TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Black Atlantic and the Fractured Landscape of Afro-Americanism in Morrison's *Beloved* and *A Mercy*

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By

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Letter of Recommendation

Mr. Dinesh Chandra Tripathi has completed his thesis entitled *"Black Atlantic and the Fractured Landscape of Afro-Americanism in Morrison's Beloved and A Mercy"* under my supervision. He carried out his research from, January 2011 to May 2011 A.D. I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for viva voce.

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This thesis entitled "*Black Atlantic and the Fractured Landscape of Afro-Americanism in Morrison's Beloved and A Mercy"* submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Mr. Dinesh Chandra Tripathi has been approved by the undersigned member of the Research Committee.

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Abstract

This dissertation positions Morrison's *Beloved* and *A Mercy* within the slave narrative tradition to scrutinize under the frame of the Black Atlantic, focusing specifically on issues of lived experience of enslavement, trauma of Middle Passage, concept of double consciousness, embodiment and authenticity. It argues that fantastic elements and fragmented rememories demonstrate to capture the subjective experience of slavery from the slaves' perspective, while revealing the importance of understanding fractured landscape of Afro-Americanism, as such. This novel surfaces the degree to which the consequences of slavery continue to haunt American culture where none can escape without compromise for liminality to construct communal solidarity, largely because this history has not been acknowledged and accepted for the possible correction at present for tomorrow. Through her emphasis on strengthening the curse of blackness and healing made possible by overcoming mind/body dualism, Morrison castigates hitherto assumptions of subjectivity and freedom, and argues for a self-in-conscious-connection consistent with self expressed and transplants freedom within the community which brings to the fore her assimilationist politics.

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I. Gilory's Black Atlantic and the Liminality of Afro-Americans in Morrison's *Beloved* and *A Mercy*

This project recourses to Paul Gilory's Black Atlantic framework which draws on Du Bois' concept of double consciousness. Gilory's endorsement of Du Bosian double consciousness get with Morrison's championing of the liminal space of the Afro-Americans in *Beloved* and *A Mercy.* I found that the physical and emotional abandonment of Afro-American is a byprodunt of Middle Passage in post Civil War America. It gives the sense that how everything and everyone became just an object for sale wherever they are. Such a situation arose primarily because of the colonial legacy. This dissertation explored the Afro-American experience of slavery and freedom along with that of the relation between whites and natives.

Black Atlantic is a slogan resided in the memory, a call for strategic realignment to move away from narrowly national frames of references. That's why, Paul Gilory believes that "double consciousness creates" the problem of weighing the claims of national identity against other contrasting varieties of subjectivity and identification" (30) – problem which he addresses by invoking the philosophical writing of Du Bois. Drawing on Du Bois, he posits that "the specificity of the modern political and cultural formation" (19) arises from the insidedness and outsidedness of the Afro-American – more of what he quotes as "cultural insiderism" (3) – as the "Black Atlantic" (19). Black Atlantic culture combines threads from British, Caribbean, African and American cultures. Cultural insiderism constitutes Gilroy's concept of Black Nationalism, which chimes in with his view of culture as hybrid creation and makes his subject position conservative as opposed to subversive, liberal as opposed to radical. By thus valorizing cultural insiderism, Gilroy criticizes both "the fatal junction of the concept of nationality with the concept of culture . . . since the Enlightenment" (2) and "the

ethnic absolutism that currently dominated black political culture" (5). In the sweep of the emphasis, he sees cultural insidersim as "typically constructing the nation as ethnically homogenous object" (3). He criticizes "the racism and ethnocentrism of English cultural studies" (11). Instead he posits the Atlantic "as one single, complex unit of analysis that produces an explicitly transnational and intercultural perspective" (15). Such a view stems from his recognition that black identity is constituted through the triangular relationships of the continents of Africa, Europe and America made possible by the middle passage, which he links "to the half-remembered micro-politics of slave trade" (17). The modernity of the West begins not with industrial technology, nor with the factory labor, but with the slave ship. Though transported as commodities, the black Africans were primarily human beings who "engaged in various struggles towards emancipation, autonomy, citizenship" and gave vent to artistic expressions through forms like "jazz" (18) and "rap" (84), which have "supported the counter culture of modernity" (16).

The vitality and complexity of black music culture, through its espousal of the causes of "the politics of fulfillment" and "the politics of transfiguration" (37), provided as counterculture of modernity by "revealing the hidden internal fissures in the concept modernity" (38). In a utopian formulation, Gilroy argues that slave and their descendent are set up to undergo "emancipatory transformation" (39). His representation of slavery's counterculture is holistic in which slave subjects form a condition which refuses modernity's categorical separation from the sphere of aesthetics, ethics, politics and epistemology. He seems to assert that slaves' holistic subjectivity is something they had to struggle to hold onto against the pressure of modernity's compart mentalising imperative and that this holism is something bequeathed to them by the very experience of modernity.

As a starting point, Gilroy describes black identity as an ongoing process of travel and exchange across the Atlantic that tried to understand its position in relation to western

modernity. In regard to double consciousness, Gilroy argues for a modernity broad enough in scope not simply to include the marginal position of slaves, but to put the "ungenteel" aspect of slavery and terror as crucial and systematic enough to understand them at the heart of modernity, itself: "A preoccupation with the striking doubleness that results from this unique position – in an expanded West but not completely of it . . . is a definitive characteristic of the intellectual history of the black Atlantic" (50). The sailing ship, slavery and music are the three important arguments and motifs which require serious attention. In the Black Atlantic, Gilroy offers a model both for reconsidering the history of ideas in the modern West and for understanding how a putative moves to the center once we examine how a small but intense attachment of scholarly or aesthetic considerations to the lived experience of a social group forces them to lead dualistic mentality.

The Black Atlantic developed from his uneven attempts to show that the experiences of black people were part of the abstract modernity which is found so puzzling and to produce as evidence some of the things that black intellectuals had said – sometimes as defenders of the West, sometimes as its sharpest critics – about their sense of embeddedness in the modern world. He even argues that exchanges between blacks and Jews are important for the future of black Atlantic cultural politics as well as for its history. The history of the black Atlantic yields a course of lessons as to the instability and mutability of identities which are always unified, always being remade.

Alasdair Pettinger finds that Gilroy's suggesting that the hybrid, restless character of the literary and musical forms he discusses are typical – that they represent the normal condition of black culture everywhere. The implication of that even the least promising site – the remotest village or the busiest financial headquarters turns out on closer analysis to be intersected by a range of trans-continental network without which they cannot be fully understood. These networks – of information, mutual aid, emotional solidarity, political

collaboration – would include the abolitionist movement; the many initiatives embraced by the term Pan-African; sycretic cultural formations such as vodun, cricket, or jazz; and the traveling, mailing, and phoning that keep the members of extended diasporic families in touch with each other. If this is the case, then the "black Atlantic" is not about evening things up between the national and the international, the pure and the corrupt, the hardcore and the sell-out, but challenging these very distinctions altogether. Because the "black Atlantic" is grounded in memory and rooted in traumas of dispossessions in the distant past.

Louis Chude Sokei efforts of name the integrated components of black Atlantic – which for Gilroy is a structure of thought as well as the historical nexus of contemporary black identities – which maps the landscape of "race" in the cultural sprawl, not in its essentialist homelands. What Gilroy's "black Atlantic" explicitly offers is a "rhizomorphic, fractal structure" of a "transcultural, international formation" that exists as a "counterculture of modernity" (4). Race is what links all of the writers and performs mediated upon in The Black Atlantic. Because Gilroy is a materialist critic, and his focus is on the historical process of race, its complexity to root, for "a valid black authenticity that glowed with its own light" (743). Double consciousness as a structure was what gave to blacks in the West "a privileged standpoint from which certain useful and critical perceptions about the modern world become likely" (111). This awareness of a diasporic intimacy is overwhelmingly fertile who challenge in style and in sound white hegemony as well as any dominant blackness. It sees slavery in a gesture against the increased potential for human freedom and against the fetishization of the rational subject. The Black Atlantic does provide an alternate routes via a "post double-consciousness" paradigm which functions to keep open the unstable, profane categories of black political culture" (223).

