RACE, HISTORY AND SEXUALITY: NEGOTIATING THE THIRD SPACE IN TONI MORRISON'S TRILOGY

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Conclusion

Summing up the Discussion

From the discussions in the previous chapters, it can be asserted that Morrison, as we find in the trilogy, has made deliberate attempts to retell the history of racism in America down from the age of slavery to the state of freedom. While commenting on the issues of Race and Sexuality, Morrison brings out the memory of a forty five years old American woman who had been hired during the Civil War and got involved in three kinds of jobs—a nurse, a cook, and 'commander of several men'; and who in 1868 asked the United States Senate for three years back pay,[1] but got rejected, because she was a woman and a 'raced woman'. Morrison reproaches that money, sex, race and class are entangled in the American approach to women in the politics of gender and race. The woman's claim or rather struggle for veteran's pay that remained quite unrewarded and unrespected in the patriarchal American society, moved Morrison so much that she chose to write powerful discourses on the nation's approaches to racism. We have seen that the social discrimination of the American national politics in the name of racism; such experiences of racism have been widely narrated not only in the trilogy of Morrison but in the whole body of literature produced by her.

In most of the postcolonial critical discussions, the 'raced culture' is narrated with the phrases of Derridian binary opposition such as Black/White or Self/Other. There is no denying the fact that identity of the Blacks is always fixed with the binary relation of whiteness; therefore in order to destroy the binary structure of power and identity in the politics of representation, Fanon says, "The Black must be Black; he must be Black in relation to the white man" (qt. Bhabha 1994: 340). In this regard Bhabha comments that Fanon's discourse of the 'human' emerges from the "signifying time-lag of cultural difference, in a space between the symbolization of the social and the 'sign' of its representation of subjects and agencies" (340).

Morrison reveals the White approaches to Black sufferance through the reaction of Schoolteacher to Sethe's murderous act of violence in *Beloved*:

"Inside two boys bled in the sawdust and dirt at the feet of a nigger woman holding a blood-soaked child to her chest with one hand and an infant by the heels in the other. She did not look at them; she simply swung the baby toward the wall planks, missed and tried to connect a second time, when out of nowhere in the ticking time the men spent staring at what there

was to stare at-the nigger boy, still mewing, ran through the door behind them and snatched the baby from the arch of its mother's swing (p.175)"

Against the heartbreaking agony of the Black mother, the scene creates no embarrassment in the white master who recognizes, quickly enough that "there was nothing here to claim", because "The three (now four—because she'd had the one coming when she cut) pickaninnies they had hoped were alive and well enough to take back to Kentucky, take back and raise properly to do the work Sweet Home desperately needed, were not" (*Beloved,* pp. 175-176). The Whites could never imagine what a Black mother could do in front of the dreadful threatening of the slave catchers; the nephew stares in disbelief, shakes uncontrollably, asks over and over: "what she want to go and do that for?" (177). In fact such an act of resistance is beyond imagination for any white supremacist.

Hybridity being a prime concern in a Third Space identity, Morrison's novels respond to the subject of racial hybridity with a realistic point of view, as it is narrated throgh the Golden Gray episode in *Jazz*. As a cultural group, the American Blacks have acquired so many white characters that it has become very difficult to distinguish them from the common American citizens except for their skin colour. Even among the coloured people of pure blood, there is a section who fall into neither of the distingiushed category, black or the white in terms of their physical feature and their nature of inheritance. It is a White stereotyping way to make the Blacks bother about the 'raced' condition. That is why Morrison has made a White supremacist father "sweat in shame" after discovering his daughter's act of involving in 'racial mixture', and the White mother's endeavours to conceal the black inheritance of her child. The light skin and the blond hair of Golden Gray in *Jazz* reveals the racial transformation; as Vikki Bell[2] points out, "his white mother Vera Louise decides to keep him and to let him 'pass' as white (but not as her son, because, as she was unmarried)"; the narrator says that what the white lady—who is forced by her father to shift from Vesper County to Baltimore because of her racial mixture—tells her new neighbours is partly true: "that she could not bear the narrow little ways of her home county, and that she had brought her servant and an orphaned baby she fancied to Baltimore" (*Jazz,* p.139). Carrying the problem of colour and identity to a further complex state of mind that she cannot avoid, which is haunted by the evidence of the boy's black father, which will reveal itself naturally on his body worries his white mother; and that is why she is trying to conceal the identity of her child from the neighbouring white society. Under such a complex turmoil of cultural location, especially in case of the people of mixed blood like Golden Gray, their identity has to be described with an intermediate terminology called 'Passing'; an identity marker which

