



Neural Trauma and Gendered Oppression in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*: A Neurofeminist Analysis of Memory, Cognition and Agency in Enslaved Women

Muhammad Ajmal¹, Atiqa Kanwal² & Rozina Bibi³

¹Associate Professor, Department of English Language and Literature, Shaikh Ayaz University, Shikarpur, Pakistan, Email: muhammad.ajmal@saus.edu.pk

²Visiting Lecturer, College of Art & Design, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan, Email: atiqakanwal27@gmail.com

³Lecturer, Department of English Linguistics and Literature, Riphah International University, Islamabad, Pakistan, Email: rozina377@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received: February 05, 2025
Revised: March 06, 2025
Accepted: March 08, 2025
Available Online: March 10, 2025

Keywords:

Neurofeminism, neural trauma, gendered oppression, memory, cognition, agency, enslaved women, trauma studies, cultural trauma, post-traumatic stress disorder

Corresponding Author:

Rozina Bibi

Email:

rozina377@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

*This study aims to investigate the convergence of neural trauma, gendered oppression and memory in Toni Morrison's *Beloved* through the perspective of neurofeminism. Bridging feminist critiques of neuroscience with trauma theory, the research assesses the cognitive and psychological effects of slavery on enslaved women, specifically Sethe and Denver in *Beloved*. This research analyzes the novel's nonlinear narrative structure and the characters' psychological struggles in light of the traumatic neurological mechanisms, such as memory fragmentation, dissociation, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). It also asks how gendered oppression exacerbates neural trauma, hindering agency and entrenching systemic violence against Black women. The idea of neuroplasticity is also touched on, with the interpersonal aspects of cognitive resilience and emotional repair developed into a model of communal storytelling and kinship. At the same time, this interrogation — through the lens of neurofeminism — reconsiders the often cognitive-centric neuroscientific paradigms that, at times, beyond the bounds of historical context, have acted as if trauma could be understood independent of the sociopolitical context in which its constituents developed. This study concludes that Morrison's *Beloved* is a great literary meditation on the neurological traumas of enslavement and the agony toward selfhood and healing.*



Introduction

Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987) stands as a cornerstone literary examination of the psychological and emotional toll of slavery, especially on Black women. The novel explores the neural traumas of systemic racial and gendered violence, as lived by the characters through fragmented memories, a sense of dissociation and battles over agency. This study looks at Morrison's narrative not only in terms of its nuanced presentation of trauma, but as a text that might draw parallels with our understanding of the cognitive and memory dysfunction experienced by enslaved women today, engaging both neuroscience and feminist critique as critical discourses in equating Morrison's work with contemporary understandings of trauma.

The psychological and cognitive effects of extreme violence have been a focus of trauma studies for decades, and the study of these has been particularly relevant with regards to slavery. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)—a disorder marked by intrusive memories, emotional numbness, and dissociation—conceptualizes the primary framework through which to consider Sethe's psychological torment in *Beloved* (Caruth, 1996; Herman, 1997). The brain shattered by trauma, a Hallelujah moment for those of us who studied the draft of this book: here it was in her fragmented memories in her hallucinations of *Beloved*, narrated the way we know people with PTSD describe memory dysregulation and fragmentation (Van der Kolk, 2014). Morrison's non-linear narrative, with sudden jumps in time and perspective, mirrors the fragmented cognitive process that trauma victim's experience, deepening the novel's neuropsychological complexity (Eyerman, 2001).

Additionally, the neural trauma inflicted by a deep-seated gendered oppression is compounded as enslaved women received not just physical violence, but also sexual abuse and control over their reproductive lives, all of which had long-lasting impacts on their cognitive and emotional states (Davis, 1983; Spillers, 1987). Neurofeminist scholars argue that mainstream neuroscience tends to neglect sociopolitical factors, instead emphasizing biological determinism (Fine, 2013). By showing how memory and selfhood are socially and historically archived rather than biologically inscribed, Morrison's representation of Sethe's trauma refuses this reductionist lens (Hartman, 1997). Also related to how people are able to respond to trauma is with regards to the concept of neuroplasticity—the brain's ability to adapt and rewire itself (Perry & Szalavitz, 2017, p. 6)—which is further evident in the analysis of the resilience that the overall community of Denver has endured and that their emotional and cognitive survival depends on and relies on.