Similarly, Peter Arickson goes on same vein when he found that opposing all forms of "ethnic absolutism" whether of the Eurocentric or as a vehicle for "an explicitly transnational

and intercultural" approach (15). But there is a gap which concerns Gilroy's treatment of Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. Morrison certainly shares Gilroy's departure from Afro centrism, as she makes clear at the outset in playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination (1992): "I do not want to encourage those totalizing approaches of African American scholarship which have no drive other than the exchange of domination-dominant Eurocentric scholarship replaced by dominant Afrocentric scholarship." But what is missing is a consideration of the motif of travel in relation to Morrison's work that is explicitly linked to Gilroy's previous deployment of this motif. As he presents it elsewhere, the theme of travel has a strong literal dimension expressed in Gilroy's interest both in actual journeys and in specific techniques of travel. The metaphorical level of the circulation of ideas is firmly grounded in the physical mobility represented by ships and trains: "I have settled on the image of ships in motion across the spaces . . . as a central organizing symbol . . ." (4); of geographical and cultural dislocation and these touristic journey to Europe stand for a second, freely chosen variety, the figure of the Pullman porter and the chronotype of the train . . . exemplify a third and more complex kind of travel experience.

Morrison appears not to be a figure of travel in the same sense as Richard Wright or James Baldwin since she has not repeated their sojourns in France but instead remained within the United States. Some recognition of this difference is needed to pursue Gilroy's argument. What modification is Gilroy's conceptual scheme as it applies to the contemporary post-Baldwin period are required by the distinctive geographical configuration of Morrison's career? This question is not meant in any way to deny the force and value of Gilroy's discussion of Beloved in terms of the parallel between Jewish thought and the concept of black diaspora. Here, major point is rather to call attention to the abruptness with which Gilroy abandons his earlier formulations about travel and jumps to an exclusively general and figurative level when he turns to Morrison. This abruptness is left unexplored and

unexplained. A more thorough rendering of the critical moves one has to make in the sequence from Wright through Baldwin to Morrison would help to fill in important details in Gilroy's conception of travel.

It seems that Morrison aims to emphasize the special form of communal solidarity in Beloved to both support the system and a hammer – for black community. It is to overpower aesthetic ideals of the white cultural machine. It directly gel with the Giloroian Black Atlantic frame of double consciousness.

The attempt is to find how experience of the Black Atlantic caused loss of identity, self-esteem; cultural, social and familial disintegration as rampant epidemic diseases results in fruitlessness. I found, almost all characters, in *Beloved*, look for solidarity but are caught in a dilemma between house and home. The inconveniences and difficult situations that have dogged the blacks is Morrison's dramatization of the curse of blackness . . . exile, homelessness and forced labor. She, however, reconstructs the curse as strength. The strength, this dissertation argues, is due to her embarking of a liminal attitude.

It is assumed that the Black Atlantic . . . also called as the Middle Passage . . . is a liminal space, a cultural formation located not in a pure space outside the West, but rather inside and yet outside it. The liminal space between race and culture . . . being and belonging is what Morrison puts forward as a counterculture of modernity in Beloved. The prime purpose of this research is to demonstrate Morrison's dramatization of Afro-Americans' fractured identity, wherein characters look for solidarity. But it is limited to the analysis to the text in the light of Paul Gilroy's concept of Black Atlantic. Significantly, though, it goes on to dramatize Morrison's championing of liminal space for the Afro-Americans. It ultimately brought to fore Morrison's assimilationist politics.

The complex narrative begins in the year 1873, shortly after the abolition of slavery in the US, in a black community at the rural outskirts of Cincinnati just North of the Ohio river,

which demarcated the free North from the slave holding South. Here, in a house on "Blue Stone Road," number 124, Denver's grandmother, Baby Suggs, had died years before; also, her two older brothers, Burglar and Howard, have long fled the house, which is obviously haunted by a ghost-baby. This changes with the arrival of Paul D, an old friend of Sethe's, who succeeds in driving out the ghost. Paul D moves in with the two women and begins a love relationship with Sethe. Through their detailed mutual recollections of the past, Morrison establishes a second setting south of the Ohio river: a small plantation bearing the euphemistic name "Sweet Home." The occurrences there in Sethe and Paul D's younger years, and the suffering entailed by these events, crop up successively in fragmentary, hesitant sequences of remembrance.

In the unfolding tale of Sweet Home, the slaves Paul D, his brothers Paul F and Paul A, the half breed American Indian Sixo, Halle and his mother, Baby Suggs, are granted to a great amount of liberty. Their master, Garner, held himself to be an "enlightened" slave owner and thus allowed them to carry weapons. The "Sweet Home men" as they call themselves, are joined by the youthful Sethe, who is seen courted by every single one of them. Sethe eventually chooses Halle, whose dedication to his mother she admires – Halle manages to buy Baby Suggs's freedom by doing extra labor on weekends. A radical change of luck occurs however, when Garner dies and his wife falls irreversibly ill; Mrs. Garner brings in a man the slaves come to call "school teacher" to administer the estate along with his two nephews. This man successively takes away all the liberties granted by their late master, robbing the slaves of their self-esteem. School teacher plainly personifies a parascientific racism – for instance, having his nephews list the animal vs. human characteristics of Sethe's physiognomy. Consequently, the slaves plan to flee north together to meet up with Baby Suggs, who took up residence in a house on the outskirts of Cincinnati after Halle bought her freedom. Before their plan can succeed, however, havoc break out:

Halle is driven mad by secretly witnessing how his pregnant wife is sexually abused by school teacher and his nephews, and thus fails to turn up at the meeting point. Send her children ahead, Sethe returns to look for him and is captured together with Paul D, Sixo and Paul A. After a cruel whipping, she desperately flees herself to be with her children; Sixo is burnt alive before the eyes of Paul D, who is given the bit, sold, and, after attacking his new owner, imprisoned in the deep South.

In their intimate companionship, Paul D and Sethe eventually manage to speak about the occurrences after their separation at Sweet Home. Paul D's story is an account of his experiences on a Georgia chain gang; he eventually manages to escape, into an extended restless odyssey through numerous until he finally arrives at Blue Road 124. Sethe's account begins with her plight north, during which she gives birth to her daughter Denver on shore of the Ohio River. An important role is played here by a young, impoverished white girl by the name of Amy Denver, who acts as midwife to Sethe and gives her the strength to continue her journey. What follows are twenty-eight happy days for Sethe in the bosom of her family and the black community where her mother-in-law had settled; Baby Suggs herself has risen to be the popular spiritual center of the community and regularly preaches in a nearby clearing. Again, however, a catastrophe approaches in the guise of Schoolteacher, who comes riding down Bluestone Road to reclaim his 'property' in the name of the fugitive slave Act. In a momentary fit, Sethe gathers her children and tries to kill them in order to save them from the degradation of slavery; while Denver, her youngest, can be saved at the last moment, Sethe cuts her two-year-old daughter's throat with a handsaw.

After spending time in prison, Sethe returns to Bluestone Road 124 and eventually leads a secluded life with Denver. The community turns away from the family, Baby Suggs dies in seclusion and Sethe's older children flee the spooked house. Only some twenty years after the killing can Paul D's arrival give new hope for a tolerable future – instead, however,

the past seems to return in the form of a mysterious child-woman in her twenties. The eerie girl calls herself “Beloved”, in accordance with the inscription on the gravestone of Sethe’s dead infant daughter. Her entry into the novel’s configuration triggers a number of complex relations. Beloved and Paul D are instantly involved in a bitter battle for Sethe’s attention; Beloved succeeds, step by step, in driving Paul D out of the house, not least by uncannily seducing him against his will. Denver is convinced she has regained her last sister; thus she tries to gain her full trust in order to be able to protect her from another act of violence on the part of her mother. Beloved’s attention, however, is set entirely on Sethe, whose story she seems to be familiar with in surprising detail. Sethe herself finally gives in to the belief that her lost daughter has come back to her; after Paul D leaves the women as he falls out with Sethe when she confesses the murder of her child, she gives up work and focuses all her attention on Beloved, whose desire for unlimited devotion grows ever more demanding. In the end, it is Denver who frees herself from Beloved’s spell and ventures forth into the community to take up work in place of her mother. The community, in turn, starts to take an interest in Paul D, Denver and Sethe’s fate. The novel ends with a communal events during which a number of women exorcize Beloved by means of a collective ritual chant. Beloved, who is big with child at this stage, disappears without trace, while Sethe, Denver, and Paul D come together again for a common future.