remains in-between two identities distinguished by the dichotomy of Black/White. When the genealogy of his birth is disclosed to him at the age of eighteen, Golden becomes quite impatient to meet his father; and his encounter with his father is entwined with the question of 'being a son', as Bell points out "if one wants to show one's genealogy in the materiality of the body and to have a relationship based upon it, one has to embrace stories of blood, of history" (1995: p.7). Through Golden's encounter with his father, Morrison reveals the trauma of "Blackness"; and the black father's reaction "I know what you came for. To see how black I was" (*Jazz*, p.172), showcases the condition of "being raced" haunting every black mind; the complexity of the race and the cultural position is revealed in his agitation, "You thought you was white, didn't you? She probably let you think it" (172). What Golden Gray thinks over the matter of his mother hiding his black identity, reveals more crucial things about the black identity and the question of slavery looming large in the black psyche even after freedom, "She protected me! If she'd announced I was a nigger, I could have been slave!" (172). But although slavery is gradually disappearing from the African American society or at least expected to disappear, as Golden's father tells him, "They got free niggers. Always did have some free niggers. You could be one of them"; the trauma of falling into the dark world of slavery still haunts the psyche of every coloured folk. Hence Golden Gray refuses to accept an identity of a 'free Nigger', "I don't want to be a free nigger; I want to be a free man." Morrison's message is revealed in the words of the black father, "Be what you want – white or black. Choose. But if you choose black, you got to act black, meaning draw your manhood up – quick like, and don't bring me no white boy sass"(p.172). Golden's desire to be a 'free man' instead of a 'free Nigger' reveals the cultural difference that the Blacks have been experiencing which they want to do away with. It is 'enonce' that enunciates the negation of a 'black identity' that should be substituted with an impertial 'American identity'.

Here Morrison showcases the social condition of being a 'free man' that every coloured folk would long for, but to live in this type of a transit moment of cultural change is rather challenging. This tension between the terms 'man' and 'nigger' that Morrison discusses in her critical work *Playing in the Dark*, in connection with Hemingway's novel *To Have and Have Not* (1937) to show her deep concern for the black character's psyche. In the display of a black character in Hemingway's novel, who is not named but referred to as a "nigger" answers to the question of the dilemma of Golden's father Henry LesTroy in Morrison's *Jazz*, about the choice between being a "free black" or a "free man". Morrison says, "The spatial and conceptual difference is marked by the shortcut that the term "nigger"

allows, with all of its colour and caste implications. The term occupies a territory between man and animal and thus withholds specificity even while marking it" (*Playing in the Dark*, p.71). All through her novels Morrison has displayed a special concern for the racial issues in America; and her narratives make strong discourses on racial equality the nation wants urgently. In order to establish her ideas Morrison has recreated the nation's racial history through her novels.

On the matter of the black will for social and individual freedom revealed through the foundation of the black towns and through the women residents of the Convent respectively in *Paradise*, Morrison reveals how cultural hybridity began to grip the orthodox society of 'Black purity'. Following the events of Segregation and Disallowing, the black leaders were endlessly making efforts to construct isolated black towns where they could live without fear of the white hegemony. But in terms of the black women's will for individual freedom, and the subsequent attack on the Convent, Morrison has deliberately eliminated the racial codes, so that in the description of their lives and events, their racial identities would be quite irrelevant. Here Morrison rather seems to have blamed patriarchy (not black or white) for the racial hatred being spread in the society; and the event of 'shooting the white girl first' in the beginning of *Paradise* reveals that type of a racial hatred exposed by the patriarchal black leaders of Ruby. Thus Morrison deals with the issue of sexuality in the white dominated society in America controlled by patriarchal norms.

Like any other colonised society, African American cultural tradition also witnessed the colonial encounter. Therefore, "in order to create viable American identities", as the historian William Appleman Williams warned in 1980, "one needs to understand and acknowledge the imperial past."[3] It is in fact the event of imperialism that has contributed a lot towards the change of identity and the crisis of the identity among the Blacks in America as well. Morrison says that it is her curiosity about the origins and literary uses of the Africanist presence that has become an informal study of what she calls 'American Africanism'. In her own words, "It is an investigation into the ways in which a non-white, Africanlike (or Africanist) presence or persona was constructed in the United States, and the imaginative uses this fabricated presence served."[4] She makes it clear that her use of the term "Africanism" is not to suggest the larger body of knowledge on Africa that the philosopher Valentine Mudimbe means by the term "Africanism" nor to suggest the varieties and complexities of African people and their descendants living in America. She rather uses the term "Africanism" for the denotative and connotative blackness that African peoples have come to signify, and expose the views, assumptions, and the readings (rather misreadings) of

Eurocentric learning about this race of people who are not sure of their identity being in a condition of "Otherness". They can locate themselves neither among the so-called mainstream 'Americans' marked by their 'white skin' nor among the Africans who live only in their memory that reckon to them their cultural root. Living in America for generations, they have got an identity which is marked only by their 'black skin' and the inferior living conditions; and it works as a token of oppression that can be exercised upon them without any legal hazard. The blackness of the African Blacks is natural where they have nothing to feel the state of "Otherness" but it has become a badge of racial hatred and social malice; for they are obliged to bear with all sorts of inhumanities and the physical/mental harassments that they encounter on the roads, malls, restaurants and everywhere they go.