This study falls within the emerging territory of neurofeminism, which criticizes the masculinist bias inherent within much of neuroscience, but also seeks to combine feminist approaches to cognitive and psychological studies (Bluhm et al., 2012). Through a neurofeminist lens, this study illustrates how Morrison's writing conveys not only the neural trauma of enslavement but also a counter-narrative to Western scientific discourses that have pathologized Black women's mental health experiences. Implying that alluding to a more circuitous, tangled, and inter-subjective understanding of trauma, cognition and memory in both the literary and neuroscientific discourses is vital to examining the construction and portrayal of memory through literature.

Rationale of the Study

The terror of *Beloved* —the fear and anxiety, the violence and degradation —is a literary exploration of slavery's enduring psychological, emotional and cognitive consequences, especially on enslaved Black women. Using techniques such as fragmented memories, dissociation and the ghost of a given past trauma, the novel paints a very vivid picture of neural trauma. Although previous readings of *Beloved* foreground trauma theory, psychoanalysis, and feminist criticism, neurofeminism offers an unprecedented collaborative lens through which to investigate

how memory, cognition, and agency are influenced by past mistreatment not solely by societal constructs but also through neural trauma as an embodied phenomenon.

It is important for its attempt to link feminist literary criticism (which often ignores race) and cognitive neuroscience (which can be redolent of androcentrism and racism). The psychological experiences of enslaved women have long been marginalized in Western scientific discourse — Morrison's novel is a counter-narrative towards that impulse and refuses reductive understandings of trauma in ways that go beyond the trauma itself. Using neurofeminist approaches, this work reveals not only how the interlocking oppressions of gender and race shape memory and agency, but also how memory can function as a source of neural resilience and healing through storytelling and kinship. This analysis enlarges the field of trauma studies that has, until now, shied away from acknowledging the multidimensionality of trauma, and demonstrates the crucible for intersectional analysis within both literature and cognition.

Statement of the Problem

Although *Beloved* has inspired a great deal of scholarship on trauma, relatively little of it has considered the novel through a neuro-feminist lens that draws on feminist neuroscience, cognitive psychology and literary analysis. Though important progress has been made, little attention has been paid specifically to the psychological and neural effects of trauma experienced by enslaved women, especially in terms of memory fragmentation, dissociation, and agency. The vast majority of existing trauma theory studies also become too concerned with the psychoanalytic and/or cultural implications of trauma associated with gendered violence and oppression; studies often neglect the cognate degree of neuronal/cerebral entropy possible. Additionally, traditional neuroscience has been historically androcentric and has not addressed how trauma specifically manifests itself in women, especially Black women who experience racialised gender-based violence.

Research Questions

- 1) How does Morrison's representation of fragmented memory, dissociation and PTSD in *Beloved* correspond with neurocognitive trauma theories?
- 2) In what ways does gendered oppression make the psychological and neural trauma of enslaved women in *Beloved* more severe, impacting their sense of agency and selfhood?
- 3) How does a collective telling of stories and kinship help to mediate neural resilience and cognitive healing for characters like Sethe and Denver?

Literature Review

Emerging from the interplay between neuroscientific discourse and feminist thought, the field of neurofeminism engages with the assessment of gendered assumptions in neuroscientific research as it simultaneously considers how gendered experiences both reflect and inform common sensibilities regarding the activation of neural processes (Fine, 2017). This framework is especially necessary in considering the traumas of enslaved women, whereby the long-term neurological impacts of systemic violence, oppression, and forced labor aligns with cultural and literary depictions of these women's psychic and emotional fortitude (Hartman, 1997).

Neural Trauma and Memory in Narratives of Enslaved Women

Slavery-related trauma has effects that can be felt long past the event itself, defining the structure of the brain and forming memories (Van der Kolk, 2014). In fiction, enslaved women experience dissociative amnesia, intrusive memories, and fragmented identity as forms of neural trauma.