The true nature of the mysterious character Beloved is, firstly, taken to be Sethe’s murdered daughter who returns from “another place” to the world of the living in uncannily manifest guise. Secondly, she is triggered by the fact that her memories of “another place”, which Denver and Sethe unquestioningly take to be some realm of limbo between the world of the living and the dead, in fact include references to a very real slave ship. Her, scar is derived from the iron collar she wore during the Middle Passage. Her highly cryptic, fragmented recollection gives a twisted impression of how she went through the torments of

the Atlantic crossing. Thirdly, Elizabeth B. House, for instance, holds Beloved to be a young woman who has been hidden away and sexually exploited for years by a sadistic white farmer which is evidenced on the recounts of Stamp Paid who helped Sethe on her flight across the Ohio River.

Beloved thus works on several planes and fulfills several functions in the narrative context, one of which is to embody not only an individual fate but also the collective suffering of enslavement and the Middle Passage. Sally Keenan, for instance, argues that "the figure of Beloved [. . .] is not only the lost daughter, but she is also all the dead victims of slavery, reaching out to the living, demanding to be remembered" (54), an argument sustained by the novel's dedication to "sixty million and more"; a number that refers to the African victims of the slave trade. Also crucial is the fact that Beloved acts as a catalyst. Through her sheer presence, her constant hunger for tales, and the "profound satisfaction she got from storytelling" (58), she brings the inhabitants of Bluestone Road 124 to face their own past, and to try and articulate this in a narrative that can be shared with others.

Beloved is based on the true story of Margaret Garner and it unearths the historical reality of a horrify context during the institutionalized slavery, the emancipation and its aftermath. It is "her-story' recourse upon the life of a female slave who kills he own beloved daughter in order to provide security from a slave master. It is a testament to the stubbornness of a mother's love in opposition to the dehumanizing demand of inhuman institution of slavery. Morrison thematizes and dramatizes the selfdom experience of black slaves who are vigorously attempting to get assimilation but the memory, injected with double consciousness, dragging them to the tip of pendulum. The novel does not only explores the range of mother's emotions and the extent to which she can go for the welfare of her children but surfaces her duel mentality caused by haunt of traumatic past and twilight of future.

In the novel, I observed Morrison's obsession to establish the liminal space. On the way, she repudiates, up to some extent, white ideals such as objective truth, linear history, absoluteness, civilizing mission, Big Brother, promised land, etc. For instance, though, the novel revolves round Sethe who has "iron eyes and back bone to match" (9) but she needs a "singing man", Paul D who "wants to put his story next to hers" (273) because they share "unspeakable thought unspoken" (199). It is the politics of assimilation to create liminal space for the enhancement of communal solidarity.

After the mistreatment by white master with his nephews, Sethe along with other slaves decides to leave Sweet Home but after havoc created by aforementioned incident, she makes her journey to freedom with the help of a black slave, Sixo who helped her to cross Ohio River. As she was heavily pregnant with Denver, in her birthpang she, again, assisted by a white girl, Amy Denver from whose she endorses her daughter's name. these incidents again depicts that solidarity and co-operation whether racial or interracial required to get out of "ungovernable" (122) loss for "some kind of tomorrow" (273).

As Ruth Franklin posits that the purpose of testimony about atrocity is to bear witness to one's own suffering or to suffering of others, so that it may be honored and commemorated. It is Sethe who guides us from silence to voice, towards the fire and destination. She calls "rememory", something that is gone yet remains. Recalling both "remember" and "memory", "rememory" names both the process of remembering and what is being remembered. It makes slaves victim, victim of haunted past. So, they want to exorcise by managing an outlet to normalize their selves to be ready for compromise and consolidation. So forth, it plateforms to develop liminality.

Similarly, *A Mercy*, a masterpiece of Morrison portrays the America before the birth of slavery. The year is 1682, and the setting is somewhere in what would become Maryland or Virginia, near the coast. Rather the physical violence, the memory and the quest of

communal identity is dominant factor in the novel. The communal and racial identity is depicted in the novel through the characters' mental and physical happenings. Each and every character revolves under the politics of their social solidarity to assimilate with ease. Not only the trauma of the Middle Passage of Afro-Americans, Morrison is successful to dramatize the underlying motive of Native American in the novel. The quest for their solidarity results in the double consciousness acting upon them to get outlet from the haunt and memory of the past.

In this novel, Morrison dramatized fate of Afro-Americans which look very complex due to subordinate position, displacement, and traumatic experience, through rememory, of middle passage. It is full of overwhelming sense of promise and pain, of hope and hopelessness. It is the Black Atlantic experience that brings the intricacies of the loss and loneliness in a fractured landscape that is both hauntingly beautiful and menacing.

II. Application of the Black Atlantic Double Consciousness

a) The Middle Passage and the Fractured Landscape in *Beloved*

Beloved, a much more surprising for its design of intimate fictional evocation of Black Atlantic slavery, is rooted in a dialogue with a decidedly Afro-American musical tradition. It is not the poetics of memory rather Morrison's politics of memory which favor a collective cultivation to democratize a cultural memory of victims and perpetrators. It is the luminal space, caused by double consciousness and found at memory level is clearly visible in the characters' dilemma who desperately striving for assimilation in so-called supreme white community though they harbor immense rage for the curse of blackness. But sense of solidarity reconstructs such curse as strength, it is why, Paul D "wants to put his story next to hers [Seth's]" (273) because they share "unspeakable thought unspoken" (199).

Most notable in Morrison's aesthetic violence to the assumptions of white vocabulary in Beloved is her use of the various forms of memory and to remember which is to dramatize and give visual imagery of horrible circumstances of Middle Passage, slavery: "The people of the broken necks, of fire-cooked blood and black girls who had lost their ribbons" (181). One of Seethe's distinctive verbal traits is her merging of noun and the verb into a hybrid - rememory as she utters: "I used to think it was my rememory" (36). The prefix suggests the idea of memory as always already re-created: that memory is never stable, singular calling up of the past, but rather a partially invented, subjectively selective narrative of that past. However, Seethe uses the phrase 'my rememory' not only to convey the sense that any particular memory or recall of a past event is always inflected with the subject's desire, but also to describe a certain mode of remembering that, as Sethe experiences it, is horribly constant, unchanging. If so, then a "rememory" is not open to the one's revision or

contextualization rather horror of memory remains in a way, fixed, frozen in a time that becomes a dangerously timeless space. As Sethe tells Denver:

> I was talking about time. It's so hard for me to believe in it. Some things go. Pass on. Some things just stay. I used to think it was my rememorize. You know. Some things you forget. Other things you never do. But it's not. Places, places are still there. If a house burns down, it's gone but the place – the picture of it – stays, and not just in my rememorize, but out there, in the world. What I remember is a picture floating around out there outside my head. I mean, even if I don't think it, even if I die, the picture of what I did, or knew, or saw is still out there. Right in the place where it happened. (6)

In Sethe's formulation – not to be too easily conflated with Morrison's - memory shifts from a personal, interior mode to an external territory, a public space of haunting. Memory is not then a personal past that exists in one's consciousness and through her voice; it's a 'picture', a loose and dangerous image. But this view acts as a defense mechanism for Sethe against the fear that the loss is both inevitable and irreversible, that 'some things pass on' into nothingness. Denver's response to Sethe at this moment points to the logical outcome of Sethe's sense that memory is eternal. Denver says, "If it's still there, waiting, that must mean that nothing ever dies," to which Sethe replies, "Nothing ever dies" (36). Given the "haunting" of 124 and the return of Beloved in the flesh, Sethe's denial of death seems to commensurate with the invented world.