Regarding the 'raced condition'of the African American, Morrison points out that the Blacks in some cases preceded the White settlers, yet are deprived of the basic amenities of life only because of their racial identity. According to Morrison, "the absence of real knowledge or open-minded enquiry about the race under the biased ideological and imperialistic rationales for subjugation gave birth to an American brand of Africanism, which is marked by strongly urged, thoroughly serviceable, companionably ego-enforcing and pervasive nature" (*Playing in the Dark*, p.8). Through her novels Morrison reveals before us, as Caroline Brown says, "the individual and group worth of a race in an era of socially sanctioned African American invisibility and stigmatization."[5] The social identity of the African American community that Morrison presents in her novels reveal the negligence of the historians towards the Blacks as if they were not essential parts of American national life. It is clearly observable that the African Americans were racially oppressed during slavery; though they began to achieve numerous improvements in their status by means of their continuous efforts. Race is so strongly intruded into the socio-literary scenario in America that it has become a metaphor of the process of "othering the blacks", which according to Morrison is more necessary to Americanness, and "it rivals the old pseudoscientific and class-informed racialism" that the raced people are quite familiar with. Morrison furhter points out that the Americans (the Whites) cannot claim for themselves a political supremacy as the British or the Canadians do, "For in this part of the twentieth century, if the Americans are to be different, if they are to be Americans in some way that Canadians are not, that Britons are not, then they must be white Americans, and that distinction depends on a constantly reliable darkness. Deep within the word "American" as its association with race"(*Mouth Full of Blood*, p.208).

The novels of Toni Morrison are the historical documents of racial discrimination in the worst form that mankind all over the world have witnessed. Not only in her trilogy, but all

through her novels we see stunning records of racial exploitation. Everywhere we see the cry for legal justice, social equality and rights of living that get reflected in the lips of her characters. For instance, in her novel *Song of Solomon*, Morrison raises the issue of racial discrimination through the characters of Milkman Dead and Guitar. The picture of the racial discrimination becomes clear when Guitar says, "Where's the money, the state, the country to finance our justice? You say Jews try their catches in a court? Is there one courthouse in one city in the country where a jury would convict them? There are places right now where a Negro can't testify against a white man. Where the judge, the jury, the court are legally bound to ignore anything a Negro has to say" (*Song of Solomon*, pp.158-159).

The pages of American history are filled with such incidents which are quite about the happenings around the African American identity. According to Bhabha, "it is the incomprehensibility in the midst of the locutions of colonization that echoes with Morrison's insight into the "Chaos" that afflicts the signification of psyche and historical narratives in racialised societies" (Bhabha 1994: pp. 304-5). While talking about the relationship between the woman of colour and the European male, Frantz Fanon brings out the exercise of hegemonic feelings in colour distinction that makes the prime concern in all discourses on colour/race. Quoting Mayotte Capacia, Fanon tries to focus on the difference of the humankind by skin colour and the notion of hierarchy in both the oppressor and the oppressed. The black narrator in Mayotte's *I Am A Martinican Woman* says, "I would have liked to marry, but with a white man. Only a coloured woman is never quite respectable in the eyes of a white man—even if he loves her, I know well."[6]

Talking about the matter of gender discrimination and gender exploitation, Morrison says that in most cases women are inclined to subjugation by their own choice rather than being imposed upon. She points out that "self sabotage among woman is no secret", but the question is why we always "insist on chain, a convention for inserting all power upon man"; "Sexism", according to Morrison, "is not confined to men; there is no system, whether it is psychology, schooling or theology that can explain or locate the origin of the oppressor" (*Mouth Full of Blood*, p.87). But, the most effective saboteur as Morrison observes, is "she who needs no order" (87). So sexism as a way of the process of oppression, in most cases is found to be involving the women of the African American race as a whole and the feminists of the race in particular.

In her novels Morrison narrates the experiences of sexuality as it exists in the American black society. The instances of sexual harassment and sex offenders, as it exists quite commonly in the western societies, also equally exists in the African American

community life; but the cases of such sex offenders could hardly create any public reaction against such practices. In *Beloved* we see the white sexual repression over the black female body, where there is neither social nor legal provision for the protection of black women from sexual harassment of the white masters. That is why Baby Suggs' eight children born of different fathers is normally accepted, even though Sethe's 'molestation' and 'stealing of her milk' by the Whites is reacted with Sethe's infanticide.

