CHAPTER 4

Negotiating the Third Space in the Trilogy

Ambivalence of Cultural Identity: The Third Space and the Trilogy

The question of locating the African American culture under the purview of the Third Space opens up various possibilities towards the definition of an African American cultural identity. The American Blacks are living in such a social environment, where they themselves are not sure how to look for a boundary to locate their identity within the locus of "American" national identity; whether to merge with the broader American identity by wiping out everything that is African (mostly termed as Nigger in white literary discourses) or to urge for a different kind of identity within the political sphere of Americanism by keeping their African cultural root alive and active by means of memory and historical representation. It is undeniable a fact that the Blacks in America have remained unrepresented in the mainstream American Literature; hence the task of getting them represented in the literary sphere of the world automatically goes to the limited authors of the community. But the able authors of the community have come forward with such a zeal for exposure of the race that the African Americans have no longer remained in the unexplored territory of literary representation, they have rather earned for themselves a dignified position in the bulk of American literature. In calling them African Americans, instead of the simple appellation of American; we are to locate their identity and culture which is different from the national identity designated as American proper, by keeping ourselves in an intermediate position, what Bhabha calls an 'in-between' space of identity. Living in the American soil for generations and in trying to get an American identity, the Blacks have forgotten, or rather lost their sense of originality, the sense of Africanism, which have become a haunting memory for the American Blacks. In fact the black population in America while trying to earn for themselves a respectable American identity, have forgotten their African cultural root, although they have so far got only hatred and racial discrimination from the Whites. Hence their identity can be described in the form of a hybrid race, a cultural group who are African in their colour and blood, but American in their heart and mind. In her fictional characters Morrison has presented the transformation of the American people of the African descent from a state of pure race to a hybrid cultural condition.

Bhabha's theory of Third Space for identification of a hybrid culture, provides us with a solid platform towards the location of the cultural identities of the Black American community; more specifically in the novels of Toni Morrison, where she demonstrates the effects of racist, sexist, classist discourses, and focuses on the need of a new liberatory language in order to heal the pathological wound of patriarchy. Notwithstanding Morrison's denial of having a feminist underpinning in her novels, she tries to locate the women at a space away from a sexist and racist world in order to challenge the patriarchal rule. Throughout her novels, Morrison displays an inherent feminist approach in the delineation of body politics, though Morrison, in her interview with Zia Jaffrey in 1998, denied any 'ism' in her fiction. In her novels we see deliberate and strong discourses on the politics of gender and sexuality, which is at par with what Judith Butler[1] in her *Gender Troubles* says, "The sex/gender distinction and the category of sex itself appear to presuppose a generalization of 'the body' that preexists the acquisition of its sexed significance" (Leitch et al. p 2540). Butler reveals the masculine subject of desire on the body politics, saying that "the radical dependency of the masculine subject on the female 'Other' suddenly exposes his autonomy as illusory" (2540). While Morrison's characters are othered by a discourse that defines both racial and gender norms, their luminal position apart from the "ideal" creates a space that can potentially encourage self-expression and self-definition and ultimate healing because Morrison's characters pose a threat to the hegemonic ideal, their physical safety is compromised in this marginal space.

Hybridity being the prime concern in Bhabha's theory of Third Space as a post-colonial condition, can be best applied to enumerate the fictionalized lives of the racially marginalised people who are mostly depicted in the literary discourses as the race struggling for their existence in order to express their presence in the world. The American Blacks have been trying to find out for themselves a space within the national boundary of America where they can live with at least self-respect and a kind of dignified identity. The novels of Morrison narrate the hybrid state of mind that the Blacks have achieved in their changing cultural lives in the United States. Having mixed with the American culture, the Blacks in the nation have procured numerous changes in their cultural behaviour which are 'new' and 'urban' compared to the tropical life they had in their past. The temporal position they have achieved and the ambivalent state of their identity make the task of cultural representation very difficult for the literary artists. Therefore, Bhabha keeps them in a borderline space to

locate their cultural identity which according to him occupies an 'in-between' space of representation. Moving further in this connection, Bhabha says:

> "The borderline work of culture demands an encounter with 'newness' that is not part of the continuum of past and present. It creates a sense of the new as an insurgent act of cultural translation. Such art does not merely recall the past as social cause or aesthetic precedent; it renews the past, refiguring it as a contingent 'in-between' space, that innovates and interrupts the performance of the present. The 'past-present' becomes part of the necessity, not the nostalgia, of living.[2]

In his *Location of Culture*, Bhabha specifically addresses the space of the 'Other', and his theoretical ideas consult the identity markers of the colonial "Others"; hence they provide a fruitful insight into the study of Morrison's novels. In each of the novels of her trilogy, Morrison narrates the cultural hybridity of the African Americans; and her characters are the display of the acute sense of 'Otherness' they have been experiencing in the White dominant American society. They are displaced from their cultural root, and whatever sense of belonging they have at present is the living memory of their cultural past; the past they can no longer restore. Under such geo-political circumstances, they have suffered the trauma of non-existence in a culturally dislocated environment. In this regard Bhabha points out that their memory is overlapped with the present experience; as the postcolonial theorist observes,

> "It is the emergence of the interestics—the overlap and displacement of domains of difference—that the inter-subjective and collective experiences of nationness, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated.[3]

Bhabha's theory gives us new outlook to the study of cultural identity in the post-colonial society. It fills the gap left by the nineteenth century theories of race, which according to Robert Young, "mirrors the ways in which today's racial politics work through a relative polarization between black and white."[4] In his theoretical discussion, Bhabha examines how the subjects in literary texts are formed 'in-between' or 'in excess of the sum' of the "parts' of difference narrated in terms of race/class/ gender etc. that Bhabha in his *The Location of Culture* terms as "primary conceptual and organizational categories" (p.2). Towards giving a new approach to cultural studies, his work embraces a kind of "fluidity, a movement back and forth against the concept of 'disrespect'—a term forger on the borderlines of ethnic deprivations that eventually works as a sign of racialized violence and

the symptom of social victimage" (p.3). The hybrid condition that Morrison creates in her fictional world presents the ethnic deprivations of the African Americans; and the way they are intermingled with the new cultural environment. The plantation labourers in Sweet Home in *Beloved* or the migrated Blacks in the northern cities in *Jazz* talk about such racial conditions in the US. Change is inevitable to any dislocated cultural group; and the Blacks after living for centuries in the dislocated environment in the United States, obviously have embraced innumerable changes to their cultural habits, which as a result lead their cultural identity to a hybrid state. The identity of such a complex hybrid race cannot be described in terms of any form of critical and theoretical dichotomy.

In fact the very concept of identity is socially constructed on the basis of certain binaries of identity markers such as Black/White, Self/Other etc. But against the tradition of resting on any western prior theory, Homi K. Bhabha denies attachment to any dichotomy in his critical discussions about the state of cultural representation; and his theory of hybridity and Third Space, inculcates the enunciation of a cultural group of discursive ambivalence. Considering the aptness of the Third Space as a theoretical framework, Bhabha says that it is not representable in itself; but it constitutes an idea of enunciation which confirms that the meaning and symbol of culture have no primordial unity of fixity. Hence his theory keeps open the scope of finding meanings of a cultural text relating to the transit moments of a nation's/society's cultural history. It is in the words of Frantz Fanon, 'a fluctuating movement of occult instability' where the revolutionary cultural and political change of a race or a nation has to be acknowledged through an indeterminate space of the subject(s) of enunciation. In agreement with Fanon's idea, Bhabha forgrounds the idea of space:

> "It is that Third Space, though unrepresentable in itself, which constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity of fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew.[5]

Morrison points out that the hierarchy called "whiteness" for asserting a dominant American identity is actually a literary imagination. In her observation of the critical response to the demarcating line of Blackness/Whiteness, Morrison tries to find out what part is played by the invention and development of whiteness in constructing a hierarchy which is commonly called "American"; and it is such a socially and historically constructed hierarchy that subsides the Blacks from the mainstream American identity to a marginalized position

thereby treating them as the cultural "Others". Morrison reproaches that a deeper reading of American literature is required to know the root of an establishment where only the Whites are given the label called 'American'. Morrison, however, feels that at present American literature has not produced sufficient critical material that can help the American Blacks in getting equal access to literary representation. According to Morrison, one likely reason for the paucity of critical material on this large and compelling subject is that, in matters of race, "silence and evasion have historically ruled literary discourse" (*Mouth Full of Blood*, p. 280) ; and it is this silence in the mainstream history that prompted Morrison to write *Beloved* and other novels. In the minority discourses, as Morrison points out, "it is evasion that has fostered a substitute language in which such cultural issues are encoded" (280). In fact the issues relating to the black identity and their culture being represented through literary works are intentionally avoided. Morrison again asserts that the matter of creating discourses on black cultural representation is "made complicated by the fact that the habit of ignoring race is considered to be a graceful, even generous, liberal gesture."[6] There is an enforced invisibility exercised through this intentional silence that allows the black body a shadowless participation in the dominant cultural body.

Morrison finds out certain deliberate intention in the dominant critical convention for keeping the black literary representations silent. She points out that there has been literary and scholarly moeurs that has intentionally terminated some American authors whose works have strong insight into the American blacks; and thus they have deliberately blocked access to such insights in their works. As for an instance, Morrison quotes the opening line of an article written by an American scholar[7] who in 1936 investigated the use of Negro so-called dialect in the works of Poe: "Despite the fact that he grew up largely in the South and spent some of his most fruitful years in Richmond and Baltimore, Poe has little to say about the darky[8]." Morrison observes that this approach towards the Blacks could be avoided, considering that it was only in the thirties of the previous century, but such type of egregious representations are common even in today's American literary world. It shows the deliberate avoidance and ignorance of the mainstream authors and critics about the black existence.

Going further ahead on the issue of the ornamented vacuum in the American literary discourse, on the presence and influence of Africanist peoples in American criticism, Morrison tries to find out some other reasons behind it. In her opinion, it is the pattern of thinking about racialism in terms of its consequences on the victims, the people of colour. She says that there are also powerful and persuasive attempts to analyze the origin and

fabrication of racism itself, which have persistently been creating obstacles in the accomplishment of progress in matters of racial discourse. To Morrison, it "seems both poignant and striking how avoided and unanalyzed is the effect of racist inflection on the subject" (*Playing in the Dark*, p.11). In her literary discourses, therefore, Morrison always tries to examine the impact of racial hierarchy, racial exclusion and racial vulnerability in the American society.

Beloved: Rewriting the History of the Racial "Others"

In all the novels of her trilogy, Morrison narrates the issues of racism and the social difference in America created by it; besides reflecting other issues related to the African American identity—their position in terms of race and their struggles to get an estimable American identity. The novels display before us a position of the coloured people in America; how much liberty they are enjoying as human beings. In each of these novels Morrison has presented the 'occult instability' of the African American cultural history. A close study of her novels helps us locate their cultural identity in the so-called civilized society in terms of Bhabha's theoretical ideas.

In *Beloved* Morrison recreates the history of the racialised society during the slavery time when the identity of the American racial 'Others' was at the utmost crisis of human civilization, when they were not treated as humans, rather treated as animals who could be sold out in the markets. The novel gives us a fictionalized history of slave possession, slave maintenance and freedom of slaves that Morrison has given special importance in the thematic concern of the novel's narrative. As the first novel of a trilogy *Beloved* narrates the early stage of the transit moments in African American racial history that focuses the progressive black American society from slavery to freedom and from freedom to modernization. And she continues the changing socio-cultural environment of the Blacks in different points of time in the other two novels of the trilogy in order to bring a coherence in the thematic concerns of the novels.

It is the discursive language of the national discourses on the ambivalent subjects about racism that brings about the difference between the 'self' and the 'other'. Regarding the ambivalence of the majority discourses on the black subjects, Bhabha in agreement with Claude Lefort, says that it is "the 'enigma of language' that provides the most apt analogue for imagining the structure of ambivalence that constitutes modern social authority."[9] The

differentiating approaches in the so called national discourses towards a special group of people arouses the nationalist sentiment in the 'Others', and instigates them to produce minority discourses focusing the neglecting attitude of the established national literature and culture towards the 'Others'; and they take a grudge to reassert those areas of the minority subject which are either omitted or neglected in the majority discourses. Bhabha, however, points out that "the people are neither the beginning nor the end of the national narrative; they represent the cutting edge between the totalizing powers of the 'social' as homogeneous, consensual community, and the forces that signify the more specific address to contentious, unequal interests and identities within the population" (Bhabha, p.209). In the three novels termed as the 'Beloved Trilogy' Morrison tries to produce such minority discourses narrating the racial difference showed towards the people of her race; and in these novels we find a minority voice reiterating the national identity of the marginalised community; and her narrative showcases the enunciation of cultural difference the Blacks have witnessed in the United States, and her novels are the counter texts against the interests of the nation's mjority discourses.

The story of *Beloved* is written on the background of a historical event, which showcases the social position of the coloured population in America. Impressed and influenced by a newspaper clipping that highlights the real life situations of a black mother who gets involved in a terrific event of infanticide in a very sensitive moment of 'slave capturing'; Morrison produces *Beloved* by mixing this history of the slave mother with her imaginative vigour asserting the history of racial difference in America. The novel opens up various questions regarding the black identity during the period of slavery. We can quote Morrison where she reveals the motivation and objectives of writing *Beloved*:

> "A news paper clipping in *The Black Book* summarized the story of Margaret Garner, a young mother who, having escaped slavery, was arrested for killing one of her children (and trying to kill the others) rather than let them be returned to the owner's plantation. She became a cause celebre in the fight against the Fugitive Slave laws, which mandated the return of escapees to their owners. Her sanity and lack of repentance caught the attention of Abolitionists as well as news papers. She was certainly single-minded and, judging by her comments, she had the intellect, the ferocity, and the willingness to risk everything for what was to her the necessity of freedom"(*Beloved*, p.xi)

The historical incident of Margaret Garner that fascinates Morrison, provided her with enough space and opportunities to use her imaginative faculty so as to enter the psyche of the bereaved mother and produce it as a relevant text befitting the context of her time, where she can raise the crucial contemporary issues about freedom, responsibility and women's place (*Beloved*, p.xi). Morrison sticks to her project and produces *Beloved* as a beautiful document of a black woman's pursuit of freedom in a white dominant society during the time of slavery, where the Blacks have no right, freedom and legal safeguard against any exploitation. They are not only deprived of the basic amenities of life, even the rights of possessing children and caressing them are also snatched away from them. The protagonist of the novel Sethe represents a type of woman with the unapologetic acceptance of the shame and terror of living in an enslaved condition, a mother who is haunted by the consequences of choosing infanticide as a resistance to inevitable slavery and a way of getting freedom for herself and for her children. Here Morrison recreates those moments of black history when the racial exploitation was at the utmost height; and the delineation of the slave characters in perfect realistic way makes the novel not only an interesting tale of slavery but also an important document for America's racial history.