I would argue that the events of the past should not be overlooked or 'disremembered'. However, Sethe initially denies that anything "passes on", whether a memory or a feeling or a dead daughter. For Sethe, the static figure of her past as a 'picture' or space into which anyone might fall offers her a temporary loophole out of loss and mourning, and allows for a denial both of personal responsibility and of the inevitability of

time itself. She can thus envision Beloved's return as an erasure of her murder comes under severe duress, an erasure of painful history:

> One more curve in the road, and Sethe could see her chimney; it wasn't lonely-looking anymore. The ribbon of smoke was from a fire that warmed a body returned to her – just like it never went away, never needed a headstone. And the heart that beat inside it had not for a single moment stopped in her hands. (198)

Even desperate yearn of Beloved from the grave to be reunited with her mother validates the way to assimilation for the identification and free motion as she says, "her face is my own and I want to be these in the place where her face is and to be looking at it too" (210). But Beloved seems also to have become one, in death, with the black and angry dead who suffered through the Middle Passage: "in the beginning the women are away from the men and the men are away from the women storms rack us and mix the men into the women and the women into the men" (211). In the body of Beloved, then, individual and collective pasts and memories seem to have become united and inseparable.

Sethe and Paul D are both haunted by memories of slavery that they wish to avoid. Seethe tries to block out the experience of being whipped and having her breast milk stolen by the nephew of Schoolteacher; of killing her daughter; and of exchanging sex for the engraving on that same daughter's tombstone. Paul D wants desperately to forget having seen the physical and psychological destruction other black men who worked on the Sweet Home plantation; having been forced to wear a bit; and having endured the hardships of the chain gang. The havoc wrought upon black bodies under slavery exemplified when Paul D reads Sethe's back as a piece of sculpture: "the decorative work of an ironsmith too passionate for display" (17). He further reads the suffering on her back with his own:

> He rubbed his cheek on her body with his own: that way her sorrow, the roots of it; its wide trunk and intricate branches. . .[He] would tolerate no peace until he had touched every ridge and leaf of it with his mouth, none of which Sethe could feel because her back skin had been dead for years. (17-18)

Paul D registers in an incessant trembling the humiliation he felt before Brother, the rooster, and the indignity of being forced to wear leg irons and handcuffs. No one knew he was trembling "because it began inside":

> A flutter of a kind, in the chest then the shoulder balder. It felt like rippling-gentle at first and then wild. As though the further south they led him the more his blood, frozen like an ice pond for twenty years, began thawing, breaking into pieces that, once melted, had no choice but to swirl and eddy. (106-107)

Though the characters feel suffering through their bodies, they are healed through the body as well. The one is that of Beloved's sexual relations with Paul D as a bodily cure. Paul D refuses to speak too fully the pain of suffering in slavery. This refusal reflects his sense that his secrets are located in what remains of his heart: "in that tobacco tin buried in his chest where a red heart used to be. Its lid rested shut" (72-73). When Beloved compels him to have sexual relations with her in language that recalls Baby Suggs's earlier speech, "to touch her on inside part" (117). The description of this scene suggests that the act of intercourse with Beloved restores Paul D to himself and restores his heart to him:

> She moved closer with a football he didn't hear and he didn't hear the whisper that the flakes of rust made either as they fell away from the seams of his tobacco tin. So when the lid gave he didn't know it. What he knew was that when he reached the inside part he was saying, 'Red heart. Red heart; over and over again. (117)

Both of their movement to erase the gap is, in a way, for the sake of solidarity and to get identification but there still remains dilemma which is byproduct of double consciousness where hope and hopelessness simultaneously live together. There is problem with some characters who want to keep their past at present and 'get hold of it'. This serves as lapse.

The problem with this loophole is that it becomes a sort of black hole. For in Seethe and Beloved's increasing desire to turn back time and merge within a static picture of 'the join', Beloved begins to consume Seethe. Thinking she doesn't have to face the loss of Beloved, Sethe loses her self to the embodied memory of Beloved, at least until the community's "sound that broke the back of words" snaps this cycle of repetition and returns Sethe to history and Beloved to the oblivion of her death, in which she is literally dismembered – "disappeared, some say, exploded right before their eyes" (262).

As a body who stalls, even reverses, history, Beloved must be destroyed. But as a body who marks an unacknowledged past – both her own murder and the collective horrors of the Middle Passage – Beloved must first be remembered, "account for", before she is finally introjected into the "chewing laughter" of the community. In psychoanalytic terms, Beloved's return moves Sethe from the static defense of melancholia into the work of mourning. That is, in order for Sethe to create a self and a life that simultaneously accounts for the past and are open to the changes of the future, she must first remember and work through the loss of Beloved. But she must also "pass on" from this return to the relationship with her dead daughter, moving through and beyond it to relationships with the living: Denver, Paul D, Stamp Paid, Ella, and the rest of the community. Ultimately, then, Beloved is a figure that must be both "remembered" and "dis-remembered." As for Morrison, the act of remembering becomes profoundly public and communal as well.

To exhibit grief and grieving, the novel depicts loss as a vehemently physical experience. When Beloved literally disappears as she and Denver are in the cold house,

Denver experiences this loss as “ungovernable” (122); it reveals the ways in which loss of a beloved other can dissolve the very self, the very body:

> This is worse than when Paul D came to 124 and she cried helplessly into the stove. This is worse. Then it was for herself. Now she is crying because she has no self. Death is a skepped meal compared to this. She can feel he thickness thinning, dissolving into nothing. (123).

The psychic dissolution of a sense of self is thus represented and experiences as a physical process, “thickness thinning”. In this chain of longing and loss, Beloved seeks her self in the body, the face, of Sethe, while Denver seeks her self in the body of Beloved. When the body of the other is absent, the subject “thins”. By the novel’s end, this chain must be broken; each character must reclaim her self and body, becoming, as Paul D says, her “own best thing” (272).

The Middle Passage, the inevitable progress from a lost origin to a forced destination, is a space of in-betweenness, the place of the motion from home to hell, from lost homeland to (in)hospitable land that must become home, “Sweet Home”, and finally “spiteful”, “loud”, and “quiet” (124). Promoted by Beloved, Sethe is forced to recall memories of her own mother. At night Nan told Sethe the story of violation and child murder – her mother’s story, a story that reiterates the story told by the novel, Sethe’s murder of her baby daughter to save her from being returned to slavery. The horror of slavery displaces the horror of the Middle Passage, whose atrocity is told by women whose voices must be invented:

> She told Sethe that her mother and Nan were together from the sea. Both were taken up many times by the crew. She threw them all away but you. The one from the crew she threw away on the island. The others from more whites she also threw away. Without names, she threw them. You she gave the name of

> the black man. She put her arms around him. The others she did not put her arms around. Never. Never. (62)

Due to consciousness and memory, the living are one with the dead, dying requires an effort and lasts forever as “it is hard to make yourself die forever” (210). It arises a question of both dying and surviving, of fusion and separation, of identity and distance together with loss. Such a confrontation with death is summed up by the piled bodies in the hull and produces strange statements: “the man on my face is dead”. This moment recurs and the image is taken up again by Beloved: “she said when she cried there was no one. That dead men lay on top of her. That she had nothing to eat. Ghosts without skins stuck their fingers in her and said beloved in the dark and bitch in the light” (241). The reference is to rape, the transition aptly preceded by the semantic ambivalence of “lay on top of her”. The rape in the monologue “he puts his finger there” (212) is also linked to Sethe’s exchange of sex for the name of her daughter on a tombstone. The climax of the novel, the epiphanic moment of Beloved’s disappearance, has Sethe “run into the fakes of” the assembled women. It coincides with the vision of the man without skin looking at Beloved:

> Now [Sethe] is running into the faces of the people out there joining them and leaving Beloved behind. Alone. Again. Then Denver running too. Away from her to pile out there. They make a hill. A hill of people, falling. And above them all, rising from his place with a whip in his hand, the man without skin, looking. He is looking at her. (262)

The white man’s “look” spells distance, domination, torture, while his “skinlessness” paradoxically sends his back in the eyes of the slave daughter to incompleteness, to “flesh”, thus reversing he own predicament since she was the one who had been flesh in the slave master’s system.

