part, we witness community intervention, culminating in Beloved's disappearance and the tentative healing of Sethe and Denver.

Moreover, we recognize that Morrison's narrative is polyphonic, featuring voices including Sethe, Denver, Paul D, and Beloved herself. Through this multiplicity, we see how dominant historical accounts are challenged, and the complexity of memory is highlighted. Morrison also employs stream-of-consciousness passages and fragmented monologues to immerse us in the characters' internal struggles and fractured psyches for example Beloved's disjointed narration when she says: "there is no place where I stop her face is my own and I want to be there in the place where her face is and to be looking at it too" (p.248) . Moreover, the supernatural element of Beloved's ghost destabilizes linear time further, symbolizing the persistence of trauma. Thus, Morrison's use of "rememory" emphasizes how memories exist independently and continue to affect the present. Through these narrative techniques, we are invited to confront the enduring psychological impact of slavery.

Similarly, when we examine Mokeddem's *Les Hommes qui marchent*, we find that she constructs a fragmented, though somewhat more linear, narrative. We follow Leïla as

she recalls her personal and family history through flashbacks, memories, and layered reflections. The narrative flows across overlapping timelines from the colonial occupation of Algeria, through the War of Independence, to the postcolonial era making visible how trauma, resistance, and silence are transmitted across generations of women like Leïla, her grandmother Zohra, and her aunt Saadia.

Mokeddem's writing style is lyrical and introspective, blending poetry and fiction. She incorporates the oral traditions of the Algerian desert, enriching her narrative with storytelling techniques from her cultural heritage. Furthermore, we recognize that the novel is composed of fourteen chapters and employs intertextuality and linguistic hybridity, mixing Arabic, Berber, and French, and integrating proverbs and oral traditions for example the use of words like "Bendir", "khoulkhal" ,"taleb". Through this multi-voiced, multicultural discourse, we see how Mokeddem resists colonial cultural homogenization and reflects Leïla's fragmented identity caught between tradition and modernity, desert and city, exile and belonging.

Moreover, by using first-person narration that mixes personal story with collective memory, we understand how Mokeddem aligns with Spivak's notion of subalternity. We appreciate that she centers women excluded from dominant historical narratives, giving voice to those erased by colonial and patriarchal violence. Through this structure, we are forced to confront history not as a single, linear story but as overlapping and contested narratives, highlighting the complexity of identity and cultural conflict in postcolonial Algeria. Morrison's form also echoes bell hooks' intersectional feminism, as Sethe is not only a former slave but also a Black mother and survivor of sexual violence. We cannot understand her suffering through race or gender alone; it emerges at the crossroads of both. Hooks' critique that mainstream feminism often erase the specific experiences of Black women is fully visible in Sethe's narrative. Morrison highlights how the world

repeatedly denies Sethe her autonomy: her breast milk is stolen, her children are threatened, and her body is violated. Yet, Morrison does not stop at individual pain. She constructs scenes of female solidarity, and we witness how Denver's growth and the communal exorcism led by neighbourhood women demonstrate the healing power of collective Black womanhood. These moments fulfil hooks' vision of recovery through community, care, and shared voice In this sense Morrison writes: "Building voice upon voice until they found it" (p. 308).

Hooks' ideas also resonate in Mokeddem's novel. Leïla's struggle cannot be separated from her gender, her colonized position, or her class. She is alienated in her hometown by conservative family norms and in the city by systemic violence. In Kénadsa, her isolation is rooted in tradition, while in Oran, new forms of repression surface: "Leur unique délit, c'était d'exister." (Mokeddem, 1997, p.313). We realize that existing as a woman in a public space becomes a threat. Narrating becomes Leïla's resistance. Through storytelling, she reclaims her voice and, with it, the stories of her foremothers. Like Morrison, Mokeddem uses fragmentation not to confuse but to reveal. She forces us to confront history not as a single, linear story, but as overlapping and contested narratives.

Furthermore, the novel's division into three parts and twenty-eight chapters allows Morrison to reveal deeper layers of each character's trauma and resilience. She places the voices of enslaved women at the centre, and by using Spivak's framework, we understand Sethe as the subaltern who refuses silence. Her most radical act of killing her daughter to save her from slavery defies both abolitionist and patriarchal interpretations. Through poetic, fragmented monologues, Morrison gives Sethe the authority to speak from her position of pain: "I took one journey and I paid for the ticket" (Morrison, 2004, p. 18). We see that this speech is not about forgiveness; it is about survival. It challenges any easy moral reading and compels us to confront uncomfortable truths. We also connect Spivak's

notion of the "unspeakable" with Morrison's depiction of memory and trauma, particularly in the character of Beloved herself. We can read Beloved as both a literal ghost and a metaphor for the repressed subaltern voice. When Beloved speaks, her language becomes abstract and fragmented, echoing the rhythm of suppressed memory: "I am not dead, I am not..." (Morrison, 2004,p. 252). This entails that her speech resists coherent narrative form, which demonstrates the limits of language in expressing the full horror of historical violence.

Like Morrison, Mokeddem centres women who are excluded from dominant historical narratives. Through first-person narration, Leïla's voice mixes personal story with collective memory, and this structure aligns with Spivak's theory. Leïla's lineage embodies subalternity, and women like Saadia, erased by colonial and patriarchal violence, are remembered through storytelling. Leïla becomes the medium through which these silenced lives regain presence.

Mokeddem further enriches her structure through intertextuality and linguistic hybridity. The mixture challenges colonial erasure and resists cultural homogenization. We see Leïla's fragmented identity caught between tradition and modernity, the desert and the city, emerge through this narrative style. The two novels share several structural parallels. Both Morrison and Mokeddem reject linear narration. They use fragmentation, temporal shifts, and layered voices to reflect how trauma disrupts memory and identity. The disjointed timelines in *Beloved* and *Les Hommes qui marchent* allow the past to intrude constantly into the present, showing how historical violence, slavery in America and colonization in Algeria continue to shape personal experience. In both texts, female voices are central and act as carriers of memory. Sethe and Leïla speak not only for themselves but for other women whose pain has been ignored or silenced. Each novel weaves personal trauma with collective history, aligning with Spivak's notion of retrieving the subaltern voice and hooks' insistence on intersectionality.

Despite these similarities, some divergences appear in how each author uses structure to serve different purposes. Morrison's fragmentation focuses on the interior lives of characters and the psychological damage of slavery. She uses poetic language, stream-of- consciousness, and supernatural elements to show how trauma distorts time and perception. In contrast, Mokeddem's structure emphasizes historical layering and political rupture. Her use of first-person narration, oral traditions, and multilingual references reflects the cultural hybridity of postcolonial Algeria. While Morrison moves between characters' perspectives, Mokeddem keeps the focus on her female characters as narrative anchors. Morrison explores individual healing within a haunted domestic space; Mokeddem exposes broader societal oppression, linking the family's silence to the failure of national memory. Morrison blends realism with the supernatural, while Mokeddem stays grounded in historical and social critique. These structural choices shape how each novel positions its female protagonist concerning history, memory, and resistance.

Comparison of the Novels' Setting

In *Beloved* and *Les Hommes qui marchent*, Toni Morrison and Malika Mokeddem transform the setting into an active, living force that shapes identity, surfaces trauma, and reveals intersections of gender, race, and history. Both authors use spaces such as haunted houses, deserts, and cities not merely as backdrops but as embodied sites of historical violence and ongoing oppression, where trauma and resistance are inscribed onto the landscape. In this analysis, we first examine how setting functions as a dynamic narrative element in both novels, and the theoretical frameworks of bell hooks and Gayatri Spivak. Finally, we discuss the similarities and differences in their use of setting. When we analyse Morrison's *Beloved*, we find that she uses setting to illuminate trauma, identity, and resistance primarily through the haunted house at 124 Bluestone Road, the Sweet Home plantation, and liminal spaces like the Ohio River and surrounding forests. We note that the

house at 124 is described as “spiteful. Full of a baby’s venom” (Morrison, 2004, p. 3), which signals the enduring legacy of slavery and collective Black suffering. We understand that this domestic space, traditionally a site of safety, becomes a prison of memory and grief, haunted not only by Sethe’s murdered daughter but by generations of trauma. We also observe how the novel’s shifting locations mirror the fractured psychological landscape of its characters, with memories violently intruding into the present.

Furthermore, we see Morrison extending the symbolism of setting beyond the home to natural geographies. We recognize the Ohio River, where Sethe escapes slavery with Amy Denver’s help, as a liminal space between bondage and freedom, danger and salvation, embodying physical and spiritual rebirth. However, as hooks (2015) emphasizes, systemic racism and patriarchy persist beyond emancipation, and we witness Sethe’s continued suffering highlighting the limits of freedom. Thus, the haunted home and surrounding spaces become sites where trauma, memory, and resistance converge. Similarly, when we turn to Mokeddem’s *Les Hommes qui marchent*, we find that she employs setting to highlight exile, resistance, and the tensions between tradition and modernity. We follow the narrative as it moves between the Saharan desert of Kénadsa Béchar and the city of Oran, spanning colonial rule, the Algerian War of Independence, and post-independence Algeria. We note that the desert symbolizes patriarchal control, emotional isolation, and generational trauma, embodied in characters like Leïla’s grandmother Zohra, who “était le désert” (Mokeddem, 1997, p. 11), linking female strength to the harsh landscape.