It is not only the mind of Sethe, the cursed mother who deliberately murdered her child to resist the enforced and inevitable slavery, but the whole family and the community at large is haunted by the uncanny presence of the dead girl's spirit. In fact the whole community is haunted by the sin committed by Sethe that they want to keep away from Sethe's house in fear of being stricken by the dead girl's ghost. It shows the hesitation of the oppressed community towards any act of defiance, a resistance to the racial oppression. Through Sethe's act of defiance, Morrison negotiates the iterative spirit of the oppressed towards cultural resistance; it is the structure of iteration, which according to Bhabha "informs political movements that attempt to articulate antagonistic and oppositional elements without the redemptive rationality of sublation or transcendence" (Bhabha, p. 38). Sethe's act of defiance that came as a sudden revolution may not be accepted by her community, but through it Morrison has presented a kind of passive resistance, and a deliberate negation of a hierarchy which is creating a demarcating line, a binary of master/slave relation, which nobody should venture to break. Therefore, Sethe's act of resistance arouses a traumatic sensation in her community, which haunts the psyche of each member of her community. It gives a hint that this form of racial injustice cannot go on forever, and it will be resisted anyhow with the active community participation at certain

future time. Sethe says to her daughter Denver, "She wasn't even two years old when she died. Too little to understand. Too little to talk much even" (*Beloved,* p.5).

The sight of the driver's act of whipping his horse to make it gallop while passing by 124 (p.5), denotes the community's reaction to Sethe's infanticide; everybody's concern is about her sin, but nobody cares about the cause behind her sinful act. In fact, neither the community, nor even Sethe's family could accept the act of infanticide as an act of defiance against the forceful slavery. Therefore, the ghost of the dead girl that lurks inside and outside Sethe's house is the signifier that signifies the psychological effect of Sethe's sin upon the family and the community; it is a kind of psychological obsession that the community has got to bear with. It suggests that at the initial stage of the racialised condition, slavery was accepted by most of the community as their destiny or a natural condition given to them by their stars; hence any effort to come out of slavery is just hopeful but unacceptable. Sethe's inclinations with her thought about her infanticide has pinned so deep in her heart that she would ask the engraver in the cemetery of her beloved daughter to write "Dearly Beloved" that would reveal her love for the dead girl. She says, "Ten minutes for seven letters. With another ten could she have gotten 'Dearly' too?" (*Beloved,* p.5)

On the one hand it reveals Sethe's excessive love for her dead child for whom she can sacrifice even her body to the engraver, on the other hand it reveals her revolutionary spirit against the injustice of a historically constructed racial difference. This type of individual reaction to a social or national system may not be enough to do away with the tradition of throwing barbarism upon the shoulder of a particular community; it at least reveals the beginning of a racial sensibility, which is essential for uplift of an oppressed community. Morrison showcases the state of barbarism in the Blacks that was found within enslaved community. Freedom is the only way that can bring them out of such barbarism thereby showing the light of modern civilization. Sethe as a sensible woman loved the commitment and responsibility that Halle showed towards his mother; and her loving heart chose Halle for the way he bought the freedom of his mother Baby Suggs. She says,

> "And so they were: Paul D Garner, Paul F Garner, Paul A Garner, Halle Suggs and Sixo, the wild man. All in their twenties minus women, fucking cows, dreaming of rape, thrashing on pallets, rubbing their thighs and waiting for the new girl—the one who took Baby Suggs' place after Halle bought her with five years of Sundays. Maybe that was why she chose him. A twenty-year-old

> man so in love with his mother he gave up five years of Sabbaths just to see her sit down for a change was a serious recommendation."(*Beloved*, p.13)

It is a race, each and every member of which was sold out for the plantation farms and they had to pass generation after generation serving their masters. There was no escape door for them; no legal support system that could resist the unlawful practices of slavery. On the contrary the legal provisions like "Fugitive Slave Laws" helped the slave owners by enforcing the escaped slaves to go back to their owners. Under such circumstances the Blacks in America who were engaged in one or the other type of slavery had to pay for their freedom. In *Beloved*, for instance, Sethe's husband Halle buys the freedom for his mother, by sacrificing all his Sundays. Such a plight of the American Blacks is depicted throughout the novels of Morrison. They lived a life of slavery, freedom or escape from which was only a dream that never came true. Any effort to come out of it would be just a fruitless one. Therefore Sethe murdered her child at least to show her spirit of resistance against the slavery enforced upon them.

Where Sethe is haunted by the memory of all the Sweet Home men and her dead child, Denver is betrayed by the sense of loneliness in the house haunted by the ghost of a long dead baby girl and she feels alienated from the rest of the world: "I can't live here. I don't know where to go, or what to do, but I can't live here. Nobody speaks to us. Nobody comes by. Boys don't like me. Girls don't either" (*Beloved*, p.17). Change is inevitable in every society; Sethe and Paul D being the by-product of such a traumatic society, and a generation which is born with the pangs of slavery, are therefore, destined to be accustomed to the life they have got to inherit and live within the parameters of slavery. Paul D understands Denver's state of mind and suggests a move towards a place where they can have a better life, a step towards the great Migration that Morrison focuses in the next novel of the trilogy *Jazz*: "Think, Sethe, I'm a grown man with nothing new left to see or do and I'm telling you it ain't easy. May you all ought to move. Who owns this house?" (p.17)

Since they are not the well established settlers of the nation, the Blacks in America have to keep moving from one place to another for various reasons: during slavery they were made to move from one place to another because of their shifting work places by their owners, being chased by the slave hunters and their subsequent efforts to escape from slavery, in which they are most commonly found to be involved; since the American Negroes are fulsomely accustomed to the habit of escaping, moving and running away became a part

of their natural skill. Morrison makes a beautiful commentary on the question of settlement of the American Blacks: "Move. Walk. Run. Hide. Steal and move on, only once had it been possible for him to stay in one spot—for longer than a few months" (*Beloved* p.78). Every event and in every thing Morrison focuses the transit moments where Black cultural tradition can only be visualised as "fluctuating movements of occult instability" that Fanon talks about and Bhabha uses for his location of cultural change.

It is a common picture that during the war time the Blacks in America had to keep moving from one place to another in search of the basic needs of life and in search of a better way of life. In their crisis of identity, they had to bear with inexplicable torture and agony in the way of their struggle for existence. As a civilized human race, the Blacks too had the zeal for living with self-respect and even the normal human ego also came in their possession; and sometimes they found it difficult to control their ego and self-respect that make them either revolt or escape the situation. Sethe is physically assaulted and seduced by the White masters and her husband can do nothing but looking on helplessly; and we see that Halle, the racially paralyzed and impoverished husband of Sethe who can neither bear the molestation of his wife nor can do something to resist the sexual abuses, finally escapes, and thus places himself in the long line of common African Americans who use the skill of running away when life betrays him/her. Years after, Sethe waits for her husband, but she knows nothing about him. She can't say whether it is his own sense of shame, his fit of anger and hatred that actually took him away from her:

> "They took my milk and he saw it and didn't come down? Sunday came and he didn't. Monday came and no Halle. I thought he was dead, that's why; then I thought they caught him, that's why. Then I thought, No, he's not dead because if he was I'd know it, and then you came here after all this time and you didn't say he was dead, because you didn't know either, so I thought, well he just found him another better way to live. Because if he was anywhere near here, he'd come to Baby Suggs, if not to me." (p.82)

It shows the plight of the coloured people in America under slavery. They were born to suffer and bow down to all forms of hierarchic oppressions, bearing with the vociferations, abuses and the physical tortures they received from the masters. If the men of the coloured race had nothing that could give them a permanent place to live in, a secured place where they can live with their kiths; if the women on the other hand are haunted by a sense of

restlessness, they always live in a traumatic condition propelled by an unknown fear in their minds. In this novel for instance, Beloved's presence has become a cause of trouble for Paul D and Denver. Paul D sometimes feels that the white girl Amy Denver, who helped Sethe during the time of Denver's birth had brainwashed Sethe's mind, and therefore always take an aversion to her; and his hatred is nothing but a racial hatred common to all American Blacks. Likewise, Beloved also differs in the attitude of Paul D and Sethe towards her. For Paul D she is the cause of all tension and unhappiness in 124 but for Sethe she is the resurrection of her lost child whom she killed herself, and therefore can never betray her.

Sethe remembers the days she was served by the white girl from Boston named Amy Denver who helped her deliver and nurture her last child, and developed a kind of kinship with Sethe; henceforth Sethe named her child Denver as a sign of gratitude to the white girl who crossed the narrow racial border to help her during her labour pain. In fact Sethe also crossed the narrow border of racial boundary while naming her daughter after Amy Denver and keeping Beloved in her house, since the orthodox Blacks like Paul D also did not approve Sethe's mix-up with the Whites, probably out of a kind of racial prejudice. Through this approach of Sethe towards the white girl Morrison shows her endeavour to produce a discourse for liquidation of the racial gap. Sethe's liberalism displayed towards Beloved and the white girl, however, could not influence Paul D who always discouraged her to keep the unidentified girl in 124. Notwithstanding her apparent liberal attitude towards Beloved, Sethe could never forget the inhuman treatments she had to suffer during slavery. Life under slavery became so difficult and monotonous that she could never feel the sense of love in anybody; even her husband did not have the opportunity to express his love for her, while they were serving Sweet Home, especially under the ownership of the estate by Schoolteacher. So Sethe escaped from the Kentucky plantation as she got a chance; and it was in front of 124 that she climbed off a wagon, with her new born and felt for the first time the wide arms of her mother-in-law, who had made it to Cincinnati, because life under slavery had "busted her legs, back, head, eyes, hands, kidneys, womb and tongue" (p.102). Baby Suggs, Halle's mother and Sethe's mother-in-law, suffered unimaginably during slavery until her freedom was bought out by Halle and became an unchurched preacher for her community towards the last part of her life. All the Blacks of her neighbourhood became her devotees and she used to teach them holy things sitting at a wide open place where she would be surrounded by the black folks. Like a veteran preacher, she opens her scripture to the people surrounding her to give them noble advice:

> "Here in this place, we flesh; flesh that weeps, laughs; flesh that dances of bare feet in grass. Love it. Love it hard. Yonder they do not love your flesh. They despise it. They don't love your eyes; they'd just as soon as pick them out. No more do they love your skin on your back. Yonder they flay it. And O my people they do not love your hands. Those they only use, tie, bind, chop off and leave empty. Love your hands! Love them. Raise them up and kiss them. Touch others with them, pat them together, stroke them on your face because they don't love that either.[…] More than your life-holding womb and your life giving private parts, hear me now, love your heart. For this is the prize."[10]

Baby Suggs, for whose freedom her son Halle Suggs had to sacrifice all his Sundays for five years, was living in such a traumatic condition that she became quite lonely to wrought in a house with none to care and accompany her, as Halle had been untraced since the day Sethe's milk was stolen by the Whites. She, however, accepted the changes she had begotten as the will of God, and advised her community also not to lose faith in the divine justice. It is in the community gatherings that Baby Suggs used to find some divine peace and her noble advices were accepted by her neighbouring folks. But the arrival of Sethe brought back the memory of all her traumatic experiences. In fact she found it very difficult to understand how Sethe got involved in infanticide, and she became dumb-stricken. Her faith, her love, her imagination and her great heart began to collapse twenty eight days after her daughter-in-law arrived.

Morrison's observation of the lives of the coloured people is depicted quite vividly in the pages of *Beloved*. We have seen how the Blacks have to pass their days in utter doubtfulness, the trauma of losing their existence to slavery; at any time the white masters or their agents can carry them away to slavery again. Sethe's escaping Sweet Home, the Kentucky plantation, at the hour of the birth of her last child reveals the traumatic state of mind that all the slaves had been suffering. Taking the hazard of crossing the Ohio river in such a critical physical condition, she runs to her mother-in-law, to whom she had already sent three of her children; of course, she is fortunate enough to get the compassionate helping hand of Stamp Paid in delivering and nurturing her baby. Morrison has made a fantastic display of fellow-feeling among the coloured folks, who are the victims of the same racial exploitation. Sethe is offered the jacket of a black boy, in order to protect the new born baby from the growing cold, who is also living in the same traumatic condition after escaping

slavery. The Blacks have got accustomed to living with all hurdles of life, and Stamp Paid convinces the unwilling black boy to give his jacket to Sethe. As she reaches 124, Sethe gets all caring advices from her mother-in-law, who like an expert paediatrist helps in nurturing her child. She enjoys the pleasure of freedom after coming to her mother-in-law, and the novel gives us an epic description of the life that Sethe has got at 124:

> "Sethe had had twenty eight days—the travel of the one whole moon—of unslaved life. From the pure clear stream of spit that the little girl dribbled into her face to her oily blood was twenty eight days. Days of healing, ease and real-talk. Days of company: knowing the names of forty, fifty other Negroes, their views, habits; where they had been and what done; of feeling their fun and sorrow along with her own, which made it better. One taught her the alphabet; another a stitch. All taught her how it felt to wake up at dawn and decide what to do with the day. That's how she got through the waiting for Halle. Bit by bit at 124 and in the Clearing, along with the others, she had claimed herself. Freeing yourself was one thing; claiming ownership of that freed self was another."(pp.111-112)

In the novel, 124 Bluestone as Andrew Hock Soon Ng says, "…is unmistakably an architecture that reifies pastness and entrapment. Here, Sethe and Dnever are locked in a persistent memory that refuses to set them free."[11] The Blacks got to develop their own schooling since there was no govt. mechanism to ensure black cultural development in the beginning of the slavery time. Denver feels quite lonely in 124, since none of the neighbours pay a visit to it because of the ghostly connection around it. They believe that it is haunted by the ghost of Sethe's murdered daughter and also that of Baby Suggs. Denver, however, manages to go to school, where Lady Jones teaches her along with some other children. Denver feels that those two hours that she passes among the other children are prestigious to her and the most pleasurable hours of the day; the rest of the day, the hours that she has to stay in 124 are quite irksome to her. In the home school of Lady Jones, Denver is startled and rather puzzled by some questions that her classmate Nelson Lord often asks her. The traumatic members of the house called 124, are so deeply affected by phasmophobia (the fear of ghost) that each and every member finds an uncanny presence of the ghost everywhere. Once while sitting on the stone in a clearing used by Baby Suggs, Sethe felt that she was being choked at her neck by somebody; and she felt as if it were the fingers of Baby Suggs, but Denver thought that it was the baby ghost, who now used to live with them after

miraculously resurrected as Beloved, as they used to believe. Denver thought to herself if Beloved really decided to choke her mother. She had no answer to Nelson Lord's questions that she confronted in Lady Jone's school, "Would she let it happen? Didn't your mother get locked away for murder? Wasn't you in there with her when she went?" (p.123). Baby Suggs was curiously waiting for the arrival of her son and grandchildren, along with her daughter-in-law Sethe. But her fate as an enslaved mother was such that her son had to sacrifice all his Sabaths for five years in order to ensure her freedom. She wished Halle could have done it for him as well, so that they could live happily together as a family under the free sky. But such a dream could never be fulfilled in the life of any coloured person in America. The psyche of Baby Suggs is revealed by the eagerness she shows to know the return of her daughter-in-law to 124; and after getting Sethe along with her surviving children Baby Suggs brings back the memory of all the sorrows and sufferings of her past life that she had to lose to the whites, "These white things have taken all I had or dreamed…and broke my heartstrings too. There is no bad luck in the world but whitefolk."[12] Thus Morrison displays the Black indictment to the white subject through the rememory of Baby Suggs and suggests its liquidation in order to bring 'racial equality' through Sethe's gratitude to the White girl.