Almost all characters show dilemmatic and confused state of mind to explore what it means to "be-loved". The hard-headed Ella tells Sethe, "If anybody was to ask me I'd say, 'Don't love nothing'" (92). For Paul D, the only safe alternative for slaves and ex-slaves is to "love small" (162): "The best thing, he knew, was to love just a little bit; everything, just a little bit, so that when they broke its back, or shoved it in a croaker sack, well, maybe you'd have a little love left over for the next one" (45). When Sethe confesses to Paul D, what love made her try to do to her children, the shocked Paul D, can only tell her that her kind of love is "too thick" to which she retorts, "too thick? . . .love is or it aint. Thin love aint love at all" (164).

Though for eighteen years Sethe has been systematically "keeping the past at bay" (42), her days devoted to the "serious work of beating back the past" (73). The reincarnation of Beloved compels Sethe to confront her personal past, a past that up till then had been "unspeakable" (58), to come to terms with the fact that she murdered her baby daughter. Here, "nothing ever dies" (36), especially our private ghosts, the skeletons we think safely locked in out closets, at least until we put them to rest. Because "anything dead coming back to life hurts" (35), what Sethe must undergo is an agonizing private exorcism of her own. This is enough to develop a sense of insecurity due to trauma and duel mentality. The novel, through Black Atlantic perspective, seems thoroughly dehumanizes both parties in its treatment of slavery which makes clear that the institution perverts the relation between self and other to create double consciousness for the possibility of luminal space:

> White people believed that whatever the manners, under every dark skin was a jungle. Swift unnavigable waters, swinging creaming baboons, sleeping snakes, red gums ready for their sweet white blood . . . But it wasn't the jungle blacks brought with them to this place from the other (livable) place. It was the jungle white folks planted in them. And it grew. It spread. In, through, and

> after life, it spread, until it invaded the whites who had made it. Touched them everyone. Changed and altered them . Made them bloody, silly, worse than they wanted to be, so scared were they of the jungle they had made. The screaming baboon lived under their own white skin; the read gums were their own. (198-199)

As Margaret Atwood has noted, slavery serves here as a "paradigm of how most people behave when they are given absolute power over other people" (50). Such power reduces people to animals, a truth brought chillingly home to Paul D, when he is forced to wear a bit in his mouth after an aborted escape attempt. Sethe's eyes are opened to the reality of her status at Sweet Home when she realizes that to school teacher she is nothing but a creature whose value is determined in an account ledger enumerating he human and animal traits.

Slaves as animals, objects or commodities – the common denominator here is the denial of the selfhood of the slaves. This is found most forcefully in Baby Suggs's personal history: in the way in which he seven children are taken from her only to disappear forever; in the fact that for most of her adult life she has no name but Jenny, the name on her bill of sale. When her owner finally asks her what she calls herself, he response is telling: "Nothing – I don't call myself nothing" (142). Insofar as she is characterized by a "desolated center where that self that was no self (makes) its home" (140), she is indeed nothing. It is transparent that this denial of humanity and selfhood takes place even under the more benign forms of slavery, such as Garner's, as Paul D comes to realize:

> Garner called and announced them men – but only on Sweet Home, and by his leave. Was he naming what he saw or creating what he did not? . . . Did a white man saying make it so? Suppose Garner woke up one morning and changed his mind? Look the word away" (220).

In the master/slave relation, "definitions belong to the definer – not the defined" (190).

In extreme circumstances, such logic leads from personal degradation to self-annihilation, from debasement to extinction. It is an awareness of this extremity that Sethe acts on when she tries to destroy her children:

> That anybody white could take your whole self for anything that came to mind. Not just work, kill or maim you, but dirty you. Dirty you so bad you couldn't like yourself no more. Dirty you so bad you forget who you were and couldn't think it up. And though she and others lived through it and got over it she could never let it happen to her own. (251)

And if one contests or rejects the logic of slavery, as Sixo does, then son is quite literally reduced to nothing. A sense of self is thus contingent upon personal freedom and autonomy. In this respect, Baby Suggs's son Halle, a slave all his life, is instinctively wise; he knows that there is nothing like freedom in this world, that it is the most precious gift he can give his mother. When Baby Suggs at last breaths the air of freedom, she looks at her hands and realizes that they belong to her; she becomes aware, for the first time of the beating of her heart. Sethe experiences a similar kind of ego formation immediately after her arrival at 124: "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" (95). Sethe's entry to the realm of hopeful, free and secure life from hopeless and traumatic adverse situation is openly articulated as she draws upon the agonies endured during her desperate escape attempt in order to construct and validate that selfhood, a selfhood she identifies with those she has suffered for, as she later tells Paul D:

> I did it. I got us all out. Without Halle too. Up till then it was the only thing I ever did on my own. Decided. And it came off right, like it was supposed to. We was here. Each and every one of my bodies and me too. I birthed them and I got them out and it wasn't no accident. I did that. I had help, of course, lots

> of that, but still it was me doing it, me saying 40 on and now. Me having to look out. Me using my own head. But it was more than that. It was a kind of selfishness I never knew nothing about before. It felt good. Good and right. I was big, Paul D, and deep and wide and when I stretched out my arms all my children could get in between. I was that wide. (162)

Anyway, the dualistic mentality is clearly visible in the act of infanticide done by Sethe which she claims as a byproduct of deep love for children. Yet, as Paul D argues, Sethe's action was not only futile but also counter -productive; who insists that there had to be "some other way" (165). Sethe's underlying aspect of shocks Paul D, and forces him to condemn her:

> This here seethe talked about love like any other women; talked about baby clothes like any other women, but what she meant could cleave the bone. This here Sethe talked about safety with a handsaw. This here new Sethe didn't know where the world stopped and she began. (164)

This depicts conflict between ideal aspiration and violent action. Where former leads to solidarity, communal living and inbetween settlement but later is enough to break the foundation and footsteps of such attempts.

The idea of possession, of being possessed by that which we think we possess, serves as unifying motif here. It occurs in monologues that emanate from 124 after the house has been converted to a world of its own, a hermetically sealed world in which all sense of the boundaries between self and other has been obliterated:

> Beloved
>
> You are my sister
>
> You are my daughter\you are my face ; you are me
>
> I have found you again, you have come back to me

You are my Beloved

You are mine

You are mine

You are mine. (214)

Here, the loved one, the Beloved, is converted into a love object, a thing. To love in that way is truly to be possessed, to be haunted by a ghost. This kind of love is itself an abnormal excess, an unnatural spirit. As Baby Suggs wisely notes, “Everything depends on knowing how much, good is knowing when to stop” (87).

In Beloved, denial and oppression of black identity by the larger slave-owning society leads to an internalization of white discourse and subsequently to an inability and a constant struggle, to develop a self-empowered subjectivity when free from physical slavery. The hidden motive behind self-actualization is to get certificate and validate black presence in the white mainstream social milieu. The novel delineates a process of self-liberation through communal support within the context of slavery. Sethe’s self-actualization is a resistive process against objectifying white definitions of black identity. As an oppressed woman of color, Sethe has potential to reflect consciousness, though dilemmatic.

In the extremely adverse situation, Sethe’s motivations for murdering her child, subsequent ostracism by her community, her obsessive love for Beloved, and he final release shows how she begins to define herself against defined and internalized isolation, fear, or even pride only with the support of others who also have experienced the trauma of oppression, that is, on mutual trust.

The historical process of healing and rememorize functions as a process of collective release from slavery which focuses on the necessity of confronting the past’s unresolved issues. The emphasis on Sethe’s contact with slavery’s commodification which results in psychological, emotional, and spiritual damage. It embodies the interconnection between

pleasure and desire, and domination and power. This constructed difference is re-enacted through Sethe's body by the school teachers and his nephews:

> I am full God damn it if two boys with mossy teeth, one sucking on my breast the other holding me down, their book-reading teacher watching and writing it up. I don't want to know or have to remember that. I have other things to do: worry about tomorrow, about Denver, about Beloved, about age and sickness not to speak of love. But he brain was not interested in the future. (70)

It is the liminal space which creates fear and desire, the sense of recognition and of disownment. Sethe's community perpetuates the legacy of slavery, demonstrating collective internalization and plays an important role as a strength to develop her subjectivity. Morrison explains:

> Sethe had had twenty-eight days . . . of unslaved life . . . 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 . . . All taught her how it felt to wake up at dawn and decide what to do with the day . . . Bit by bit . . . along with the others, she had claimed herself. Freeing yourself was one thing; claiming ownership of that freed self was another. (95)

Sethe frees herself, but she does not "claim ownership of that freed self" alone. And Sethe's trouble begin as the moment community decides to withdraw its support:

> Nobody ran on ahead . . . to say some new whitefolks with the look just rode in. the righteous look every Negro learned to recognize . . . Like a flag hoisted this righteousness telegraphed and announced the faggot, the whip, the fist, the lie, long before it went public. Nobody warned them . . . some . . . thing . . . like . . . meanness let them stand aside, or not pay attention. (157)

As Charles Scruggs points out , “somehow the members of the black community imagine that Baby Suggs has not suffered in slavery as they have suffered, and this ignorance of their mutual history makes mutual trust impossible” (103). Their misconception and communicationless state is caused by hatred and affection simultaneously within the core of their heart and mind.

