

Chapter I. General Introduction

The research puts forward Morrison's fictional texts and it explores reformation of black identity into America. Slavery is black past reality, who have undergone with bitter experiences of it. The research digs out black's cultural trauma through which they have been searching their lost identity.

Toni Morrison is very renowned black writer who was born in 1931. She is an American novelist, editor, and professor. Almost her fictional writings have thematic uniformity and they advocate slavery and effects of slavery into American socio-cultural life. Her novels are known for vivid dialogue, and richly detailed characters and painful memories of slavery. Among them, her best known novels are *The Bluest Eye*, *Sula*, *Beloved* and *Paradise*.

Morrison began writing fiction as part of an informal group of poets and writers at Harvard who met to discuss their work. Almost her fictions have depicted black people's painful memories. She has presented black issues along with strong voice of black people. All her novels have similar voices of black people, who had been suffering from white domination.

Morrison's novel *Beloved* became a critical success. Later on, it has got Nobel Prize and had many critical responses. Not only this novel, all her novels, equally advocate black inferiority and suffering into white dominated society.

Toni Morrison posits physical, emotional, and spiritual desolation produced by slavery to mould her characters' sense of self through direct experience with slavery and white oppression. The most prominent negative impact of slavery, Morrison focuses on in her novels, is the way former slaves are haunted. Even in freedom, they are victimized by the

dehumanization they endure. Due to their repressed social status, Morrison's characters are only able to experience relationships if they are granted the privilege to do so by those who hold power over them.

As time progresses beyond legalized slavery, the now free African-Americans have to achieve a societal standard of whiteness in order to gain acceptance. Morrison's first novel, *The Bluest Eye* exposes the results of white presence in society on African-Americans and how this presence imposes difficulty on the individual to form an identity. Morrison uses this reality to structure these novels and the bonds between the characters, their society, and themselves.

Morrison demonstrates the deliberate dehumanization of African slaves in her novels, and the presence of whiteness in society that alter her characters' ability to form their own sense of self-identity. The alienation the slaves experience echoes into future generations by disabling any hope of forming relationships after attaining freedom and creates psychological obstacles African Americans must conquer in the future.

Morrison highlights the importance of identity, the formation of the self, and the influence of the society on that development. Ron Eyerman in *Cultural Trauma: Slavery and the Formation of African American Identity*; "cultural trauma refers to a dramatic loss of identity and meaning, a tear in the social fabric, affecting a group of people that has achieved some degree of cohesion" (2). African slaves were unified by their environment and society's racial oppression.

Morrison discloses in her novels her characters' struggle for identity formation. Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development encompasses changes in people's understanding of themselves, one another, and the world around them during the course

of development' (Feldman 392). Erikson also admits, "identity formation, while beginning in childhood, gains prominence during adolescence. Faced with physical growth and sexual maturation, adolescents must accomplish the task of integrating their prior experiences and characteristics into a personal identity" (Feldman 392). The experiences slaves are able to draw upon, however, are not capable of fulfilling their need for an identity because their experiences and relationships are limited due to the social and racial groups to which they belong.

Both men and women are classified by their relation to each other; men's masculinity and women's femininity is based on who defines it and, in the case of the characters in *Beloved*, it is defined by the slave owners and the society in which they live. Because they are denied mature adult relationships, their psychosocial development is delayed and their capacity to understand themselves in relation to one another and society is inhibited. This is an extension of the cultural trauma produced by slavery because, by denying the basic human right to choose sexual partner for physical, emotional, and reproductive reasons, they are denied the ability to develop on a psychosocial level to achieve an understanding of their own identity.

Slavery and the discrimination of African Americans influence their sense of identity. Identity is a sense of personal continuity and uniqueness based not only on personal need, but also on membership in various groups, such as familial, ethnic and occupational. African slaves were not only discriminated for belonging to their racial group, but also for being slaves and belonging to that social group. Root, identity and community have always been the underlying theme of Toni Morrison. Through the accounts of her novels, Toni Morrison shows several ways in which slavery, which was

the most oppressive period in the black history, has affected the identity of African American. It is their cultural trauma and they have been searching their black unified identity. The research raises the questions as to black cultural identity through similar experiences.

Chapter II: Trauma, Cultural Trauma and Representation

Trauma is defined as a mental condition caused by severe shock, especially when the harmful effects last for a long time. Trauma remains its effect in human mind and, which comes time and again. Directly and indirectly it is represented through any kind of manifestation. Normally, trauma is understood from its nature of effect. Physical trauma is a kind of physical wound and injury and it is curable in some extent. Anderson defines trauma as:

Trauma results from an even series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as psychically or emotionally harmful or threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and physical, social, emotional or spiritual well being. (2)

Unlike physical trauma, psychological has long term and indelible effects in human mind. On the basis of researcher's statement of problems, the analysis goes onto both domain of effect. Any human recipient has traumatic experience which always governs his mental status. It may remain dominant position or latent position but it comes time and again into the expression. It is a kind of mental status; psychological wound which is remained into deep level in mind. A person can't forget those psychological wounds so which are appeared at any time but can't be hidden forever. It gives a kind of shock into human mind that remains into human unconscious mind.

Cathy Caruth points out that the original meaning of trauma is "an injury inflicted on a body" (3). In Freud's texts, however, trauma refers to "a wound inflicted not upon the body but upon the mind" (qtd. in Caruth 3). She then provides the general definition of trauma as "the response to an unexpected or overwhelming violent event or events that

are not fully grasped as they occur, but return later in repeated flashbacks, nightmares, and other repetitive phenomena” (91). Erikson expands the definition of trauma to make it a more useful concept. Focusing on the traumatic effects, he insists that trauma can result from both “a constellation of life experiences and discrete happening, from a persisting condition and an acute event” (185). He stresses that trauma can transform one sharp stab into an enduring state of mind. He also distinguishes individual trauma from collective trauma; the former means the blow to individual psyche while the latter the damage to the bonds between people.

Laura Brown broadens the scope of trauma even further by taking into account the private, secret experiences of various minority groups such as girls and women of color, men of color, homosexuals, poor and physically challenged people. She brings up the concept of trauma which refers to “the trauma effects of oppression that are not necessarily overtly violent or threatening to bodily well-being at the given moment but that do violence to the soul and spirit” (107). She indicates that trauma studies has one-sided focus since it focuses almost exclusively on the traumatic experiences and applies critical approaches “emanating from a Euro-American context” (2).

Michelle Balaev, in *Trends in Literary Trauma Theory*, not only provides a useful definition of trauma but also adds another aspect to be examined—the role of place. She notes that there is general agreement among psychiatrists and psychologists that the traumatic experience can “disrupt or alter consciousness, memory, sense of self, and relation to community” (6). She defines trauma as “a person’s emotional response to an overwhelming event that disrupts previous ideas of an individual’s sense of self and the standards by which one evaluates society” (1). Balaev believes that analyzing the role of

place, “the locus where nature and culture converge to construct meaning and inform both individual and collective identity acknowledges the sociopolitical and cultural forces that cause trauma, so it gives new understating to trauma’s meaning for both the individual and community” (8). In *Community and Nature*, Barbara Christian calls attention to the “value system” of the place and stresses the importance of place as “a participant” in African folk tradition (51). In other words, place is regarded as an actor shaping the identity of the characters.

By such unexpected, unusual and catastrophic events make room of human mind. Such suffering or violence and unexpected events are deeply rooted by those wounds whereas human mind is guided. Trauma has very negative, destructive and harmful effects upon human being and such psychological wounds often remain long time.

By many ways, human have got such traumatic experience and they suffer over times. Such emotional injury can have because of unexpected event, natural disaster and human caused. Anyway it has such destructive power in human being. People have got such traumatic experience, which grows into human psyche and that causes continual attack into human mind. Regarding to trauma, William Cote and Roger Simpson describe “a bodily injury or shock, an emotional shock” (22). It emphasizes that physical and psychological trauma. Normally physical trauma is taken as physical loss or any visible wound and it can be repaired at times but serious and huge accident they may loss something forever.

At the level of the social system, societies can experience massive disruptions that do not become traumatic. For traumas to emerge at the level of the collectivity, “social

crises must become cultural crises. Events are one thing, representations of these events quite another” (Alexander 10).

Trauma is not the result of a group experiencing pain. It is the result of this acute discomfort entering into the core of the collectivity’s sense of its own identity. Collective actors decide to represent social pain as a fundamental threat to their sense of who they are. Experiencing trauma can be understood as a sociological process that defines a painful injury to the collectivity, establishes the victim, attributes responsibility, and distributes the ideal and material consequences. The gap between the event and representation can be conceived as trauma process.

Collectivities do not make decisions as such. Rather they are the agents who function as carrier of trauma. Media is vital to this group. Certain group of people broadcast symbolic representations of ongoing social events: past, present, and future. They broadcast these representations as members of a social group. Carrier groups are the collective agents of the trauma process. These groups have both ideal and material interests; they are situated in particular places in the social structure.

The status of trauma is dependent on the socio-cultural context of the affected society at the time, the historical event or situation arises. A society emerging from a major war, experiencing economic crises or internal conflict is more trauma prone than others. Collective memory is associated with a strong negative effect, disgust, shame or guilt. A cultural trauma refers to an overwhelming event that is believed to undermine the culture as a whole. Smelser differentiates between cultural trauma and psychological trauma, thus:

..... that a cultural trauma differs greatly from a psychological trauma in terms of the mechanisms that establish and sustain it. The mechanisms associated with psychological trauma are the intrapsychic dynamics of defense, adaptation, coping, and working through; the mechanisms at the cultural level are mainly those of social agents and contending groups.

(39)

A notable feature of a psychological trauma is its embeddedness in the structure of personality. It has an insistent claim on the person's energy. It becomes the part of the psyche. Major patterns of defensive activity on the part of the person are to deny, to become dumb, and to avoid situations that might reactivate the memory of the trauma. They develop dissociation symptoms. Moreover, repression is a special defense mechanism in coping trauma.

The psychological literature on trauma sometimes suggests the possibility of virtual disappearance through cure or work. As it clarifies that "Freud's formula of cure through catharsis plus putting the affect into words is described as a cure and the idea of grief work after traumatic loss of a loved one suggests returning to normal functioning" (Smelser 42). This is a process of 'acting out.' The counterpart of the psychological reactions at the collective level is collective denial or collective forgetting. In order for a historical event to become established as a collective memory, there must be assumed a claim for common membership in a collectivity. In other words, unlike psychological trauma, all collective traumas have some bearing on national identity.