Morrison produces the character of Baby Suggs with multiple suggestions, to represent a number of issues relating to the identity of the coloured people in America. A Negro is a slave, an individual whose life is bought out by a white master, and he/she has to carry this compelled slavery all through his/her life. Their identity, their position in the society is so insignificant that they are not given any respectable name for their recognition. We have numerous such instances how the black characters are kept without an identifiable first or last name, not only in Morrison's novels but also in many other black literary discourses. For instance, the conversation between Baby Suggs and Mr. Garner, the bargain scene in *Beloved* where the novel dramatizes the situation of a very crucial issue about black identity that reveals how the blacks are given their names:

> "Mr. Garner," she said, "why you call me Jenny?"
> " 'Cause that what's on your sales ticket gal. Ain't that your name? What you call yourself?"
> "Nothing," she said, "I don't call myself nothing."

It might sound quite comical to the white slave owner Mr. Garner, who went red with laughter; but it reveals the actual condition of the black racial identity where they feel that

their names bear no significance in a society where they are valued no better than the beasts. Since the Blacks don't have any valid proper names/surnames of their own, the white authorities put any name they find applicable to them in their documentations. Therefore, regarding the name of Baby Suggs, Mr. Garner explains, "When I took you out of Carolina, Whitlow called you Jenny and Jenny Whitlow is what his bill said. Didn't he call you Jenny?" (*Beloved*, p. 167). The rest of the conversation reveals the irony of nomencleture in the black identity, where the innocent black lady replies:

> "No, sir. If he did I didn't hear it."
> "What did you answer to?"
> "Anything, but Suggs is what my husband name."
> "You got married Jenny? I didn't know it."

It reveals the ambivalence of a Slave woman's cultural identity (which Fanon calls the state of 'occult instability') in the 'raced person' who is not sure of his/her 'Self', the identity marker by which he/ she should introduce himself/herself to the society. It is the transit moment of African American cultural history where the black population had to pass through various states of ambivalence about their social identity. It is a part of black history when the 'raced' folks were hardly sure about the existence of the other members of their families, be it a husband, a son or a mother. The scene reveals such state of their identity crisis:

> "You know where he is, this husband?"/"No sir."/"Is that Halle's daddy?"/"No sir."/"Why call him Suggs, then? His bill of sale says Whitlow too, just like yours."/"Suggs is my name, sir. From my husband. He didn't call me Jenny."
>
> "What he call you?"/"Baby"/"Well," said Mr. Garner, going pink again, "if I was you I'd stick to Jenny Whitlow. Mrs. Baby Suggs ain't no name for a freed Negro."(p.167)

This long conversation between Mrs. Garner and Baby Suggs opens up various issues related to black identity in a white dominant society. If the coloured folk had no significant identity in the white dominated society, their name, the important identity marker has nothing to do with their recognition; since they are treated like animals by the slave owners, the life they are passing under slavery is not more valuable than the kettles. In fact because of this lack of importance in social life and a permanent settlement with respectable identity, the Blacks kept themselves escaping and moving from place to place. Baby Suggs recalls her

husband teaching her to make shoes, so that it could be instrumental in running away, which was so vital in their survival. He persuaded her to run together if possible, and alone if not; for escaping and running was the only way they could think of in order to ensure their survival in a world where the Blacks could be picked up and enforced to enter into slavery at any moment. In his case, Baby Suggs' husband, finally got a chance, and escaped somewhere leaving her in utterly dismal situation, without even letting her know where he escaped. It is a common picture in black life during slavery. Baby Suggs' husband escaped, so did her son Halle. The legacy of escaping continues, and the two sons of Sethe also follow the route of their predecessors to escape as an inherited cultural trait. In *Beloved*, Morrison narrates the sight of slave catching and Sethe's subsequent infanticide, the murder of her eldest daughter to show her resistance to slavery, and reveals the mockery of freedom that the Blacks in a white dominated society dream of in vain, "All testimony to the results of a little so-called freedom imposed on people who needed every care and guidance in the world to keep them from the cannibal life they preferred" (p.177). Though Sethe is secluded by her community for her sinful act of infanticide, Morrison does not totally deny the rightfulness of Sethe in her reaction against the brutal enforcement of slavery upon her children and her race as a whole. The novel rather leaves the question unanswered to the readers to judge. Like any other man/woman of the community, Paul D who was most compassionate towards Sethe, could never support her murderous action, and argued with her about its futility, "Yea, it didn't work, did it? Did it work?" But Sethe was quite sure that she did nothing wrong to her daughter, because she believed that "They ain't at Sweet Home. Schoolteacher ain't got them." Paul D. could not feel the grief Sethe bore in her heart about giving up her child to the brutal hands of the slave owners. So she readily declined Paul D.'s scepticism about the rightfulness of her act, "Maybe there is worse" and replied in a straightforward and deliberate intention of passing the message that slavery is worse than death:

> "It ain't my job to know what's worse. It's my job to know what is and to keep them away from what I know is terrible. I did that" (*Beloved*, p.194)

In fact like many others of his community, Paul D also believes that being born in a tradition of slavery, and since there is no legal safeguard to protect them from this hateful tradition, they have no other option than accepting it as their destiny. In the character of Sethe Morrison has produced a kind of rational and revolutionary spirit who can raise her voice against the historical process of racial exploitation. Sethe tries to justify her act to be proper by active rememory of the day Schoolteacher along with his men came to catch them and the

way people of her race were terrified by the arrival of the party. She talks to Beloved, whom she believes to be a resurrection of her murdered daughter and tries to convince herself that what she did with her daughter was not sinful, because by doing so she sent her to a place where she should be, rather than allowing her to wrought in the chaotic darkness of slavery at Sweet Home, like herself and other members of her family. She says,

> "Beloved, she my daughter. She mine. See. She come back to me of her own free will and I don't have to explain a thing. I didn't have time to explain before because it had to be done quick. Quick. She had to be safe and I put her where would be. But my love was tough and she back now. [13]

Sethe does not reproach her act of killing her own child because now she can be sure that nobody will be able hereafter to take her milk except her own children. As a mother she believes that she never had to give it to anybody else, because it is the milk that belonged to her own baby; she remembers that in the Kentucky days, the little white babies got it first and as a mother what grieves her is that she got what was left after being taken away by the whites. Sethe can never forget that horrible sight when they handled her like the cow, no, like the goat, back behind the stable because it was too nasty to stay in with the horses. Morrison's use of the language of exploitation in the white hegemonic practices like stealing Sethe's milk signifies the position of the Blacks in a white ruled society. Sethe's resistance is the enunciation of the cultural rights of the black suffrage in the white society.

Sethe's memory of the Sweet Home days have so lasting effect in her mind that she carries them over even to Denver and Beloved in such a convincing manner that they join her in expressing their aversion to the hateful tradition of slavery although they had never experienced slavery in their personal lives. She narrates the situation to Beloved asserting that life under captivated slavery in Sweet Home was so wearisome that Denver doesn't like even to talk about it and she hates everything about Sweet Home. But Sethe feels Beloved (if she was that daughter of Sethe) was too young to have the memory of all those hateful days of slavery in Kentucky. The belief that Sethe or Denver carries about Beloved being the dead daughter of Sethe, is made convincing to the reader by the memory of Beloved about certain things that connected to the bygone days of Sethe; for instance, Beloved asks Sethe about the ear rings that she used to wear during her stay in Sweet Home. Like Sethe, Denver also reveals her belief about Beloved to be her dead elder sister. She says,

> "Beloved is my sister. I swallowed her blood right along with my mother's milk. The first thing I heard after not hearing anything was the sound of her crawling up the stairs. She was my secret company until Paul D came. He threw her out. Ever since I was little she was my company and she helped me wait for my daddy. Me and her waited for him. I love my mother but I know she killed one of her own daughters, and tender as she is with me, I'm scared with of her because of it. She missed killing my brothers and they knew it. They told me die-witch! Stories to show me the way to do it, if ever I needed to."(*Beloved*, p.242)

Denver being a next generation slave girl who is now living in a freed condition, doesn't know how it happened, whether some ill spirit made her mother commit such a sinful act; and she believes that her mother will not have to do with her or murder her like her sister under any circumstances. Whatever it may be, the memory of the horrible past keeps haunting the minds of every living member of the family. This individual memory of Sethe turns into the common memory for the whole neighbourhood, and in fact to the community as a whole.

Progressive Black Society: Morrison's Presentation of Social Change

The picture that Morrison gives us in *Beloved* is the history of racial exploitation in America during slavery, when coloured people were deprived not only of the basic amenities of life, they were also kept away from the development programmes such as education, economic inclusion etc. The Blacks under slavery were kept away from learning so that the whites could keep the social hierarchy in their hands and continue their hegemonic power over them. There were very little learning accessibilities among the Blacks, and they themselves were not so much interested in learning as they should have been. Denver brings up the memory of her grandmother's appreciation of her father Halle, who was peculiar about living and progressive thinking. Morrison here reveals the urge for a change in the Black approach to slavery and social life. Baby Suggs and Sethe bear the instances of progressive minds, and their efforts to come out of slavery and white supremacy is iteration of a deprived race against a social construct. Right from Baby Suggs to Denver, in all three generations, we see the growing tendency for a change through learning and participation in the developmental process. Denver remembers Baby Suggs talking proudly about Halle, "He was too good for the world." She thought, "He could count on paper. The boss taught him.

Offered to teach the other boys but only my daddy wanted it." She remembers her father expressing his desire for learning and development, "If you can't count they can cheat you. If you can't read they can beat you" (p.246).

In fact Baby Suggs, the progressive black lady that she was, became a voice for black uplift; and she believed that Halle's ability to count on papers enabled him to buy her freedom from their master. This simple belief of Baby Suggs denotes the novel's social concern that showcases the importance of education in the black community. On her part, she wished she could learn reading the Bible like a true preacher. So, Denver got encouragement for learning in Lady John's home school meant specifically for the downtrodden children. Thus in *Beloved* Morrison presents a progressive picture of the Blacks which might be a distant dream but not unachievable, and we see it in the other two novels of the trilogy.

Morrison showcases the demoralized and dehumanized lives of the slaves in Sweet Home depicted through the Paul brothers, who didn't have the access to get identifiable personal names for their recognition. We come to know from Paul D's memory that Paul A and Paul F were his half-brothers.[14] It shows how the coloured folks maintained quite an undignified and indecent social and individual lives under slavery in Sweet Home. The presentation of the savagery and the unorthodox life of the Blacks make the novels of Morrison realistic historical documentation of the coloured people in America. In fact Morrison has used Sweet Home as a miniature of all slave experiences.

In *Beloved* Morrison discloses certain aspects of the black community life, where they have displayed their community sentiment and social morals. Slavery, no doubt, has affected their community life, but still they have got some social traditions that keep them intact as a social whole. When Sethe comes back from slavery, they help her to get back home safely with her new born baby; but they can't forgive her infanticide, and Sethe has to live in 124, almost like a woman being excommunicated by her community. Even Paul D, who loves Sethe and comes to live with her in 124 is not free from the skepticism about Sethe's sinful act; Stamps Paid forbids him to live with Sethe saying that he can choose any house in Cincinnati, but he cannot allow him to live in 124. Other than living in a desolate environment in 124, the inmates are haunted by a perpetual fear of ghost, as has been stated earlier in this chapter; and this fear also spreads among the other members of the community. Denver is quite tired of the alienated life she is living, and her loneliness disappears only when she comes to live with Lady Johns for reading among other children. The narrator

expresses her irksome life in 124, “As Denver’s outside life improved, her home life deteriorated. If the white people of Cincinnati had allowed Negroes into their lunatic asylum, they could have found candidates in 124” (p.294). Morrison displays the black experience of freedom through Denver’s and Paul D’s experiences. Taking part in the Great Migration, Paul D enjoys the blessed condition of a freed life, where he can work and earn money so that he can buy his own goods,

> “Moving down to a busy street full of white people who needed no explanation for his presence, the glance he got to do with his disgusting clothes and unforgivable hair. Still, nobody raised an alarm: Then came the miracle. Standing in a street in front of a row of brick houses, he heard a white man call him (“Say there!Yo!) to help unload two trunks from a coach cab. Afterward the white man gave him a coin. Paul D walked around with it for hours—not sure what it could buy (a suit? A meal? A horse?) and if anybody would sell him anything.”(pp.318-319)

The novel ends with the message that the Blacks who are too busy with their past, should rather think about their future, “It was not a story to pass on” (p.321). The message that Morrison wants to convey through this concluding statement is that people have forgotten the story of the bereaved mother and her wretched daughter. It was not a story to be overlooked, it was rather a story that should have inspired the Blacks as well as the Whites to do something for the uplift of the community. Morrison narrates the ‘raced social condition’ of the Blacks in America during slavery which kept them away from modern civilization that they desperately wanted. Instead of keeping their identity hanging in a third space, a place of utter uncertainty in between the polar opposition, they should be placed in the American mainstream.