Is white supremacy alone to be blamed for the sexual repulsion of the black women? In *Jazz* as well as in *Paradise* and *The Bluest Eye*, we see pictures of black women being molested, seduced and even raped by black men other than being sexually abused by the whites. In that sense the women body seems to be the common sexual property of the male sex, irrespective of status and colour. Sexuality here is treated as a property of individuals, which may reside in their hormones or their psyches. According to Gayle Rubin, "it may be construed as physiological or psychological, but within these ethnoscientific categories, sexuality has no history and no significant social determinants."[7] Of course, in *Paradise*, Morrison displays a feeble reaction and resistance against offences of the Blacks in terms of sexuality; where the sexual aggression of K.D. towards Arnette is negotiated in the initiative of Reverend Misner. This negotiation of the issue of sexuality in terms of Arnette- K.D. relationship can be accepted as a form of "new scholarship on sexual behaviour", which according to Rubin "has given sexuality a history and created a constructivist alternative to sexual essentialism" (Rubin 1984; Leitch et al. p.2386).

Considering the discourses on the politics of sexuality, Morrison's fiction can be read from several new perspectives; where we can find both heterosexual and lesbian sexual existence demonstrated through the black woman characters of her novels. Barbara Smith, for instance narrates Morrison's novel *Sula* as a lesbian novel, "Despite the apparent heterosexuality of the female characters, I discovered in rereading *Sula* that it works as a lesbian novel not only because of the passionate friendship between Sula and Nel but because of Morrison's consistently critical stance toward the heterosexual institutions of male-female relationships, marriage and the family."[8] This observation of Smith about *Sula* can also be applied to Morrison's other novels like *Paradise*, where Morrison has displayed the disbelief in the heterosexual relation institutionalized by marriage; that the novel displays through the frustration of Mavis over her marital life with her husband Frank, and her subsequent living among the women boarders of the Convent. Even in the two earlier novels of the trilogy, *Beloved* and *Jazz*, Morrison displays the black women's frustration in the institutional heterosexual relation, where woman body is treated as a plaything for the male sex. Besides

being sexually exploited by the white masters in slavery, black women have also to sacrifice their freedom in terms of their body even to the black male sex hunters. In *Beloved* Baby Suggs gave birth to several children with different male partners, even Sethe is also seen having sexual relation with Paul D, after the disappearance of her husband Halle; likewise, in *Jazz* we see the extra-marital love of Joe Trace and Dorcas and in *Paradise*, we see the perverted sexuality in the love making of Deek-Consolata, K.D.-Arnette and K.D.-Gigi relations. Like Barbara Smith, we can also make rereading of the novel *Paradise* from the point of view of lesbian existence, where we see a teen-aged girl Gigi living naked in the courtyard of the Convent.

Discursive Cultural Ambivalence and the Third Space

The question of Other/Self arises when the majority population of a society/nation begins to treat a minority section to be inferior and inefficient to be among them as members of such societies. The prime condition for being the self/other in America is the racial condition of Black/White; and here the Blacks are treated as an inferior race that can never reach the height of the white standard of living. It is not that only the Whites are solely to be blamed for hegemonic exercises over the coloured people; in many cases the people of the coloured races keep themselves at a safe distance from the Whites thereby giving the oppressors an advantageous position. The people of colour are so influenced by the white standard of living that they always long for the features of the Whites, even by forgetting their self-identity or their cultural root. Fanon very aptly narrates the context of Mayotte, who loves a white man unconditionally. The white man she loves is her landlord, from whom she asks for nothing, demands nothing, except for a little whiteness in her life. And when she asks herself whether he is handsome or ugly, she writes, "All I know is that he had blue eyes, blond hair, a pale complexion and I loved him". Fanon rewrites the words of the coloured woman as, "I loved him because he had blue eyes, blond hair and a pale complexion" (*Black Skin, White Mask*, p.25). The dreams and longings of the Martinican woman can be placed as a parallel with Morrison's Pecola Breedlove in her debut novel *The Bluest Eye*; who also desperately longs for the bluest eye, in order to have the privileges of white people. In fact she has developed an idea that it is the bluest eye that can wipe out the bereavements of her coloured life. Fanon reiterates that the plight of the coloured woman in the European context is the result of their own choice of adopting white standards that actually affect their own cultural identity. Fanon asserts that Mayotte like any other woman of her race would reiterate that their race must be whitened; they would not even think safeguarding "the originality of

that part of the world in which they grew up (Fanon,p.30)." The Martinique's case is not much different from the American Blacks. Despite having miscegenation and inter-racial inclinations, the Blacks in America want to live in the nation with self respect and with due recognition as Americans. Founding of 'all-black towns' showcases the self determination of the American Blacks to live a life of self respect; although there has been exceptions like Pecola Breedlove who represents a section that long for the white standard of living.