Moreover, Mokeddem reimagines hadras once religious ceremonies as tools of resistance during the war: “Avec la guerre de libération, le répertoire des hadras se transformait en formidable outil de résistance et de propagande...” (Mokeddem, 1997, p. 132). We recognize this transformation as exemplifying Spivak’s notion of subaltern speech through hidden cultural practices that challenge dominant narratives. Yet, we also

understand that Leïla's voice remains caught between desert and city, past and present, reflecting Spivak's warning that subaltern female voices often remain unheard within power structures.We further note the shift from desert to city in Mokeddem's novel symbolizes a move from overt patriarchal control to subtler forms of repression. The city offers education and visibility but also new pressures, especially with the rise of Islamist ideologies. Here, we apply bell hooks' concept of intersectionality to understand that Leïla's oppression is shaped by gender, rural origins, postcolonial context, and religion. Like the Black women hooks discusses, Leïla must navigate restrictive roles, concealing parts of herself to survive. When we apply bell hooks' intersectional feminism, we understand how both novels center women's experiences at the crossroads of race, gender, class, and colonialism. In *Beloved*, we see Sethe's suffering, marked by sexual violence, the theft of her breast milk, and threats to her autonomy, not as isolated but as intersecting oppressions. We also witness Morrison foregrounding female solidarity and healing, as when neighbourhood women unite to exorcise the haunting: "where the voices of women searched for the right combination, the key, the code, the sound that broke the back of words. Building voice upon voice until they found it" (Morrison, 2004, p. 308).

Similarly, when we consider Spivak's postcolonial feminist theory, especially her question "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988), we see this reflected in both novels. Morrison's *Beloved* gives voice to the silenced through the ghostly figure who declares, "I am not separate from her, there is no place where I stop" (Morrison, 2004, p. 248), resisting linear narrative and embodying a consciousness shattered by slavery. We also recognize Mokeddem's use of hadras and cultural memory as enacting subaltern speech, though we acknowledge that Leïla's marginalization reflects Spivak's caution that subaltern women's voices often remain unheard within dominant power structures. *Beloved* and *Les Hommes qui marchent* share significant similarities in their use of setting, which functions as a

living, dynamic force shaping identity and reflecting trauma. In both novels, settings such as haunted houses, deserts, and cities are not mere backdrops but embodied sites of historical violence and ongoing oppression.

Morrison's haunted house at 124 Bluestone Road symbolizes the lingering legacy of slavery and collective Black suffering, while Mokeddem's Saharan desert and urban landscapes represent colonial and patriarchal violence that continue to impact generations. Moreover, natural environments in both texts serve as powerful metaphors: the Ohio River in *Beloved* marks a liminal space between slavery and freedom, danger and salvation, whereas the desert in *Les Hommes qui marchent* embodies harshness, isolation, and female endurance under patriarchal control. Both authors also explore the tension between domestic and public spaces. Morrison's domestic setting becomes a site of trauma and female solidarity, while Mokeddem highlights women's navigation between the private desert and the public city, illustrating complex identity negotiations under oppression. Also, these settings act as conduits for intergenerational memory, with the haunted home influencing Sethe and Denver's experiences, and the desert and cityscape carrying the legacies of Leïla's foremothers. Spiritual and cultural dimensions further enrich these spaces: Morrison's hauntings and rituals symbolize healing and remembrance, and Mokeddem's transformation of hadras into acts of political resistance underscores women's hidden strength and the expression of subaltern voices. Ultimately, both novels portray setting as a site of resistance where suppressed histories are voiced, communal healing occurs, and women confront patriarchal and colonial oppression through cultural memory and everyday defiance.

While *Beloved* and *Les Hommes qui marchent* use setting as a powerful narrative tool, their approaches reflect distinct cultural and thematic priorities. In *Beloved*, Morrison's settings, such as the haunted house at 124 Bluestone Road and the Ohio River

are intimate, psychological spaces that emphasize the internal legacy of slavery and trauma. The haunted house symbolizes personal and collective memory, confinement, and the struggle for healing within domestic boundaries.Within this house, "she lived in a house with two stories; tougher, because she could do and survive things they believed she should neither do nor survive."(Morrison, 2004, p. 56) This toughness reflects the resilience embodied by Sethe and others who inhabit 124, a home that is both a literal space and a symbolic site of trauma and survival. Conversely, Mokeddem's *Les Hommes qui marchent* situates her narrative in broader, more external landscapes like the Saharan desert and the city of Oran, which represent the harsh realities of colonial and patriarchal oppression as well as the tensions between tradition and modernity. The desert embodies isolation and patriarchal control, while the city reflects subtler social and political pressures that weigh on the characters. This emotional reality, shaped by oppressive landscapes, is vividly expressed in the haunting image: "Les peurs qui cisaillent le souffle et d'où tombe le temps comme une aile amputée. L'extrême des solitudes, pareil au désert et à son calme calciné."(Mokeddem, 1997, p. 295). Thus, whereas Morrison's settings focus on interiority and the haunted past, Mokeddem's landscapes foreground historical and political struggles, highlighting the protagonists' navigation through shifting cultural terrains.

Comparison of Characters

Sethe Vs Leila

Sethe and Leïla are the central characters of the novels; they come from different historical and cultural backgrounds, but both embody resistance and resilience. Sethe, a formerly enslaved Black woman in post-Civil War America, is defined by her fierce maternal love and the enduring trauma of slavery, which shapes her struggle for survival and identity. Leïla, an educated Algerian woman, resists patriarchal and colonial oppression by seeking freedom and self-expression beyond her traditional community. Despite their

distinct contexts, both women confront intersecting systems of oppression and reclaim their voices, making their stories powerful explorations of trauma, memory, and resistance. To better understand their experiences, we first analyse the character of Sethe, followed by an examination of Leïla's journey.

In *Beloved*, Toni Morrison presents Sethe as a woman burdened by a past that refuses to stay buried. More than a former slave, Sethe embodies the psychological scars slavery leaves behind. Her every action is motivated by the need to protect her children and herself from past horrors. Sethe's early life at Sweet Home plantation, though seemingly less brutal, is marked by dehumanization and sexual abuse. Morrison describes one of the most harrowing moments when schoolteacher's nephews steal Sethe's breast milk, an act symbolizing that her motherhood and the ability to make her own decisions was stolen from her she says : "I never had to give it to nobody else—and the one time I did it was taken from me—they held me down and took it. Milk that belonged to my baby" (Morrison, 2004, p. 236). This act initiates Sethe's obsessive drive to protect her children. Despite the risk, Sethe escapes Sweet Home while pregnant Morrison writes : "'Running off pregnant'. 'Had to. Couldn't be any waiting'. [...] 'all by yourself too' [...] 'Almost by myself. Not all by myself. A whitegirl helped me'" (Morrison, 2004, p. 9).

Her journey, resulting in the birth of Denver with Amy Denver's assistance, symbolizes both literal and symbolic rebirth. However, when the schoolteacher pursues her under the Fugitive Slave Act, Sethe makes a devastating decision: she kills her infant daughter to prevent her return to slavery, she states, "I couldn't let all that go back to where it was, and I couldn't let her nor any of em live under schoolteacher. That was out" (Morrison, 2004, p. 192). This act alienates her from the community and herself, becoming the core of her guilt and isolation. Sethe's home at 124 Bluestone Road becomes haunted by her daughter's ghost, symbolizing unresolved trauma. The arrival of Beloved, a

mysterious young woman embodying the spirit of the murdered child, further traps Sethe in the past. Morrison writes, “Beloved ate up her life, took it, swelled up with it, grew taller on it” (Morrison, 2004, p. 295), illustrating how trauma consumes if unaddressed. Healing begins when community women, once judgmental, unite to exorcise Beloved, demonstrating that recovery from slavery’s trauma requires collective solidarity. In the novel’s conclusion, Paul D reassures Sethe: “You your best thing, Sethe. You are” (Morrison, 2004, p. 323), affirming her humanity and capacity for love despite her scars.

In *Les Hommes qui marchent*, Mokeddem portrays Leïla as a woman born into a society that silences and confines her due to her gender. From childhood, Leïla resists the oppressive expectations placed on her. Her mother’s harsh treatment contrasts with the affection lavished on her brothers:

> Tout comme les mots de la tendresse réservés aux garçons. La fillette ne recevait d'elle qu'ordres et remontrances : ‘Prépare le biberon du petit! La soupe de l'autre! Prends ton frère, ne le laisse pas pleurer comme ça! Torche celui-ci! Va étendre le linge! Pourquoi me regardes-tu comme ça? Pourquoi restes-tu au soleil? Ce n'est pas une fille que j'ai là, c'est une négrita. Pose ce livre, et fais ce que je te dis! . (Mokeddem, 1997, p. 115)

Despite this, Leïla clings to reading as a form of silent rebellion and escape. Education empowers her to envision a life beyond traditional confines, even though her family disapproves, especially of French colonial schooling. Her departure from her desert town to the city marks both liberation and exile, symbolizing rupture from oppressive traditions and loss of belonging. Later, she joins Algeria’s independence struggle, gaining confidence through activism, but realizes women remain oppressed “C’était de nouveau le couvre-feu pour les femmes” (Mokeddem, 1997, p. 314). Leïla’s city life is marked by alienation and loneliness, yet she holds on to her voice.