Jazz: Retelling the Cultural History of Black Freedom

The novels of Toni Morrison have a common tendency of revealing different aspects of African American identity; and the trilogy of our concern, gives us a coherent picture of the African American racial history in three different segments. These three novels as a unit called ‘Beloved Trilogy’ by revealing three different aspects of love try to focus on the African American struggle in the way of their existence in a highly racialised society. In the first novel of the trilogy Morrison narrates the black cultural history during slavery with raw

vision of the wounds of slavery from which the community was always trying to come out; which the novels hint with the freedom of some of the characters like Baby Suggs, Sethe, Paul D and Denver. The second novel of the trilogy narrates the socio-political improvement of the Blacks from slavery to freedom. In this novel using the machinery of 'love revenge' the novelist again reveals different aspects of racialised life in America. Talking about the historical context of the novel, Morrison announces that she was interested in "rendering a period in African American life through a specific lens—one that would reflect the content and characteristics of its music (romance freedom of choice, doom, seduction, anger) and the manner of its expression" (*Jazz,* "Foreword" p.ix).

Regarding her motivation for writing the novel *Jazz*, Morrison points out that the ideas centering round how and what one cherishes under the duress and emotional disfigurement imposed by a slave society, that she focused in *Beloved* inspired her to find out a continuum of the theme of love as a perpetual mourning. The idea of the perpetual love haunting the black psyche led Morrison to consider a parallel situation; how such relationships were altered, later in a certain level of liberty. Regarding her attempt to connect music with the racial discourse, Morrison says, "An alteration made abundantly entrap us" (*Jazz,* p.x). In *Jazz* Morrison reveals the remorseless consequence of the liberty entrusted to the racialised folk that the novel presents through an older couple born in the South, the impact on them of "a new urban liberty, the emotional unmanageableness of radical change from the post-reconstruction South to the promise of post World War II North" (p.x).

Morrison developed the idea of connecting musical influence on the exposure of identity from her interest in the black cultural movement that took place in America in the 1920s that contributed to the so called Jazz Age to the nation's history. As a form of music, jazz originated in New Orleans as a fusion of African and European music and played an important part in developing a popular culture in America. The movement developed during a period when the society was affected by the 'dryness' of the prohibition, intertwined with the developing cultures of the young people, especially the African Americans, and the growing popularity of the music helped boosting the developing spirit of the marginalised Blacks in America. The term 'Jazz' first coined by Fitzerald became a popular term not only in America but also in Europe where the Jazz music began to grow as a new musical form. In fact the insertion of the African tradition in the Jazz music helped the African Americans, the oppressed coloured population of the nation gain a respectable position in the American

society, since the music began to rise as a popular music form among the American white middle classes.

In exploiting an object of music for creating a discourse on identity, Morrison admits that although she had its context, a plotline, characters and data, she could not establish the structure where meaning rather than information would be of prime importance. Her intent in producing this novel was to take it closer to the essence of the so-called Jazz Age, thereby making it a historical text illuminating the black civilization and its significance in the formation and enrichment of the black cultural heritage in the US. In this connection we can quote Morrison's own observation:

> "The moment when an African American art form defined, influenced, reflected a nation's culture in so many ways: the bourgeoning of sexual license, a burst of political, economic, and artistic power; the ethical conflicts between the sacred and the secular; the hand of the past being crushed by the present."(p.xii)

Thus Morrison reveals the importance of African American cultural heritage in formulating the present social and cultural status of the race. The acceptance and participation of the Whites in the black cultural exercise like Jazz music reveals the growing importance of the community in the American socio-cultural scenario.

The 'Nation Space' and the Racial 'Other'

The context of the Third Space in revealing the identity in connection with racism becomes quite relevant in the representation of black social life in a freed condition that Morrison presents in *Jazz*; where we get black response to the modern free society that they initiated in the historical condition depicted in *Beloved*. The novel narrates the impact of the great cultural change that the Blacks, especially in the American northern towns following the great migration. These 'Other' people of the nation have now entered into the society's mainstream with their participation in all the 'modern' ideologies from which they had so far been kept away. The first person narrator of the novel, without much dramatizing the event, narrates very plainly about the black woman's psyche after the murder of a black girl by her husband who had been involved in adulterous relation with her. The black woman named Violet, went to the funeral to see the dead girl with an intent to cut her head, but the people over there threw her away. The woman who had been traumatized by the affair got back to

her apartment and took the birds that she had kept as her pet, out of their cage and set them out of their windows to "freeze or fly", thereby giving them freedom including the parrot that said "I love you". It shows the trauma of Violet about living in the modernised condition, where they have got free access to the corrupt practices like adultery, debauchery and many other such 'New' habits that the Blacks embraced in the complicated 'modern' city environment.

The freedom given to the caged birds, Morrison might have used to symbolically suggest the freedom that the American Blacks enjoyed after escaping slavery, which for them was nothing but captivity endorsed upon them. At the same time, Morrison brings in a question how far the freedom earned by the Blacks has helped them in the formation of the African American national identity. There are much speculations to think whether the coloured folks after coming into freedom, have got easy access to the practices like adultery, homicide etc. which have become serious concern for the coloured society, and there has been perpetual effort to resist such incidences. The social organizations formed to help the coloured people in their distress are very actively engaged in the development, rehabilitation and re-establishment of the black people who have fallen into various troubles because of natural and societal happenings, such as riot, violence, lynching and many other such events of racial hatred. In case of Violet in *Jazz* for instance, the Salem Women's Club brought in her name in the January meeting as someone needing assistance, but the proposal was turned down, because they "preferred a man and his family on 134th Street, that had lost everything on fire" (*Jazz*, p.4). The club's assistance to the fire victim family and their refusal of financial help to Violet, on the ground that she has a more or less able husband, shows the rationality in distributing their assets, at the same time showing their social commitment, in a society where there is so much of socio-cultural and economic lapses.

The apartment houses in the Northern towns where the Blacks, following the Great Migration, have found their new residences, have provided them with many opportunities to enjoy the pleasure of freedom, that lead them in most cases towards immoral sexual practices, affecting the private as well as social life. Violet did not end with her expression of anger and hatred towards the dead girl, she rather planned to punish Joe by getting herself a boy friend and letting him visit her house. The change that the migration has brought to the black population is reflected in many ways; the race that was so accustomed to the life under slavery found it difficult to adjust with the 'New' and 'Free' environment in the City; and the modern sophistication of the city life brought these changes in their living patterns. This is a

common picture of Harlem where the Blacks together with the material progress have delved into some sorts of moral crisis as well. Morrison, however, shows how the slave society has got freedom and now getting involved in the works where only the Whites were found to be engaged, thus minimizing the gap between the Blacks and the Whites. It seems that the history of the black slavery is over and the oppressed and enslaved race is now occupying (or at least trying to occupy) a place at the same line of the Whites. The novel gives us a picture of the 1920s when the Blacks feel at home in the town; and the history of all war, all bad stuff is over and they can see everything settled for them and they can look ahead for a better future, forgetting their "bad stuff" the "no-one-can-help staff" in the past southern tropical life. The settlement of the coloured folks brings settlement to the whole nation. The settlement and development of the Blacks leads the nation towards development and brotherhood crossing the racial boundary. Morrison says that in the halls in the offices people are found to be engaged in discussions about "projects and bridges and fast-clicking underground trains; now the govt. agencies, and the companies like A&P hires a coloured clerk" (*Jazz*, p.7). Morrison glorifies the appearance of the black faces in all American professions, from railways to the hospitals, the coloured people have begun to occupy respectable and responsible jobs, which showcases their efficiency in handling intellectual occupations which were otherwise thought to be meant for the Whites only. The position they are occupying today with the display of their abilities in handling big jobs, shows their position in the modern world, and their rightful claim to be treated equally with the other people, where they should no longer be treated as the colonial 'Others' as they have usually been subsided from the so called mainstream society.

The slaves narrated in *Beloved* after coming into freedom have got a totally different life as is narrated in *Jazz*. It is not that the Blacks have changed only for themselves; they are also getting prominent places in the nation's working places and public systems. Morrison is all praised for the black participation and the importance they are creating for themselves in the society:

> "Nobody wants to be an emergency at Harlem Hospital but if the Negro surgeon is visiting, pride cuts down the pain. And although the hair of the first class of coloured nurses was declared unseemly for the official Bellevue nurse's cap, there are thirty five of them now—all dedicated and superb in their profession" (*Jazz*, pp.7-8)

The position of the Blacks that Morrison presented in the first novel of the trilogy is changed in *Jazz*, where the novelist showcases the prosperity and promotion of the Blacks from the worthless life of slavery to the people of respectable profession, and with the display of their fitness for such places. This progress, however, does not reflect the permanent settlement of the problem of the black cultural identity. It is the position that Bhabha refers to as the 'Nation Space' as a means of cultural location in a transit moment that can be used to identify the 'New' position of the Blacks who are always kept at a liminal position. Bhabha reiterates that "Once the liminality of the nation-space and its signifying difference is turned from the boundary 'outside' to its finitude 'inside', the threat of cultural difference is no longer a problem of 'other' people. It becomes a question of otherness of the people-as-one."[15]

In the novel *Jazz*, as a part of her beloved trilogy, and in continuation of the motif of the preceding novel, Morrison makes a beautiful narrative where using the memory of the black migration towards the American North, she has reconstructed the history of the coloured population in America from slavery to freedom. If *Beloved* is the picture of life under slavery, *Jazz* is the depiction of life after being freed from the cursed state of slavery. In this novel, Morrison has narrated the history of those incidents and events that contributed to the freedom of the Negro slaves. The narrator visualizes the sight of the black people proudly participating in all sorts of development programmes everywhere in the American society, where they are trying to place themselves among the elite classes; the organizations and institutions trying to bring equality to the society are intruding into the narrative to showcase the endeavours for the black uplift. The novels narrate how the white plumes on the caps of the UNIA[16] men are commonly visible in the cities during the revolution and black agitation programmes. Morrison acknowledges the contributions of various agencies, institutions, individuals and organizations towards the uplift of the Negro slaves and the lives of the Blacks as a whole. The considerable progresses of the coloured people, after joining various economic sectors have inspired them for such works; and a common tendency of migrating towards the cities in search of livelihood developed among them, and in consequence new cities and townships began to develop for allocating the coloured population. There have been consistent endeavours to form all-black towns, institutions, markets etc. since the Harlem days in order to ensure black freedom. In the novel Morrison has given a detailed account of the "new" city life the coloured folks have welcomed after the Migration, the facilities and the opportunities they have got to enjoy in the city is far better

than the towns they were born, "the sidewalks in Lenox Avenue are wider than the main roads of the town where they were born" (*Jazz*, p. 10); in the city they have got so many exposure, the church, the store, the party, the post box, the beauty parlour and everything they want for their comfort. In fact they have found everything thrilling in the big city, the club, organization, group, order, union, society, brotherhood, sisterhood or association, everything in the city adds and enhances their thrill and pleasure; and make them forget the darkness of southern life.

As has been already stated, the novel narrates the story of a love sick black married man Joe Trace and his extra-marital love affair with a young girl Dorcas that rouses the love hatred in his wife Violet. In fact the whole family is affected by the trauma of love hatred and violence, and the traumatic minds create more and more tension and disorderliness in the family. Morrison has used this traumatic 'love-affair' as a signifier to signify the changing social attitude of the Blacks in the freed social condition, to which they have been newly introduced. During slavery, barbarism was part of their normal life and socially accepted; but in the freed condition, these types of affairs are treated adultery, hence unacceptable. In *Beloved*, we are informed that the eight children of Baby Suggs were fathered by six persons. Such common practice of the slave society is turned into individual in the free society. Dorcas finds a better companionship in another man which infuriates Joe and leads his revengeful mind towards a cold-blooded murder of his (illicit?) girl-friend. But even after the murder, Joe remains so upset and self reproachful that he cannot keep his mind anywhere as the memory of the murdered girl haunts him like a ghost: he can't sleep and grieves day and night the loss of his love. Violet leaves no stone unturned to bring him back to normalcy but in vain.

The experience of Joe and Violet has become a common narrative of experiences of all the American Blacks after coming into freedom. The new living style, the new profession and the free life, they have earned for themselves have paused new challenges to the coloured folks, who otherwise had tried to derive contentment even amidst the harsh life during slavery. The psyche of the black man's wife is so affected by the extra-marital affair of her husband that she can neither rival the dead for love nor she can completely wipe out the image of Dorcas from Joe's mind. It is very ironical that she keeps up Dorcas's photograph on the wall of their house as a constant reminder of her appearance. It seems that Violet is not only losing Joe to a dead girl, but she wonders if she isn't falling in love with her too;

because many a times, “she is admiring the dead girl’s hair with just a suggestion that she need her end cut”, she also wonders “if the dead girl had coal-black eyes or brown” (p.15).

The coloured people who were made to sleep in the stables along with the horses during slavery, as depicted in *Beloved*, after freedom migrated in large numbers to the city, where they could live in far better condition, but there again they witnessed similar racial difference everywhere—from the restaurants to the railway carriages—there was special provisions for the Whites. For instance, in the carriages, the Blacks are separated by green curtains and in the dining carriages the Whites were given first preference. But still the change is welcome. Every Black after coming to the northern cities and enjoying the modern life, feels: “… Living in the City was the best thing in the world. What can you do out in the country? When I visited Tuxedo, back when I was a child, even then I was bored. How many trees can you look at? And for how long and so what?” (*Jazz*, p.207). The natural environment in which they have lived for generations, has now turned to be a boring experience, especially after they have got the taste of the blessings of city life. This is how “Newness” has entered into the black society, which in many ways may be unacceptable for an orthodox coloured person.