Cultural Trauma

Cultural trauma is a kind of collective experience which represents particular group and community. It is represented through collective memory or shared past or history. A particular group may have common ground or common remembrances society. Unlike individual trauma, cultural trauma is quite different because it is shared by certain groups of people and their experiences which are represented from various ways or mediated from different ways. Cultural trauma is closely linked with cultures because only similar or single culture people have common experience or knowledge. Here Ron Eyerman has defined cultural trauma as;

The notion of cultural trauma implies that direct experience of an event is not a necessary condition for its inclusion in the trauma process. It is through time delayed and negotiated recollection that cultural trauma is experienced, a process which places representation in a key role. How an event is remembered is intimately entwined with how is represented. Here the means and media of representation are crucial, for they bridge the gap between individuals and between occurrence and its recollection. Social psychological studies provide grounds. (12)

Thus, the definition or views of critic has focused upon group shared past or experience that includes member either he/she mayn't have gone through similar experience but such collective experience makes such feeling in group. So as group of people have a kind of common ground that creates a kind of solidarity among groups.

Further, Eyerman views about that "the existence of the necessary psychological distance that remembering a collective or individual traumatic event requires. Time may

soothe and lessen the pain that remembering a traumatic event produces. The individual experience may be different but common experience is mediated by which everyone can feel unified consciousness. The particular issues is represented which everyone can come together. Such cultural trauma always frames and re-frames those collective experiences and makes feel similar within community.

In the sense that it is the matter of representation because who may not have such traumatic experience but could feel similar experience. One generation can feel such traumatic experience but same experience is not in next generation however they are represented and they can get same feeling.

Cultural trauma is the subject of collective experience which retrieves to similar past experience. The terrible and torturous events are indelible in human psyche and remain as eternal memories. In this regards, such deep rooted memories are unconsciously and consciously fore-grounded thorough different means of representation. Jeffrey C. Alexander views about cultural trauma; “it is by constructing cultural traumas that social groups, national societies and sometimes even entire civilizations on only cognitively identify the existence and source of human suffering” (85).He has explained that such cultural trauma can be remembering or cultural aspects can represent through the different ways.

The collective representation blends those all group members but it has a kind of common feeling. According to Eyerman, slavery is a cultural marker; few African-Americans can avoid its impact on their identities. The social condition of slavery, which all blacks in the U.S. either endured or feared until 1863, has been transformed into a symbolic condition affecting all the descendants of slaves. His generations can be defined

by their collective memory of significant events. So, cultural trauma signifies on the basis of collective memory, by which new generations could feel old history and unhand experience. Being collective memory of particular group or community, it becomes the group identity formation.

Cultural trauma is evident in the group, public memory of slavery and its aftermath. Eyerman, who has earlier written on the sociology of popular music, shows how each generation of African-Americans has interpreted itself through literature, the popular press, music and art. The evolution of African-American scholarship, especially the discipline of sociology, is also an exercise in self-interpretation. Three themes, according to Eyerman, are evident in how African-Americans have represented themselves: integrationist, redemptive, and progressive. The integrationist theme stressed mechanisms to persuade white society to accept the ex-slave.

As cultural trauma and black identity, Laura Christian opines on it;

the observation that the black subject receives a white reflection of himself from the cultural mirror provide to him in the Antilles is not adequate, however, to solve the problem with which Fanon began: that is why for example, a Negro who has passed his baccalaureate and has gone to the Sorbonne to study to become a teacher of philosophy is already on guard before any conflictual elements have coalesced around him? (221)

Because cultural trauma can persist as a very vivid element in a collective's identity the long after the initial events occurred, and such identity, therefore, can influence people who never experienced the incidents or were not directly involved. It must be a social construct; it is built upon the fabric of cultural memory, enforced and cyclically

regenerated through the means of ritualized depiction via art, lore and the media. As Eyerman says here:

While this collective memory makes reference to historical events, that is, events that are recorded and known to others, the meaning of such events is interpreted from the perspective of the group's needs and interests, within limits of course. (67)

Cultural memory is sustained through forms of representation targeted in two directions one focusing internally, on the new generations and assuring the transfer of memory and its interpretation. All the while making sure that, each new generation is convinced, they are indeed being traumatized. This characteristic shows that:

Collective memory is always group based and subject to adjustment according to historically rooted needs [...]; moreover, it emphasizes the malleability of this shared information in regard to the dynamics of the society it originated from and represents. "As social groups are mobile, so too are the borders of their memory and collective identity formation. (Eyerman 69)

The reconstruction of the past intends to support a specific positioning in the present or future. Moreover, individual identity is built via the resources from the collective memory, which acts as a toolkit providing members with the necessary baggage of shared history and knowledge to understand the functions of society and culture. In Eyerman words, "collective memory provides the individual with a cognitive map within which to orient present behavior" (65). The practical use of these tools by members of a group is, however, situational and subjective.

Nevertheless, it reflects back upon the informational pool of the initial collective memory. By adding to it or refuting redundant elements, hence, the relation between the collective and the individual, past and present is a mutually dependent one. At this point, another important question needs to be clarified. In what way does asocial trauma, since most of the time the progression is in this order, become a cultural one? Similarly, Laura Christian argues that:

very often the Negro who becomes abnormal has never had any relations with whites. Has some remote experience been repressed in his unconscious. Did the little black child see his father beaten or lynched by a white man? Has there been a real traumatism? To all of this we have answer no. Well then. (16)

What more, can we say, especially in the case of the African-Americans, of a culture burnout of and built upon trauma as a social cohesive? Culture is probably the most complex notion trying to sum up the functioning of society in its entirety. First of all, the term is generic for all the intellectual and material creations of a specific group of people.

In this sense, culture can be defined as follows that “complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (Tylor 7). By forming a distinct culture, it withholds an equally large and vital part the members of a culture themselves. Then the living humans, that constitute society and, who build a complex system of a hierarchical yet flexible social arena wherein life takes its course. Culture is not only what people create; it is the necessary tool for them to sustain an identity through discovering shared meanings and values, which are historically inherited and adapted. In this way, it has been defined. According Clifford Geertz:

The concept of culture I espouse . . . is essentially a semiotic one.

Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretative one in search of meaning. (www.wsu.edu, 19.02.2011)

Why is this distinction necessary and so important? Mainly due to the bilateral way these aspects are embedded in the identity of collectives. On the one hand culture is the constructed semiotic frame that sets the boundaries and the structure of human relations, which in turn generate laws, knowledge and material value, destined to become cultural trademarks themselves. Responding to the initial question of how social and humanitarian crises evolve into cultural ones, it can be believed that the aforementioned distinction helps aids using solving this puzzle.

While most disasters, wars or other great events which threaten the stability and security of society cause many problems. They are of a social nature, not a cultural one because they affect the products of culture, either by diminishing them, removing their value and or preventing their creation over a period of time. What really causes cultural trauma are events which threaten the meta-frame of a collective. They break the bonds that hold these people together and have profound effects on the level of consciousness, often resulting in a need to reassert one's self. Therefore, Alexander further says:

Trauma is not the result of a group experiencing pain. Although this may be a catalyst factor it is the result of this acute discomfort entering into the core of the collectivity's sense of its own identity. Collective actors decide

to represent social pain as a fundamental threat to their sense of who they are, where they came from, and where they want to go. (10)

Hereby it becomes evident that cultural trauma is characterized by being ingrained in the collective memory of the group which accounts for the effects ranging over several generational spans. This can be explained by understanding the mechanics of identity-building processes and their intrinsic relation to memory, as explained earlier. The collective recollections of a cluster of people serve as the primary source for individual identity negotiation. For this process, it is always a discourse; the moment that the access to this databank is either hindered or no longer provides any meaningful solutions to a current, lived situation, trauma takes its course, and a need to fill the gap is perceived.

Meanwhile the public display of this state is often observable when the ordeal itself becomes the subject of cultural production, and which is the part of the semiotic endeavor to cope with its effects. It is exactly by these functions, mainly designed to assure self-preservation that the collective memory is being enriched. It is still debatable whether these effects are completely desirable or not with the compounds of cultural trauma, which, becoming available for all future generations.

One could read this book merely as very learned account of how African-American cultural expression has evolved, changed, and revolved back to its origins over the generations. African-Americans saw themselves as bringers of civilization to Africa. Talking about African identity, it always leads toward past slavery history which always makes them united for creating their identity. They bring their memory and search their black identity.

All black people experience the slavery as their past. Our ways of remembering things, processing new memories and accessing old memories is also dramatically changed when we are under stress. Still there is growing body of evidence indicating that is based on words and another that is largely non-verbal. Our verbally based memory system is verbal. Piotr Sztompka views as “the culturally defined and interpreted shock to the cultural tissue of a society” (451), and presents a model of the traumatic sequence.

Under normal conditions, the two kinds of memory function in integrated way. Our verbal and non-verbal memories are thus usually intertwined and complexly interrelated. What we consider our normal memory is based on words. From the time we are born we develop new categories of information, and all new information gets placed into an established category, like a filling cabinet in our minds. We talk in words, of course, but we also think with words. The person we identify as me is the person who thinks and has language.

When we need to recall something, we go into the appropriate category and retrieve the information we need. But under conditions of extreme stress, our memory works in a different way. The metaphor of cultural trauma, which currently enjoys great popularity in cultural and literary studies, combines two independent traditions of trauma research. As Wulf Kansteiner explores:

the writings on cultural trauma are based primarily on philosophical reflections about Auschwitz and the limits of representation, which emerged in the postwar writings of members of the Frankfurt School and were further developed by a number of poststructuralist thinker. (193)

They are deeply imprinted more strongly in fact, than normal everyday memories. Which are called emotional memory and has shown that this kind of memory can be difficult or impossible to erase although we can learn to override some of our responses?

Furthermore, Hall talks about black people their memory of slavery as he says in his words:

African culture can be seen in this light as well. Symbolic forms of dress, art, and even religion were seem as African but were invented and formed by American needs and conditions, rather than remembered or discovered through personal experience on the continent. Traditions were formed to suit the needs and desire of a new generation of ghettoized black communities some in desperate need of regeneration and hope for the future. (193)

Problems may arise later because the memory of the events that occurred under severe stress are not put into words and are not remembered in the normal way we remember other things. Instead, the memories remain frozen in time in the form of images and body sensations like smells, touch, tastes and even pain and strong's emotions.