Morrison's (1987) *Beloved* indicates how traumatic memory resists linear narrative structures in favor of flashbacks, silence, and symbolic hauntings (Caruth, 1996). In this way, Sethe's haunting of her trauma feeds through fragmented cognition and sensory stimuli, consistent with neuroscientific accounts of trauma's encoding through the hippocampus and amygdala (Schacter, 2001). This neurofeminist understanding illustrates that memory is a form of survival, as well as a tool of victimization, in the stories of enslaved women.

It was a change in emotional processing rather than cognition that had my attention.

Neurofeminist studies underscore that chronic stress shaped by systemic oppression (e.g., patriarchy, sexism, racism) changes how people process information, make decisions, cope emotionally, and function in their agency (Taylor et al., 2000). The accounts of enslaved women often feature characters engaging in "hyper vigilance," "emotional numbing," or "maladaptive coping mechanisms"—all markers of prolonged exposure to trauma (Resnick et al., 1993). In her 1861 narrative, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, Harriet Jacobs addresses oppressive structures by introducing a protagonist, Linda Brent, who uses strategies such as secrecy, delayed gratification, and adaptive reasoning to navigate to resistance to her oppressors (Yellin, 2004). This is consistent with current neuropsychological research suggesting that marginalized populations form enhanced cognitive resilient capacities in reaction to chronic trauma (McEwen, 2012).

Fiction and the Agency and Neurofeminist Resistance within it

Enslaved women in fiction fight back against trauma's neurological and psychological barriers to agency, forging new selves through assertions of embodied resistance, narrative, and community building (Gilroy, 1993). Reference to trauma of survivors makes certain the redefinition of agency to include how trauma survivors negotiate constraints through conscious navigation of boundaries as they cultivate new selfhood (Rose & Abi-Rached, 2013). Celie's metamorphosis from oppressed tepee of the male-dominated aftermath of her life in *The Color Purple* (Walker, 1982) to a self-actualized actor in the world exemplifies the mediation of the language generative and the mediated relationships necessary for an evolving concept of self that is what it means to be neuroplastic in the face of life after trauma (Damasio, 1999). Fiction, thus, provides a potent neurofeminist critique of the ways in which women in slavery build agency in the midst of neurological wounds of oppression.

Toni Morrison's *Beloved* has been deeply investigated within the domains of trauma studies, feminist criticism, and African American literature, a neurofeminist reading—combining the fields of neuroscience, gender studies, and literary analysis—has yet to be applied to the novel's exploration of memory, cognition, and agency. This review explores the rich interdisciplinary scholarship on trauma and memory in literature; the gendered implications of psychological oppression; and current neurofeminist critiques of cognitive science, showing the interweaving threads moving Morrison's novel.

***Beloved* and Trauma, Memory and Cognition**

Beloved has been widely recognized by scholars as a trauma narrative revisiting fragmented memories and psychological disturbance. As Caruth (1996) suggests, trauma is revealed in literature through the rupturing of narrative coherence, such as in Sethe's fragmented retellings of her experiences of slavery and her act of infanticide. This mismatch between our memories and narrative relates to what we know about PTSD from neuroscience research, such as how experiences feel often feel nonlinear, detached, and hyper aroused (Van der Kolk, 2014). Likewise, Eyerman (2001) describes *Beloved* as an interrogation of cultural trauma, claiming that Sethe's

psychological distress is not merely individual but rather collective, resonating the historical inheritance of enslavement in the African American community.

From a cognitive standpoint, Morrison's nonlinear narrative structure, use of repetition, and fragmentation of narration also resembled the disruption of memory formation and recall wrought by trauma. According to Felman and Laub, "the survivor's own account is incomplete, fragmented, incoherent, sometimes inexplicable" (1992, 9), and it is precisely this problem of the incoherence and fragmentation of Sethe's own account that symbolic internalization of trauma cannot resolve. Neurocognitive research affirms this premise and indicates that extreme stress can deregulate the hippocampus (which is the area of the brain that initially consolidates memory) while at the same time hyper activating the amygdala (which governs our emotional reactions to fear and peril; Perry & Szalavitz, 2017).