> Leïla s'arrêta. Elle prit sa plume. Raconter? Raconter... Mais par où commencer? Il y avait tant à dire! [...] Un souffle puissant dénoua ses entrailles et libéra enfin sa mémoire. Elle avait repris sa marche vers Bouhaloufa, vers l'aïeule Zohra, vers Saâdia, Emna, Ben Soussan, La Bernard, vers les phares qui balisèrent le rivage houleux de l'erg.

(Mokeddem, 1997, p. 321)

This passage reveals that writing is not merely intellectual but deeply emotional, healing, and liberating. Leïla honors her heritage and continues a legacy of resistance. Unlike a simple escape, her journey is marked by reflection and mourning, prompting us to question whether tradition and freedom can coexist.

From bell hooks' (2015) intersectional feminist perspective, Sethe's experience as a formerly enslaved Black woman places her outside dominant categories of humanity and womanhood. As hooks emphasizes, "Slavery is terrible for men; but it is far more terrible for women. Superadded to the burden common to all, they have wrongs, and suffering, and mortifications peculiarly their own." (hooks, 2015, p. 42). This insight highlights how Sethe's maternal identity is criminalized, reflecting hooks' critique of racist and sexist structures that seek to control Black women's bodies. Sethe confronts systems that mark her body as a site of control, refusing conformity and demanding a redefinition of community that includes her voice. Similarly, Leïla's marginalization is shaped by the intersections of gender, nationality, and postcolonial identity, positioning her at a complex intersection of tradition and modernity. She, too, resists patriarchal and colonial oppression, demonstrating the importance of feminist resistance rooted in lived experience. Both women reclaim experience as knowledge. Their imposed silence is strategic or trauma-born but ultimately challenged through acts of narrative resistance.

Building on this framework, Sethe exemplifies Gayatri Spivak's (1988) concept of the subaltern women silenced within dominant systems of knowledge and power. Sethe's trauma defies conventional language; her fragmented speech and social isolation reflect the deep epistemic violence Spivak describes, which seeks to erase or render subaltern voices unintelligible. Her experience demonstrates how systemic oppression filters and distorts

the subaltern's voice, making it difficult to be heard or understood within dominant discourses. Similarly, Leïla's voice, shaped by Algerian patriarchy and nationalist discourse, is legible only through acts of transgressive writing, exile, and refusal of silence, but often remains unheard within her society. Both women are situated at intersections of colonial legacies, patriarchy, race, and class that attempt to silence them, embodying Spivak's assertion that "the subaltern cannot speak" in a way that challenges us to disrupt these structures and create space for their narratives.

A key similarity lies in their experiences of parental absence and alienation: Sethe's mother was hanged, leaving her vulnerable within the brutal institution of slavery, while Leïla's parents are emotionally distant and complicit in oppressive structures that limit her freedom. This absence compounds their marginalization and forces them to forge identities through resistance and trauma. Furthermore, both women endure alienation and misrepresentation within their communities; Sethe's radical act of killing her daughter isolates her emotionally and socially, while Leïla's intellectual defiance and exile position her as an outsider in both her native and adopted societies. Yet, neither wholly rejects community; instead, they demand a redefinition of belonging that includes their voices and experiences. Their modes of resistance also converge: Sethe asserts agency through survival and maternal sacrifice, while Leïla challenges patriarchal and colonial norms through education, writing, and self-expression. Importantly, both narratives emphasize memory and storytelling as tools to confront trauma and reclaim suppressed histories, thereby challenging dominant discourses and insisting on recognition on their own terms.

However, there's this significant differences shaped by their distinct contexts and narrative styles. Sethe's story unfolds in post-Civil War America, where she grapples with the immediate psychological scars of slavery, expressed through haunting memories and supernatural elements symbolizing trauma and motherhood. In contrast, Leïla's

narrative is situated in postcolonial Algeria, where her struggle is framed by the intersection of patriarchal tradition and colonial legacies, emphasizing political and cultural silencing rather than personal haunting. Narratively, Morrison's *Beloved* employs a fragmented, poetic style focusing on family, memory, and healing within a haunted domestic space, whereas Mokeddem's *Les Hommes qui marchent* uses a non-linear, first-person narrative enriched with oral traditions and multilingualism to highlight historical layering and societal oppression. Moreover, Sethe experiences profound isolation and community ostracism but finds healing through collective solidarity, while Leïla's exile is both physical and emotional, marked by alienation from family and homeland but sustained by storytelling and cultural memory. Finally, their forms of resistance differ: Sethe's is embodied in survival and maternal sacrifice, asserting agency within a dehumanizing system, whereas Leïla's is intellectual and political, expressed through education, writing, and activism against patriarchal and colonial structures. These differences underscore how each novel uniquely portrays subaltern women's struggles, offering complementary but distinct perspectives on trauma, memory, and resistance.

Baby Suggs Vs Zohra

The next comparison between the two characters, Baby Suggs and Zohra, reveals how both function as matriarchal figures who preserve cultural memory and embody resilience within their communities. Despite their distinct historical and cultural contexts, these women serve as vital anchors of identity and survival, transforming trauma and marginalization into sources of strength. Through their roles as storytellers, caregivers, and spiritual leaders, Baby Suggs and Zohra enact forms of resistance that align with intersectional feminist and postcolonial theories, highlighting the complex ways in which gender, race, and history shape their experiences and legacies. We begin by examining Baby Suggs' spiritual leadership and healing role in *Beloved*, before turning to Zohra's

embodiment of Bedouin heritage and oral tradition in *Les Hommes qui marchent*.

Baby Suggs, the mother of Halle and Sethe's mother-in-law, whose life reflects the brutal legacy of slavery alongside the potential for communal healing. Born into bondage, she bore eight children, most of whom were sold away, leaving only Halle, who gained freedom through extra labor at Sweet Home. After emancipation, Baby Suggs settled in Cincinnati and became a spiritual leader known as "Baby Suggs, holy." She created the Clearing, a sacred space where she urged the Black community to reclaim their bodies and spirits. Morrison (2004) powerfully states, "Here," she said, "in this here place, we flesh; flesh that weeps, laughs; flesh that dances on bare feet in grass. Love it. Love it hard. Yonder they do not love your flesh. They despise it… You got to love it, you!" ((Morrison, 2004, p. 103). Through this invocation, Baby Suggs offers a radical affirmation of humanity in a world that dehumanizes Black bodies.

We also observe that Baby Suggs' generosity, while nurturing, became a source of tension. When she hosted a lavish feast at 124 upon Sethe's arrival, the community perceived it as prideful, leading to resentment that later extended to Sethe after her tragic act of child killing. Despite these challenges, Baby Suggs retained a nurturing spirit. The narrator explains that she felt "so abused by life" she could no longer rely on her body to survive and thus "had nothing left to make a living with but her heart—which she put to work at once" (Morrison, 2004, p. 102). This shift to spiritual caretaking highlights her resilience and selflessness. Even as despair overcame her in later years, she found solace in colors: "blue, yellow, maybe green" (Morrison, 2004, p. 213), focusing on sensory beauty as a refuge from pain. By the novel's end, when Denver seeks help, the community's long-standing resentment toward Baby Suggs begins to dissolve, culminating in a collective effort to exorcise Beloved a tribute to the legacy of care she once embodied.

Turning to Zohra, we see a woman who embodies the living memory of the desert

and the Bedouin identity within her family. Formerly a nomad, Zohra was forcibly sedentarized, a loss that profoundly shapes her life and role as a storyteller. Mokeddem (1997) vividly describes her:

> C'était un petit bout de femme à la peau brune et tatouée. Des tatouages vert sombre, elle en avait partout : des croix sur les pommettes, une branche sur le front entre ses sourcils arqués et fins comme deux croissants de lune, trois traits sur le menton. Elle en avait même aux poignets, ciselés en bracelets, et aux chevilles en kholkhales .(p. 9)

These tattoos signify her tribal belonging and cultural pride "Des bijoux pas chers que personne ne peut me voler, avait-elle l'habitude de dire en regardant ses mains" (Mokeddem, 1997, p. 9). We notice how Zohra's animated walk and expressive wearing of her chèche constantly recall her nomadic past and refusal to relinquish her origins.