Recreating the History of the Great Migration

In the novel *Jazz*, Morrison has narrated the history of the Great Migration, the instant flow of the black population towards the northern cities and its impact upon the American society in general and in the Black cultural identity in particular. People from the small cities, towns and countries began to move towards the city of Illinois, where they could live in cheaply rented houses and apartments with those modern facilities without which they had been living or which were beyond their imagination while living in their country lives. Morrison gives a detailed account of the migration and its continuation for decades affecting the lives of the Black as well as the Whites:

> “The wave of people running from want and violence crested the 1870s; the ’80s; the ’90s but was a steady stream in 1906 when Joe and Violet joined it. Like the others, they were country people, but how soon country people forget. When they fall in love with a city, it is for forever, and it is like forever” (*Jazz*, p.33).

Morrison recreates the history of the black uprise that gave birth to the riots involving both the Blacks and the Whites in various public massacres at different cities, lynching and many incidents of racial violence. Using the memory of Alice Manfred, Morrison recreates the history of the riots causing bloodshed and racial hatred that spread not only in America but also in Europe. Alice remembers the flow of black men and women marching down the Fifth Avenue to advertise their anger over the death of about two hundred black people in East St. Louise, including her sister and brother-in-law, the victims of the riot of communal violence. The Silent Protest March that Alice remembers reflects the hatred caused by the riot in both the Blacks and the Whites resulting in the mass killing of both of the races. Without debating or without showing her leaning towards any racial side, Morrison has displayed her aversion to the hatred caused by the riots. A riot is blind assassin where there is no justification in any action committed by either side, be it black or white. The racial hatred in America caused primarily by the black migration, is due to the fear of the Whites about losing various opportunities to the Blacks in different industrial sectors. In fact the American Whites began to be afraid of losing their hold and the advantageous position they had been enjoying over the Blacks in the traditional social hierarchy, and came out in mass to attack the coloured people which returned in the form of retaliation upon them; and neither side could be said to be just in their hosility and violent activities. In the novel the narrator says that Alice's brother-in-law "was not a veteran, and he had been living in East St. Louise since before the war." He was not a white man's rival in the field of job, since he owned a pool hall. He was not "involved in the riot, possessed no weapon and confronted nobody on the street; yet he was pulled off a street car and stomped to death" (*Jazz,* p.57). The rioters displayed more hatred and injustice towards Alice's sister, who after getting the sad news went back home only to fall into the brutal violence of the rioters who set fire to their home that engulfed her in the flame.

The public mind was so affected by the riot that murder of any individual became quite negligible or a matter of cold contempt. In the novel the event of Dorcas's murder is so coldly accepted by her aunt Alice that she even did not think of lodging a petition against the case, seeking justice to her dead niece. The impact of the riot was reflected in the public and private life as well. Alice did not take as much grudge against the slayer of her niece as she should have been, because such incidents were so commonly found in the society that it became a mere addition to the blood-shedding incidents that she found on the pages of the news papers during the whole of January and February. The feelings of the racial hatred

looms large on the black people so large that their hatred for the Whites get outburst at any moment and they have developed a kind of aggressive nature against the superior race as a way of self-defense or exercising the strength of their racial unity. Morrison narrates their participation in the riot against the Whites, "Black women were armed; black women were dangerous and the less money they had the deadlier the weapon they chose" (*Jazz*, p.77).

Freedom to Violet's Parrot: Metaphor of Black Freedom

The discursive ambivalence of the cultural dislocation is reflected in different events of tacial trangression, as depicted in Joe-Dorcas affair; the transitoriness and black cultural identity, as reflected in Joe-Violet marital life. In this novel, Morrison reveals the state of the black people's trauma through the reaction of Alice Manfred towards Violet's hateful retaliating spirit and her tolerant approach towards the couple after the murder of her niece. Alice, who is now moved by the Christian belief in the justification of God towards mankind, has learned the tolerance to accept the death of her niece as a divine justice. It is not only Violet who has turned traumatic to unearth her anger and hatred upon the corpse of her love rival, the girl whose adultery has thrown poison to the sweet family of the Traces; in fact like Violet, all the blacks are found to be roaming about the streets of the American cities during the riot. Here Morrison brings certain questions, "who were the unarmed ones? Were they berated or cursed? Were the women fondled in the kitchens and back of stores?" (*Jazz*, p.77) Morrison's answer to such questions, however, is quite simple yet full of a negative attitude towards the black up-rise. She says that whatever happened to them happened at the will of God and their own wishes. Alice no longer keeps grudge on Violet or her husband, because she takes the gesture of Violet rushing desperately with a knife to kill the girl lying in her coffin, as a common traumatic behaviour of any black woman that she has witnessed during the riot. Being a Christian devotee or rather a preacher of the Christian morals, Alice regarded the Joe-Violet couple as the type of Negro couple she would like to teach and train to cure the traumatic state of their mind. She feels that the traumatic mind of the coloured people need psychological advice in order to bring them into peaceful state of mind that can bring them into a stable social as well as domestic environment. In the Joe- Dorcas relation, Morrison displays a kind of racial transgression that was so commonly found in the unorthodox black American society.

Morrison's narrative focusses on the matter of sexual repression in the Christianized American society. Michel Foucault comments that "If sex is repressed, that is condemned to

prohibition, nonexistence, and silence then the mere fact that one is speaking about it has the appearance of deliberate transgression."[17] If repression leads towards transgression, then what type of a social liberty in terms of sexuality can we see black society presented in *Paradise*, where Morrison has displayed in the attitude of the Ruby leaders towards the convent women? If Joe's adultery and Dorcas's perversion are to be controlled by the legal provisions or the social norms formulated by the smaller communities, we have much speculation about the sexual exploitations of the so called hegemonic classes on the oppressed ones as we see in *Beloved*. If sexuality is to be labeled 'sinful', Foucault brings forth certain legitimate questions as to "why sex was associated with sin and why we burden ourselves today with so much guilt for having once made sex a sin" (Foucault, 1976/1998: p.9). A liberal thinking about sex on the part of Joe-Dorcas relation, the complex and the traumatic situation would not have occurred; and the events of the murder of Dorcas can be regarded as the result of 'sexual grudge'.

Dorcas turns of traumatic and obsessive in her response to Joe's sexuality that she loses her self-possession out of her anger and thirst for revenge. Having returned from the funeral of Dorcas, where Violet went with the intent of avenging her love hatred by cutting the throat of the girl lying in the coffin to fulfill her thirst for revenge, but she was violently thrown away by the people present there. Frustrated, that Violet became at the assault, came back home and took out the cage of her birds, and released the birds she had been nurturing with so much love and passion, as her pets. The novelist has made a dramatic display of the pathetic parting scene of Violet and the parrot, the pet that she had loved most endearingly. In fact, the psyche of Violet after the affair had been so disturbed by the treatment she received at the funeral of Dorcas that all her love and comradeship was replaced by anger and frustration. She lost her self possession to release the birds she had kept in her cage, a captivity that was far better than the slavery of the Blacks. Morrison comments on Violet's act of releasing the birds and her rightfulness to do so; as the narrator says,

> "Violet should not have let the parrot go, he forgot how to fly and just trembled on the sill, but when she ran home from the funeral, having been literally thrown out, by the hard handed boys and frowning man, "I love you" was exactly what neither she nor that Violet could bear to hear. She tried not to look at him as she paced the rooms, but the parrot saw her and squeaked a weak "love you" through the pane." (p.92)

Morrison has dramatized the parting scene of the bird and its owner/mistress; it can be placed as a parallel of the master/ slave dichotomy which lacks the enotional involvement shown in the parrot/ Violet relation. After driving them away, whom she had been keeping with her heartiest love and care, Violet was quite embarrassed, and her embarrassment was more vindicated by the absence of her husband Joe, who had been missing since New Year's Day. Being obsessed by the funeral experience, alienation of the bird and her husband, Violet kept going up and down the stairs from her apartment door to the front door to enquire if Joe was coming down the street, but she could not have the trace of her husband, instead she could find only the parrot shivering and telling her each time with a melancholic tone "I love you." Violet was so perturbed by the bird's appeal that her words reveal her broken heart, "Get away," she told him. "Go off somewhere!"(p.93)

Violet, who never cared to give the bird a good name called him "My parrot" who in return would respond as "Love you", also noticed the bird waiting for her company even on the second day, but the next day onwards, Violet could not hear the sweet melody of "Love you" from the dearest pet that had managed to fly away on the wings that "he had not soared for six years, wings grown stiff from disuse and dull in the bulk of an apartment with no view to speak of" (p.93). It symbolically reveals the loss of natural life the Blacks had been enjoying in the South and their close relation with the natural world after coming into the new urban life in the northern cities. This loss or the change, however, is acceptable to the Blacks who were tired of the monotonous life they had been passing, and after coming to the City, they began to feel that they were better attuned to the changed cultural habits than their monitonous country life.

What Violet did to the poor bird was the turning loose of her hatred that assembled in her heart because of the treatment she had got from the society. The bird has been used as the symbol of slavery and freedom. The 'bird' symbol is used by Morrison as the 'signifier' that signifies the condition of 'slavery' and 'freedom' in the transit moment of African American cultural history, when the Blacks even after the end of slavery are staggering in the 'freed condition'. The bird which got so much accustomed to the captivity that he forgot the skill of flying. Despite being given freedom, he is not willing to accept it, because, now in freedom, it will be difficult on his part to adjust himself to the new environment. Likewise, the Africans who have spent generations in America as slaves like the caged bird with the difference that the bird enjoyed love and affection from its owner, whereas the Africans under the cage of slavery were totally deprived of the touch of love and affection from their

owners. The situation is like that of Paul D in *Beloved*, when he got a coin in the market, since he was not accustomed to using money for buying a thing from the market. They, however, attained freedom with the passage of time; and they began to aspire after a life of a standard of the Whites that they had been jealously watching, as we see in Pecola Breedlove's longing for the 'bluest eye' in Morrison's debut novel *The Bluest Eye*.

Joe Trace and the 'Temporality' of African American Identity:

In his theoretical perception about culture and identity, Bhabha talks about the 'temporality' and 'transitoriness' of a culture that suffers the loss of 'fixity' of cultural location; in the depiction of several black characters of her novels, Morrison displays such 'temporal' state of their identity. In each of the novels of her trilogy, Morrison deals with the question of identity, especially the issues related to the African American identity. Personal names are always regarded as important identity markers and the name of a person plays a vital role in revealing his/her identity. In the novel *Jazz*, the identity of Joe Trace answers to many questions regarding the importance of black identity in a white dominated society. The novel presents before us a detailed account of Joe's birth, adopting him by a couple and giving him a name without a surname because he inherits nothing that carries any meaning or significance. He says, "I was born and raised in Vesper County, Virginia, in 1873. Little place called Vienna" (p.123). He can never forget how Rhoda and Frank Williams took him away during the riot and raised him along with six of their own. Her last child was three months old when Mrs. Rhoda took him in, and the two—Victory, the youngest son of Mrs. Rhoda and Joseph—became closer than many brothers. Mrs. Rhoda named him Joseph after her father, but neither she nor Mr. Frank either thought to give him a last name. She never pretended that he was her natural child. When she parceled out chores or favours she'd say, 'you are just like my own.' The word 'like' that Mrs. Rhoda uttered made him ask her where his real parents were. The reply that he received from Mrs. Rhoda, "O honey, they disappeared without a trace" (p.124). The way he heard it developed in his simple mind a kind of misunderstanding that the 'trace' they disappeared without was he himself. Therefore, on the first day he got to school he had to have two names, so he told the teacher Joseph Trace. Thus the identity of Joe Trace brings out many misunderstandings about the cultural identity of the Blacks.

It is quite ironical that Joe who got his name so casually without bothering about his ancestral surname or a well arranged christening, as is customary about the white children. It

was only a misunderstanding in deconstructing the reference about his father that he assumed from the words of Mrs. Rhoda. It is not only Joe who has not acquired a name he could have been proud, there are numerous examples in Morrison's novels such as Paul D, Paul F, Baby Suggs etc. in *Beloved* and Golden Gray in *Jazz* who bear names that made no sense in terms of their status and identity. Like Joe, Henry Les Troy, the father of the mixed coloured boy Golden Gray, got his name only from a situational incident, not having any connection with his inheritance, as the narrator says, "Henry Lestory or Les Troy or something like that, but who cares what the nigger's name is" (p.128).

Racial Hybridity and the Story of Golden Gray: the Mulatto

Hybridity makes the prime concern in Bhabha's idea of Third Space, and it is also used by Morrison as prime thematic concern of her novels narrating the African American cultural hybridity. In *Jazz,* the episode of Golden Gray reveals another crucial issue of black identity. It is very difficult to encompass the identity called 'African-American' since there have been certain people among them who belong neither to the progeny of a race identified with their colour as 'black' or 'white'. There are the 'Mulattoes', the 'Miscegenations' and the 'Passers' who are neither pure 'black' nor pure 'white'.

Morrison raises the issue of White racial prejudice through the happenings around the character of Golden Gray, who is presented in the novel as signifier to signify the growth of a hybrid generation born out of 'Black-White' racial mixture. Violet's grandmother True Belle tells the story of Golden Gray to Violet as a myth of racial mix-up. True Belle worked as a faithful slave to a white lady named Vera Louise Gray, who gave birth to a child of mixed colour with her black lover Henry Les Troy. When the father of the white girl, Colonel Wordsworth Gray came to know about it, the pride and prejudice gripped the heart of the white father so tightly that he at once told his daughter to go away from home, and made her live in Baltimore with a black slave woman, True Belle. In fact realizing the terrible thing that had happened to his daughter, the proud white father was found to be sweating in shame and anger, because "there were seven mulatto children in his land" (*Jazz,* p.141). The frustration that Colonel Wordsworth shows over the racial mix-up of his daughter is not a sudden outburst of anger and hatred; it is rather a common racial hatred of the whites against the inter-racial relation that is growing in the society. Thus Morrison has recreated the history of the Mulatto, the mixed raced people who are living in the American soil with a different identity. The baby that Mrs. Vera Louise gave birth grew to a beautiful young man, who was

quite appropriately named Golden Gray, "Gray because that was Vera's last name (much, much later it was also the colour of his eyes), and floppy yellow curs covered his head and the lobes of his ears" (p139). Due to the lack of a well recognized identity, the boy becomes traumatic and eccentric in his behavior, he becomes so impatient about his identity and inheritance that he looks for his father to question his identity or to avenge his racialised condition; and ends up falling in love with a woman named Wild. Thus in *Jazz* Morrison reflects those aspects of Black cultural history, especially about the racial riots, White response to racial mixture and the transition of Black culture from tropical country culture to modernised city culture.