A flashback is a sudden intrusive re-experiencing of a fragment of one of those traumatic, universalized memories. During a flashback, people become overwhelmed with the same emotions that they felt at the time of the trauma. Flashbacks are likely to occur when people are upset, stressed, frightened, or aroused or when triggered by any association to the traumatic events. Their minds can become flooded with the images, emotions, and physical sensations associated with trauma and once again. But the verbal memory system may be turned off because of the arousal of fear. So they cannot

articulate their experience and the non-verbal memory may be only memory of person has of the traumatic event.

At the time of the trauma they had become trapped in speechless terror and their capacity for speech and memory were separated. As a result, they developed what has become known as amnesia for the traumatic event the memory is there but there are no worlds attached to it so it cannot be either talked about as a behavioral re-enactment of a previous event. Uneven thinking of flashbacks as memories is inaccurate and misleading. When someone experiences a flashback, they do not remember the experience they relive it. Often the flashback is forgotten as quickly as it happens because two memory systems are so disconnected from each other.

It is the normal response to overwhelming trauma is not headed. The picture becomes even more complicated for children who are exposed to repeated experiences of unprotect their bodies, brains, and minds are still developing. We are only beginning to understand memory, traumatic memory and how these memory systems develop and influence each other.

Collective Consciousness and Afro-American Identity

Slavery then, is a site of memory for African-Americans, a memory requiring constant reflection and re-interpretation. It is a primal scene and historic event present in every African-American's consciousness. Different generations "have different perspectives on the past because of both emotional and temporal distance, altered circumstance and needs" (p. 33), but all generations of African-Americans need to interpret, and come to terms with, their collective traumatic past and their relationship to that past.

Later, Martin Luther King's civil libertarian approach used the American ideology of democracy as a path to acceptance. The progressive narrative started with the belief that slavery had been a necessary stage to "civilize" slaves, to bring them via modernity and Christianity out of the heathen, primitive Africa from which they had been stolen. The redemptive narrative was linked to Christianity for many decades, but in the 1940s found a new life. Authenticity was also a recurring problem, as in each generation's artists and intellectuals sought means to identify and validate their African-ness. Grace Hale views about that:

how to "perform" blackness was always present: what picture should African-Americans present to whites, whether whites "slumming" in Harlem in the 1920s or whites supportive of civil rights in the 1960s, and what pictures should African-Americans present to themselves? It has written in journal; "memory and heritage form a continuum or heritage memory nexus, whereby claims to the past receive different degrees of reverence or legitimacy. (1)

Cultural trauma is defined as collective aspect engrained in collective memory, as well as the relation to identity formation which is intrinsically linked to shared knowledge systems and forms or means of representation. Therefore due to its temporally displaced effects, trauma, be it on a collective level or an individual one, is closely linked to memory and remembrance processes. Thus it keeps augmenting the generative events that have caused the initial shock. The processes that drive cultural trauma are similar but they usually imply more complex levels, specifically: group identity, and political and/or ideological thought. As Alexander further says that:

Cultural trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways.(1)

The multitude of horrific events across the ages should have led to a never ending creation cycle of collective trauma and to the inability to forward intercultural contact based on mutual understanding and forgiveness. Thus they would have created a world of mutual animosity, where fear and prejudice over past events would reign free. It would in short be anarchy. However, in view of forwarding progress, measures are pursued to minimize those effects. By questioning the very subjective collective memory, it provides the main resource for identity shaping practices and socialization.

The interesting aspects of this phenomenon become increasingly enthralling when we look at societies. Such historically unfavorable circumstances have forced to preserve their threatened identity by any means necessary. Therefore they have incorporated the traumatic aspect of their shared history into the foundation of their group identity.

Such a collective is represented by the African-American diaspora and the people. As Hall says; “our cultural identities reflect the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which provide us, as one people with stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning, beneath the shifting divisions and vicissitudes of our actual history” (221). When we talk about the African-American Diaspora and the historic background it ensued from, the European slave trade is the dominant narrative. Therefore, one can state that slavery is a cultural marker deeply rooted in the collective consciousness and memory of African-Americans.

Moving past, the analysis has to perceive the fact that the African-American identity is built upon this very state of utterly traumatic existence, because in this case, the group consciousness was artificially created out of great diversity with the resounding basis of overcome hardships.

The three core elements that could possibly function as social glue for this huge mass of displaced people were: their African roots, the condition of slavery and their race understood in this context as the visually perceivable differences between mostly dark skinned people and white dominant majority, out of which, the tragic circumstances would bridge the many inherent differences of all former slaves. It is therefore due to pragmatic reasons that the social condition of slavery has been transformed into a symbolic condition affecting all the descendants of slaves. Thus, it has become a site of memory for African-Americans, a memory requiring constant reflection and re-interpretation.

These measures, in one hand, could give the slaves their means of resistance, and on the other side of the field, they justified the actions of slave traders back in the white heartlands, creating the myth of the white man's burden.

Moreover, it is important to understand that the slave populations across the New World were not a homogenous mass, but they represented a very diverse and ethnically rich environment. Then, it persisted throughout the entire period and posed a major problem both for organized resistance movements, as well as for the birth of the African-American identity.

Slavery as world system targeted the ideological, spiritual notions of the slaves, it undermined the very pool of collective African memory these people had, only to show

how these same very diverse, often time even conflicting, African members of heritage were posing a major threat to the unity of any resistance movement. Moreover, it had been also to the creation of the post slavery communities. The solution to this apparent riddle lies in the very nature of African diasporic identity, which is heavily hybridized, concretized and multi-layered. One can easily recognize that the European efforts to destroy what they considered primitive cultural remnants, namely the African heritage, were never fully successful because these were far too deeply integral part of the collective memory.

And thus only merged these efforts only succeeded in merging with this superimposed Western thinking thoughts. It is, therefore, not out of the ordinary for the Caribbean people to show strong evidence of African cultures, especially on the level of religiosity or spirituality, the performing arts and attitudes towards life in general. This direct alteration of the communal knowledge pool of African slaves through the brutal realities of their historic frame was in end effect, demonstrated the real cultural trauma. They, as a collective had to undergo, were obliged to experience.

It was the enforced adoption and creation of a new identity. It also meant to cope with the new factors of existence that defined the emerging. Obviously such process is always traumatic because it implies the loss or metamorphosis of a previous identity and of the memories that distinctiveness entailed as Eyerman says:

It is important to keep in mind that the notion African American is not itself a natural category, but rather a historically formed collective identity that first of all required articulation and then acceptance on the part of those it was meant to incorporate. It was herein this identity formation,

that the memory of slavery would be central, not so much as individual experience, but as collective memory. It was slavery, whether or not one had experienced it, that defined one's identity as an African American.

(76)

One can hereby understand the hardships the black leaders faced at the beginning of and throughout the 20th century America faced when deciding which elements of the shared knowledge at the disposal of their people to uphold and represent. Thus, by laying out their new identity in order to reflect both the tragedy of their past, they get the opportunity of integrating into mainstream American culture.

While many early black leaders asserted the need to commemorate past events in Black population and worked towards the abolition of discrimination, segregation and adverse attitudes towards the black communities across the USA. Many of them were stemming from ideological remnants of slavery. One has always to keep in mind that white majority had equally been manipulated through propaganda and indoctrination into believing their role as superior propagators of civilization; there were those who believed that the experienced trauma could only be headed by returning to Africa.

This becomes obvious that many different ways of interpreting and dealing with the generative task of accommodating the implications of the black cultural trauma has coexisted and still do. Various questions recur among African-Americans seeking to interpret themselves. One is how to name the group, and thus oneself. Is one a Negro, a colored, a black, or an African-American? Ron Eyerman explains this occurrence through an ingenious use of the concept of generations. He explains that generations can be defined by their collective memory of significant events. Eyerman manages to show

through the examples of leading intellectuals and artists how each generation had its own interpretation of the underlying trauma of slavery. Then he also clarifies how the interpretation resulted in different attitudes towards social integration and the meaning of being black. Regarding that Eyerman says:

What makes such writers constitute a “generation” is not their year of birth so much as their collective articulation of the aspirations of those who had experienced the raised hopes of emancipation and the crushing effects of the failure of reconstruction. Their poetry and fiction objectified [...] the memory of slavery, at the same time as it articulated a generational consciousness. (83)

He also pointed out that as time passes; contrary to popular belief, the potency of their lived experiences can intensify and generate further deep feelings of pain and frustration. According to Eyerman, there are three themes evident in how African Americans have represented themselves: integrationist, redemptive, and progressive. However, all these different and even opposing directions in African American cultural expressivity have at their core foundation, the pain of having been deeply shaken on a semiotic level, which led to a strong perception of cultural trauma.

Cultural trauma can be seen through different symbols, language, religion and tales or stories. Morrison has represented, reproduced and re-created. In so far as black people have such collective identity after post war period, black people coped with master culture in America.

Chapter III: Cultural Trauma as Afro-American Identity in Toni

Morrison's Fiction

Toni Morrison has raised racial issues and their identity. Almost her novels or any piece of writing, she has touched Afro-American cultural identity. Along with black right movement, black people got in some extent equality and social right. America included black people into national mainstream, along with black people lost their own cultural collectivity and cultural integration. Black people lost their own cultural identity because of access of them. They got social rights and opportunity but their cultures disintegrated. Black people had unique and separate cultural identity but after post- civil war slavery and blacks' unified or self identity has been abolished. Then they had been dispersed from their collective bond or collective cultural identity.

Since black people got freedom then blacks' identity formation came into process. Obviously, they got social justice but it became issue of identity throughout the world. Black culture and black identity became a collective memory in black's mind and consciousness. They felt a kind of cultural trauma in their history of world. Eyerman says that:

the trauma in question is slavery, not as institution or even experience, but as collective memory, a form of remembrance that rounded the identity formation of a cultural process. As cultural process, trauma is mediated through various forms of representation and linked to the reformation of collective identity and the reworking of collective memory. (1)

Eyerman has focused on black's experience of cultural lack or gap between their new adopted culture and origin of culture.