Neurotrauma and Gendered Oppression in Enslaved Females

Thus, the entwining of trauma and gendered oppression becomes a crucial lens to understanding Sethe and the other female characters in *Beloved*. The sexual violence, reproductive control, and psychological degradation that enslaved women experienced were acts of brutality but they also caused severe neural and emotional trauma in black women (Davis, 1983). Following the ideals of Black feminism, Spillers (1987) elaborated on how Black bodies, and specifically the bodies of women, underwent an "ungendering" process through slavery, thus Islamizing them from an expected femininity and agency. This process plays out in Sethe's experience, where her identity as a mother is weaponized against her, leading to the act of infanticide.

Neuroscientific research has shown that the women's brains respond to trauma in contrasting patterns with men, with increased activation of the prefrontal cortex and limbic system, rendering women more prone to anxiety, depression and PTSD (Fine, 2013). Yet traditional neuroscience has drawn criticism that it is set within a methodologically male-centered approach that does not capture the gendered nature of violence and its neurocognitive effects. Neurofeminist scholars call attention to the impact of social and cultural issues on neural research and reject biological determinism in favor of an intersectional perspective (Bluhm et al. In *Beloved*, Sethe's past trauma is exacerbated by her status as a mother, a former slave and a survivor of sexual violence, which demonstrates the complex and interrelated ways that racialized and gendered oppression affect cognition and individual identity.

Reflections on Neurofeminism, Resilience, and Healing in *Beloved*

Though *Beloved* exposes the destructive nature of trauma, it leaves the readers / viewers with a sense of process or healing, particularly through collective narration of personal stories, friendships, love, kinship, and more importantly, confronting emotions. Neuroplasticity, which is the brain's ability to change and make new neural connections in response to trauma, is highly responsible for Denver's psychological development in moving past her mother's trauma and into the greater Black community (Perry & Szalavitz, 2017). [1:5] Hartman (1997) explains, "the collective narratives at the end of the line became a form of resistance, a struggle for the restoration of the subject's agency and the subject itself within a history that denied them both" [1:5].

For this reason, neurofeminism rejects the specific and individual pathology on which the paradigms of Western science are based, and against self, it stands up for a broader view of trauma, as a phenomenon embedded in a social and historical context (Bluhm et al., 2012). The narrative retelling of trauma in *Beloved* serves as a form of streaming record of a traumatic past that characterizes many trauma-based therapeutic models; survivors often recall and reconstruct

their past self in the presence of another in a safe place (Herman, 1997). This is consistent with work in cognitive therapy, suggesting that communal processing of traumatic memories can facilitate neural reorganization and emotional healing (Van der Kolk, 2014).

While existing scholarship on *Beloved* has demonstrated how the novel tempts us to reconcile its themes of trauma and memory, the neurofeminist approach is novel in its interdisciplinary efforts to integrate neuroscience with feminist theory and literary studies. Based on an analysis of the novel's treatment of cognitive dissonance, gendered oppression, and resilience, this study emphasizes how Morrison disrupts traditional, masculine models of trauma and presents an alternative position for psychological restoration. Using neurofeminism as a critical framework for a novel such as *Beloved* insists that trauma studies and cognitive neuroscience must be brought in conversation on more intersectional terms, and that doing so opens up new possibilities for understanding the role of literature in representing, and resisting, oppression.

Research Methodology

This study utilizes a qualitative research design, specifically, textual analysis and interdisciplinary interpretation to analyze the book, *Beloved*, from a neurofeminist perspective. The main mode of investigation is close reading, as related to Morrison's portrayal of trauma, memory, and cognition in the context of gendered oppression. Using trauma theory, feminist literary criticism, and cognitive neuroscience, the study investigates how Morrison depicts the psychological and neural effects of slavery, focusing particularly on (dysfunctional) narcissism, dopamine stimulation, and disorienting momentarily-after effects in Sethe's fragmented memories and a distorted sense of agency. The analysis will be underpinned by secondary sourcing, such as scholarship on trauma studies, neurofeminism, and African American literature. The study will also incorporate research from cognitive neuroscience concerned with trauma, PTSD, and gendered differences in neural resistance to oppression, offering neural appropriate dimensions to its literary concern. This perspective will shed light on how Morrison's narrative strategies echo the cognitive and neurobiological impact of trauma, leading to a finely tuned perception of the phenomena of memory, persistence and survival.