Moreover, Zohra resists the sedentary imposition of colonialism, lamenting, "L'immobilité du sédentaire, c'est la mort qui m'a saisie par les pieds… Maintenant, il ne me reste plus que le nomadisme des mots. Comme tout exilé" (Mokeddem, 1997, p. 11). Unable to wander physically, she transforms her longing into oral storytelling, inviting her family to listen, she says: "Asseyez-vous donc… J'ai la tête lestée de mots" (Mokeddem, 1997, p. 11). Through her narratives, she preserves the culture, struggles, and hopes of her people. She adds : "Nous descendons de ceux-là, des hommes qui marchent. Ils marchaient. Nous marchions…" (Mokeddem, 1997, p. 12). Her storytelling becomes an act of cultural resistance and a means to sustain identity amid colonial and patriarchal pressures. The profound bond between Zohra and her granddaughter Leïla, who inherits this legacy of resilience and memory. Zohra's death marks a turning point for Leïla, inspiring her exile and independence. The narrator affirms, "Zohra était le désert" (Mokeddem, 1997, p. 11), symbolizing endurance and cultural survival. Building on these character analyses, we apply bell hooks' (2015) intersectional feminist perspective to understand how Baby Suggs and Zohra navigate layered oppressions of race, gender, class, and history. hooks argues that "the struggle to end racism and the struggle to end sexism

were naturally intertwined, that to make them separate was to deny a basic truth of our existence, that race and sex are both immutable facets of human identity" (hooks, 2015, p. 29). This insight helps us see that Baby Suggs and Zohra's identities and leadership emerge from these intersections but are not solely defined by them. Instead, they transform trauma into acts of resistance and care, reclaiming experience as knowledge and challenging dominant narratives. We observe how both women use storytelling and spiritual leadership to assert agency and challenge systems of domination.

Furthermore, we draw on Gayatri Spivak's (1988) theory of the subaltern to reveal how Baby Suggs and Zohra's voices are often mediated or silenced by dominant powers. Their legacies survive through intermediaries; Sethe and Denver for Baby Suggs, Leïla and Saadia for Zohra, signifying indirect survival rather than full recognition. We note that Baby Suggs retreats into silence after community judgment "Her marrow was tired…" (Morrison, 2004, p. 209), while Zohra fears the loss of oral tradition "J'ai la tête lestée de mots…" (Mokeddem, 1997, p. 12). These experiences underscore Spivak's call to disrupt epistemic violence and create space for subaltern speech, reminding us that "the subaltern cannot speak" unless her voice is acknowledged and heard on her terms. Baby Suggs and Zohra share numerous profound similarities that underscore their roles as resilient matriarchal figures preserving cultural memory and fostering communal strength. Both women transform the trauma inflicted by slavery and colonialism into powerful acts of resistance through storytelling, love, and care.

They create vital spaces, Baby Suggs' Clearing and Zohra's oral storytelling gatherings, where healing, memory, and identity are nurtured and sustained. These spaces serve not only as sanctuaries from oppression but also as sites of empowerment, where the community can reclaim agency and humanity. Their leadership emerges from intersectional oppressions of race, gender, class, and history, yet they refuse to be defined

solely by these forces, embodying bell hooks' (2015) vision of survival and reclamation. Both women emphasize the importance of bodily and spiritual healing, whether through Baby Suggs' insistence on loving one's flesh or Zohra's embodiment of Bedouin cultural pride through tattoos and storytelling. Moreover, both experience silencing and marginalization within their communities but continue to assert agency by preserving and transmitting cultural knowledge, resonating with Spivak's (1988) concept of subaltern voices surviving through intermediaries. Their maternal roles extend beyond biological ties, emphasizing chosen kinship and collective care that bind fractured communities together and offer continuity amid disruption.

While we acknowledge these strong parallels, some differences enrich our understanding of their unique contexts. Baby Suggs' influence is deeply rooted in spiritual healing and communal bodily reclamation in post-slavery America, whereas Zohra's power is expressed through oral tradition sustaining Bedouin nomadic identity amid colonial displacement. Baby Suggs retreats into silence following community fatigue and judgment, but Zohra actively resists erasure through storytelling despite fearing cultural loss. These distinctions highlight the diverse ways matriarchal resilience manifests across oppressed communities shaped by specific historical and cultural realities. Ultimately, by examining both women, we gain a richer appreciation of how marginalized women negotiate survival, memory, and resistance, inspiring ongoing struggles for recognition and justice.

Denver Vs Saâdia

Building on our previous analysis of female characters, we now turn to the final comparison between Denver and Saâdia, two young women shaped by worlds of loss, silence, and inherited pain. Each grows up surrounded by stories that are half-told or deliberately buried, forcing them to make sense of violence predating their existence. Although isolated and emotionally neglected, both embark on journeys toward self-

definition and healing. Their experiences reflect generational trauma but also reveal the possibility of breaking cycles not of their making.

Denver grows up in a house haunted not only by the ghost of her dead sister but also by the psychological weight of her mother's past. Isolated from school, community, and friendship, she lives in near-total solitude. Her trauma is inherited; she suffers not from direct experience of slavery but from the silence, fear, and shame it has left in her family. Morrison (2004) illustrates this when Denver reflects on the birth story as a source of identity and connection. She writes, "This was the part of the story she loved. She was coming to it now, and she loved it because it was all about herself; but she hated it too because it made her feel like a bill was owing somewhere and she, Denver, had to pay it" (Morrison, 2004, p. 91). Unlike Sethe, who is defined by memory and guilt, Denver gradually learns to define herself through action. Initially sheltered and unsure, her only strong bond is with Beloved, who at first provides comfort.

However, as Beloved's presence begins to drain Sethe, Denver realizes that someone must act. This pivotal moment when Denver acknowledges: "Denver knew it was on her. She would have to leave the yard; step off the edge of the world, leave the two behind and go ask somebody for help" (Morrison, 2004, p. 286). This marks Denver's shift from fear to agency. Subsequently, she expresses hope when she considers her plans: "She had heard about an afternoon job at the shirt factory. She hoped that with her night work at the Bodwins' and another one, she could put away something and help her mother too" (Morrison, 2004, p. 314). It becomes clear that Denver's power is quite rooted in observation, care, and moral clarity. She listens, understands, and chooses to protect, embodying healing by reclaiming her voice and connection. In contrast to the house at 124, which didn't know when to stop, Denver learns when to speak, act, and move forward. Through her, Morrison suggests that healing from generational trauma is possible not by

forgetting the past but by living beyond its shadow.

Turning to Saâdia, we find that her pain originates from neglect and rejection within a wealthy yet emotionally barren household. Orphaned and blamed by her stepmother for her mother's death, Saâdia endures cruelty and marginalization. She admits that she sometimes stole food to satisfy her hunger despite the abundance around her . She says , "Il m'arrivait de voler pour pouvoir me rassasier. Alors qu'il y avait tant de richesses dans la ferme!" (Mokeddem, 1997, p. 41). Meanwhile, her father, Bouhaloufa le Deuxième, reinforces patriarchal control by asserting that order requires girls to learn submission. The narrator argues , "L'ordre ne se conjugue-t-il pas avec l'apprentissage de la soumission pour les fillettes?" (Mokeddem, 1997, p. 42). Consequently, Saâdia grows up isolated, finding comfort only in nature and dreams of freedom. However, after breaking a jug and fleeing her home, she is kidnapped, raped, and imprisoned in a bordel. Society condemns her as "une traînée," effectively banishing her from her family and community "Elle appartenait désormais au monde des bannies" (Mokeddem, 1997, p. 57). Yet, Saâdia refuses to give in to despair. Her melancholy transforms into defiance and combativeness , as the narrator describes : "Sa mélancolie se muait en combativité et en défi" (Mokeddem, 1997, p. 57). She survives her ordeal with "charme, insolence et dérision," demonstrating remarkable resilience. After fourteen years of imprisonment, Saâdia is finally freed. The narrator writes , "Au bout de quatorze ans d'enfermement, Saâdia retrouva l'air libre. C'était en 1953" (Mokeddem, 1997, p. 65).

Upon her release, she reconnects with life by walking through the desert, physically reclaiming her freedom "Elle marcha pour éprouver charnellement, à chaque foulée, sa liberté" (Mokeddem, 1997, p. 66). In the town of Kénadsa, Saâdia opens a laundry business, gains financial independence, and begins to rebuild her life. The narrator notes , "Saâdia c'était mise à gagner plus d'argent qu'elle n'en avait jamais espéré [...] Elle était libre

maintenant. Et elle avait le bonheur indulgent" (Mokeddem, 1997, p. 90). Despite facing gossip and judgment, she walks with pride, wearing her haïk loosely and meeting men's eyes boldly "Elle était si différente des autres femmes. Son haïk, elle ne le portait que comme une pèlerine, gardant le visage découvert et les bras libres. La fierté de son regard désarçonnait les coutumes et forçait les hommes à baisser les yeux" (Mokeddem, 1997, p. 92).

Moreover, Saâdia's strength extends to forgiveness. She visits her dying father and promises to go to her stepmother's grave, declaring: "Je n'ai jamais eu de haine contre personne" (Mokeddem, 1997, p. 122). Later, her cousin offers her the baby she is carrying, saying: "Si tu le veux, et si le prochain bébé est une fille, elle sera à toi [...] Je n'aurai fait que la porter pour toi" (Mokeddem, 1997, p. 251). This gift allows Saâdia to become a mother, affirming that despite loss and rejection, she retains the capacity to love and care.