Morrison depicts the picture of the changing African American scenario with the changing attitude of the Blacks towards their living standard; and even their attitude to Africanism itself. Morrison with acute sensibility and responsibility for her race, tries to capture the pace and rhythm of the changing African American scenario; but while doing so, she has not spared the dark shadows of oppression that looms large in the minds of the people. However, the picture that we get from the fiction of Toni Morrison, we can assume that the unspeakable sufferings of the Blacks in America will obviously haunt the posterity of the race in America for many generations. Throughout her fictional creations, Morrison has produced powerful discourses that enunciate the anguishes of the soul of the black community, for being crushed and paralysed under the system of a highly racialised social construction. Her novels are the racialised histories of America, although written not in organized episodes but in a random choice of events pertaining to different fractions of the community's struggle for existence and uplift. The history of slavery that Morrison narrates in *Beloved* is the anguish of a black mother over the hateful tradition of slavery and slave catching. The damages that the African American community has suffered out of slavery has been visualized by Morrison in her novels through the experiences of the slave characters of the novel like Paul D, Stamps Paid, Sethe, Baby Suggs and Halle. It is Stamps Paid from whom we get the clearest panoramic view of the ravages of war, and the injuries suffered by the blacks:

"Eighteen seventy four and white folks were still on the loose. Whole towns wiped clean of Negroes; eighty-seven lynchings one year alone in Kentucky; four coloured schools burned to the ground; grown men whipped like children; children whipped like adults; black women raped by crew; property taken, necks broken, he smelled skin, skin and hot blood. The skin was one thing, but human blood cooked in a lynch fire was a whole other thing" (*Beloved*, p. 212).

The experience of the Blacks that Stamps Paid narrates brings before us the extraordinary history of abuse and racial hatred; and how the black psyche is haunted by the terrific experience of the brutality they witnessed. The experiences in the world of slavery have haunted the black psyche so badly that they find the terrifying ghostly presence in every

uncanny situation. Even the very first line of the novel *Beloved*, presents before us the picture of such a desolate and remorseful state of a black residence, "124 was spiteful. Full of a baby's venom"; and it looks like what Baby Suggs meant when she admonished Sethe: "Not a house in the country ain't packed to its rafters with dead Negro's grief (p.6). Morrison has not only seen slavery to be a denial of the human family, but she has also gone into the deeper sense of it as a human psyche as a socially imposed condition. With utterly graphic logic, as Vishnu Kant observes, "she gives us a world that is defined entirely in terms of human dismemberment: the body is pieced apart, the family is divided, the subject is cut off from its past."[9]

The Blacks who otherwise live in an air of a free community, is often haunted by the fear of losing their freedom to the white masters. The arrival of the white men, the fear of returning to slavery, the dread of physical torture and hunger, has taken away the power of speech from the Negroes present there on the scene where Sethe commits infanticide. Amidst the timid silence of the blacks, Sethe's murder of her child exposes the extremity of the bane of slavery, and the passive resistance of a black mother on the verge of situation that poses threat to the identity of her posterity. Through the character of Sethe, as Soyam Chaningkhombee points out, "Morrison shows that slavery values women not for who they are but for the capacity to reproduce more workers."[10] The novel displays a social turmoil, a traumatic condition where a mother is made to kill her own infant under searing terror of living in slavery. Death is more comfortable to the child, the mother thinks, than to grow in wretched conditions of existence under slavery. It is the motherly love that kills the child, not the urgency of circumstances.

The history of slavery that Morrison rewrites is carried over to the black life after the darkness of slavery, where the free Blacks, who come to the North are depicted with realistic perspectives in each of her trilogy. At the last chapter of *Beloved*, Morrison tells us, "This is not a story to pass on", which indicates that she intends to carry on the theme she has dealt with in *Beloved*. In the subsequent novel of the trilogy, *Jazz*, Morrison continues the history of the racial exploitation in America. In the novel, the history of Joe Trace stands for the history of the American blacks in the 1870s. Joseph Trace, in the novel, got an identity which had no connection to his blood, his parenthood, his culture or anything which in fact carries no meaning; it showcases the meaninglessness of the black life in a society where they were sold like cattle. The identity of Joe Trace is the misconception he had developed about his cultural root; and Morrison uses it as an "Enonce" for enunciation of the cultural difference in the White dominant American socio-cultural situation.