Theoretical Framework

This study is informed by a research agenda of neurofeminism which intends to challenge and deconstruct traditional neuroscience for its androcentric assumptions and addresses how social oppression and gender can affect cognitive and neural processes, functions and representations (Bluhm et al., 2012). Through the lens of neurofeminism, Sethe's experience of trauma, as well as the cognitive dissonance that accompanies her past, can be explored in saying that between deterministic accounts of female neurobiology, neurofeminism highlights the complexity of the intersection of social structures, historical violence, and neural adaptation. Trauma theory as posited by Caruth (1996) and Van der Kolk (2014) will further be utilized to analyze the disjointed yet circular narrative structure of *Beloved* which reflects the manner in which traumatic experiences rupture memory and perception. The study is also in conversation with Black feminist thought (Spillers, 1987; Hartman, 1997) that places the psychological and cognitive distress of enslaved women in the context of broader systems of racialized and gendered oppression. Through the synthesis of these theoretical approaches, the research will show that Morrison's *Beloved* is both a literary representation of neural trauma and a critique of the sociohistorical forces that mediate cognitive agency in oppressed women.

Data Analysis: Textual Excerpts with Interpretation

A neurofeminist reading of Toni Morrison's *Beloved* laid out here illustrates that the cognitive, neurological, and psychological aftermath of trauma engulfs enslaved women. Through close reading of selected passages, I show how trauma affects memory, cognition, and agency.

Fragmented Memory and Neural Trauma

Perhaps the most harrowing way that Morrison conveys trauma's effects on cognition is in Sethe's disjointed memories. The novel's nonlinear structure resembles the disordered nature of traumatic memory, as reflected in the following passage:

"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." (Morrison, 1987, p. 43)

Sethe's notion of "rememory" parallels findings in neuroscience about PTSD and how traumatic experiences remain acutely salient and intrusive, entering memory for individuals, often against their will (Van der Kolk, 2014). Neurofeminism criticizes the way that traditional neuroscience often fails to account for the specificity of responses to traumatic experiences through gender. Through Sethe's narrative, Morrison depicts how enslaved women experience cognitive ruptures differently because their bodies bear the effects of both racial and gendered oppression. The fragmentation of episodic memory is also noted, a mechanism through which trauma disrupts the brain's processes for fluent encoding and recall of memories (Caruth, 1996).

The Haunting Presence of *Beloved* and Cognitive Overload

Beloved's spectral return is a metaphor for the return of trauma in the mind, a reminder that memories buried at the unconscious level can always bubble up as a pathological burden. The moment when *Beloved* physically returns is accompanied by Sethe's intense disorientation and emotional chaos:

"She had to have it, she was laughing so much. And she had to have it, for Sethe was licked, tasted, eaten by *Beloved's* eyes." (Morrison, 1987, p. 57)

Beloved's gaze from a neurofeminist angle represents the neurological entrapment of trauma. "Licked, tasted, eaten" metaphorically describes Sethe's cognitive and emotional exhaustion, highlighting the notion of trauma-induced cognitive overload (Herman, 1992). Sethe's inability to cope with *Beloved's* return is a manifestation of how the brain grapples with hyper arousal and intrusive thoughts after extreme violence. The repetitive phrasing and disconnected syntax employed by Morrison mimic the interruptions in cognitive processing and neural pathways that occur during chronic stress and trauma (Schore, 2009).