Bell hooks (2015) argues that women living at the margins of society face intersecting oppressions related to gender, race, and class. Denver and Saâdia exemplify this intersectionality: Denver, as a poor Black girl in post-slavery America, and Saâdia, as a marginalized woman in colonial Algeria, experience layered forms of exclusion and silencing. However, hooks also highlights that the margin can become a space of strength and resistance. We see this clearly in how both women reclaim agency, Denver through her quiet courage and engagement with her community, and Saâdia through her survival, economic independence, and capacity for forgiveness. Their stories illustrate hooks' assertion that healing and liberation emerge from resilience and self-definition within oppressive structures. As hooks (2015) states that feminism demands "the acceptance of woman's right to individual conscience and judgment" and the freedom "to decide her own destiny; freedom from sex-determined role; freedom from society's oppressive restrictions; freedom to express her thoughts fully and to convert them freely to actions"

(p. 260). This encapsulates the core of Denver's and Saâdia's journeys toward autonomy and self- realization despite systemic barriers.

Gayatri Spivak's (1988) concept of the subaltern , those pushed so far to the bottom of society that their voices are ignored or distorted applies directly to both characters. Denver's imposed silence inside the haunted house at 124 and Saâdia's erasure through family shame and societal rejection reflect the epistemic violence Spivak describes. As Spivak (1988) emphasizes "the archival, historiographic, disciplinary-critical and, inevitably, interventionist work involved here is indeed a task of 'measuring silences'" (p.82), highlighting the challenge of uncovering and representing subaltern voices within dominant discourses. Yet, both women challenge this silencing. Denver breaks her isolation by seeking help and reconnecting with her community, while Saâdia rebuilds her life through work and forgiveness. Their acts of survival and self-expression embody Spivak's call to disrupt dominant narratives and create space for subaltern voices to be heard.

We observe some convergences between Denver and Saâdia in their journeys toward empowerment despite trauma. Both grow up isolated and emotionally neglected, facing the absence or unavailability of their parents. Denver's mother is overwhelmed by grief, while Saâdia is orphaned and rejected, leaving them without traditional support. Nevertheless, we see how they develop resilience that enables them to resist marginalization and reclaim their identities. Their resistance is expressed through care and self-definition rather than overt rebellion: Denver steps beyond the haunted house at 124 to engage with her community and care for her mother, while Saâdia gains economic independence and forgives those who wronged her. Moreover, Denver becomes her mother's caretaker, and Saâdia embraces motherhood through her cousin's child, challenging societal norms, as bell hooks describes. Symbolically, Denver's escape from the haunted house and Saâdia's walk through the desert

reflect their transformation from silence to voice and from confinement to agency. Through these convergences, we understand how both women embody intersectional resilience, navigating complex oppressions while forging paths to healing and self-definition.

Several important divergences between Denver and Saâdia shape their distinct experiences and responses to trauma. Denver's trauma is situated within the legacy of slavery and racial oppression in post-slavery Black America, while Saâdia's trauma arises from colonial Algerian patriarchy and social exclusion. As a result, Denver's resistance is quiet, communal, and rooted in caring for her mother and reconnecting with her community, whereas Saâdia's resistance is more defiant and individualistic, expressed through independent economic survival and forgiveness. Besides , their familial contexts differ: Denver's trauma is compounded by her mother's grief and emotional detachment, whereas Saâdia is orphaned and rejected by her stepmother, influencing their paths to self-reliance. In terms of symbolism, Denver escapes the confined, haunted domestic space of 124, reflecting a break from generational trauma, while Saâdia's journey through the open desert represents rebirth and reclamation of freedom. These divergences highlight how their cultural, historical, and social contexts inform their distinct modes of survival and healing.

In conclusion, Morrison and Mokeddem reject linear storytelling, using fragmentation, shifting voices, and layered timelines to represent how trauma distorts memory and identity. Settings act as living forces 124 haunted by slavery's past, the desert and city shaped by colonial and patriarchal violence while characters like Sethe, Leïla, Baby Suggs, Zohra, Denver, and Saâdia embody resilience by transforming silence and loss into survival. Read through hooks' intersectionality and Spivak's subaltern theory, both novels expose how women resist erasure, reclaim memory, and assert agency. Morrison emphasizes psychological haunting and communal healing, Mokeddem foregrounds historical layering; however, both affirm storytelling as a form of resistance

that preserves silenced histories and empowers marginalized voices.

Chapter Two: Comparison of Themes in *Beloved* and *Les Hommes qui marchent*

This second chapter focuses on themes in the two novels that reveal the complex experiences of women within different cultural and historical contexts. In this chapter, we aim to explore both the similarities and differences between the two narratives.

1. Slavery and Colonialism as Gendered Systems of Oppression

When we examine both novels, they present systems of oppression that profoundly impact each character's life. Not only do slavery and colonialism shape the societies in which the stories unfold, but how they also directly influence the lives, bodies, and choices of women. Through the intersection of race, gender, and power, these novels reveal how such systems function, how women resist, and where their experiences converge and diverge.

In *Beloved*, slavery as a brutal, dehumanizing system that reduces African Americans to a property, destroying their physical and mental well-being and shattering families. Enslaved women endure physical and psychological violence, including rape, torture, and the terrifying possibility of losing their children. Sethe's story embodies this oppression fully, she suffers sexual violence and trauma at Sweet Home plantation, which, as we understand, ultimately drives her to attempt to kill her children to protect them from slavery. Sethe explains, "If I hadn't killed her, she would have died" (Morrison, 2004, p. 236), underscoring that her act was not merely personal but a desperate response to a system that offered no protection, freedom, or future for Black women and their children. This act exposes the brutal reality that slavery destroyed the meaning of family, turning love into danger and survival into crime. Sethe argues, "That anybody white could take your whole self for anything that came to mind. Not just work, kill, or maim you, but dirty you. Dirty you so bad you couldn't like yourself anymore. Dirty you so bad you forgot who

you were and couldn't think it up" (Morrison, 2004, p. 295). We can interpret Sethe's choice as an act of refusal to allow her child to be turned into property. Her violent resistance thus becomes both grief and a form of protest against systemic oppression. Moreover, the novel exposes how Black women were exploited as breeders and denied rights over their children.

Although Sethe's resistance is violent and desperate, other women resisting in quieter yet equally powerful ways, shaped by pain and the need for survival. For example, Baby Suggs creates a spiritual sanctuary through preaching and love but later retreats into silence after the community rejects Sethe. Meanwhile, Denver breaks her isolation by engaging with the community to save her mother, thereby embodying a form of active, though understated, resistance. Additionally, Beloved herself, as both ghost and memory, forces the return of repressed trauma, symbolizing the silenced victims of slavery who refuse to be forgotten. Thus, Morrison (2004) makes clear how deeply slavery deformed the self but also how these women, each in her own way, fought back against erasure.

Similarly, in *Les Hommes qui marchent*, Mokeddem (1997) reveals how French colonialism in Algeria operated not only as a political and military occupation but also as a system that targeted women's bodies, roles, and futures. We see that the colonial order intersected with patriarchal traditions, thereby creating a double layer of violence against women. Like in *Beloved*, women resist these forces not always through direct rebellion but through survival, silence, speech, and refusal. French colonialism reduced Algerian women to controlled bodies: they were excluded from public life, denied education, and restricted in movement. Zohra's memories reveal how colonialism controlled women by regulating their grief, dignity, and appearance. After the 1945 Sétif massacres, women stopped wearing white haïks and turned to black, as Mokeddem (1997) writes : "C'est depuis cette date que les femmes de l'Est algérien ont troqué le blanc haïk contre un drapé noir. Noir d'une

tragédie qui hantera l'œil roumi. Elle veillera à ce que la clémence du temps ne lui accorde pas trop facilement l'oubli de ces méfaits" (p. 31). This passage shows that Algerian women consciously chose to carry and display the memory of colonial atrocities. We understand that the black drape thus becomes a political act, turning grief into protest and confronting the colonizer's gaze by reminding him of the crimes committed. Consequently, the colonial and patriarchal systems together turned mourning into silence.

Furthermore, colonialism regulated women's reproductive roles and sexual autonomy. Zohra is expected to remarry after her husband's death, but she rejects that role, stating, "Je ne suis que la dépouille d'Ahmed" (Mokeddem, 1997, p. 29). Her refusal to remarry constitutes a rejection of both the colonial economic need to manage female labor and the traditional role of women as objects to be redistributed. When Mme Perez, a French settler's wife, insults her, Zohra replies, "Je ne suis ni ta bonne ni ton esclave" (Mokeddem, 1997, p. 35). In this act of speech, though punished, she asserts her dignity as a woman and colonized subject, directly challenging the colonial-patriarchal gaze that sees her as labor or property. Yamina's story further illustrates the colonial reorganization of society. She was married off at fifteen without consent and uprooted into a life of hardship. We see how her lack of agency reflects the economic survival strategies under colonialism, which depend on arranged marriages and migration:

> Bien évidemment, personne ne demanda à Yamina son avis. Elle dut abandonner une vie et un climat relativement cléments pour une existence de misère sous des cieux d'enfer. Elle n'eut droit, en guise de dot, qu'à quelques habits et bijoux. Les biens : terres et bêtes, étaient la propriété des hommes . (Mokeddem, 1997, p. 38).