Paradise: Enunciation of a Black National Identity

In the trilogy Morrison has constructed the history of African-American national identity with clearly visible three stages of African-American struggle for a national identity in the heterrogenous social set up of American cultural structure. If *Beloved* narrates the condition of slavery, and the pitiable conditions in which the coloured people were living under slavery in America; the second novel of the trilogy, *Jazz* reveals different aspects of the condition of black freedom, especially after the American slaves had come out of the vicious grips of slavery to join the common processes of modernization in the American society. *Paradise*, on the other hand, shows the urge for a black national identity, developed among the coloured people, as a reaction to racial exploitation and racial discrimination. Such an urge begins to grow in a community which feels deprivations in all ways of life, as Bhabha points out, "Deprived of that unmediated visibility of historicism – 'looking to the legitimacy of past generations as supplying cultural autonomy'[18] – the nation turns from being the symbol of modernity into becoming the symptom of an ethnography of the 'contemporary' within modern culture" (*Location of Culture*, p. 211). Such a split in the nation-space make the narrative in Morrison's *Paradise*, where the blacks show an urge for a distinguished narrow national identity within the larger parameter of American national identity. Commenting on reason for the growth of such a tendency in the members of a community, and its presentation in the literary discourses, Bhabha reiterates that "such a shift in perspective emerges from an acknowledgement of the nation's interrupted address articulated in the tension between signifying the people as a priori historical presence, a pedagogical object; and the people constructed in the performance of narrative, its enunciatory 'present' marked in the repetition and pulsation of the national sign" (211).

Like the other two novels of the trilogy, Morrison's *Paradise* deconstructs the African American social life, especially on the matter of women subjugation, under the patriarchal oppressive social norms, where the coloured women are doubly marginalized. The subjugation and oppression of the women under racial and patriarchal hegemony have become so hard and obsessive to the African American women that they have learned the language of silence in order to tolerate all sorts of tortures and inhumanities meted out to them, and it is the silence in different situations that actually reveals their protest against the racialised and genderised condition entrusted by social hegemony. The women in *Paradise* are most commonly denied the language of protest and resistance, which motivate them to define themselves and ensure their existence marked by perennial state of self-destruction and a kind of self-exile in a world of their own, away from the dominance of patriarchy, which they try to find out in their common dwelling they have arranged in the Convent. All the eight women in the novel, more specifically Consolata, begin to reject patriarchal limitations, and they have tried to get an access to words and ideas that allow them to identify themselves in terms of their own definition of the 'self' against the tradition of living as 'others'. In fact the Convent women in the novel create among themselves a community that rejects racist, classist and individualized views of gender, just as the women in another novel of Morrison, *Love* tries to express revolutionary denial of a male hierarchy and in a sense denial of the male dominant world.

In *Paradise,* Morrison showcases the national sentiment of the American Blacks that began to develop towards the last decade of the 19th century. Because of the discrimination, exclusion and the maltreatment that they suffered in the white dominated society, the Blacks developed a tendency to create a society for themselves where they could live in an alienated environment; and establish an all black town called Haven in Oklahoma in 1890. They built up a big oven with bricks and cement for the common use of the community that symbolize the strength of their unity and kinship. This town survived for almost a period of five decades, but the town gradually declined because of its depopulation when the black people were getting merged with the other towns controlled by the whites. The narrator gives a detailed statistics of how the town happened to disappear, "One thousand citizens in 1905 becoming five hundred by 1934. Then two hundred, then eighty as cotton collapsed or railroad companies laid their tracks elsewhere" (*Paradise,* p.6).

The novel gives us a partial history of the rise of a nationalist sentiment among the Blacks in America, that could be assumed in the foundation of Haven in the 1870s; which

eventually declined because of depopulation, and its reconstruction as New Haven, renamed as Ruby in the 1950s in order to fulfill the vow of the grandparents of Deek and Steward Morgan, the twin brothers who worked as the frontline leaders of the new town. In the depiction of the town of Ruby which makes the central plot of the novel, Morrison has given an account of the racial history of America—its social construction on the basis of skin colour and its efforts to resist the condition of being 'raced'. The foundation of Haven or Ruby reveals the state of racial difference in the social set up of the nation during the time of slavery.

The urge for foundation of another black town—New Haven or Ruby—did not come to the minds of the black leaders all of a sudden; it was the result of a long suffered racial feelings given birth by the differentiating social systems called Desegregation. The twins, Steward and Deek Morgan have powerful memory of everything that happened around the black people, which they can never forget, things they witnessed, they learned and they heard from various sources. They remember every story told by their grandfather who put the words Haven in the Oven's black mouth,

> "A story that explained why neither the founders of Haven nor their descendants could tolerate anybody but themselves. On the journey from Mississippi and to Lousiana parishes to Oklahoma, the one hundred and fifty-eight freedmen were unwelcome on each grain of soil Yazoo to Fort Smith. Turned away by rich Choctaw and poor whites, chased by yard dogs, jeered by camp prostitutes and their children, they were nevertheless unprepared for the aggressive discouragement they received from Negro towns already being built." (P.13)

The advertisement for such towns in the popular papers like the Herald would make the headline as "Come Prepared or Not at All," bear significant meaning that the Blacks should be fully prepared for the changing environment in order to befit themselves for the new environment. It is the distress, the trauma of being neglected in a society full of racial marginality that made them think of building a new town for themselves, where they could live more independently with self respect and self governance. In Morrison's narrative where she produces those historical moments that represents an eternity produced by 'self-governance' of a suffered generation; here we see as Bhabha observes, "The performative intervenes in the sovereignty of the nation's self-generation by casting a shadow between the

people as ‘image’ and its signification as a differentiating sign of Self, distinct from Other of the Outside” (*The Location of Culture*, p.212). What Bhabha implies in his observation is that the ‘Otherness’ of the African Americans is different from the ‘Colonial Others’; the American “Others” in Morrison's narrative are trying to create for themselves a narrow ‘national boundary’ within the larger boundary of American Nationality as a defensive measure against the social restrains; they are not seeking a free nation of the colonial “Others”. In this sentiment of the African Americans, as Bhabha points out, “We are confronted with the nation split within itself, articulating the heterogeneity of its population” (212).

Morrison has given a historical account of the foundation of Haven, its existence and its importance in the black community. The Blacks were the worst victims of racial discrimination, and they had to suffer it even among the coloured people. The victims of racial oppression and hegemonic cultural differentiation were also many a times found to be creating among themselves an undesired system of hierarchy where the dark skinned blacks hated the light skinned blacks. We have instances of the frustration of a section about the heterogeneous sentiment in a homogeneous group, “Us free like them; was slave like them. What for is this difference?” (*Paradise*, p.14). Haven flourished in the early 20thcentury with all the modern amenities of life that the Blacks could see only in the Whites enjoying the advantage of all those blissful things. The novel states that “in 1910 there were two churches in Haven and the All-Citizen’s Bank, four rooms in the school house, five stores selling dry goods” (p.15). The community life was so enjoyable for the Blacks that no family needed more than a simple cook stove as long as the Oven was alive. But towards the 1930s, the town gradually began to decline. Even in 1934 when everything about the town was dying, when electricity was still a dream and a subject of the public talk, gas lines were unquestionable, the Oven remained alive; and until the Big Draught, running water was not missed because the community well was deep. When the city so labouriously built up for the Blacks was dying, the twins Deek and Steward, who were born in 1924, were quite young to listen to, imagine and remember everything that happened in connection with the growth, development and decline of the town, a paradise for the Blacks. The narrator says that in “1949 the two brothers grew young and got married, the time when the Haven residents leaving for other places, and those who had not packed their luggage, were also planning to do so” (p.16). The Morgan brothers stared at the dwindling post-war futurity of the town; therefore they tried their best to persuade other boys of the community to make a shift of the

town and reconstruct it somewhere else as their old fathers did in 1890. Accordingly the ex-slaves and ex-soldiers broke up the Oven and loaded it into two trucks so as to make a shift. Thus a mess of fifteen families assembled at dawn in the middle of August and moved out of Haven to the pristine location of Oklahoma, instead of heading towards the famous cities like California, Saint Louise, Houston, Langston or Chicago as many other black families of Haven had already done leaving behind a town that provided them with a life of privacy. Finally, after a troublesome and hectic journey, they arrived at this site that was cheap enough for them to establish the Oven they had been carrying for their community dwelling that they initially called New Haven. We are given a detailed account of the history how the town was established and given a new name in connection with the founding family.

> "For three years New Haven had been the name most agreed to, although a few were loud in suggesting other names—names they did not speak, they said, of failure new or repeated. Pacific veterans liked Guam, others Inchon. Those who fought in Europe kept coming up with names only the children enjoyed pronouncing. The women had no firm opinion until the nephew's mother died. Her funeral—the town's first—stopped schedule of discussion and its necessity. They named the town after one of their own and the men did not gainsay them. All right. Well. Ruby.Young Ruby."(p.17)

Amidst the reflection of its homogeneity, this well-built town was meant to ensure all sorts of pleasure and happiness of living in self-governed community replete with the blessings of a modern city life. And in fact the town was gradually developing all the amenities of modernization, they found available in the white towns that created great fascinations in the black population. But against the homogenous and philanthropic nature of the town, there is an undeclared racial hatred looming large in the hearts of the Blacks, which is reflected in the relation of the town's men and women with the residents of a nearby Convent.

Near the town, some seventeen miles away, there has been a Convent where some bereaved women have been taking shelter. The novel gives a detailed account of the Convent, which was in fact an isolated mansion once used by an embezzler, presently used by a group of women as a nunnery and a school for the native Indian girls. The town has been in close connection with the Convent, but the Protestant leaders of Ruby, however, refuse to accept it as an ideal Convent,

> "But there are strange things nailed or taped to the walls or propped in a corner. A 1968 calendar, large X's marking various dates (April 4, July 19); a letter written in blood so smeary its satanic message cannot be deciphered; a fedora tilted on the plastic neck a female torso, and, in a place that once housed Christians—well, Catholics anyway—not a cross of Jesus anywhere."(p.7)

The subsequent chapters are named after the women residents of the convent who are haunted by their sorrowful past. The relation between the leaders of Ruby and the inhabitants of the Convent turns to be unfriendly, might be because of their jealousy of the liberty the women of the convent were enjoying or their despise against any form of woman liberty. While narrating the mournful past of these women, the novel depicts the plight of the women in the society. In the chapter entitled Mavis, for instance, we get a detailed account of womanhood of Mavis Albright, a distressed mother, who feels genderised after a tragic incident in which her infant twins Merle and Pearle died being suffocated inside her car as she went out for shopping. Later she became traumatic in the fear of being killed by her drinking husband and her two elder sons, who believed her to have killed the children. Therefore, she escapes her home looking for a secured place of shelter and eventually arrives at the Convent where she is welcomed by Consolata known as Connie, another resident of it. Morrison has given a hint at the common picture of domestic violence found in the black social life, as we see in the characters like Mavis Albright. Thus she looks for herself a homogeneous society to replace the wearisom condition of sexual heterrogeneity, and at certain points in the sexual behaviour of the Convent boarders Morrison has displayed an averson to social heterrosexuality.

The pure black leaders of Ruby brought certain allegations against the women boarders of the Convent. They decided to destroy the Convent and accordingly proceeded towards it in the darkness of night with the intent of attacking the women living there. The novel opens with the action of the black leaders attacking the Convent, which reveals their racial hatred, "They shoot the white girl first. With the rest they can take time" (*Paradise*, p.3). But Morrison has not revealed anything about the white girl anywhere in the novel. It suggests the common hatred cherished in the hearts of the Blacks against the Whites. It will be worthwhile to mention that among the fifteen families that moved to this place for founding another all-black town (New Haven) in the model of Haven that collapsed after surviving for a short period of five decades, there are nine families of pure black skin; and

they have formed a kind of hierarchy among themselves based on the colour of their skin, where the people of pure black skin get a more advantageous position in their society, and they consider themselves the hegemonic group over the light skinned residents of the town like Roger Best.

As has been stated earlier, the Convent failed to keep the spiritual holiness as is expected from a genuine Convent as a religious institute. In the chapter named after the woman Grace, known as Gigi, Morrison narrates the plight of the lady and her adulterous relation with the nephew of the Morgan brothers, K.D. which betrays the outrageous twin brothers. This is where the patriarchal hypocrisy in their attitude to sexuality gets exposed. It is in fact K.D. the woman chaser, who persistently followed Gigi everywhere to have her company, and thereupon made her involve in sexual perversion with him. But the powerful uncles of K.D. blamed the girl for the relation thereby safeguarding their nephew, as if women were always subject to be the plaything for the male as superior beings. Meanwhile we have come to know that K.D., the woman chaser made love to Arnette Fleetwood and made her pregnant, which she gave birth in the Convent as an abandoned child. There has been conflict between the two families—the Morgans and the Fleetwoods. This perversion of K.D remains unprotested because of the powerful position of the Morgan family. Likewise, the Morgans enjoy the economic hegemony over the inmates of the town. Since the Morgans are controlling the public bank of Ruby, they enjoy a more privilege than the Fleetwoods; and K.D. uses the power of his uncles to defend his guilt. The matter, however, is negotiated in the presence of Reverend Misner and the dispute is settled. The instinct of sexuality comes from both sexes alike, Gigi's habit of wearing miniskirt to draw the attention of the opposite sex is no less spiteful than K'D.'s woman chasing.