Assimilationist politics came of the surface when one tries to and emphasizes for communality from where once one is denied without warning. It is what Anzaldua borderland which opines for strong relation between self and community. As per her definition, border culture is created by “the lifeblood of two worlds merging to form a third – a border culture.” It is the reciprocity of Sethe and her community who are accountable for Sethe’s highly problematic attempt and at last successful merging to claim authority over oneself and respect others.

The curse of blackness which forces Sethe to live a static and solitary life where is no potential for personal growth. As Morrison writes, “Those twenty-eight happy were followed by eighteen years of disapproval and a solitary life” (173). It is Beloved who lives in those eighteen years as “unlivable” (173). It is Beloved who returns to 124 for the same reason she has haunted Sethe, to force her mother to confront her past consciousness and memory. The act that ends her life, her mother denying Beloved her own identity, begins a cycle from which neither mother nor daughter can escape without some movement towards resolution. When Beloved returns as a visible and tangible presence, Sethe no longer can ignore and deny her painful past. Within the narrative, Beloved’s physical presence and ensuring interactive relationship it begins between mother and daughter eventually force Sethe to acknowledge the dual mentality that she has hitherto ignored.

The first month Sethe and Beloved spend together seems idyllic. But, soon the unresolved tension dominates the atmosphere: “it was Beloved who made demands. Anything

she wanted she got, and when Sethe ran out things to give her, Beloved invented desire . . . the mood changed and the arguments began . . . she took the best of everything – first" (240-241). Beloved knows only desire; she knows only what she lacks. But she cannot be satisfied; her unbalanced self, consisting only of her desire, is inexhaustibly hungry. Sethe responds by trying to satisfy Beloved's desire: "Sethe played all the harder with Beloved, who never got enough of anything" (240). Seethe is driven by the guilt of the past, by the memory of what she did to her daughter, which causes her to focus obsessively on Beloved and neglect all other aspects of he life:

> Sethe pleaded for forgiveness, counting, listing again and again her reasons: that Beloved was more important, meant more to her than her own life. That she would trade places any day. Give up her life, every minute and hour of it, to take back just one of Beloved's tears. (241-242)

Sethe's obsessive focus is as unbalanced as Beloved's desire. In trying to erase a past that cannot be erased by wanting to exchange he life for Beloved's pain, she succeeds only in re-emphasing their own limitation.

While Sethe must deal with her past, she cannot deal with it at the expense of her present existence and through the continued denial of he own dualistic nature. Sethe and Beloved are "locked in a love that wore everybody out" (243). The desperate emotional interaction between Sethe and Beloved intensifies as they continue trapped in a cycle with no relief. Sethe "sat in the chair licking her lips like a chastised child while Beloved at up he life, took it, swelled up with it, grew taller on it. And the older woman yielded it up without a murmur" (250). Sethe still attempts to erase the past, this time by taking the place of Beloved herself.

In *Beloved,* the self potentiality is realized when Sethe's community renews its support for solidarity, thereby enabling to problematize sense of self. It is the women of the

community that “come together” and “arrived at 124 . . . the first thing they saw was themselves . . . there they were, young and happy, playing in Baby Suggs’s yard, not feeling the envy that surfaced the next day” (258). In the coming together to help one of their own, the women are able to envision the past in which they had experienced a collectively empowering “mutual trust” with the family of 124. Their positive common memory strengthens their communal resolve, and they begin to pray for Sethe. “Then Ella hallered. Instantly the kneelers and the standers joined her. They stepped praying and took a step back to the beginning. In the beginning there were no words. In the beginning was the sound, and they all knew what that sound sounded like” (254). It is the “sound” which black women use to locate their position, only to problematize hitherto sense of positionality. The communal application of a morality warped by an internalization of inappropriate, oppressive lessons results in Sethe’s tragedy, using the dominant discourse to reach Sethe can cause only more damage. The following occurs when Sethe hears the voices:

> For Sethe it was as though the clearing had come to her with all its heat and simmering leaves, where the voices of women searched for the right combination, the key, the code, the sound that broke the back of words .building voice upon voice until they found it, and when they did it was a wave of sound wide enough to sound deep water and knock pods off chestnut trees. It broke over Sethe and she trembled like the baptized in its wash. (261)

What succeeds in breaking through the cycle imprisoning Sethe and Beloved in it redundant sterility is the sound of the community’s voice. Its use is to negate the oppression and lead to assimilation by linking Sethe to her community once again. As she trembles “like the baptized in its was”, it is as if Sethe has been reborn outside of the confinement which functions as a means to generate hope of life. It is the Beloved’s disappearance which mirrors

Sethe's "birth" into "new consciousness." It gives sense that there might be something good but still there is possibility to be victim of being black.

As Sethe struggles with the consequences of being black, especially, female, bodies which is enough to get denial of self to allow the wounding of slavery to continue. It bounds her to live a traumatic life where she dwindles between aspiration of home and house, affection and solidarity, alienation and communal life and so on.

Sethe is haunted by ht character Beloved, a strange woman who is presented as both Sethe's murdered daughter, returned as a the adult she would have become had she loved and the collective memory of those who died during the Middle Passage. Fragmented narrative and flashbacks helps to tell multiple issues simultaneously. Sethe's experience of slaver, her escape to freedom, her isolated life after the murder of her daughter, and the eventual healing that occur when Paul D, a man who shared Sethe's slavery, returns to her life and ultimately returns her to community. Beloved reconnects with her memories of the past and with other people in the present which leads her to assimilate easily.

The body is a site of ambiguity, a ground upon which African Americans were excluded from full personhood so black bodies are enmeshed and gripped in dilemma which ultimately caused double consciousness within their selves. It results in neither complete rejection nor acceptance of mainstream white socio-cultural milieu along with that of even blacks. That's why, Sethe cannot escape the past because for her time does not move in a linear fashion. It shows the continued relationship among past, present, and future, not only interrogating the degree to which slavery persists in the present of black experience, but also looking to a future in which this wound would heal and a new model of racial community possible.

Beloved exorcises lost experience of slavery to tell what is being trapped. It follows Sethe as she learns after years of living as an object under slavery. Neither escaping slavery nor the

Emancipation Proclamation is sufficient to end her existence as a slave because she remains trapped in holding pattern, haunted by the loss of three of her children. As she tells Paul D:

> I got a tree on my back and a haint in my house, and nothing in between but the daughter I am holding in my arms. No more running – from nothing. I will never run from another thing on this earth. I took one journey and paid for the ticket, but let me tell you something, Paul D Garner: it cost too much! (25)

Sethe cannot learn how to live as a free self because she remains trapped by the moment of loss when she "paid" for escape. For Sethe, "the future was a matter of keeping the past at bay. The 'better life' she believed she and Denver were living was simply not that other one" (42).

Sethe's experience o slavery is recorded on her scarred body, especially the scar on her back, named "a tree" for its pattern, which she received when whipped for pretesting the theft of her milk while pregnant. She focuses on the trauma of the theft not the flogging, because it robbed her of the ability to provide sustenance for her children. Indeed, earlier she cannot recognize herself apart from her role as a mother. While trying to escape, she continually refers to her need to reach freedom, not to be free but to get the milk she still carries to her children, who have been sent on ahead. Even at the limits of her endurance, she keeps going in order to deliver Denver, with whom she is pregnant, not out of any concern of her own life. Sethe ascribes to an identity consonant with slavery's definition of her as an object that breeds. By subjugating individualism to motherhood, she writes against mainstream notion of slavery, while the tension between the admirable and disturbing aspects of her devotion to her children reveals one of the key subjective effects of slavery6, its ability to prevent something as 'natural' as a mother's love for her own children. This is most apparent in Sethe's decision to kill he children rather than let them be returned to slavery. She

argues that the worst part of slavery was not what it could do your body, but instead “dirty you”.