This unveils that her body is traded rather than protected. The colonial system destabilizes traditional social structures while reinforcing male control over women's choices. Like Sethe in *Beloved*, Yamina is punished for being a mother under domination; her motherhood is shaped by fear, silence, and forced roles. To understand these dynamics fully, we turn to bell hooks' (2015) theory of intersectionality, which explains how Black

and colonized women are subjected to interlocking systems of racial and gender oppression. This perspective is further clarified by her recognition that "the major systems of oppression are interlocking. The synthesis of these oppressions creates the conditions of our lives" (hooks, 2015, p. 205). In *Beloved*, Sethe's trauma and her desperate act to protect her children highlight how slavery targets Black women's bodies and motherhood. hooks' analysis helps us see that Sethe's resistance, whether violent or quiet, is a response to the compounded violence of racism and patriarchy. Similarly, in *Les Hommes qui marchent*, French colonialism and Algerian patriarchy combine to oppress women like Zohra and Yamina doubly. Their exclusion from public life and control over their bodies reflect hooks' and the Collective's insight that women's oppression is always multidimensional.

Moreover, Spivak's (1988) postcolonial feminist theory clarifies why women's voices are often silenced in these systems. Her concept of the subaltern explains how, when speech is denied, women's acts, such as Sethe's infanticide, become forms of resistance that "speak" against their erasure. Yet, as Spivak famously asserts, "there is no unrepresentable subaltern subject that can know and speak itself" (Spivak, 1988, p. 80), highlighting the profound difficulty marginalized women face in making their perspectives and histories legible within dominant ideologies. Spivak's framework thus reveals that even when women cannot participate in official discourse, their bodies and choices become sites of political struggle. Each woman in *Les Hommes qui marchent* resists in ways defined by her circumstances. Zohra refuses to remarry, speaks to the colon's wife, and teaches Leïla to think and question. Saâdia runs, fights, and suffers. Yamina endures. These forms of resistance represent survival strategies in systems that deny Black and colonized women full of humanity. Like Sethe, Baby Suggs, and Denver in *Beloved*, the women in Mokeddem's novel resist through their bodies, memories, choices, and pain. Ultimately, colonialism, like slavery, is not only about the domination of land but also about the domination of people,

especially women. It controls what they wear, where they go, whom they marry, and how they raise children. It punishes independence, speech, and dignity. Yet, through small acts of refusal and survival, these women resist the system that tries to erase them. Their resistance is not loud; it is often punished. But it is constant.

When we compare these novels, we find that both foreground the intersectional oppression of race, gender, and class, illustrating how Black and colonized women endure compounded violence targeting their bodies, identities, and reproductive roles. Sethe's traumatic experiences of slavery and Zohra's and Yamina's subjugation under colonial and patriarchal rule reveal how women's bodies become contested sites of control and resistance. *Beloved* centers on the legacy of American slavery and its psychological scars, employing supernatural and symbolic elements, such as the ghost of Beloved, to represent trauma's persistence and the struggle for healing. Resistance in Morrison's work often unfolds within intimate family and community spaces, emphasizing spiritual renewal and emotional reconciliation. Conversely, *Les Hommes qui marchent* is grounded in the concrete realities of French colonialism and Algerian patriarchy, focusing on political exile, forced sedentarization, and the disruption of traditional social structures. Mokeddem's characters resist through direct political defiance, education, and refusal to conform to imposed gender roles, reflecting a more overt engagement with colonial power dynamics. Furthermore, whereas *Beloved* explores the aftermath of slavery and the quest for freedom, *Les Hommes qui marchent* portrays ongoing colonial violence and the struggle for national and personal liberation. From the structural violence of slavery and colonialism emerges a deeply personal crisis: exile, a state that disrupts not only geography but also their sense of identity.

2. Exile as a Feminist Experience of Displacement and Identity Crisis

Exile is a powerful theme deeply explored in feminist literature, as it reveals how being forced away from home affects women in multiple ways. Not only does exile signify physical separation, but it also causes a profound struggle with identity and belonging. When we examine the experiences of women in Morrison's novel alongside those of Zohra, Leïla, and Saâdia in Mokeddem's novel, parallels and significant differences in how exile shapes their lives. Indeed, both contexts reveal exile as a complex feminist experience that challenges autonomy, belonging, and selfhood within oppressive systems. In *Beloved*, exile transcends physical separation to become a profound disruption of identity for Sethe, Denver, and Baby Suggs. Sethe's life revolves around exile in every sense. Physically, she escapes the plantation seeking freedom; however, the house at 124 turns into a prison rather than a refuge. For example, Morrison (2004) illustrates how this haunted house isolates Sethe and her family from the community, symbolizing the inescapable grip of her past. Moreover, Sethe's internal exile is captured when Morrison writes, "All the parts of her that were precious and fine and beautiful... Over there. Outside this place, where they would be safe" (Morrison, 2004, p. 192). This suggests that Sethe has had to exile parts of her identity as a form of protection, thereby fragmenting her selfhood to survive the trauma of slavery.

Sethe's exile leads us to grasp the profound identity crisis she faces. Her name and story nearly disappear: "Everybody knew what she was called, but nobody anywhere knew her name. Disremembered and unaccounted for..." (Morrison, 2004, p. 323). This highlights how slavery not only physically displaces women but also denies them recognition and agency, stripping them of their identities. Similarly, Denver's exile is shaped by loneliness and invisibility; Morrison writes, "It was lovely. Not to be stared at, not seen... Needing nothing. Being what there was" (Morrison, 2004, p. 139). This reveals Denver's fragile

selfhood, shaped by isolation and the haunting legacy of her family's past. Her struggle to find herself is further emphasized when the author states: "Nothing could be counted on in a world where even when you were a solution you were a problem" (Morrison, 2004, p. 302), illustrating the precariousness of her identity in a hostile environment. Baby Suggs represents spiritual exile. Morrison asks, "What for? What does a sixty-odd-year-old slave woman who walks like a three-legged dog need freedom for?" (Morrison, 2004, p. 166), which underscores the deep alienation and displacement she feels even after physical emancipation. Thus, exile transcends physical boundaries and invades the spirit, compounded by personal and communal betrayal.

Turning to colonial Algeria, we find that exile similarly disrupts women's identities but within a different socio-political framework. For Zohra, exile means losing her nomadic freedom and sense of self. She describes forced settlement as akin to succumbing to a disease ; she writes ,"Zohra, elle, n'avait pas choisi de quitter ce monde. Elle n'en avait pas été bannie. Elle était tombée en exil dans l'immobilité sédentaire comme on succombe à une maladie" (Mokeddem, 1997, p. 310). Moreover, the transition from a nomadic to a sedentary life feels like "un peu de mort qui vient parasiter la vie" (p. 32), symbolizing the erasure of her identity tied to movement and land. Therefore, Zohra's feminist consciousness is deeply connected to this freedom, making exile a stifling and alienating experience.

Leïla's exile, on the other hand, manifests internally as silence and confinement. Mokeddem (1997) wrote: "Leïla ne parlait plus que pour se défendre... Les livres étaient les seuls intimes dans cette vie divergente" (p. 315), meaning that Leïla's intellectual refuge is a form of resistance against the social isolation imposed on her. Her quiet rebellion, such as attending forbidden burials, symbolizes a refusal to accept imposed stillness. Furthermore, Leïla's physical movement becomes a form of resistance against the stillness of exile.

Ultimately, she seeks physical exile as the only way to freedom and self-fulfillment: “La liberté exigeait d’elle d’autres départs, d’autres ruptures...” (Mokeddem, 1997, p. 315). Through this, we understand that exile under colonialism is not simply leaving home but a deep disruption of identity, belonging, and self-worth. Saâdia’s exile is even harsher, as Mokeddem notes: “Pendant plus d'une dizaine d'années, Saâdia n'eut aucune nouvelle de sa famille... Toute missive, tout messager lui auraient valu une deuxième expédition punitive” (Mokeddem, 1997, p. 56). This illustrates the complete severance from community and the punitive nature of her banishment. Moreover, Mokeddem argues: “A Béchar, Saâdia n’eut droit, encore une fois, qu’à un petit rectangle de ciel” (Mokeddem, 1997, p. 63), using this metaphor to emphasize that Saâdia’s exile is both spatial and psychological imprisonment.

In *Beloved*, Sethe, Denver, and Baby Suggs experience exile as isolation, spiritual alienation, and loss of community, reflecting hooks’ view that oppression fragments the self on multiple levels. In *Les Hommes qui marchent*, Zohra’s forced settlement, Leïla’s internal silence, and Saâdia’s banishment all illustrate how colonial and patriarchal systems disrupt women’s autonomy and selfhood. Spivak’s (1988) theory of the subaltern helps explain why exiled women are often silenced or erased. She argues: “The ideological construction of gender keeps the male dominant. If, in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow” (Spivak, 1988, pp. 82-83).