In most of the pages of *Paradise*, we see the picture of black unrest and unsettlement in different changing social conditions. After coming back from the Vietnam war, Deek and Steward, especially Steward struggles to get adjusted to the homely environment and expresses deep concern about the trouble of the black people; everywhere he notices discouraging picture of the society—Arnette being pregnant with K.D. would not leave her bed, Menus after returning from Vietnam took to drinking, Roger Best's daughter Billie Delia disappear and K.D.'s relation with Fleetwood's daughter—keep him unhappy. This is the cultural transit moment that Bhabha deals with and the moment of 'occult instability'.

Deacon Morgan, who wanted to keep up a hegemonic position in Ruby, since it was established as a continuation of Haven, founded by his grandparents, discourages any reference to them as ex-slave, even though they had been born in the ages of slavery. The young people in the free black society, has become haughty in their behavior towards the elders. Deacon is infuriated in one of the youth's calling his grandfather an ex-slave, "Stop calling him an ex-slave like that's all he was. He was also an ex-lieutenant governor, an ex-banker, an ex-Deacon and a whole lot of other exes, and he wasn't making his own way; he was part of a whole group making their own way" (p.84). In the meeting held in the observation of Reverend Misner, Roy Beauchamp tries to establish that his grandparents also shared a respectable contribution in the foundation of Haven, which Deacon Morgan straightly disagrees. Keeping up the hegemonic position he has been displaying in his attitude, Deek reiterates the role of his grandparents in building the Oven and the town as well, which the present generation should duly recognize with respectful memory. "Now you all listen to me. Real close. Nobody is going to change the Oven or call it something strange. Nobody is going to mess with a thing our grandfather built. They made each and every brick one at a time with their own hands" (p.85). He argues that neither the Beauchamps, nor Fleetwoods nor Harper had any right to make change in the Oven, so labouriously built up by his grandfather. Thus Deacon Morgan tries to occupy a hegemonic position over the people of the town. Finally it was unanimously decided upon the fact that it was a common history and it is the memory of that historical past that will lead them towards the futurity in running the black community towards its futurity.

Cultural Difference and Cultural Development

Ruby was founded in 1950, with the expectation of making it a developed town where the disadvantages of Haven were tried to minimize. Living standard in Ruby got remarkably changed as the Blacks began to be the part of modern development processes. The women began to buy soft toilet paper, used wash clothes instead of rags, soap for the face alone or diapers etc. for their beautification. After all, a sense of development and modernization began to grow among the Blacks. The dirt yards were carefully swept and sprinkled, beautiful lawns were seen charming with colourful flowers blooming. After all, a revolutionary change in the Haven landscape was marked in Ruby with new polished habits and practices and thoughts reflected in the activities of the Ruby residents, especially in the young generation. In fact the young generation of Ruby long for certain changes to the Oven, which has been

treated as the source of integrity and community strength over the years. There has been hot debate in the meeting held at Mount Calvary, where the young men of the town argued over the message carried over by the words written on the face of the Oven, "Beware the furrow of His Brow", which they feel should be "Be the furrow of His Brow". Even Steward's wife Dovey also feels the "Furrow of His Brow" is enough for any age or generation. In fact, Steward is disgusted with the idea of the Ruby youths' idea of writing a slogan "Cut me some slack" that they wanted to paint on the Oven. The Morgan brothers, who have the active memory of the stories of the painful experiences of their parents and grandparents in connection with the foundation of Haven, do not agree to the idea of making any change in the Oven. It is the symbol of their pride, their hegemony. The hierarchy they have created for themselves is not a day's or moment's earning; they have the stories, the legends and history, as evidence for proving their leading role which they have inherited from their forefathers during Haven to the construction of Ruby. Deacon Morgan remembers the stories told by his father or grandfather about the Big Tours that gave them the idea of founding a separate town for the Blacks that could help them escape the horrors of Disallowing. The first such tour, as he was informed was taken in1910, before they (Deek and Steward) were born. Big Daddy (Zechariah Morgan), Uncle Prior and Elder visited several towns like Boley, Langston City, Mount Bayou etc. and spoke endlessly about their experiences. Some eleven years later, Tulsa, along with many other black towns that they had visited were bombed. But amidst such turmoil in 1932 Haven still survived. The economic crash that touched down every other town had not touched Haven. Personal savings were substantial, Big Daddy Morgan's bank had taken no risk—partly because the subscription shares had been well protected. But the gradual collapse of other black towns also gripped Haven after the Second World War. The Morgans could never take pleasure in the failure of some of the coloured towns. In fact they had carried the rejection of 1890 like a bullet in their brain which demanded purgation, and could not take rest until they could found Ruby in 1950.

Like any other novel forms, Morrison's *Paradise* also uses love as a prime theme, which is used to reveal various issues relating to black social and cultural life in America. In the chapter Divine, Morrison reveals the black approach to love and marriage, through which the community life in Ruby is beautifully depicted. According to the novel, love is "divine only and difficult always. If you think it is easy you are a fool. If you think it is natural, you are blind. It is a learned application without reason or motive except that it is God" (p.141). Morrison's idea of love is deeper than it is thought to be. In the novel, she again reveals her

philosophy of love that it "is a diploma conferring certain privileges: the privilege of expressing love and the privilege of receiving it." It is the virtue of love that distinguishes mankind from other beings and the difference lies in the fact that human is educable and we are capable of learning how to learn, therefore interesting to God. Reverend Pulliam, regarding the marriage of K.D. and Arnette, says that couples who do not keep up the sacredness of the divine virtue cannot survive in marital life; because the blessings of God goes only to the pure and holy. The marriage of K.D. also exposes the conflict between Reverend Misner and Reverend Pulliam, against the hope of the Morgans and the Fleetwoods for a family reunion as well as the two preachers of the town. Reverend Misner was disgraced with the way senior Pulliam was leading the marriage rituals; in utter disgrace he noticed the senior gazing at the women with an air of expressionless and disinterestedness, until he stood up from his seat to take the lead by himself in preaching the matrimonial rites. In fact from morning, he was rehearsing the sermons for sanctifying the matrimonial rites, but the damaged words that senior Pulliam had spread from the pulpit had affected the spirit of the ceremony. The groom K.D. also became quite upset that everybody was using his wedding, messing up his ceremony, to extend a quarrel—on the one hand the two Christian preachers of Ruby, Reverend Misner and senior Pulliam quarreling with each other, on the other hand, his uncles quarreling with his in-laws—that he was looking forward to be ended with his marriage. He wanted to get over with his unsought for affair with Gigi, which led him commit a number of unlawful things. Arnette, on the other hand, the well-educated bride was so eagerly waiting for her marriage with K.D. that she became quite impatient when Reverend Misner was lingering by "holding on the cross with an imposing silence" (*Paradise,* p.149). This silence reveals the mental agony of a helpless girl Billie Delia, who had to carry on the blame of perversion since the age of three because of her indomitable desire for riding the horse belonging to Mr. Nathan DuPress, the horse that K.D. rode while winning the race on the foundation of Ruby. Nobody would believe in her regret that she was still virgin, whereas, the bride Arnette, who had sex at the age of fourteen, before marriage with the groom K.D. She could never understand how the burden of the blame was shifted on her shoulder, and her virginity, "which no one believed existed, had become as mute as the Cross reverend Misner was holding aloft" (p.152). It is because of the difference they possessed in terms of their skin colour, despite their racial similarity.

The history of racism haunted the conscience of all Ruby inhabitants. Patricia, the daughter of Roger Best, undertook a historical project which turned out to be a gift to the

citizens of Ruby—a collection of the family trees of the fifteen of the founding families of Ruby, displayed by Patricia's project—found to be a tree turned upside down, with the trunks sticking in the air and the branches sloping down. It suggests the crisis of the African American identity in the changing American scenario. In their struggle for achieving a dignified American identity, the Blacks are being uprooted from their African root. The new generation of the race, symbolized by the branches in the family trees drawn in Pat's project showcases the condition of being culturally uprooted, as suffered by most of the present generation, and thereby making whole of the African Americans a lost generation who are neither alien nor in their home. There is a beautiful display of the dilapidated status of the younger generation found in the reception of K.D.'s marriage. In her research, Pat used the town's official history, Sunday school classes and ceremonial speeches, in fact she wanted proof in documents where possible to match the stories, and if not available, she interpreted herself freely but insightfully using her emotional distance. Pat's research becomes the historical document for the people of Ruby to figure out the foundation of Haven:

> "There were nine families, nine large intact families who made the original journey, who were thrown out and cast away in Fairly, Oklahoma, and went to found Haven. Their names were legend: Blackhorse, Morgan, Poole, Fleetwood, Beauchamp, Cato, Flood and both DuPress families. With their siblings, wives and children, they were seventy nine or eighty one in all (depending on whether the two stolen were counted). Along with them came fragments of other families: a sister and a brother, four cousins, a river of aunts and great- aunts shepherding the children of their dead sisters, brothers, nieces, nephews." (*Paradise,* p.188)

Thus Morrison presents before us a historical document of the black uprise and their journey from slavery to freedom. Pat collects the genealogy of the Morgan family from the members she has come across. When she asked Steward where his grandfather Zechariah (or Big Pappa) got his name, he said that he thought it was Moyne originally, not Morgan Or Le Moyne or something, but, "Some people called him Black Coffee. We called him Big Pappa. Called my daddy Big Daddy" (*Paradise,* p.192). Pat came to know from him that the family felt it to be an insult upon their position, because the Morgan line was crop feeble in regenarating the futurity of the family line; since one of Zechariah's sons, Rector, had seven children with his wife Beck, but only four survived: Elder, the twins Deacon and Steward, and K.D.'s mother, Ruby. As it was a common picture in the African American society, that

only a few of the progeny grew to manhood and remained with the family, because of the situational force of being separated either by early death or migration to other places and escaping. In the big Morgan family, “Elder died leaving his wife, Susannah (Smith) Morgan, with six children—all of whom moved from Haven to northern states” (p.193). Zechariah, as a hardcore leader of the foundation of Haven disliked and discouraged the inmates of the town moving to other places, for he considered Moving as scattering, which would be a curse to the futurity of the town.

The intact nine families who founded Haven were the descendants of those who had been in Louisiana Territory when “it was French, when it was Spanish and French again, and when it was sold to Jafferson and finally became a state in 1812” (*Paradise,* p.197). Therefore, their language was partly Spanish, partly French, and partly English. The insult of the rejection loomed so large in the mind of Zechariah that he turned authoritarian in the foundation of Haven. But despite their will to live in their own town with love and integrity, they ended creating a hierarchy among themselves, a hateful tradition they had despised all through their lives. Roger Best was hated by the Ruby inhabitants for marrying a wife with no last name, “a wife without people, a wife of sunlight skin, a wife of racial tempering” (197).

The close confinement that Zechariah, the founder of Haven wanted to impose upon the townsmen did not exist, which caused the failure of Haven as a self-secured all-black town expected by them. The lesson that they had learned from Haven, encouraged the descendants of the founders of Haven, some two generations later, to found Ruby, another black town, which they initially called New Haven. But the new generation of the Ruby inhabitants is not found to be as much respectful to their black origin as they should have been. Their haughty nature and turned out to be disgusting even for the Christian preachers appointed for the town. Counting on the position he was being offered in Ruby, Misner felt that he was not well-used here, and he would be contented with any place as long as there were young people to be taught, to be told; and sometimes he felt that the Whites were often found to be the obstacles to his humanitarian ideologies. He tried to make his students learn that Jesus had been freed from white religion and the Blacks no longer would have to beg for respect, it was already in them which they needed only to display. But against his longing for a descent black society, he was betrayed with the resistance he was getting from the society in Ruby. He felt that his students here were being chastised about the beliefs he helped instill. Now to his utter distress—Patricia Best, with whom he’d taught Negro history every

Thursday afternoon—was chipping away at his Bible class, confusing self-respect, for arrogance, preparedness for disobedience. He wondered whether she thought education to be just the sum of knowledge that helps one get a job. From her approach he felt that Negro history and list of old-time achievements were enough for her but not for the new generation. Reverend Misner was quite upset in Pat's arguments over importance of the memory of their African origin. Although it embarrassed Reverend Misner, the debate between the two reveals the tendency of the young African-American masses to get merged with the American mainstream at the cost of their African root:

> "If you cut yourself from the root, you'll wither"
> "Roots that ignore the branches turn into termite dust."
> "Pat" he said with mild surprise. "You despise Africa."
> "No I don't. It just doesn't mean anything to me."
> "What does Pat? What does mean something to you?"
> "The periodic chart of elements and valences."
> "Sad," he said. "Sad and cold." Richard Misner turned away (*Paradise*, p.209).

The tendency of the young African Americans to forget their African root, in their hope for standing in the line of pure American citizen, is clearly visible in the young approach to Africanism. It is an effort to live in America freely as the whites do; and for this they would rather wipe out the special tag "African American", which distinguishes them from the American mainstream. Hence their position in the American society remains hanging at what Bhabha calls an 'in-between space' that can be located from both the point of view of Africanism and Americanism or can be negated from either side; for in their efforts to get an American identity, they have possessed for themselves the identity of a hybrid cultural group.