Suppressed Agency and Neurobiological Impairment

Sethe's loss of agency due to past trauma is evident when she reflects on the murder of her child:

"I stopped him... I took and put my babies where they'd be safe." (Morrison, 1987, p. 164)

Sethe's language is splintered, defensive and self-referential, a marker of cognitive dissonance. Neurological studies indicate that those suffering severe trauma, especially in regard to gendered violence, experience a suppression of the executive function and as such loses cognitive structural abilities with regards to decision making (Perry, 1999). Morrison's portrayal of Sethe's mental processes is also consistent with research showing that the effects of long-term trauma can take

over the prefrontal cortex, affecting rational decision making and increasing emotional reactivity (McEwen, 2000). This further lends support for a neurofeminist critique of trauma as this model argues that traditional clinical neuroscientific models overlook the intersection of gendered systemic oppression with neural functionality (Bluhm, 2012).

Denver's Cognitive and Emotional Development as Neuroresilience

Similar to Sethe's trauma, which manifests in fragmented memory and suppressed agency, Denver embodies a sort of neuroresilience, the brain's capacity to adapt and heal from trauma. For her to seek help from the community is a shift towards self-agency:

"She walked toward the voices. Her stomach hurt, but she walked on." (Morrison, 1987, p. 243)

Denver's advancement illustrates the neuroplasticity of trauma survivors, or the degree to which external support systems lead to healing (Davidson & McEwen, 2012). Her agency stands in stark contrast to Sethe's psychological paralysis, emphasizing how trauma is gendered, and thus affects people differently. Through a neurofeminist lens, one might glean from Denver's experience that trauma changes cognition and memory, yet social intervention and collective support can reshape our neural maps such that resilience and recovery become the path of least resistance (Gilligan, 1993).

Discussion

This study's findings illustrate the ways Morrison's *Beloved* intricately depicts the neurobiological and cognitive derangements that arise in enslaved women as a result of trauma, underlining the importance of a neurofeminist approach. Its fragmented narrative structure and Sethe's shattered memory patterns reflect trauma-induced neural changes, consistent with contemporary understandings of PTSD and episodic memory dysfunction. Morrison's disjointed syntax, recurring imagery, and non-linear storytelling function as literary markers along the PTSD spectrum, providing a text-based embodiment of neurocognitive impairment.

In addition, the study illustrates how trauma specifically targeted based on gender, and specifically as linked to slavery, compounds cognitive dysfunction and confines agency. The battle between Sethe's memories and the fact of *Beloved's* presence beautifully demonstrate that trauma is not only a psychological but also a neurophysiological burden that becomes an essential part of an individual's identity and decision-making. The study also highlights the role of communal support and neuroresilience, as demonstrated by Denver's capacity to regain agency and interrupt the cycle of trauma.

The results of this study suggest that in fiction, neural trauma and gendered oppression can be said to operate in an inextricably mediated relationship, so that even the cognitive and emotional bearers of the enslaved woman's voice become subject to transformation by systemic violence. Through the textual analysis of *Beloved*, we see that Sethe's fractured structure of memory and these recurrent traumatic flashbacks reflect clinical symptoms of PTSD. Using non-linear storytelling, Morrison mimics the fragmented quality of traumatic recollection, echoing the way enslaved women's trauma interrupts coherent self-narratives (Caruth 1996).

Linda Brent's psychological fortitude is demonstrated in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* by her use of deceit and secrecy. Her lengthy imprisonment in a crawl space for seven years — a form of sensory deprivation — fits with neuroscientific investigations of the impact of isolation on brain plasticity and cognitive resilience (McEwen, 2012). Brent's letters to her grandmother, in

which she pretends to escape, demonstrate how enslaved women employ cognitive strategies to resist oppression whilst lessening psychological injury (Yellin, 2004).

The Color Purple is another example of how neurofeminist agency manifests via evolution of language and emotional structure. Celie's metamorphosis is enabled by her reclaiming language and voicing subjectivity through writing. She embodies neuroplasticity and the fact that healing and empowerment are indeed possible even years after trauma (Damasio, 1999). Walker's epistolary form dramatizes how storytelling is a therapeutic act, retraining Celie's neural pathways in the direction of agency and self-worth (Taylor et al., 2000).