Their struggle to reclaim voice through storytelling, intellectual pursuit, or small acts of defiance shows how the subaltern resists even in conditions of exile. Spivak’s framework illuminates how these women’s experiences of displacement become both sites of loss and sources of resistance. When we compare these narratives, we observe clear parallels. Exile is not just physical displacement but a profound crisis of identity that separates women from their communities, land, and selves. Both Morrison and Mokeddem

show how women's bodies become contested spaces of control and resistance. For instance, Sethe's internal exile and the haunted house at 124 mirror Zohra's loss of nomadic freedom and Leïla's silent confinement. Baby Suggs' spiritual exile corresponds to Saâdia's forced banishment, illustrating exile's fracturing effect on belonging and selfhood.

However, we also notice important differences. Morrison's *Beloved* ties exile closely to the trauma of slavery and family separation, focusing on reclaiming identity through memory and community. Mokeddem's *Les Hommes qui marchent* situates exile within colonial violence, state control, and forced sedentarization, emphasizing cultural dislocation and physical banishment. Besides, resistance differs: Morrison's women reclaim identity through spiritual healing and emotional resilience, while Algerian women resist through physical movement, endurance, and subtle defiance. As exile severs women from their communities and selves, memory and trauma become the battlegrounds where they reclaim voice and agency.

3. Memory and Trauma as Feminist Acts of Resistance

When we consider the role of memory and trauma in both novels, we find that these elements are central to how women confront their pasts. We see that remembering painful experiences becomes a way for women to resist the violence and silence imposed on them. Indeed, both novels demonstrate how memory empowers women to find strength and keep their stories alive. In Morrison's *Beloved*, we observe memory as unavoidable and deeply physical. Sethe cannot escape the trauma of slavery because her memories are embodied by Beloved, who returns as a ghost to show how the past continues to haunt her. We hear Sethe say:

> I was talking about time. It's so hard for me to believe in it. Some things go. Pass on. Some things just stay. I used to think it was my rememory. You know. Some things you forget. Other things you never do. But it's not. Places, places are still there. If a house burns down, it's gone, but the place—the picture of it—stays, and not just in my rememory, but out there, in the world. (Morrison, 2004, p. 43).

Through this quote, we understand that trauma is not confined to the mind but exists in the world around us. We recognize that some memories, especially painful ones, do not fade but return unexpectedly. Beloved's return gives physical form to this concept. She does not haunt the house merely as a symbol but enters Sethe's life as a real presence. Morrison writes: "Beloved bending over Sethe looked the mother, Sethe the teething child, for other than those times when Beloved needed her, Sethe confined herself to a corner chair. The bigger Beloved got, the smaller Sethe became" (Morrison, 2004, p. 294). Here, Beloved's presence overwhelms Sethe, reversing their roles. Sethe becomes passive and dependent, while Beloved grows stronger.Sethe is trapped by the weight of her past and trauma. Morrison thus shows us that remembering is necessary; Sethe must confront Beloved, her living trauma, to begin healing. By refusing to forget what slavery did to her and her child, Sethe resists the system that tried to silence her. Her suffering compels the community to acknowledge her pain. Although memory does not free her immediately, it as the first step toward reclaiming voice and identity. Furthermore, Morrison portrays the community as vital in transforming trauma. Through the support of other Black women, Sethe begins to heal. In *Beloved*, the gathering of women to exorcise the ghost is both a literal and symbolic reclaiming of space from trauma.

Turning to Mokeddem's *Les Hommes qui marchent*, we find that memory also plays a central role but functions differently. Memory is passed from one generation of women to the next, and those who survived colonial violence embody their suffering in how they live, speak, and resist silence. We see this as a refusal to forgive or forget colonial crimes. For example, Zohra continues to speak of the past because:"Les vérités qui blessent sont les premières qu'on voudrait jeter à l'oubli. Et ce sont celles-là, précisément, qui nous enferrent et nous enferment" (Mokeddem, 1997, p. 87). We understand that painful truths, once buried, do not disappear but trap women unless confronted. Through testimony and

intergenerational dialogue, these women resist the demand to forget.

Unlike *Beloved*, where memory haunts and isolates, *Les Hommes qui marchent* uses memory to build identity. Leïla, though not a direct victim of violence, inherits its weight. We follow her journey as she connects with this memory to understand herself and continues the resistance of the women before her. She expresses it as follows: “Je ne fais que ce que je peux et à quel prix! C'est ça qui m'étouffe de plus en plus. Ici, on ne vit pas, on subit. On ne rit pas, on périt chaque jour. Ici, tout est dramatique. Pourquoi la légèreté et le rire n'existent-ils que dans mes livres, hanna?” (Mokeddem, 1997, p. 277). Through this, we see how Leïla feels trapped and exhausted. She admits that even doing her best costs her emotionally. We realize that she does not truly live but merely survives. Every day feels like a slow death. She finds no joy around her, only in books, which become her escape and a quiet form of resistance against a life of silence, pain, and control.

Saâdia’s experience further reveals how memory and trauma become powerful tools of feminist resistance. We witness her life beginning in mourning denied maternal love, which drives her to seek her mother’s forgiveness at the cemetery. This private grief isolates her but also frees her from domestic submission. Her rape marks a violent rupture, yet she reclaims power by narrating it in her voice: “Il me viola. Plus que la douleur… c’est un sentiment de révolte et de honte qui me fut le plus insupportable” (Mokeddem, 1997, p. 45). It sense that Saâdia chooses revolt over silence, refusing to be silenced by trauma. At the institution where she is held, Saâdia rejects all forms of control: “Ordres, chantages, menaces, plus rien n’avait d’emprise sur elle… la mort était certes la moins séduisante des libertés. Mais liberté tout de même” (Mokeddem, 1997, pp. 63-64). We see that this refusal, even at the cost of her life, redefines autonomy and resistance. Her trauma sharpens her will, as described: “Sa mélancolie se muait en combativité et en défi” (Mokeddem, 1997, p. 57). Remembering, for Saâdia, becomes a radical act of courage; we

understand that returning to painful memories is not weakness but a confrontation with oppression:“La souffrance de revoir les lieux d’une mémoire blessée ?” (Mokeddem, 1997, p. 121). Through silence, defiance, and refusal, Saâdia transforms trauma into survival, and survival into resistance.

Bell hooks (2015) emphasizes the importance of collective memory and solidarity among marginalized women as tools for healing and empowerment. She notes that, too often, “we did not talk about ourselves, about being black women, about what it means to be the victims of sexist-racist oppression” (hooks, 2015, p. 24). In *Beloved*, Sethe’s memories embodied in Beloved and the community’s support during the exorcism reflect hooks’ idea that resistance is both individual and collective. In *Les Hommes qui marchent*, memory passes from generation to generation; Zohra and Leïla resist forgetting colonial violence, and Saâdia transforms trauma into survival and resistance. Spivak’s (1988) postcolonial feminism helps us understand how remembering and narrating trauma become political resistance for women whose voices are suppressed. Sethe’s confrontation with her past and Saâdia’s refusal to be silent about her pain are acts of “speaking as the subaltern.” Yet, as Spivak points out, “within the effaced itinerary of the subaltern subject, the track of sexual difference is doubly effaced” (Spivak, 1988, p. 82), emphasizing that women’s experiences are not only marginalized by race and colonialism but also by gender. Spivak’s theory reveals that remembering is a dangerous but necessary way to reclaim agency and resist erasure.

Beloved and *Les Hommes qui marchent*, share several key similarities and differences regarding memory and trauma as feminist acts of resistance. Firstly, both novels emphasize memory as a crucial tool for reclaiming identity and resisting erasure. In *Beloved*, Sethe’s “rememory” embodies the persistence of trauma, while in *Les Hommes qui marchent*, memory is passed down through generations as a form of cultural survival.

We see in both texts that women's bodies become sites where personal and collective histories intersect, and remembering painful truths serves as an act of defiance against systems that seek to silence them. Moreover, community plays an important role in healing and resistance: Morrison's depiction of the Black women's gathering to exorcise Beloved parallels Mokeddem's portrayal of intergenerational dialogue among Algerian women. We also find that both narratives explore the ambivalence of silence and speech, showing how breaking silence can be necessary for healing, but silence can also be a strategic form of resistance or imposed condition.

However, there's several important differences. The novels differ in their historical and cultural contexts, which shape how trauma and memory manifest. Morrison's *Beloved* uses supernatural and symbolic elements to depict trauma's psychological impact, with the ghost of Beloved serving as a haunting embodiment of the past. This approach highlights the internal, psychological struggle of healing from slavery's legacy. In contrast, Mokeddem's *Les Hommes qui marchent* presents trauma more concretely through lived experiences of colonial violence, forced sedentarization, and political exile. We see that the trauma here is embedded in social and political realities, and memory functions as a collective, cultural inheritance rather than an individual haunting. Resistance also takes different forms: in *Beloved*, Sethe's confrontation with trauma is deeply personal and spiritual, focusing on reclaiming identity through memory and community healing. Conversely, in *Les Hommes qui marchent*, resistance is often enacted through endurance, physical movement, intellectual defiance, and cultural preservation amid ongoing colonial oppression. Furthermore, while Morrison's novel centers on the aftermath of slavery and the quest for psychological freedom, Mokeddem's work grapples with the continuing presence of colonial violence and the struggle for personal liberation. Memory and trauma are not mere wounds but powerful catalysts that ignite women's resistance and pave the way

toward empowerment.