Morrison also discusses her characters' struggle for identity formation in her novels. Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development "encompasses changes in people's understanding of themselves, one another, and the world around them during the course of development" (392). According to Erikson, identity formation, while beginning in childhood, gains prominence during adolescence. Faced with physical growth and sexual maturation, adolescents must accomplish the task of integrating their prior experiences and characteristics into a personal identity. The experiences slaves are able to draw upon, however, are not capable of fulfilling their need for an identity. It happens because their experiences and relationships are limited due to the social and racial groups to which they belong.

In fact, black people have bitter experience about past that has been base of black people's identity now. Slavery is unique experience of black who seek their blackness by going past collective memory. One generation had experience of slavery but black intellectuals imply the feeling of slavery through literature and it becomes cultural trauma among black community. Regarding that, critic Eyerman puts his view:

The trauma of forced servitude and of nearly complete subordination to the will and whims of another was thus not necessarily something directly experienced by many of the subjects of this study but came to be central to their attempts to forge a collective identity out of its remembrance. In this sense slavery was traumatic in retrospect, and formed a primal scene which could potentially unite all African Americans in the United States whether or not they had themselves been slaves or had any knowledge of or feeling for Africa. Slavery formed the root of an emergent collective

identity through an equally emergent collective memory one that signified and distinguished a race a people or a collective memory one that signified and distinguished a race a people or a community depending on the level of abstraction and point of view being put forward. It is this discourse on the collective and its representation. (2)

Toni Morrison uses the psychological ramifications of the physical, emotional, and spiritual desolation produced by slavery to mold her characters' senses of self through direct experience with slavery and white oppression. The inability of male and female characters to form a sense of identity in her novels *Beloved* and *The Bluest Eye* is tied to the cultural trauma they experience which makes it impossible to shape a sense of self. The most prominent negative impact of slavery Morrison focuses on in *Beloved* is the way in which former slaves are haunted, even in freedom, by the dehumanization they endure.

Due to their repressed social status, Morrison's characters are only able to experience relationships if they are granted the privilege to do so by those who hold power over them. As time progresses beyond legalized slavery, the now 'free' African-Americans have to achieve a societal standard of whiteness in order to gain acceptance. Morrison's first novel, *The Bluest Eye*, exposes the results of white presence in society on African-Americans and how this presence imposes difficulty on the individual to form an identity. Here, Alon Lazar says about cultural traumatic experience that “In order for an event to be represented as cultural trauma, the event must be culturally classified by the collective as a master narrative, one which constructs the core of its collective identity” (12).

Morrison uses this reality to structure these two novels and the bonds between the characters, their society, and themselves. Through the allowance or denial of relationships, Morrison demonstrates in *Beloved* and *The Bluest Eye* how slavery, the deliberate dehumanization of African slaves, and the presence of whiteness in society alter her characters' ability to form their own sense of self-identity. Similarly, Alon Lazar views that “We aim to suggest some insights into the ways younger members of collectives, who continue to bear the scars of a traumatic past, view cultural trauma as symbolic boundary” (12).

The alienation the slaves experience echoes into future generations by disabling any hope of forming relationships after attaining freedom and creates psychological obstacles African Americans must conquer in the future.

In the majority of her novels, Morrison highlights the importance of identity, the formation of the 'self', and the influence of the environment and society on that development. As Ron Eyerman in *Cultural Trauma: Slavery and the formation of African American identity*, “cultural trauma refers to a dramatic loss of identity and meaning, a tear in the social fabric, affecting a group of people that has achieved some degree of cohesion” (2). African slaves were unified by their environment and society's racial oppression. In the case of Morrison's characters in *Beloved*, the trauma in question is slavery, not only as an institution or even an experience, but as a collective memory, a form of remembrance that grounded the identity-formation of a people.

In order to understand how slavery and the discrimination of African Americans influence their sense of identity, one must first understand what 'identity' means. Identity refers to according to Kelman 'the enduring aspects of a person's definition of her- or him'

self, the conception of who one is and what one is over time and across situations. Personal identity is “a cumulative product built up over a person’s lifetime experiences” (3).

Morrison has presented in her novel those evidences or witness of black people to the shame and trauma that exist in the lives of African American people who had undergone with similar experiences. She has intended to have repaired their lost identity through presenting black collective memory. She wants to re-link their cultural heritage through memorize their painful memory. Slavery is their cultural legacy and timeless stereotype event which frequently reframe their cultural identity even after racial equality. She has restaged those painful and tragic scenes through her fictions but it creates common soul among black community.

As Morrison shows that race matters not only in the collective cultural experience of African Americans and in the construction of group identity but also in the experience of the individual. She represents with also most historical experience through her artistic made up. As other almost her novels, she has depicted black history and past experience of black. The traumatic representation of black people has been shown in the novel *Paradise*. The meaning of paradise also seems quite traumatic experience of black people. Morrison has surveyed black people history and cultivated their bitter experience in this novel. It covers African-American life that she has presented as sequel through different novels.

In the novel *Paradise*, Morrison looks back to slavery, reconstruction and the post reconstruction years and to the black exodus from the South and settlement of Oklahoma State. The novel even covers American post colonial period. Even after formation of civil

rights and black rights, they couldn't feel complete freedom so they migrated from one place to another. Morrison has included that movement and psychological fear of black people into this novel. As says Stamm here:

author suggest that cultural trauma could be conceived as an event, which may be in the making and apart from commemorating past physical destruction could signify any attack upon the essential and vulnerable elements of the collective culture, such as its core symbols language, religions history etc. (184)

Black people had a kind of fear and even after having freedom they searched black community in America, therefore they moved from one place to another. Morrison has focused on that black migration from place to place in this novel.

Trauma in *Beloved*

Toni Morrison novels present unrelenting and unflinching image of black people, which always creates indelible impression within black people. Her almost novels cover black culture, black folk, traditions and black collective memory through her fiction. Morrison focuses not only on the collective memories of her trauma of slavery in works like in *Beloved*. She is also intent on portraying the trauma of defective or abusive parenting relationships and also the black on black violence that exists within the African American community. Erikson views here “individuals who reached early adulthood without having established a sense of identity would be incapable of intimacy.” (372) Erikson's perception, characters in *Beloved* find difficulty establishing and maintaining any type of intimate relationship due to the abuse and discrimination.

Identity is a sense of personal continuity and uniqueness based not only on personal need but also on membership in various groups, such as familial, ethnic and occupational. African slaves were not only discriminated for belonging to their racial group, but also for being slaves and belonging to that social group. They have uncovered the black folk or communal values embodied in her work. Just as matters according to Morrison, remain unspeakable in American culture and this unending matter.

Morrison represents the speechless terror of trauma in recurring scenes of dissociated violence and highly visual scenes in which her characters experience violence from a detached perspective. She also conveys the haunting and humiliated memory as she depicts that rememorizes the spontaneous recurrences of the past driven quality of traumatic her characters. She has presented cultural uniqueness and collective African American experience. She points to the shaping and shaming power as racist stereotypes. By presenting black past memory, she goes on African American identities as racially.

Since these group identities, in addition to satisfying the need for affiliation, help people define themselves, not only in their own eyes but in the eyes of others. It is clear why the characters in Morrison's novels find difficulty in forming a personal identity. In the eyes of others, they are subhuman, and this in turn affects how they see themselves because they have internalized society's racism.

In the case of the characters in *Beloved*, it is defined by the slave owners and the society in which they live. Because they are denied mature adult relationships, their psychosocial development is delayed and their capacity to understand themselves in relation to one another and society is inhibited.

In *Beloved*, Paul D, one of the main characters, internalizes the mistreatment he experiences for years. Despite his inner strength and motivation to persevere, that dehumanization transforms him into an unemotional man with a fractured identity. After attempting to murder one of his owners, Paul D is sent to a place. Morrison describes as similar to a prison: "the ditches; the one thousand feet of earth ' five feet deep, five feet wide, into which wooden boxes had been fitted. A door of bars that you could lift on hinges like a cage opened into three walls and a roof of scrap lumber and red dirt"(125).

Paul D and the forty-five members forced to work on the chain gang along side of him were subjected to humiliating treatment along with physical and sexual abuse. He locks away his memories in a tobacco tin-heart, rusted shut from years of abuse and repression. Paul D internalizes the discrimination inflicted upon him and is emasculated to such an extent that he believes he is unworthy of human attachment.

Morrison has represented black suffering and objectifies that pain. As in the case of Sethe, the protagonist in *Beloved*, the dehumanization of slaves deprives those characters of their femininity by denying them motherhood. It was customary for infants born into slavery to be removed from their mothers as soon as possible to disallow any chance to form emotional attachment.

This made it easier to debase women as human beings by denying them the natural desire to mother their children. Not only did the physical separation of mother and child prevent female's slaves from identifying themselves as mothers, but the concept of motherhood alone. Lisa Williams argues that; "due to the economic realities of racism, usually limited to white women" (164). Williams suggests that Sethe feels grief as a black mother due to the isolation she experiences as a slave. *Beloved* begins in 1873

in Cincinnati, Ohio, where Sethe, a former slave, has been living with her eighteen-year-old daughter, Denver. Sethe's mother-in-law, Baby Suggs, lived with them until her death eight years earlier. Just before Baby Suggs's death, Sethe's two sons, Howard and Buglar, ran away.

Many African slaves were influenced by West African motherhood practices in which the individual mother is valued, but the act of mothering was a collective communal process. According to Patricia Hill Collins in her article "The meaning of motherhood in black culture and black mother/daughter relationships a woman has no choice but to evaluate her identity based upon motherhood" (31). The slavery system has created a typical black cultural identity which has lost when black people socialized in white social structure.

When viewing this theory through the lens of slavery, it is apparent that African female slaves had little to no chance to form a mother-identity: "the idea of the cult of true womanhood has been held up to Black women for emulation, racial oppression has denied black families significant resources to support private nuclear family households" (164). Presenting typical characters, which has shown black suffering in America but it has tied their collective identity.

Sethe not only experiences separation from her children because she sacrifices her own well being to send them to safety, but, as a "direct attack on her as a Black mother" (164), she is also robbed of her breast milk, the essence of her motherhood, in a very animalistic fashion. Throughout the novel, Sethe focuses on her milk and the life-force she is naturally supplied with:

All I knew was I had to get my milk to my baby girl. Nobody was going to nurse her like me. Nobody was going to get it to her fast enough, or take it away when she had enough and didn't know it. Nobody knew that she couldn't pass her air if you held her up on your shoulder, only if she was lying on my knees. Nobody knew that but me and nobody had her milk but me.(19)

While talking about her past with her daughter, Denver, Sethe describes the event: “After I left you, those boys came in there and took my milk. That's what they came in there for. Held me down and took it” (19). Sethe continues to focus on this memory because breast milk is the only part of her related to motherhood she thinks is safe from white people. Her milk, the substance that would sustain her child's life, is the one thing that truly belongs to her, but when the white boys take it from her they diminished her worth as a woman, a mother, and a human being.