The identity of Joe Trace reveals a number of issues about the American Blacks and the questions about the identity of Joe replies to such issues. Joe himself is the best example of black hybridity; and he is the representative of such blacks whose identity is very difficult to trace out. Here Morrison seems to have used his second name 'Trace' as a symbol of this identity crisis of the blacks. Moving from one place to another, the young blacks like Joe became a 'lost generation' who had even missed the 'Trace' of their inheritance. That is why Victory (Mrs, Rhoda's youngest son) suggested aptly that he should have recorded his name as 'Joseph Williams'; it would perhaps help his parents (if they survived) trace him out, because they would at least remember that they had left him at William's place. Thus the irony inherent in Joe's name bears a great significance. It replies to several questions of a black identity—who his parents were, where he is and what sort of inheritance he bears—which are narrated through the experience of Dorcas and Joe in their love and marriage. The novel *Jazz*, as Jones observes, retells the story of *Beloved*, which Morrison regards as the essential story of the black experience in America. According to Jones, the story of the novel *Jazz* reveals the "fracturing of human psyches, souls, and bodies caused by slavery" (Jones,1997), and this fracture symbolized by Violet's cracks and Joe's traces, the cultural and situational forces that cause one "to devalue the self, to displace the self and to locate the best of the self in an 'Other'(1997)." Retelling the history of racial riot and the impact of racism, upon a particular community, Morrison reveals through her story a discourse that advocates the freezing of racial difference. Through the inherent metaphor of moving out of racial riot, Morrison narrates the reconstruction of identity in the African American community following different historical events.

Morrison's *Paradise*, which helped her complete a trilogy, required to her first to recognize and identify racially inflected language and strategies, then deploy them to achieve a counter effect, deactivate their power; thereafter she had to use an inventive language style to describe a racialised society coming out of the straightjacket of racial representation. The materials that she collected for the novel were of keen interest to her—the all-black towns founded by the African Americans in the 19th century—that provided her with a rich field for an exploration into "race-specific/race-free language."[11] In the novel Morrison has presented an all-black community chosen by its inhabitants along with a raceless one, thereby "shifting the traditional black/white hostility to the nature of chauvinism, the source of oppression, assault, and slaughter" (*Mouth Full of Blood*,p.274).

Thus we see that the Blacks are always the subject of hatred and malice not only in America but in every parts of the world where 'blackness' exists, as Frantz Fanon observes, "In the United States, Blacks are segregated. In South America, they are whipped down in the streets and black strikers are gunned down. In West Africa, the black man is beast of burden."[12] Thus the Blacks are getting a kind of maltreatment in the name of racism. The practice of treating the Blacks as the inferior race and calling them 'Other' is nothing but the colour prejudice of the white supremacists. With the obvious hope of getting the exercise of 'colour prejudice' disappear from the world, Fanon says that this colour prejudice creates only hatred in the hearts of mankind. Fanon elaborates the notion of 'colour prejudice' by quoting a passage from Sir Alan Burns 'Colour Prejudice', where he says:

"It [colour prejudice] is nothing more than the unreasoning of one race for another, the contempt of the stronger and richer peoples for those who they consider inferior to themselves and the bitter resentment of those who are kept in subjection and are so frequently insulted."[13]

From this observation we can come to the conclusion that the identity attributed to the coloured people is the result of the colour prejudice of the advantageous class (the whites) of the American society in order to continue their hegemonic exercises. In order to establish their superiority over the Blacks, they began to treat them as Others, and tried to develop a psychology of that sort. In acceptance of Fanon's suggestion that "an oppositional, differential reading of Lacan's 'Other' might be more relevant than the Marxisant reading of the master-slave dialectic" (*The Location of Culture*, p.47), we can say that out of the contemporaneity and transitoriness, the black identity has to be looked from the point of view of a Third Space, an intermediate and 'in-between' space of cultural observation. In the novels of Morrison, especially in the last novel of her trilogy, we see the inherent intent of 'Self' and 'Other' not in the Master/Slave relation but among the people of the same race, where one section of the blacks are trying to treat another section as 'Other', thereby imitating or rather adopting the practice of creating hegemony among themselves. In fact the Blacks after the dark period of slavery, have lost the sense of their own cultural traits and they have adopted certain hybrid culture which are neither inherited nor imposed by any force, it is the force of situation. Bhabha points out that "culture only emerges as a problem or a problematic, at the point at which there is a loss of meaning in the contestation and articulation of everyday life, between classes, genders races, nations."[14]

The iteration of the past exploitation, the memory of all the tortures meted out to their ancestors has made the blacks create a kind of hatred towards the exploiters as well as to their pastness. Being the progenies of a tortured race, they have become a lost cultural group who are fit to survive nowhere. Even founding isolated black town has not helped them overcome the fear of white supremacy and the humiliation derived out of it. The nine families who founded Haven as an all-black town, afterwards became "a tight band of wayfarers bound by the enormity of what had happened to them. Their horror of whites was convulsive but abstract. They saved the clarity of their hatred for the men who had insulted them in ways too confounding for language: first by excluding them, then by offering them staples to exist in that very exclusion" (*Paradise*, p.189). This is what Bhabha calls the enunciation of cultural difference that "problematizes the binary division of past and present, tradition and modernity at the level of cultural representation and its authoritative address." Bhabha further points out that "in signifying the present, something comes to be repeated, relocated and translated in the name of tradition, in the guise of a pastness that is not necessarily a faithful sign of historical memory but a strategy of representing authority in terms of artifice of the archaic. That iteration negates our sense of the origins of the struggles."[15]