4. Reclaiming a Voice, a Place, and Empowerment

When we examine the theme of reclaiming a voice, a place, and empowerment in these feminist novels, we notice that both focus on women who actively fight against various forms of oppression. Although the stories take place in very different times and places, slavery in America and colonial rule in North Africa, the female characters in both novels demonstrate remarkable strength and courage as they strive to reclaim control over their lives. In *Beloved*, we see how Sethe embodies resistance on both mental and emotional levels. For example, she declares, "No more running—from nothing. I will never run from another thing on this Earth" (Morrison, 2004, p. 18). This statement reveals her readiness to confront her traumatic past rather than avoid it, marking a pivotal moment of bravery and self-assertion. Furthermore, Morrison clarifies that "freeing yourself was one thing, claiming ownership of that freed self was another" (Morrison,2004, pp. 111–112), which teaches us that freedom alone is insufficient; we must also embrace and take responsibility for our freedom to truly be empowered. Denver, Sethe's daughter, also exemplifies growth when she realizes her own identity, feeling "needing nothing. Being what there was" (Morrison, 2004, p. 139), which shows her emerging confidence and self-acceptance. In addition, Baby Suggs, as a spiritual leader, encourages the community to embrace self-love, urging them to "Love it hard" (Morrison, 2004, p. 103). This powerful message teaches us that loving oneself is a vital form of resistance against the dehumanization caused by slavery.

Correspondingly, Les *Hommes qui marchent* presents resistance in a variety of ways. For instance, Zohra refuses to accept her subjugated role in the colonial system when she boldly states, "Je ne suis ni ta bonne ni ton esclave, madame Perez" (Mokeddem, 1997, p.

35), asserting her dignity and rejecting servitude. Moreover, she preserves the memory of resistance by singing, “Zohra, la femme aux tatouages sombres, leur chanta la complainte du S'baâ” (Mokeddem, 1997, p. 132), which symbolizes how cultural expression becomes a form of defiance. Leïla, meanwhile, uses education as her weapon, explaining, “Craie, ardoise, encrier, plume, cahiers, livres... Plus tard encore, ils seraient ses armes et moyens de résistance” (Mokeddem, 1997, p. 124). This shows us that knowledge and learning empower her to challenge oppression intellectually. Leïla also speaks out against the new forms of oppression women face after independence, lamenting, “Ils ont détruit mes souvenirs d’enfant et veulent brider mes espoirs !” (Mokeddem, 1997, p. 247), which reflects her awareness of ongoing struggles and her refusal to be silenced. Saâdia exemplifies physical and mental resistance, declaring, “Plutôt mourir que céder” (Mokeddem, 1997, p. 64), showing her determination to resist at all costs. She fights back against her abusers, as described in “Elle se battit maintes fois avec des hommes pervers [...] elle avait gagné la paix et le respect” (Mokeddem, 1997, pp. 57–58), and her walking after captivity symbolizes reclaiming her freedom and agency.

Bell hooks (2015) observes that “Black women were often told that we should find our dignity not in liberation from sexist oppression but in how well we could adjust, adapt, and cope” (p. 21). This expectation to endure rather than resist highlights the additional barriers Black women faced in seeking empowerment. The female characters in *Beloved* and *Les Hommes qui marchent* challenge this narrative by refusing mere adaptation and instead actively resisting the systems that oppress them. In Morrison’s novel, Sethe, Baby Suggs, and Denver embody different forms of resistance whether through direct defiance, spiritual leadership, or community engagement demonstrating that empowerment comes from reclaiming agency and refusing to be defined by oppression.

Similarly, in Mokeddem's work, Zohra, Leïla, and Saâdia resist both colonial and patriarchal constraints through speech, education, and acts of survival, showing that true dignity is found not in passive endurance but in active opposition to injustice.

Spivak's (1988) theory further underscores that when women are denied a public voice, their resistance is often embodied in actions, silences, or the transmission of memory. Spivak explains, "To confront them is not to represent (vertreten) them but to learn to represent (darstellen) ourselves" (p. 84), highlighting that empowerment is not simply about speaking out for others, but about refusing erasure and asserting one's dignity and agency in whatever ways are possible within oppressive systems. When we compare *Beloved* and *Les Hommes qui marchent*, we find that both novels focus on women who actively resist various forms of oppression, slavery in America and colonial rule in North Africa and demonstrate remarkable strength and courage in reclaiming control over their lives. In both narratives, resistance manifests not only through overt rebellion but also through survival, community support, spiritual leadership, education, and cultural expression. The female characters refuse to accept imposed roles or passive endurance; instead, they assert their dignity and agency through speech, defiance, and solidarity. Motherhood and community emerge as pivotal sources of strength and empowerment, whether through Sethe's maternal sacrifice and Baby Suggs' spiritual guidance in *Beloved* or through Zohra's storytelling and intergenerational memory in *Les Hommes qui marchent*. Education and intellectual empowerment also serve as key tools of resistance, exemplified by Leïla's fight for knowledge and Denver's journey toward self-acceptance.

However, the novels differ significantly in their historical and cultural contexts, which shape the forms and expressions of resistance. *Beloved* centers on the psychological and spiritual healing in the aftermath of American slavery, emphasizing reclaiming identity

and community healing, while *Les Hommes qui marchent* is grounded in the ongoing realities of French colonialism and Algerian patriarchy, highlighting political defiance, cultural survival, and endurance amid continued oppression. Furthermore, the novels portray silence and speech differently. In *Beloved*, breaking silence is necessary for healing, whereas in *Les Hommes qui marchent*, silence can be both an imposed condition and a strategic form of resistance. These thematic differences are reflected in their narrative styles, with *Beloved* employing symbolic and psychological motifs and *Les Hommes qui marchent* offering a more concrete socio-political critique. Together, these works provide rich, complementary perspectives on how women resist and empower themselves within oppressive systems shaped by race, gender, and history.

In conclusion, by examining *Beloved* by Toni Morrison and *Les Hommes qui Marchent* by Malika Mokeddem, we see how women face and fight against different forms of oppression caused by slavery and colonialism. Although these stories take place in very different times and places, America and Algeria, we find many similarities in how women's lives, bodies, and identities are affected. Using concepts from intersectionality and postcolonial feminism, we understand that resistance and empowerment take many forms, ranging from personal struggles to collective support and the act of remembering the past. Both novels show us that memory and trauma are central to women's experiences. Remembering what happened is painful but also necessary for healing and reclaiming power.

IV. Conclusion

This dissertation explored how literature can be used to resist systems of oppression and reclaim silenced voices, through a comparative study of Toni Morrison's *Beloved* and Malika Mokeddem's *Les Hommes qui marchent*. Though the two works come from different cultures, histories, and languages, our research found that they speak to each other in important ways. The analysis revealed that the similarities between the two novels are more significant than their differences. Both texts express shared concerns with trauma, memory, identity, and the consequences of historical violence, especially on women from marginalized communities. Through the use of Gayatri Spivak's subaltern theory and bell hooks' intersectional feminism, this dissertation highlighted how both authors bring forward the voices of those who have been historically excluded, ignored, or misrepresented. These theories helped us interpret how Morrison and Mokeddem center the experiences of women who are oppressed not only by colonial and patriarchal systems, but also by race, gender, class, and social hierarchies. The novels show that subaltern women are often denied the ability to speak and define themselves, but they also show how those same women resist, survive, and reclaim that right through personal and collective struggle.

This comparative study supports the value of reading across cultures using shared critical frameworks. It also proves that certain experiences, particularly those of colonized and racialized women, transcend national boundaries. Literature written by women of color offers unique insights into how power operates and how it can be resisted. The stories of characters reveal common strategies of survival, resilience, and defiance. That being said, our comparative study of the two novels is not exhaustive or complete. Many relevant aspects and potential research questions could not be covered within the limits of this dissertation. This dissertation underscores literature's transformative potential not only as a space for historical reckoning but also as a domain where marginalized voices reclaim their

agency through the written word. The interplay between trauma, identity, and resistance within *Beloved* and *Les Hommes qui marchent* affirms that storytelling remains one of the most profound instruments of social change.

More importantly, however, the two selected novels offer additional areas of interest that deserve further investigation, such as the psychological impact of trauma, the role of memory and silence, or the philosophical reflections embedded in the narratives. Future researchers are encouraged to approach these texts from different perspectives, including psychoanalysis, language and discourse analysis, or even comparative mythology. Both Morrison and Mokeddem provide complex representations of marginalized voices, which can be examined through various theoretical lenses beyond feminist critique. Other approaches such as psychoanalysis, discourse analysis, or even comparative mythology can offer fresh insights into how these works articulate themes of resistance and survival. Both authors provide representations of marginalized voices that invite further exploration beyond the scope of feminist perspective.

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