Male slaves are denied the ability to identify themselves as masculine, Mr. Garner, the original owner of the Sweet Home plantation where Sethe and Paul D lived, allows his male slaves to feel like men: “The Garners, it seemed to Sethe, ran a special kind of slavery, treating them like paid labor, listening to what they said, teaching what they wanted to know” (165).

Even though the method by which Mr. Garner runs his plantation seems positive, he too “dramatizes the numerous ways in which the white exercises its power to define the experience and identity of slaves” (63). The slaves are allowed to feel artificially masculine because they are only granted secondary characteristics of masculinity. Mr.

Garner allows them to carry guns, learn to read, and grants them the privilege of sexual agency but allowing Sethe to choose her partner and husband, Halle.

In fact, while Mr. Garner permits them to act like men through these secondary characteristics, he in effect owns their masculinity and denies their ability to internalize their identity as men, Peterson views on it:

Even a benevolent slaveholder like Mr. Garner employs this privilege of definition: he boasts to other slaveholders that unlike them he has 'men' who work for him. His power to name his slaves 'men', however, calls into question their very experience of manhood. (63)

Since the male slaves on Sweet Home plantation need permission to act like men, the process of labeling themselves as such is artificial as well. The slaves' experience with masculinity is short lived, however. After Mrs. Garner's brother-in-law, a man the slaves refer to as 'schoolteacher', gains control of sweet home, the men are denied secondary masculine characteristics:

Paul D grew up thinking that, of all the Blacks in Kentucky, only the five of them were men. Allowed, encouraged to correct Garner, even defy him. To invent ways of doing things; to see what was needed and attack it without permission. To buy a mother choose a horse or a wife, handle guns, even learn reading if they wanted. (147)

Schoolteacher strips them of anything that makes them feel more powerful as men: by taking away their guns, he takes away their ability to hunt for food or protect themselves; by denying them the ability to learn to read, he guarantees their stay at sweet home. With every ounce of pride schoolteacher takes away from the men of Sweet Home, his power

grows exponentially while that of the slaves grows weaker. That past black experience even reflected here:

No, no. That's not the way. So they have common experience can be felt from her pretention. Black people have such bitter experience so all black people have collective. I told you to put her human characteristics on the left; her animal ones on the right. And don't forget to line them up. (193)

Overhearing this lesson upsets Sethe to the point that she does not mention this instance to anyone until she is explaining her past actions to her daughter, *Beloved*. Peterson again keeps his view that “Sethe recognizes schoolteacher's words and 'logic' as almost a greater threat to blacks than the material conditions of slavery itself; she discerns that his instructions promote an unspeakable terror and violence” (64). By teaching his nephews this 'lesson', schoolteacher is ensuring the racial attitudes of the next generation.

Sexuality also plays a vital role in the slave's lives. For many years, the only female slave on the Sweet Home plantation is Baby Suggs, the mother of Halle, one of the men of sweet home. Until Sethe is brought to the plantation, there is no one to fulfill one of the most basic human sexual desires. She projects psychological experiences that have undergone by black people. In fact, slavery has been dramatized through novel. Cultural scenes of shame and trauma, and she confronts in her fiction and cultural trauma.

By debasing slaves to the point that they feel they are categorized the same as animals, if not lesser, the slaves themselves believe it is acceptable to have sexual relations with animals. The denial of any access to fulfill their basic human desires allows them to further internalize society's belief that they are subhuman.

Morrison has brought those all lost memories into foreground. Such experience has been deeply rooted into their psyche. The novel begins, Paul D, whom Sethe has not seen since they worked together on Mr. Garner's Sweet home plantation in Kentucky approximately twenty years earlier, stops by Sethe's house. His presence resurrects memories that have laid buried in Sethe's mind for almost two decades. From this point on, the story will unfold on two temporal planes.

The present in Cincinnati constitutes one plane, while a series of events that took place around twenty years earlier, mostly in Kentucky, constitutes the other. This latter plane is accessed and described through the fragmented flashbacks of the major characters. Accordingly, she brings frequently these flashbacks several times, sometimes from varying perspectives, with each successive narration of an event adding a little more information to the previous ones.

From these fragmented memories, the following story begins to emerge: Sethe, the protagonist, was born in the South to an African mother she never knew. When she is thirteen, she is sold to the Garners, who own sweet homeland practice a comparatively benevolent kind of slavery. There, the other slaves, who are all men, lust after her but ever touch her. Sethe chooses to marry Halle, apparently in part because he has proven generous enough to buy his mother's freedom by hiring himself out on the weekends.

After the eventual death of the proprietor, Mr. Garner, the widowed Mrs. Garner asks her sadistic, vehemently racist brother-in-law to help her run the farm. He is known to the slaves as schoolteacher, and his oppressive presence makes life on the plantation even more unbearable than it had been before. The slaves decide to run because all the

characters represent black people and they have been suffered from any kind of social violence in the white society.

Morrison has drawn her attention on the damaging impact of white racist practices and learned cultural shame on the collective African- American experience. She points to the shaping and shaming power racist stereotypes and discursive repertoires in the construction of African- American identities as racially inferior and stigmatized.

She shows that race matters not only in the collective cultural experience of African American and in the construction of group identity but also in the experience of the individual. She presents the recent construction of Afro-American identity after post war period. Black present experience and their sense of inferiority are reflected through her characters who have been suffering from racial violence and social descriptions.

Sethe spends twenty-eight wonderful days in Cincinnati, where Baby Suggs serves as an unofficial preacher to the black community. Afro- Americans have been forced to deal not only with individual and family shame and trauma but also with cultural shame and racial trauma as they are designated as the racially inferior and stigmatized other. Eventually it becomes the target of white discrimination and violence. Race and cultural matters become the main issue of black people that has been realized by black people.

Paul D has endured torturous experiences in a chain gang in Georgia, where he was sent after trying to kill Brandywine, a slave owner to whom he was sold by schoolteacher. His traumatic experiences have caused him to lock away his memories, emotions, and ability to love in the “tin tobacco box” of his heart. One day, a fortuitous

rainstorm allows Paul D and the other chain gang members to escape. He travels northward by following the blossoming spring flowers.

Morrison has shown their physical oppression, shame, humiliation, and slavery which is all black experience of past. It represents the lost black African experiences. All scene of this novel has depicted and linked with their physical as well mental trauma. She brings haunted memories of the slave experiences. Garner and her mistreatment and humiliation at the hands of Garner's successor, schoolteacher, Sethe makes her difficult flight to freedom only to be tracked down by schoolteacher one month later.

When Paul D learns the story of Sethe's "rough choice"—her infanticide—he leaves 124 and begins sleeping in the basement of the local church. In his absence, Sethe and Beloved's relationship becomes more intense and exclusive. Beloved grows increasingly abusive, manipulative, and parasitic, and Sethe is obsessed with satisfying Beloved's demands and making her understand why she murdered her. Worried by the way her mother is wasting away, Denver leaves the premises for the first time in twelve years in order to seek help from Lady Jones, her former teacher.

The community provides the family with food and eventually organizes under the leadership of Ella, a woman who had worked on the Underground Railroad and helped with Sethe's escape, in order to exorcise Beloved from. When they arrive at Sethe's house, they see Sethe on the porch with Beloved, who stands smiling at them, naked and pregnant. Mr. Bodwin, who has come to take Denver to her new job, arrives at the house. Mistaking him for schoolteacher, Sethe runs at Mr. Bodwin with an ice pick. She is restrained, but in the confusion Beloved disappears, never to return.

Paul D comes back to Sethe, who has retreated to Baby Suggs's bed to die. Mourning Beloved, Sethe laments, "She was my best thing." but Paul D replies, you your best thing, Sethe." The novel then ends with a warning that "this is not a story to pass on. The town and even the residents have forgotten Beloved like an unpleasant dream during a troubling sleep" (1).

Toni Morrison has presented black people suffering through this novel, which is collective conscious or memory of black people. She represents those bitter memories through her fictions. When black people integrate into white dominated society then they lost their blackness whereas they adopt white culture. It leads them into world of capitalism. Therefore they forgo own culture and society. But Morrison rethinks these issues by fictionalizing in her work.

Trauma in *The Bluest Eye*

While in *Beloved* Morrison discusses the direct effect of discrimination of slaves. She reveals how the future generations of slaves are affected by the past through white presence in society in *The Bluest Eye*. The title of the novel itself calls attention to the presence of whiteness and how that presence can affect not only a collective group, but also an individual. African identity has formed in relation with white society and white treatment to them. They have been seeking their cultural as well racial identity in after Post Civil War. As Andrew Morrison views that:

Learned cultural shame over feeling of being different remarks, the African American people often judged by white American society as inferior, have endured the stigma of being different since their history on this continent began. The sense of difference and inferiority imposed by

the dominant culture leads to internalization of that judgment by the affected group. (35)

The way in which trauma affects an individual is different than how it affects a culture as a cultural process, trauma is mediated through various forms of representation and linked to the reformation of collective identity and the reworking of collective memory. Three prominent characters in Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, Cholly Breedlove, Pauline Breedlove, and Pecola Breedlove, deal not only with the struggle to form personal identities but also with the presence of whiteness in society and the pressure to meet society's white standard.

All characters in the novel represents black memory of past, who had very bitter reality. Both male and female characters have similar experiences. By presenting those suffering, the novel advocates black reformation of social identity. Cholly Breedlove is one of the male characters in *The Bluest Eye* who is affected from white domination. Cholly is abandoned by his father before his birth, abandoned by his mother nine days after birth, and is rescued and raised by his grandmother who does not hesitate to remind him that he owes her his life. Regarding that James Comer argues that; “trauma of slavery was compounded by the fact that children born into slavery were socialized and developed in ways that defined them as inferior” (154). They lost their own culture, and enslaved, excluded and degraded by white people. It has remained as unending effect upon black people.

During each of these conflicts, the individual is 'vulnerable and moving toward increased potential. Conflict is a moment to decide between progress and regression. The first of Erikson's eight stages is referred to as 'trust versus mistrust.' This stage is

characterized by the development or lack of development of a trust for others and the self, or a sense of confidence in infancy.