The Black after coming into freedom have reached such a critical juncture, where they can neither define themselves to be modern in terms of their living standard, nor are they willing to dig out the inherited cultural traits which they treat to be a forgotten past. In *Paradise* we see that type of a picture in the attitude of Patricia Best, where she reveals her disinterestedness towards the African cultural root or the urge for Africanism. They want to build up their future counting on what they have seen today, not in terms of what they were in the past; this sentiment of Patricia or the young African American generation may be shocking to the traditional black leaders of the town, but that is how they want to see their futurity. Thus the changed political environment creates among them a hybrid generation, and this condition of hybridity cannot be looked from the point of view of the dichotomy of polar opposition like Black or White. Bhabha also agrees that "the theoretical recognition of the split-space of enunciation may lead the way to conceptualizing an international culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity" (*Location of Culture* p.56). This sense of hybridity is the result of the white interference in the community's cultural identity; that is why, Fanon's metaphor 'a black man is a white man's artifact',[16] in connection with the black identity crisis sounds very appropriate. We can extend the idea towards Bhabha's Third Space identity

which is usually ignored by other postcolonial theories that are mostly confined to the polarities of 'Self' and 'Other' in a colonial perspective, but at the same time agrees to fanon's idea of black identity. In this regard Bhabha observes, "It is not the colonialist 'Self' or the colonized 'Other', but the disturbing distance in-between that constitutes the figure of colonial otherness—the white man's artifice described on the black man's body."[17]

Thus following the theoretical principles of Bhabha and Fanon, we can say that the issues of 'Black Identity' especially in the American context should not be judged with the same parameters as we do with the identity of other colonized nations. The African American identity is a class apart, and they can be measured by the scale of racism only. Throughout her novels, Morrison has recreated the history of American racism, where the Blacks are given the maximum focus. If at any place, there is a white portrayal in her novel, it is in terms of the connectedness with the Blacks. And we can say that Morrison is not stereotyping the blacks in her novels with any propagandist view. She has rather given us a realistic picture of the African American community life with the memory of slavery; and the active rememory in her narrative produces the history of racial and sexual abuse in the community.

The question of state of the 'beyond' and 'space' appears when there is a conflict between the self and the 'other'. In *Beloved* we see the conflicting state of a mother which is represented with the reaction of the people living in close connection with 124, the house of Sethe that becomes the central metaphor of an oppressed black environment. Through the death and return of Beloved, as Bhabha points out, the slave mother reclaims her 'self' that she had to lose to the enslaved 'other'; and it comes back to her through the presence of the child, the property of her own person. According to Bhabha, this knowledge comes as "a kind of self-love that is also the love of the 'Other': Eros and Agape together" (*The Location of Culture*, p. 34). This knowledge is reflected in the sentiments of Sethe, Beloved and Denver expressed through their celebrative moods over the present joyful state of mind against the dooms of the past that lives in their minds in the form of constant rememory. In their words there is a figure-like ceremony of claiming and naming through intersecting and interstitial subjectivities, as Bhabha observes: 'Beloved, she my daughter'; Beloved is my sister'; 'I am Beloved and she is mine.' The women speak in tongues, from a space 'in-between each other' which is a common space. They explore "an 'interpersonal' reality that appears within the poetic image as if it were in parentheses—aesthetically distanced, held back, and historically framed" (pp.34-35). The cultural inheritance of slavery or colonialism, as Bhabha observes, is brought before modernity not to resolve its historic differences into a new

totality, nor to forgo its traditions, "it is to introduce another locus of inscription and intervention, another hybrid, 'inappropriate' enunciative site, through the temporal split. Differences in culture and power, according to Bhabha are "constituted through the social conditions of enunciation: the temporal caesura, which is also the historically transformative moment, when a lagged space opens up in-between the intersubjective 'reality of signs … deprived of subjectivity' and the historical development of the order of social symbols" (pp.346-47).

Thus Bhabha clearly relates the enunciative space of ambivalence revealed in the novels of Morrison, where the novelist talks about the black urge for modernity from which they have been deprived by the grip of slavery and racism. Above all we find a sense of hybridity in the social transformation of the Blacks from slavery to freedom. Bhabha points out that the issues of 'Black identity' in the discourses of racism as a postcolonial subject becomes "the 'unstable element of linkage' the indeterminate temporality of the 'in-between' that has to be engaged in creating the conditions through which 'newness comes into the world'. We have seen in Morrison's *Paradise* the way the elements of 'newness' have entered the society affecting the change of black identity leading the cultural history of the race towards a moment of temporality that cannot be described in terms of any 'fixity', but have to be looked from a different 'space', an 'In-between Space' of cultural location that takes an intermediate position between the Western dichotomy of Black/White.