Conclusion

Through its examination of Morrison's *Beloved*, this study has illustrated how the neurobiological and psychological implications of trauma are intricately woven into the narrative structure of Morrison's novel, providing a strong case for the application of a neurofeminist lens. The novel's portrait of downtown life in the 1970s and '80s through fragmented memory, cognitive overload and the fight for agency also shows the deep and long-lasting impact of gendered and racial trauma. Sethe's fragmented memories, *Beloved's* ghostly existence, and Denver's eventual fortitude demonstrate that trauma severs not only cognition but also the ability to exercise choice.

Under a neurofeminist lens, *Beloved* problematizes the traditional neurosciences, with their failure to incorporate social and cultural factors relevant to trauma. Much of Morrison's narrative aligns with our current understanding of things like PTSD, neural plasticity, and trauma-induced cognitive impairments, emphasizing the intermingling of narrative, feminist neuroscience, and trauma studies in Morrison's work.

Ultimately, this study points to the importance of broadening trauma discourse to encompass gendered neurological experiences specifically shaped by historical oppression. This approach will enable us to query more incisively how race, gender, and cognitive trauma come together in literary representation, and, in turn, inform more inclusive and intersectional methodologies in both literary criticism and neuroscientific study of Literature.

References

1. Bluhm, R., Jacobson, A. J., & Maibom, H. L. (2012). *Neurofeminism: Issues at the intersection of feminist theory and cognitive science*. Palgrave Macmillan.
2. Caruth, C. (1996). *Unclaimed experience: Trauma, narrative, and history*. Johns Hopkins University Press.
3. Damasio, A. R. (1999). *The feeling of what happens: Body and emotion in the making of consciousness*. Harcourt Brace.
4. Davis, A. (1983). *Women, race & class*. Random House.
5. Eyerman, R. (2001). *Cultural trauma: Slavery and the formation of African American identity*. Cambridge University Press.
6. Felman, S., & Laub, D. (1992). *Testimony: Crises of witnessing in literature, psychoanalysis, and history*. Routledge.
7. Fine, C. (2013). *Delusions of gender: How our minds, society, and neurosexism create difference*. W. W. Norton & Company.
8. Fine, C. (2017). *Testosterone rex: Unmaking the myths of our gendered minds*. W. W. Norton & Company.
9. Gilroy, P. (1993). *The black Atlantic: Modernity and double consciousness*. Harvard University Press.

10. Hartman, S. (1997). *Scenes of subjection: Terror, slavery, and self-making in nineteenth-century America*. Oxford University Press.
11. Herman, J. L. (1997). *Trauma and recovery: The aftermath of violence—from domestic abuse to political terror*. Basic Books.
12. McEwen, B. S. (2012). *The end of stress as we know it*. Dana Press.
13. Morrison, T. (1987). *Beloved*. Alfred A. Knopf.
14. Perry, B. D., & Szalavitz, M. (2017). *The boy who was raised as a dog: And other stories from a child psychiatrist's notebook*. Basic Books.
15. Resnick, H. S., Kilpatrick, D. G., Dansky, B. S., Saunders, B. E., & Best, C. L. (1993). Prevalence of civilian trauma and posttraumatic stress disorder in a representative national sample of women. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 61(6), 984-991.
16. Rose, N., & Abi-Rached, J. M. (2013). *Neuro: The new brain sciences and the management of the mind*. Princeton University Press.
17. Schacter, D. L. (2001). *The seven sins of memory: How the mind forgets and remembers*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
18. Spillers, H. (1987). Mama's baby, papa's maybe: An American grammar book. *Diacritics*, 17(2), 64–81.
19. Taylor, S. E., Klein, L. C., Lewis, B. P., Gruenewald, T. L., Gurung, R. A., & Updegraff, J. A. (2000). Biobehavioral responses to stress in females: Tend-and-befriend, not fight-or-flight. *Psychological Review*, 107(3), 411-429.
20. Van der Kolk, B. A. (2014). *The body keeps the score: Brain, mind, and body in the healing of trauma*. Viking.
21. Walker, A. (1982). *The color purple*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
22. Yellin, J. F. (2004). *Harriet Jacobs: A life*. Basic Civitas Books.