Cholly does not experience any confidence during intimacy because he is unable to bond with his parents, and his grandmother. Even though she takes it upon herself to save Cholly and remains at an emotional distance. Not only is the failure to progress beyond the first stage of development to blame for Cholly's fractured identity but Cholly is also disturbed by the fact that he is not his father's namesake. When Cholly asks his grandmother why he isn't named after his own father, his grandmother replies:

He wasn't nowhere around when you was born. Your mama didn't name you nothing. The nine days wasn't up before her throw you on the junk heap. When I got you I named you myself on the ninth day. You named after my dead brother. Charles Breedlove. A good man isn't no Samson never come to no good end. (133)

Cholly is upset because he is not named after his father, but instead he is the namesake of a distant relative who is deceased before Cholly is born. The origin of one's self is important in identity formation. Black people are renamed in white society. It creates terrible condition of black people. It leads them into resistance against white people.

Since Cholly cannot identify with anyone he is related to any resemblance of a sense of self and his maturation is stunted, which makes it easier for Cholly to internalize society's racism. Cholly experiences dehumanization in *The Bluest Eye* similar to Morrison's character, Sethe, in *Beloved*. While Sethe is robbed of a natural life-force, Cholly's first encounter with sex, a natural human experience, is perverted by two white hunters.

During the reception after Aunt Jimmy's funeral, Cholly and Darlene run off to a field where their flirtations quickly turn into sexual relations. While in the middle of intercourse, Cholly and his partner are interrupted by a two white hunters as it clarified, "There was no mistake about their being white; he could smell it" (147). As Cholly tried to stand up and dress himself. The hunters shined their flashlights on the couple and ordered Cholly to finish, "With a violence born of total helplessness, he pulled her dress up, lowered his trousers and underwear" (147).

The white hunters repeatedly refer to him as a 'coon' and order him to mate with Darlene like cruel animals. The ease with which hunters demand Cholly to continue intercourse with Darlene is reminiscent of the systematic mating strategies slave owners practiced with only 'breeding' in mind. This humiliating and dehumanizing experience create hatred for women which is demonstrated later in the novel by his domestic violence toward his wife and the molestation of his daughter. These characters have been victimized from social, cultural and personal rights.

Pauline Breedlove is one of the female characters in *The Bluest Eye* affected by the white standard society has placed upon her. Pauline has a deformity on her foot that prevents her from having a nickname among her peers when she is younger. Because of this lack of a nickname, Pauline is unable to relate herself to her peers and her ability for form an identity at a young age is thwarted. Also as a result of her deformity is her extreme concern about her physical appearance: "Her general feeling of separateness and unworthiness she blamed on her foot" (111).

Pauline internalizes society's love of white-beauty to such a degree that she views herself as worthless unless she can attain that standard. It's because she is unable to relate

any of the black in the North. Pauline frequents the movie theater where, “along with the idea of romantic love, she was introduced to another physical beauty. Probably the most destructive ideas in the history of human thought. Originated in envy, thrived in insecurity, and ended in disillusion” (122). These are the days in Pauline's life when she learns that beauty equals virtue. Pauline gives the image of black suffering who has undergone bitter feeling. Toni Morrison projects pathetic characters along with their unbearable suffering.

Pecola Breedlove, the protagonist in *The Bluest Eye*, is either seen as worthless by everyone around her or is not seen at all. Pecola has internalized society's racism the most out of all the characters in the novel. As a result of all the abuse she suffers from her father, mother, strangers and other children, she believes that everything would change for the better if she acquired blue eyes. As it justifies that “It is the construction of white womanhood that Pecola's desire to have blue eyes is born, since both she and her mother long for a white middle-class conception of beauty and grace that has been communicated to them thorough the portrayal of white women in the movies” (57). Pecola is raped and impregnated by her father, loses the baby she is carrying, and is driven into madness from the persistent abuse, but continues to search for blue eyes to cure her alleged ugliness and societal rejection.

Pecola begins to converse with her imaginary friend. It illustrates that “Ironically, having been denied a sense of self and a voice to articulate her pain, in the end an insane Pecola has found not one, but two voices” (15). She internalizes society's racism and allows this to reaffirm an already weakened perception of herself. Then her low self-esteem disables any ability for Pecola to form a sense of self.

She is unable to experience relationships and relate to others, which is a key element in forming an identity, according to Erikson. Since she is unable to form mature relationships and have positive experiences to integrate and accumulate over her short lifetime, she is forced to create a second 'identity' in order to satisfy her need for human interaction and acceptance.

Toni Morrison focuses on similar painful suffering of African American slaves in her novel *Beloved*. The views of society at that time of slaves as a subhuman group denies them basic human desires and makes it impossible for them to create a stable sense of personal identity. They are forced to identify with their social and ethnic group, but by doing so their sense of self is lost. In *The Bluest Eye* Morrison shows how the cultural trauma of a cohesive group can lead to the inability for individuals in the group to form identities.

The presence of whiteness in society at that time creates an unattainable white standard that African Americans needed to attain in order to gain acceptance. This cult of white womanhood permeating the nineteenth century further devalued black women since the social and economic reality of slavery made it almost impossible to live up to these so-called 'feminine virtues' (57). It illustrated that "She was never able, after her education in the movies, to look at a face and not assign it some category in the scale of absolute beauty, and the scale was one she absorbed in full from the silver screen" (122).

The result of the attempt and failure in relation to this standard disabled any chance African Americans have to find themselves. The inability to form intimate relationships makes it impossible to form a sense of self, which only worsened their lack of identity.

Talking about the novel *The Bluest Eyes* states black miserable condition. It re-projects the slavery. It is past experience of black people however it is re-presented though fictional world. Pecola's father has tried to burn down his family's house, and Claudia and Frieda feel sorry for her. Pecola loves Shirley Temple, believing that whiteness is beautiful and that she is ugly. She always munched anger within herself, she thinks; "they are ugly and they weeds" (37). Therefore, such representation or racist representation shows the black condition in white society. It shows black and white relation but it was very cold. Black people were marginalized who had to serve white people.

Morrison's fictional representation of lower class black masculinity and even as it constructs a black folk heroic figure. Additionally, it evokes the inter and intra racist stereotype of the lower class black male as prone to criminal acts of violence. Pecola believes that if she had blue eyes, she would be loved and her life would be transformed.

Meanwhile, She is wrongly blamed for killing a boy's cat and is called a "nasty little black bitch" by his mother. Black people have internalized that black as inferior and white as superior. It wouldn't erase from their mind. It remains for long and even generation transfer such thinking.

We learn that Pecola's parents have both had difficult lives. Pauline, her mother, has a lame foot and has always felt isolated. She loses herself in movies, which reaffirm her belief that she is ugly and that romantic love is reserved for the beautiful. She

encourages her husband's violent behavior in order to reinforce her own role as a martyr. She feels most alive when she is at work, cleaning a white woman's home. She loves this home and despises her own. Cholly, Pecola's father, was abandoned by his parents and raised by his great aunt, who died when he was a young teenager. He was humiliated by two white men who found him having sex for the first time and made him continue while they watched. He ran away to find his father but was rebuffed by him. By the time he met Pauline, he was a wild and rootless man. He feels trapped in his marriage and has lost interest in life.

Cholly returns home and finds Pecola washing dishes. With mixed motives of tenderness and hatred that are fueled by guilt, he rapes her. When Pecola's mother finds her unconscious on the floor, she disbelieves Pecola's story. Pecola goes to Soaphead Church and asks him for blue eyes. Instead of helping her, he uses her to kill a dog he dislikes.

Claudia and Frieda find out that Pecola has been impregnated by her father and unlike the rest of the neighborhood; they want the baby to live. They sacrifice the money which had been saving for a bicycle and plant marigold seeds. The flowers refuse to bloom, and Pecola's baby dies when it is born prematurely. Cholly, who rapes Pecola a second time and then runs away, dies in a work house. Pecola goes mad, believing that her cherished wish has been fulfilled and that she has the bluest eyes.

Whatever Morrison has presented through her fictions, she just generalizes the overall black experience. In their cultural trauma the slavery is represented through black cultural past. It consists of all black people either they went through slavery or not but it

addresses all black people. Morrison only presents black suffering and it was their reality but she highlights painful experience. It reshapes black formation of identity.

Trauma in *Paradise*

The novel *Paradise* has told black cultural, historical and societal as well as memory of black people which brings black people together again. The novel has presented those narratives which are interwoven with historical and realistic image of slavery. She revisits those images which have deeply rooted into black mind. This novel depicts of black people and cultural trauma of black people. All images regarding black people always remain hitting among their community.

It has presented social violence and black people underwent through bitter reality. The story begins with a scene in rural Oklahoma, nine men from the nearby town of Ruby attack a former convent now occupied by women fleeing from abusive husbands or lovers, or otherwise unhappy pasts "women who chose themselves for company"(55). Whose solidarity and solitude rebuke the male-dominated culture that now exacts its revenge?

Morrison makes of it a many-layered mystery, interweaving the individual stories of these women with an amazingly compact social history of Ruby's founding families and their interrelationships over several decades. It all comes at us in fragments, and we gradually piece together the tale of black freedmen after the Civil War gradually acquiring land and power, taking pride in the culture they've built--vividly symbolized by a memorial called the Oven.

That wrathful prophecy is fulfilled as the years pass, raw between families and even a rivalry between twin brothers grow ever more dangerous, and in the wake of the

desolation that rose after King's murder, Ruby succumbs to militancy; a Black Power fist is painted on the Oven and the handwriting is on the wall. With astonishing fluency, Morrison connects the histories of the convent's insulted and injured women with that of the community they oppose but cannot escape.

In the Morrison's novel *Paradise* the entire town of Ruby that is constructed in the image of the white communities. But it also represents the place where black people affected by white unjust suppression. Characters in the novel attempt to escape from a white racist society and create their own black racist society. It has been seen that black people are afraid of white communities. White people treat them as inferior people who are perceived as dirty and lawless. They have turned a house constructed by a white person and used as a convent for Catholic nuns into a unique oasis for women who do not fit into the larger society. So these funky women, then, live without men in a manner not condoned by the upstanding community of Ruby. They eat, sleep, and live in whatever room they desire, repurposing rooms, sleeping in root cellars, drinking and shaving their heads and generally embracing a sort of idol worship that is reminiscent of some other society in a third world on some foreign continent.