Thus we can say that Hybridity in the African American cultural tradition is prevalent in different forms of the mixed-blooded people of the community variably termed as 'miscegenation', 'mulatto' and 'passing'; it also exists in the cultural behaviour of the common people of the race. The idea of hybridity, as Satoshi Mizutani points out, "helps the postcolonial critic to upset the discourse of imperialism that would otherwise remain 'unmixed', uninfluenced by anything other than itself."[18] Change is a natural process and it affects the oppressor and the oppressed alike. This is why the issues of racial mixture like the mulatto and miscegenation have received so much importance in the critical discussions about racism in the complex socio-cultural structure of the African American society. The growth of the progenies of the miscegenation and mulattoes are thought to be an element of degeneration for the white purity; and therefore always discouraged by the white supremacists. Mizutani points out that "in a Bhabhaite scheme of hybridity, it would be the mimetic effect of the Eurasian subject, rather than his racialised identity, that signals a possibility for postcolonial intervention: a moment which he calls hybridity" (Mizutani, 2009,

p.8). The concept of hybridity challenging the 'temporal dimension'of colonial discourse, its deliberate motif of showing the never-changing identity of the colonisers, is brought to the debate of existence in the critical discourses of western hegemony. On the matter of hybridity in the postcolonial context, Bhabha says that: "Produced through the strategy of disavowal, the reference of discrimination is always to a process of splitting as the condition of subjection: a discrimination between the mother culture and its bustards, the self and its doubles, where the trace of what is disavowed is not repressed but repeated as something different – a mutation, a hybrid."[19] Therefore, for Bhabha, "hybridity is 'the revaluation of the assumption of colonial identity through the repetition of discriminatory identity effects" (Bhabha 1994/2015, p.159).

Concluding Remarks

After reading the novels of Toni Morrison and from the discussions in the previous chapters, we can sum up that the trilogy constituted with the 'slave and ex-slave' novels reveal the identity crisis of the community called "African Americans" at different stages of the American history; and the following observations can be made about the select novels. **First**, Morrison has given a raw 'vision of slavery' in *Beloved*, with every minute detail of the brutelities meted out to the Negro slaves in the name of the hatefule 'slave tradition'; there is, however, a hint at the endeavour of the slave community to come out the grip of slavery. **Second**, Morrison shows the cultural change that the community has provoked after getting liberty of living in a freed condition, although they are still witnessing the sign of 'racial difference' in the American social set up. **Third**, After being convinced about their abilities of living independently, the Blacks are now found engaging in the 'Reconstruction works' in order to escape or rather resist the hateful events like 'Segregation' and/or 'Disallowing'. **Fourth**, the cultural state of the community is still in the transit moments, which cannot be described in terms of any 'theoretical fixity' of any western dichotomy but has to be analysed with an intermediate space 'in-between' two polar oppositions of the binarism of theoretical convention.

Thus we can conlude that throughout her narratives, Morrison documents the 'occult instability' of the African American culture, and their persistent efforts to come out of the grip of 'slavery', the racial hatred they have been receiving over the ages. In attempt to achieve social equality by breaking the deadlock of the racial barrier from the social, cultural and literary approaches to the Blacks and the black subjects, they have earned for themselves a hybrid cultural position which can be described in terms of a Third Space which remains

'in-between' the polar oppositional identity markers of 'Black' and 'White'. Living in the American soil for ages and for generations, they have adopted many 'new' cultural habits which have been marked as 'white' in the white discourses; and the Blacks after coming into freedom and getting mixed with the modern societies, have become so accustomed to such cultural mix-up that now it has become very difficult to distinguish the Blacks from the Whites in terms of the cultural habits except for their skin colour. Even on the matter of the 'blackness' of skin, there are numerous sections like the 'dark-skinned Blacks', 'light-skinned Blacks', people of the mixed race like 'Mulattoes', 'Miscegenation' and the 'Passing'. After all, there are various transit moments in the American racial history which make important parts of Morrison's narrative, that bring out as Bhabha observes, "Such pedagogical knowledges and continuist national narratives miss the 'zone of occult instability where the people dwell" (*The Location of Culture,* 218). Thus the trilogy of Morrison works as a Black cultural discourse enunciating the cultural equality for the American Blacks of which they have been historically deprived for ages. Throughout her fictional narrative, we find Morrison dealing with the issues of 'black racism' as the prime subject of her cultural discourse, which as the agency of the people of the 'raced community' articulates the "split in the discursive ambivalence that emerges in the contest of narrative authority between the pedagogical and the performative" (218); and they are the records of the transit moments of the African American cultural history.