> No undreamable dreams about whether the headless, feetless, torso hanging in the tree with a sign on it was he husband or Paul A; whether the bubbling – not girls in the colored- school fire set by patriots included her daughter; whether a gang of whites invaded her daughter’s private parts, soiled her daughter’s thighs and threw her daughter out of the wagon. (251)

Sethe fears not simply the violence of slavery being, enacted upon her children but also its destruction of them as subjects, and she would rather sacrifice them than allow them to be objectified in the way she was. Still she hopes to have an opportunity to assiilate for the construction of solidarity which conforms her duel mentality.

Significantly, Sethe’s list of what might happen to her daughter is, actually, her fear of past’s continuation. She tells Denver:

> The picture is still there and what’s more, if you go there- you who never was there- if you gothere and stands in the place where it was, it will happen again; it will be there for you, waiting for you. So, Denver, you can’t never go there. Never. Because even though it’s all over-over and done with- it’s going to always be there waiting for you.(37)

Sethe does eventually accepts a future and stop fearing rememories, but the conclusion emphasizes that this is “not a story to pass on”(274). It is a story that should not be repeated, passed on, in the way that Sethe fears it waits for Denver; but it is not a story that leaves, the way “some thing go. Pass on”(35). It clearly picturizes that confused state of mind of Sethe due to her excess involvement in double consciousness. As the consequences of slavery remain integral to their experience. Rather than avoid a future that she fears will only be like the past she escaped, Sethe becomes willing to be a subject who might unergo

different experiences. She discovers that she can be her own “best thing” when she unites body and mind, accepting that the fragmented parts of her body can cohere into a whole. No longer thinking of herself as a body there to serve someone, whether her children through her breasts or the slave-owners through her labor, she accepts that her body Is herself. This means accepting all that happened to it through slavery, accepting the dirtying. She fears for her daughter; but she learns that she cannot remain an object to escape the pain that comes with embarking subjectivity, hope and the future.

But the scars, the scars of slavery, as a grotesque distortion, is the cruel one, in which the individual is by no means gently enfolded, rather marked as both owned by social order and irrevocably outside that order. The scars on Sethe’s back are a sort of aesthetics of pain. It is to anesthetize the unfolding of painful and traumatic experiences. However, Sethe’s wholesale adoption of Amy’s “chokecherry tree” image functions as part of a larger, problematic, anesthetized stance she takes toward her past. As the novel introduces both Sethe and Paul D in a state of emphatic denial of their past, of their history; Sethe describes her daily mission as “the day’s serious work of beating back the past” (73), while Paul D has his heart boxed up in a rusted-shut tin can. When Paul D touches the scars on her back, Sethe cannot feel them, as if the mark of her pain did not yet belong to her and her history were not yet her own:

> He rubbed his cheek on her back and learned that way her sorrow, the roots of it, its wide trunk and intricate branches . . . . And when the top of her dress was around her hips and he saw the sculpture her back had become, like the decorative work of an ironsmith too passionate for display, he could think but not say, “Aw, Lord, girl.” And he would tolerate no peace until he had touched every ridge and leaf on it with his mouth, none of which Sethe could feel because her back skin had been dead for years. (17-18)

Here, Paul D does not magically learn "that way her sorrow, the roots of it, its wide trunk and intricate branches," as is evinced in his harsh judgment of her when he learns about her killing of Beloved. It depicts his mental matrix gripped in confusion.

So Paul Gilroy is right in his depiction of an "imaginative proximity to terror" as the "inaugural experience" of black consciousness. Then Morrison's focus on scars brings the imagination to the cultural and psychological terrors of slavery, and to the "terror" of pain's inexpressibility. The limitations act not only as marks of irredeemable loss and alienation – scars and sounds tracing unimaginable and inexpressible pain – but also as sites for the emergence of a more complex, more fluid, and ultimately more cohesive structure. It offers unafraid stand point on the radical vulnerabilities of bodies, selves and communities.

To see Black Atlantic sense in the musicality, I found that if Baby Suggs represents an Afro-Christian musical tradition, Paul D clearly embodies the secular tradition. Paul D, a "singing man", stepped in southern or country blues where not only do his experiences of slavery in the Deep South, of the chain gang, and of his restless wandering take resources of typical blues. The line "lay my head on the railroad line,/Train come along, pacify my mind" (40), reproduce one of the common motifs of the blues. It is only in his blues, Paul D is able to express his traumatic past. When Sethe asks for his story, he replies, "I don't know, I never told a soul" (71). Ultimately, though, musical expression is not a black privilege. The "white girl" Amy Denver, who massages and encourages Sethe on her flight, and aids her in childbirth establishes the cross-cultural invocation and generation of the blues. Amy accompanies her "repair work" (80) with a song, humming three stanzas that are quoted in the narrative framework. They assert:

When the busy day is done

And my weary little one

Rocket gently to and fro;

When the night winds softly blow,

And the crickets in the glen

Chirp and chirp and chirp again;

Where 'pon the haunted green

Fairies dance around their queen,

Then from yonder misty skies

Cometh Lady Button Eyes. (81)

Morrison does not imply poem to point to the oppositional nature of African-and European-based music, however, as the tune is clearly seen as a positive in the cautions intercultural encounter of Amy and Sethe. Jazz, Morrison seems to acknowledge here, is not an autochtonously black form of art. It seems that it first came into being in the contact zones of the Americas and developed from certain later forerunners. As a result, with the characters Beloved, Baby Suggs, Paul D and Amy Denver, Morrison symbolically accounts for the essential influences that went into the transculturation mentality of Morrison which is backgrounded to foreground the assimilationist politics by problemstizing the claim as the powerful and overriding force which, ultimately, aspires the better upcomings. And it is possible only when all are ready to develop a sense of surrender and compromise.

So, with sense of compromise and reconciliation in the pen-ultimate of the novel Paul D say, "Sethe, me and you, we got more yesterday than anybody. We need some kind of tomorrow" (273). It is the move from the destructive past - full of horror, violence, pain, torture, hopelessness, homelessness and fractured identity – towards a new beginning. It is the flexibility which is going to be accountable to have a life of solitariness, solidarity, faith and hope rather than confusion, duel and dwindling mentality, and inability to choose friends from the foes.

b) Politics of Assimilation in *A Mercy*

Although the Afro-American characters, in *A Mercy,* are relegated to the margin of the text, they are vitally important to illustrate contradictory relationship with whites. The novel dramatizes the eerie experience of the middle passage, the terror of being a hunted woman in the wild, the passion of man and woman who give wholly to each other. This exposes the curse of being black forgetting wholsesale sufferings. Florens' writing of "telling" with a nail on the floor of her dead master Jacob Vaark's unfinished mansion, literally marks the hunt of Afro-Americans who desperately seek completion and stability.

For Mark C. Conner, *A Mercy* is cartography, an exploration of the land --a brave new world and even a very ancient and familiar landscape. It causes the double consciousness which is enough to create dilemma to the Afro-Americans. One of the inhumane situations, dramatized in *A Mercy,* is that of advertisement, not only for a wife which is answered by Rebekka: "a healthy, chaste wife willing to travel abroad." Even it runs with a purchased Native American servant, Lina, a homeless orphan girl. Sorrow, and the slave girl, Florens, whom Jacob accepts in lieu of debt from Spanish planter, they constitute for a time an idiosyncratic but functioning family unit, which gives them momentary compensation.

Jacob's restless aspiration compels him to seek wealth by the means of trafficking in rum; thereby he is implicated in the barbaric molasses-rum-slaves triangle, precisely a bloody business only to build "a grand house of many rooms rising on a hill." Such grand whishes of whites lead to more fragmentary and chaotic relationship with blacks. Florens is on an archeptypal quest for the blacksmith only to get freedom and affection. Though she travels through a series of portraits of the have-nots and dispossessed, but result is thicker enslavement. It is a stunning portrait of American slavery which is precisely the product of a range of human enslavement. It shows the fractured landscape of Afro-Americanism.