They combine several religions, to create something new that serves their small community of women. They find existing cultures to suit themselves, rather than tailoring themselves to suit the existing cultures. When several men break into the convent they discover that each woman sleeps not in a bed, like normal people, but in a hammock. They resist the dictates of standard society which suggest that people should sleep in beds. These women do not have clothes in their closets and wore no-fit dirty dresses

and nothing you could honestly call shoes. These women are not normal, intentionally so. They wish to be comfortable and happy, not correct.

As is in *Sula* there are two female characters who serve as philosophical opposites in *Paradise*. These matriarchal figures are Connie of the convent and Soane of Ruby. Though the novel is peppered with strong female characters representing both philosophical poles in which these two characters emerge as central to the narrative's evolution. Particularly in the case of *Paradise* Morrison's narrative seems uncomfortable with the future of the funky woman.

In this novel all of the funky women are destroyed and live on only in a sort of mythologized version of the narrative. Those two characters, that do seem to thrive in the novel and continue on to carry a more liberal message of tolerance into the future of the town of Ruby, are two misfits: Anna and Richard. So they are two individuals who are not entirely inside or outside of the constructed circle of the town called Ruby.

Interestingly, these characters are neither funky nor overly proper; they inhabit some middle ground between the two ways of existing. Both Anna and Richard are temperate in disposition, and these two characters, as well as some of Morrison's other characters, seem to suggest that the future of the African-American race lies neither in the funky nor the properly white and clean mode of existence.

In the novel *Paradise*, Morrison has collected all black experiences, deep rooted feeling and indelible images in their psycho. She has re-lived those all experiences and tries to represent black history. Morrison creates a rich and complex narrative, as she describes the founding of the town. Her fathers are determined to honor their fathers and grandfathers, preserving dream of living in an all black. She has constituted such story

that illustrates the causes and consequences of and social shaming. As a result, that is the dismissive and inherently dangerous othering and dehumanizing of those people considered different.

The novel *Paradise* has represented that past black world into this new world and it creates sympathy among black community. Even they feel that we have common world, common heritage and history. It makes their reunion so they feel their common trauma on common shock that shapes black identity even the future. It is dramatic description of a horrific crime; the violent attack on the convent women by name Ruby men. Then the narrative slowly and circuitously spirals around this central act of violence in an attempt to make sense of the present by looking at the past lives of the characters. She has exposed color partiality, social construction and its affective power among African American community. Whatever black have bitter and unequal experience which has reflected into novels.

After all, this novel *Paradise* also projects slavery and its affect upon the society. it leads formation of black identity after civil war. The novel revolves around white and black racial conflict and tension. It brings negative image of black people but it becomes the black cultural experience. Later on, black people also looked back their history and find black lost identity.

Trauma in *Sula*

In *Sula* traumatic events including death occur throughout the novel and mark the characters. *Sula* starts with the death of the Bottom whose origin is a “nigger joke” is a constant reminder of the force and continuing effects of racism; it is the powerful white people who define and determine the fate of the Bottom.

In the last section “1965,” the sadness of the loss of the Bottom is highlighted through the contrast between a real place and “separate houses with separate televisions and separate telephones” (166). As mentioned above, place plays a crucial role in *Sula*, serving as a character with values and moral views affecting the characters in their ways of achieving their identities and dealing with trauma.

Bottom is a mostly black community in Ohio, situated in the hills above the mostly white, wealthier community of Medallion. The Bottom first became a community when a master gave it to his former slaves. The master gave the former slave a poor stretch of hilly land, convincing the slave the land was worthwhile by claiming that it was hilly, it was closer to heaven. The trick, though, led to the growth of a vibrant community. Now the community faces a new threat; wealthy whites have taken a liking to the land, and would like to destroy much of the town in order to build a golf course.

Shadrack returns a shattered man, unable to accept the complexities of the world; he lives on the outskirts of town, attempting to create order in his life. One of his methods involves compartmentalizing his fear of death in a ritual he invents and names National Suicide Day. The town is at first wary of him and his ritual, then, over time, unthinkingly accepts him.

Nel is the product of a family that believes deeply in social conventions; hers is a stable home, though some might characterize it as rigid. Nel is uncertain of the conventional life her mother, Helene, wants for her; these doubts are hammered home when she meets Rochelle, her grandmother and a former prostitute, the only unconventional woman in her family line. Sula's family is very different: she lives with her grandmother, Eva, and her mother, Hannah, both of whom are seen by the town as

eccentric and loose. Their house also serves as a home for three informally adopted boys and a steady stream of borders.

Despite their differences, Sula and Nel become fiercely attached to each other during adolescence.

However, a traumatic accident changes everything. One day, Sula playfully swings a neighborhood boy. When she loses her grip, the boy falls into a nearby river and drowns. They never tell anyone about the accident even though they did not intend to harm the boy. The two girls begin to grow apart. One day, in an accident, Sula's mother's dress catches fire and she dies of the burns. Nel chooses to marry and settles into the conventional role of wife and mother. Sula follows a wildly divergent path and lives a life of fierce independence and total disregard for social conventions.

Sula leaves the Bottom for a period of 10 years. She has many affairs, some with white men. However, she finds people following the same boring routines elsewhere, so she returns to the Bottom and to Nel. Upon her return, the town regards Sula as the very personification of evil for her blatant disregard of social conventions. Their hatred in part rests upon Sula's interracial relationships, but is crystallized when Sula has an affair with Nel's husband, Jude, who subsequently abandons Nel. Ironically, the community's labeling of Sula as evil actually their own lives.

Her presence in the community gives them the impetus to live harmoniously with one another. Nel breaks off her friendship with Sula. Just before Sula dies, they achieve a half-hearted reconciliation. With Sula's death, the harmony that had reigned in the town quickly dissolves.

Eva accuses her of sharing the guilt for Chicken Little's death. Her accusation forces Nel to confront the unfairness of her judgment against Sula. Nel admits to herself that she had blamed his death entirely on Sula and set herself up as the "good" half of the relationship. Nel comes to realize that in the aftermath of Chicken Little's death she had too quickly clung to social convention in an effort to define herself as good. Nel goes to the cemetery and mourns at Sula's grave, calling out Sula's name in sadness.

The novel addresses the confusing mysteries of human emotions and relationships, ultimately concluding that social conventions are inadequate as a foundation for living one's life. The novel tempts the reader to apply the diametrically opposed terms of good and evil to the characters and their actions, and yet simultaneously shows why it is necessary to resist such temptation. While exploring the ways in which people try to make meaning of lives filled with conflicts over race, gender, and simple idiosyncratic points of views.

We encounter Shadrack, a traumatized World War I shell-shocked victim, and learn about his founding as a way to make a disorderly world orderly, which becomes a landmark in time and a point of reference in the neighborhood (56). Matus emphasizes the significance of the "historical circumstances in addition, she links Shadrack with the soldiers on the train Nel and her mother take to New Orleans and Sula's drug-addicted uncle Plum to highlight "the duplicity of American race relations" (57).

Furthermore, in a way, Shadrack's war trauma is also made present to the community and becomes a part of the communal memory, which manifests the close connection between the individual and the community.

The traumatic events that Sula has to deal with include being a black female, having a dead father and a distant mother, causing Chicken Little's death, witnessing her mother's death, losing Nel's friendship, and being abandoned by Ajax. Matus is right to observe that Sula is haunted by "sorrow and pain" (63). Morrison describes experimental Sula as a "New World black woman and sort of an outlaw" (47). Regarded by the Bottom community as a pariah, an evil, and a witch, Sula has also been interpreted in many ways such as "a rule-breaker a lawless woman a "new female being" (28); "a misanthrope and shamed social outcast" (Bouson 52). In this essay I intend to show how the overwhelming violent events and the insidious trauma help shape Sula, no matter how one labels her.

Being a black girl growing up at a chaotic low class Peace household at the Bottom means that opportunities are quite limited for Sula and ensures that she would have a constellation of life experiences. Even at a very young age, both Sula and Nel know that since they are "neither white nor male, all freedom and triumph was forbidden to them" (52). Hence they have "set about creating something else to be" (52). Christian mentions the "effect of insularity on the women of the Bottom" because the neighborhood is high up in the hills and so isolated from the rest of the world (50).

She also remarks that due to the insularity and vulnerability of the black community, the crucial defining characteristic of "the class of woman is that she make others" by making babies and supporting men (76). The adult Nel, who has both borne children and made Jude (83), reminds Sula that being "a woman and a colored woman," she "can't act like a man can't be walking around all independent-like" (142).

Even Eva, who has traveled outside the neighborhood, accepts the role of women and accuses the anti-conventional Sula, who only wants to “make myself” and on one else, of being “selfish” (92). It is worth pointing out that for Sula, life and the fate of being a colored woman are similar in the cities. She concludes that “All those cities held the same people, working the same mouths, sweating the same sweat,” which bores her (120). Sula tells Nel that every colored woman in their country is “dying like a stump while she is going down like red woods”(143). In the picture of the colored women Sula presents, we see the potential trauma victims.

Sula whose loneliness was so profound it intoxicated her though ironically all sorts of people drop in her house. Overhearing her mother’s words just don’t like her which give her a sting in her eye and send her “flying up the stairs with dark thoughts, when she was twelve years old is a crippling turning point for Sula with severe consequences” (57). First, it marks her as a “mother-damaged figure” and shatters her sense of self (64) because her mother’s remarks teach Sula there is “no other that you could count on” (118-9).

Margaret Schramm suggests that Hannah’s comment “intensifies Sula’s need for Nel’s friendship” as an alternative center to make up her mother’s failure to provide one” (173). Second, the overwhelming event leads to Sula’s accidental drowning of Chicken Little, another haunting trauma, which shows her there is no self to count on (119). As a result, Sula has “no center, no speck around which to grow” (119). Released from “one major feeling of responsibility, Sula launches an experimental life, giving her imagination free rein” (118).

Matus reads Chicken Little's death as a symbol of "Sula's own childhood hurt and loss and as the novel's central symbol of loss or lack" (4). It can also signify the end of Sula's innocence and childhood, which is short-lived just like the butterflies. In addition, it is telling that when Nel tries to deal with the overwhelmingly traumatic double betrayal of Sula and her husband, Jude. She remembers the mourning and screaming women at Chicken Little's funeral.