Fall of the Convent: Exercise of Sexual Hegemony

It is noteworthy that the American Blacks who had been living a savage life under slavery in America were civilized and brought into the life of the so called modern civilization by Christian Baptists. In *Paradise*, we see the way of black life being controlled by the Christian teachings of Reverend Misner and Senior Pulliam. Christianity intruded into the black life during slavery in the form of home teaching as depicted in *Beloved*, is institutionalized after freedom, as Morrison narrates in *Paradise*. The Convent narrated in

Paradise, initially built up as the mansion of an embezzler, was later on used as a school for the native Indian girls, where the Christian nuns taught the native students, basically the Christian morals. When Ruby was founded, this school located some seventeen miles south of the town, was known as the Convent, which later turned into a sheltering place for the distressed women. Its origin name CHRIST THE KING FOR NATIVE GIRLS, was used only by the nuns and the few students boarding here, during the prayer; all other people called it the Convent, for no specific reason. Mary Magna, the nun, who was respected as the Mother of the Convent, adopted Consolata, a distressed girl, who worked hard for thirty years to become and remain Mary Magna's pride because of her accomplishment in teaching, nurturing and tending the Convent. Until Ruby was founded in 1950, the Convent was an isolated solitary place, where the nuns, sisters and the students passed an alienated life. But some four years later, the Convent residents were glad to see that in the newly established town, people were building houses, fencing and ploughing land, and for their greater delight, they had begun to build feed store, a grocery store and above all a pharmacy to provide Mary Magna the bolts of antiseptic cotton for the girls' menstruation, fine needles and thread for mending and many other essential things. Thus the Convent gradually began to grow a close relation with the town. Cosolata, the adopted daughter of Mother Mary Magna, developed an adulterous relation with Deacon Morgan, and continued their love-making practices, which defamed the Convent and became one of the causes behind its destruction by the townsmen. Soan Morgan, wife of Deacon Morgan, on the other hand, came to the Convent to abort her third child; it later brought another charge against the Convent residents as abortionists. Soan, of course developed a friendship with Conosolata, despite coming to know about her relation with Deek. Consolata, who was brought to the Convent at a very tender age became the witness to all its ups and downs. She could feel the dying heart of the Convent, just as she nursed the declining health of Mother Marry Magna. She shared with Mary Magna, Sister Robarta, and Sister Mary Elizabeth, the tension over the existence of the school. The endowment of the wealthy woman who founded and funded it had survived the thirties; but towards the fifties, the principal (Mary Magna) and the sisters found it quite challenging to persuade the Protestant state authorities to continue sponsoring the Catholic school. Mary Magna had to write letter after letter, had to travel far to Oklahoma City, in obvious hope of making the school active and survive against all odds and hurdles, but all her efforts ended in smoke, as all the boarding students escaped one after the other. In September, 1954, she got the news of closing the school; till then Mary Magna and Sister Mary Robarta were left in the Convent. Sister Mary Elizabeth accepted a teaching post in Indiana and the two Indian girls

Penny and Clarrissa escaped to Arkansas. The three women—Mother Mary, Sister Robarta and Consolata—waited the summer for some state support, but after winter they stopped waiting and began to feel like abandonment. So, they took up step to keep up the property which was in the name of the principal and manage the expenditure by themselves. For this, they used to make sauces, jellies and European bread. They also sold eggs, peppers etc. mostly to the truck drivers who drove between Arkansas and Texas. Ruby citizens seldom stopped there to buy anything other than peppers since they usually grew their needful things. Finally, when Mary Magna died after suffering a long illness, Consolata, remained there like an orphan, as the loan caress of the convent. With Consolata, in charge, like a new and revised Reverend Mother, feeding the Convent residents bloodless foods and water alone to quench their thirst, they altered. Thus the Convent finally fails in its origin objectives and turns out to be a mere club house for the boarding women; and the patriarchal leader would not tolerate such a liberty of the women. The well planned attack upon the Convent reflects the exercise of the sexual hegemony of the male leaders of Ruby.

Ambivalence of Black Power Generation and the Fear of the White Law

It was Lone DuPress who first overheard nine men discussing at the Oven about their plan to attack upon the Convent. She at once persuaded some of the people of her close contact to save the Convent women from the women hunters of Ruby. But before they could reach the Convent, nine gunned men led by Steward Morgan reached it at dawn and shot at a white woman resident of the Convent. Although Lone managed to send a group of men to defend the women, the women hunters reached beforehand, and massacred them. In their counter attack some of the attackers along with some of the people who went to save them also got injured.

The attack upon the Convent reveals various issues relating to the freedom, leadership and the question of black nationality. On the one hand they dreamt of founding and establishing Ruby as a Paradise for themselves; on the other hand, they showcase the worst kind of human hatred and thirst for blood in their attitude to the women boarders of the Convent. It is very difficult to guess what prompted the Ruby leaders to attack the wretched women of the Convent. There is no denying the fact that the Convent remained neither an educational institute after the native girls escaped and deserted it one after the other, nor a religious institute where there was hardly any religious practices except the prayers. Especially, after the death of Mother Mary Magna, when Consolata became its unofficial

mother, it turned into a rather sheltering place for some distressed women who eventually arrived here and became its irregular boarders. It is quite an injustice to these women who have been given some derogatory labels by the Ruby citizens for no fault of them. Firstly, the Convent women were called to be adulterous, but we have seen that if they were involved in adultery, they were not alone to be blamed for such practices. We have come to know that it was K.D. the woman chaser who took Gigi for a ride in his car and made love to her; likewise, his uncle Steward Morgan used his impressive influence to make Consolata (Connie) practise adulterous sexual relation with him in the Friday evenings in a burned farm house. Secondly, the Convent women were charged of being involved in abortion, but nobody took interest in the fact that it was Soane Morgan who insisted on Connie's assistance in aborting her third child. So there is no point in casting the label of abortionist upon the back of the Convent women. It suggests that the Ruby people used the Convent women for their individual purposes and finally turned hostile to them.

If Ruby was founded as a reaction to the racial prejudice and hypocrisy of the Whites, what they did to the Convent women was no less discernible act than the Whites racists. After the thoughtless attack upon the innocent residents of the Convent, the citizens of the city got divided among themselves, scornful to each other; everybody seems to be trying to endeavour a kind of self-defense to get rid of the white laws, inevitable to grip them. Until the attack, they thought themselves to be self-governed, and self-protected among themselves, although there had been persistent effort from the Morgans to establish their authority over the Ruby citizens. But after the attack, the fear of the white law, that is inevitable to grip them all, notwithstanding their claim to be self-governed township, is distinctly seen in everybody's face:

> "You all massacred those women? For what?"
> "Now we got white law on us as well as damnation!"
> We didn't come here to kill anybody. Look what they did to Menus and Fleet.
> It was self-defense!"(*Paradise*, p.290)

Whatever is the explanation that Aaron Poole got from K.D. and the elder Morgans, it becomes crystal clear that they are afraid of the white law, and their dream for free township without the imposition of any white hegemonic power is a mere dream that never comes true. Morrison makes the 'Others' raise their voice against the racial difference, but the existing pattern of 'social hegemony' leads them towards a perpetual 'dumbfoundedness' and their

voice gets restrained. This is the actual state of the American Blacks that Morrison depicts in the pages of *Paradise* as well as the other two novels of the trilogy. This discursive state of the American Blacks in the power structure of the nation is reflected in all three novels of the trilogy; and throughout her narratives, Morrison tries to reflect the iterative voice of the Blacks for racial equality.

Racial Difference, Black Identity and the Third Space

In her essay "Gertrude Stein and the Difference She Makes", Morrison, in response to Stein's fictional work *Three Lives* written (1905?), points out that there are two responses to chaos: naming and violence.[19] The process of naming is accomplished effortlessly when there is a so-called unnamed, stripped-off-names population or geography available for the process. Violence, on the other hand is understood as an inevitable response to chaos. Morrison finds out another response to chaos, which she describes as "stillness", which according to her lies in "awe, in meditation, in passivity and in dumbfoundedness"; and this third one surfaces in the works of the transcendentalists like R.W. Emerson, Henry David Thoreau etc. Morrison asserts that "the availability of a domestic chaos, an invented disorder, a presumed uncivilized, savage, eternal and timeless "Other" that gives American history its peculiar and special formulation" (*Mouth Full of Blood*, p. 207). This "Other" is nothing but the Africanist presence in the socio-political domain of American literary, cultural and intellectual discourses and activities. Morrison further asserts that there is always a perpetual tendency of an ambivalent racial stereotyping in all the privileged literary workers. Regarding this process of producing racial Other, Morrison observes, "For the intellectual and imaginative adventure of writers who have come to signify "modern" in literature, this convenient Africanist Other was body, mind, chaos, kindness and love, the absence of restraint, the presence of restraint, the contemplation of freedom, the problem of aggression, the exploration of ethics and morality, the obligation of social contract, the cross of religion, and the ramification of power" (209). Other than having a treatment of racial differentiation, there is always a common tendency of formulating difference in terms of gender and sexuality. In this regard, Morrison again reiterates that "individual American style precluded the possibility of, any room for, an "Other" and that, in case of sexism it was an erasure of the other as significant, as a non-person" (209). In such a stereotyping approach, Morrison's finger points at the definition of an American as a white male who is different. According to such a stereotyped view, a good or successful American is a white male who is different and powerful; but

against the superior position given to the American whites, the whole contraption work is pushed to the subject of blackness, femaleness, by means of defamiliarising strategies and oppression.

Bringing into the discussion about the convention of gender discrimination and racial stereotyping in literature, Morrison talks about Gertrude Stein's novel *Three Lives*, which in fact, is a novella constituted with the stories of three women. Here Morrison locates a deliberate repressive approach towards the racial minority, the blacks, whom Stein calls the "Negro"; and places it as a common American way of treating the racialised population in the nation. It is an approach to black life, how they are differentiated from the rest. Among the three women portrayed by Stein, one is placed at the centre of the novel with maximum space provided for her presentation in the narrative. The thing that Morrison picks up for special consideration is the name given to the women representing their importance in the American society. The first and the last parts of the novel are called "The Good Anna" and "The Gentle Lena" respectively, whereas the central and the most prominent and the longest part of it is called "Melanctha". What surprises Morrison is the name of the central character, who is not given any adjective before her name as is found in case of the other two women. Showing the instance of white stereotyping through this novel of Stein, Morrison points out that Stein has brought a difference in the presentation of the three women belonging to the same social category, except for their race. Morrison makes it clear that Melanctha is a black woman, who is identified by Stein as a Negro, and she needs or rather deserves no other adjective to her identity. The same can be said of the characters of Baby Suggs in Morrison's novel *Beloved* and Joe Trace in *Jazz.*

The character of Melanctha just like Joe Trace or Baby Suggs represents a type of black woman/man, who according to Morrison, is sandwiched between the two other women, and thus she appears "framed, bounded by the others as if to foreground and underscore her difference while keeping her fully under her control" (*Mouth Full of Blood,* p. 211). In order to justify her position, as a black woman, Morrison points out Melanctha's difference with the other two women, and tries to identify the similarities so as to relieve her differences. Morrison asserts that all three women constituting this text are servants; all die in the end; and all are mistreated in some fashion by men or the consequences of male-dominated society. Even if we talk about economic difference, Melanctha stands in the same line with the other two between abject poverty and deserving poverty. Then in what sense are the two other women different from Melanctha? The similarity and the difference have to be counted

from this point. The two white women have a nationality: German, first, and then as immigrants, they can be placed in the category of German American, if they chose to. Morrison reproaches that among the three it is only Melanctha who was born in America, it is only she who is given no national identity; because she is a Negro, and therefore, even in 1909, forty years after the proclamation, freed all the slaves without a land and without a citizenship designation (211). Morrison reproaches with deep heart that under such a situation it is only the Negro woman who is never described as an American in the whole narrative; as if the black skinned are not qualified for the label of 'American'.

Like the narrative in Stein's work Morrison also negotiates the racial difference that the African Americans have been facing over the ages. The type of woman/man as represented in Stein's Melanctha, we have numerous such characters in Morrison's narrative where the blacks are given any name that bear no connection with their cultural identity. The only difference in the two narratives is that Stein's is a white discourse where the black American woman is deliberately portrayed as an inferior being, but Morrison's narrative is a black racial discourse articulating the social equality for the blacks who are otherwise treated as the "Others" in the nation. For an exact location of such cultural identity, we have to look through the specific lens of Bhabha's Third Space that narrates fluctuating identity of cultural group of 'occult instability' as a 'hybrid cultural group which occupies an in-between space of observance or an intermediate position between two cultures. The African American cultural identity formed with the African root and brought up in the American cultural environment has to be looked through the Bhabha's cultural ideas rather than narrating with the western tradition of applying any binary opposition; and a mere dichotomy of Black and White is not enough to find out a proper location of their culture.

Notes:

1. Butler's *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990) is the most influential theoretical text for cultural study. See Leitch et al. p.2542.
2. See Bhabha, "Introduction"*Location of Culture,* p.10
3. Ibid, p.2
4. Robert Young, "The Cultural Politics of Hybridity" from *Colonial Desire,* in Ashcroft et al. (Eds) *The Post-colonial Studies Reader*(2nd edition) p.161
5. Bhabha, "Commitment to Theory", *Location of Culture*,p.55
6. See Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark*, pp.9-10

7. Killis Campbell, "Poe's Treatment of the Negro Dialect", *Studies in English*(1936) p.106 qt.Morrison, *Playing in the Dark*, (Morrison's Note) p.10.
8. Morrison points out regarding the use of the word 'darky' in the sentence that it represents the polite parlance of the day, that "darky" was understood to be a term more acceptable than "nigger". See Morrison, *Playing in the Dark*, p.10
9. Bhabha, "Dissemination", *The Location of Culture*, p.209
10. Morrison, Toni. *Beloved*, pp.103-104.
11. Hock Soon Ng, Andrew. "Toni Morrison's Beloved. Space, Architecture, Trauma"*Symploke*,Vol.19,No.12(2011).Pp.231-245
12. Morrison has revealed the racial hatred of the black time and again in the novel. Baby Suggs' reference to the white folks as the worst form of bad luck denotes the ambivalent racial hatred possessed by the blacks. See*Beloved*, Pp.104-105
13. The frustration that Morrison displays in Sethe's reaction to the situation is self-revealing, whereby the enunciation of cultural revolution against an established tradition is focused. See *Beloved*, Pp.236-237
14. Born of the same mother but from different fathers, such examples are abundantly narrated in the novel, for instance the eight children of Baby Suggs were born of six fathers. *Beloved*. P.258/28
15. SeeBhabha, "Dissemination", *The Location of Culture*, p.215
16. Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League(UNIA), founded by Marcus Garvey in 1914 worked as a very active agency for black uplift during the Harlem Renaissance. See Gavins,2016, p.284
17. Michel Foucault, "we Other Victorians", *The History of Sexuality*, p. 6
18. A Giddens, *The Nation State and Violence* (Cambridge, Polity, 1985), p. 216, qt. Bhabha, "Dissemination", *The Location of Culture*, p. 211.
19. Morrison refers to Gertrude Stein as Paradigm or a precursor of modernism in America, especially in relation to her fictional work Three Lives. See "Gertrude Stein and Difference She Makes"/ "Black Matters" *Mouth Full of Blood*, pp. 210-211.

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