Cheryl Miller, rightly, says that is *A Mercy* an attempt to see what could have been, had slavery not taken full root in the New World, a tale of America "before it was America", in Morrison's words. Morrison completes dramatic personae of contemporary American identity politics by assimilating various characters from different roots at Vaarks.

Gentle Jacob became a monster of greed because, as Lina explains, "he is a man" and a "europe", for whom possession is an imperative. Disconnected from the earth one another, the "Europes" seek possession in a desperate and pointless to fill the emptiness of self. It is one of the primary causes of trauma and pathos for, both, whites and blacks.

Elizabeth McHenry finds the scenario in A Mercy as a "disorganized world" for slaves, though for Jacob, Florens is "a human child, not pieces of eight." But for Florens, the aftermath of Vaark's mercy is complex because she remains profoundly affected by displacement and abandonment. The female characters whose voices animate this novel are "unmastered" women. Their stories, and the predicament in which they are, speak volumes about a Americans past, its history of chattel slavery and racism, and the ambiguous nature of the freedom and opportunity it promised.

For Ruth Franklin, the purpose of testimony about atrocity is to bear witness to one's own suffering or to suffering of others, so that it may be honored and commemorated. It is Florens who guides us from silence to voice, towards the fire and destination. Such situation is the byproduct of the middle passage which is typical picture of fractured landscape of Afro-Americanism.

This project tries to dramatize the fate of Afro-Americans under the rubric of Black Atlantic which gives glimpse of unspeakable haunting memory and desperate aspiration of assimilation which is camouflaged under the color politics.

III. Conclusion

Morrison's championing of the liminal space and assimilationist politics ride on hope of fruitful exchange of cultural memory and vision to develop the transcultural potential goes to get with Du Bosian double consciousness. She reworks on black trauma in order to "re-member" history for black collective and thereby to furnish with a heightened sense of identity. He Beloved is captured by wound, suffering and anxiety due to long rooted suppressed cultural exploitation, slavery, racial discrimination and haunted by past. It is the curse of blackness . . . exile, homelessness and forces labor. By representing the inaccessibility of the farmer slaves, Morrison reveals the limits of hegemonic, authoritarian systems of knowledge thereby returns unknown slaves and unknowable horrors the slaves endure. It is to created the alternative discourse by the free black community for the secure self under the asylum of communal solidarity.

Morrison is concerned with time: looking towards the past, she insists on the need to remember the historical realities of slavery, while looking towards the future, she anticipates our ability to move beyond this past and into a transformed world. Crucial these transformations are the argument that the past must not be repressed or denied but acknowledged and incorporated into our collective understanding of reality – a site of sedimented meaning of the Middle Passage.

In *Beloved* the Middle Passage is rewritten as a ritual, the enactment of Beloved's conjoining with mother after the trauma of father's death. Subjecthood and identity become possible but only at the price of abjection. Genuine survival is achieved at the cost of revisiting the horror of the Middle Passage. In this stark poetic rendering, Morrison mimics the gradual verbalization of meaning, the translation of experience in language in order for it to be transmitted. A female child's voice doubles back upon itself so as to conjure new

picture and to add new words to a sentence and make it more complete. At the same time, the return to the beginning leads to a revisiting of the origin – that is, total fusion with a possession of the mother, a passage through the site where subject and object are undifferentiated in mutual narcissistic possession, a return to abjection. It renews the ordeal of the passage and of displacement without turning it into wondering. It is to gather up the fragmented pieces for restoration of self.

Beloved solicits, makes visible, and then defeats the desire who identify with a protagonist seeking not only emancipation from servitude but also redemption of the self and the past. The novel ruptures patterns of repetition as who witness the vicissitudes in dreams of deliverance gain a chance to think and act differently. Thus does *Beloved* retell a captivity narrative to dramatize and then relinquish the dream of redemption at its core, precisely for the sake of the freedom it also has promised in the form of communal solidarity to assimilate.

Indeed, since a transformed relation to the past, the self, and others, and thus a language of captivity and rebirth, is central to the imagination of freedom in the promised land, *Beloved* illuminates and moves beyond indebtment to legacies. To clarity its repetition with a difference, hence its view of freedom, thereby its political resonance, consider how the language and action within it is related to the world beyond it.

Most obviously, the novel shows how freedom depends on naming captivity: *Beloved* reveals a society constituted by profound divisions, historically embedded, psychologically charged, and socially sedimented in practices of labor and nurture. Sethe bespeaks the particular and general in the fact that she is legally free, but bound to a mortal and desiring body, and thus implicated in bonds of love and power; rooted in an unchangeable past; conditioned by inherently problematic but changeable forms of labor and gender; and invested in a powerful but constructed narrative of redemption. It is possible only by developing sense of compromise and consolidation.

By naming such conditions as a legacy confronted in the world and the self, *Beloved* represents a struggle to become free. It involves an effort to achieve a right relationship to the past, but also to distinguish in the present the kinds of servitude that are inescapable, coerced, or self-imposed. As characters deliberate about their suffering, bonds and choices, they exemplify Nietzsche's digestion, by which a worldly legacy taken inside becomes not only an illness of repetition and reaction, but a pregnancy. As Sethe arrives in all ambivalence at a generative moment once precluded, so the novel has digested on all too-present past to foster the power to originate buried in the sepulchers of the fathers. *Beloved* creates a space in which plural voices engage in an ongoing practice of making sense. That is because it lays stories next to each other. In that space, authority lies not in origins, revealed truth, or even consensus but in experience and the language which they voice, confirm and contest it, and thus deepen, reconceive, and change it. As the narration opens a space in which characters confront their history, struggle for freedom and dream of redemption, *Beloved* engages it post-reconstruction contexts.

On one hand, the novel enters a culture haunted by a history of servitude. Facing it seems impossible: the ideology of self-making warrants denial, fantasies of escape, and resentment toward those signifying failed self-determination. But insisting on historical wrong also risks intensifying the resentment that weds some identities to injury, resentment and retribution and others to denial and guilt. The novel enacts politics by showing the necessity of confronting the past, but also the difficulty of moving beyond rather than drowning in it. Like Sethe, Beloved rejects the dream of escaping the past, but raises the dead and lives with them; unlike Sethe, it relives that past to relinquish the dream of redeeming the suffering and crimes that make it haunting. Thus, the novel does not use the past to prove guilt or innocence or recover a model for life. Unlike such stories, *Beloved* dramatizes the

need to vindicate a past it does not heroize or demonize to elicit the grieving for irreparable loss that, by changing both anger and hope, releases energy to will a future.

By such achievement, a revised captivity narrative emplots the internal and worldly dimensions of democratic possibility. *Beloved*'s textual spaces are an experiment – through language, with others, and on the self – in carving out of past and present servitude not a promise of redemption, but self-government in its personal and political senses. By going behind liberal origins, below contractual surfaces, and outside redemptive symmetries, Beloved represents the language and spaces by which a haunted people could confront the history and servitude, suffering, resentment, and stories that hold them captive to forge thereby neither solace nor unity, but a new kind of authority as authors and citizens. This is the hope which makes all the characters seek for solidarity.

As memory is used to separate from the past, and anger to contest rather than passion its legacy, the present appears as if for the first time, in it profound difficulty and divisions, and ripe with possibilities once foreclosed by resentful energies and redemptive dreams. Surely, poetry is not politics. But such retelling of the story of captivity and redemption seems crucial to move the American experiment in democracy in its current stalemate. As *Beloved* crosses borders and transgresses boundaries, Sethe aso learns to transcend the boundaries between self and other through the definition of rememorize. It has been made clear that both individual and collective designs of identity which is always plural in nature and rooted in transcultural process of exchange.

Thus, *Beloved* and *A Mercy* narrate the agony and tussle of rejected suppressed and dehumanized slaves who are haunted by rememorize of their past – experience of Middle Passage. But Morrison efforts to provide them outlet by stimulating them to go for compromise for the construction of communal solidarity in the liminal space. It is the only

politic which will lead to assimilation and will give enough strength to survive even within the course of blackness.

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