The death of chicken represents "a displaced enactment of Sula's dark thoughts and feelings and the painful and confusing experience of toxic shame" (64). Christian calls attention to the beginning of sexual stirring in Sula and Nel. She believes that the overwhelmed Sula swings Chicken Little when she is overflowed with the "energy of repressed pain and pleasure" (35). Sula's budding sexuality is presented clearly in the chapter with her delight from Ajax's compliment and the highly sexually implicated game Sula and Nel play.

Furthermore, the whole event regarding Chicken Little's death is also significant in terms of Sula and Nel's friendship. It is their mutual, unspeakable, and unforgettable memory, which supposedly binds them. Yet, at the funeral they neither touch each other nor keep eye contact; instead, there is a space, separateness, between them" (64). It seems to foreshadow the breach of the friendship between Sula and Nel, which, considering their awakening sexuality, prepares and makes room for Nel's marriage to Jude.

She is traumatized by her mother's unexpected and violent death by fire and suffers from the symptoms of "the delayed reaction and haunting dreams" (67). Before she dies, as if to convince the absent Eva of her innocence, who believes that Sula watches Hannah burn because she is interested Sula explains, "I didn't mean anything. I

never meant anything. I stood there watching her burn and was thrilled.” (78) It seems unbelievable, but for the thirteen-year-old Sula, who has “a mean determination to explore everything that interested her mother’s burning is an extraordinary event out of the monotonous daily life (55).

Bouson proposes that Sula’s secret pleasure suggests “her desire for revenge against her shaming mother and her emotional disconnection from the suffering of others” (65). Thrilled or not, her mother’s horrible and tragic death haunts her, causing the recurrent nightmares from which Sula wakes up “gagging and overwhelmed with the smell of smoke” (148).

Elizabeth Abel states that unlike parental and sexual bonds, friendship is “a privileged relationship with the potential to blend “perfect freedom with complete involvement.” (428) Nevertheless, it is almost impossible to achieve the balance between “growth and identification necessary to friendship” between Sula and Nel because they have different definition and expectation of their friendship. The friendship between Sula and Nel is essential for both since it offers them “center, the intimacy, the safe harbor to grow on” (119). Sula treasures Nel, who is the closest thing to be both other and a self, so much that Nel is the last thought in her mind before she dies.

Nonetheless, losing Nel’s friendship seems an inevitable trauma for Sula. Nel’s misunderstanding of Sula’s protective act toward her is a blow to Sula’s psyche. Nel is disgusted by Sula’s unintentional self-mutilation in the effort to protect her, believing the fear-stricken Sula cuts herself to “protect herself” (101). Sula decides to “let her emotions dictate her behavior,” which is partially to blame for her having sex with Jude” (141). For the emotion dominant Sula, Jude “just filled up the space” (144). She also

thinks since they are such good friends “two throats and one eye and with no price” (147).

Matus notes that Sula’s seduction of Jude suggests her detachment” and a “profound lack of, or disregard for, feeling” (62). It is worth mentioning that sex is where Sula finds “misery and the ability to feel deep sorrow and sadness” (122). Ironically, her experiencing misery from bedding down with Jude begets more and appalling misery in Nel. Sula and Nel as two parts of one psychological self, Nel represents “the superego or the conscience while Sula the id or the pleasure and the unconscious desire of the psyche” (151). She suggests that sleeping with Jude, whom Nel also possesses, is Sula’s attempt to “connect with the other part of her, Nel and relive the days when they were one (147). However, Nel believes that Sula takes Jude away because she does not love her enough to leave Jude alone and let him love her (145). From then on she no longer considers Sula as a friend but as an “enemy” (138).

In the end of the section entitled “1939,” the free-spirited Ajax, which is actually Albert Jack, leaves Sula after detecting in her the signs of “nailing him,” which I think is the final wound inflicted on her mind (127). Sula thinks that “It’s just as well he left,” otherwise her “tremendous curiosity” might end up hurting him, which very likely would cause the community to blame her for harming him intentionally (121). Sula knows and seems to accept that she is seen as a “pariah, but that does not mean she is not hurt when being wrongly accused”(122). She does not want to be further misunderstood and blamed for something she does not do.

She believes that “isn’t worth more than me” and she will not spend her life keeping one (143). Nevertheless, it is implied that being abandoned by Ajax contributes

to Sula's sickness. The thoughts in her mind then "There aren't any more new songs and all the ones there are seem to suggest that she can cease exploring, imagining, experimenting, inventing, or even living now that she has tried everything (137). In addition, it is no coincident that the following section, which is "1940," begins with her illness. Christian says that Sula's death is due to both "spiritual malnutrition" and "physical cause" (37). From the above analysis of the traumatic events in her life, it is also likely that Sula is exhausted from the blows to her psyche (187). Yet being who she is, Sula is still exploring the new experience death at the last moment.

That absence is echoed in the end when Sula is not there to share Nel's epiphany that it is Sula rather than Jude that she has been missing all the years. The loss of a human connection is intensified by Sula's failure to remember Shadrack as the person who has said "always" to comfort her after her accidental killing of Chicken Little and by Shadrack and Nel's mutual failure to recognize each other (149). In their final encounter, they move in "opposite directions, each thinking separate thoughts about the past" (174). The word separate is reminiscent of the loss of the community. Thus in the end individual and communal trauma mingles in the bottomless and topless "circles of sorrow" (174).

Morrison's fictions are designed and make self-conscious use of folklore and myths. She has presented collective memories as well as horror among black people because of transferred fear and psychological realization. She has drawn such psychological fear as well as collective memory of black through her characterization and justice to them. She has created haunting memories or re-memories which reoccur time and again. It creates cultural trauma among black people.

Morrison states clearly in *Rootedness* that “the best art should be unquestionably political and irrevocably beautiful at the same time” (345). In her book, Jill Matus reports that “Morrison claims being seen as other is a trauma; that is, racism is a trauma” (23). Matus regards Morrison’s novels as literary witnesses to the racial traumas African Americans have suffered not only slavery but also the ongoing racial inequalities and oppressions. She analyzes them as “a form of historical and cultural memory functioning both as the dream work of the traumatized and as bearers of witness to those dreams” (34).

Toni Morrison begins with the demolition of the place where there was once a neighborhood is a powerful proof that it historicizes and contextualizes trauma. Trauma is situated in a specific culture and place and understood through the cultural values and social relationships associated with that particular place.

Morrison weaves fragmented stories and differing conflicting voices of large cast of characters describing in the process births and deaths, wedding and funeral. She projects the formative trauma of slavery and also the pain of intro racial shaming and showing the intergenerational transmission of racial wound and the damaging impact of the color caste hierarchy on the collective black identity. When slavery was abolished then dominant white culture and their value adequacy will be destroyed reduced or under constant at severe challenge.

African American carries with them collective memories on only of white antagonist and abuse but also of the sound of hatred feeling. African impact of racist violence and racial contempt on the collective historical experience of black people, have been reflected in the Morrison fiction. Cornel West argues that:

Yet this fear is best sustained by convincing them that their bodies are ugly, their intellect is inherently underdeveloped, their culture is less civilized and their future warrants less concern than that of other people. Two hundred and forty four years of slavery and nearly a century of institutionalized terrorism in the form of segregation, lynching and second class citizenship in America were aimed at precisely this devaluation of black people. (122)

He is remarking on the pain of wounding, Bell Hooks discusses the association in the black imagination of whiteness terror. All black people have been undergoing undeclared racial war. This process although dependent on this information is not a one way transfer rather. It inevitable reflects the newly created self image and the functions used to sustain it back into the collective core.

However the inherited wealth of knowledge is not the only factor contributing self development, since individuals are originally members of a given community and are thus socialized according to the prevalent discourse of that group, in a similar fashion societies are embedded in a world system and thus have constantly negotiate their characters to reflect the broader historical frame. According to Stuart Hall the African diaspora displays three main centers of influence which are ever present in shaping and influencing the dominant discourse of identity. It is possible with this conception of different to rethink the positioning and re positioning of cultural identities in relation to at least presence borrow.

This distinction takes perfect sense as it accurately portrays the semiotic layers of either inherited knowledge enforced views or the influence of major cultural dominant

hubs that are facing each other in the inner worlds of black and American. The balance of influence of each of these three factors is portrayed.

Stuart Hall goes on to explain how the African presence is ever present in the artist expression off the diaspora as well as in the daily life of people however it is an imagined idealized Africa. Since most people in the diaspora never have had any direct contact within the continent the African elements of their identity having undergone tremendous metamorphosis and hybridization are an original product of the diaspora creativity.

American diaspora undoubtedly reached an all-time high in the persona and works and ideas of Markus Garvey, who was firmly convinced that the only possible way to overcome the cultural trauma inflicted by slavery and the contamination of the initial predominantly African collective memory was a massive exodus back to Africa. The Garveyist dream of pan-African unity was resurrected in the discourse of diaspora, the notion that all biological descendants of Africans, no matter how far removed in time and space, were part of common community. Opposing this line of thought was a generation of black scholars, emerging from the cultural hub of Harlem in New York, who presented their approach of mutual understanding which would lead on a steady path of social acceptance and social cohesion.

Therefore narratives has undoubtedly played a stronger role and had more influence on the shaping of the African-American identity. Two rather opposing patterns have been forwarding their influence and vision on the African-American collective; both of them positioning themselves ideologically and politically in line with certain elements of that semiotic whole known as cultural memory.

Traumatic character that underlies the core of this society, since they voluntarily tap into the history of slavery and the destructive, yet ironically, also formative effect it has had on culture identity. Additionally, they fuel the continuous representation and reinterpretation of those events. The problem that surfaces amid this constant reimagining, reliving and repositioning towards a fundamental element of one's history and identity lies with internal dissent among the methods used to integrate it into the collective memory.

Mostly events which generate cultural trauma for one party are also coupled with guilt generation in with the other parties, which can historically be proven historically in the context of slavery. Neither of these options which is beneficial for future understanding and doesn't provide a stable basis for improving, in this case race relations. On one side, the sins of the fathers will generate uncertainty and frustration when having to deal with African-Americans, while inside the diaspora there will constantly be a current of victimization and distrust towards the mainstream dominant culture.

Cultural trauma is indeed strong presence in the current build-up of the African-American collective memory. When black people integrate into white communities then it brought problem in black culture and society. They adopt only white culture and forget their own cultural identity. It leads them into identity-less people. They lost their wornness into white community. But later on it reminds them. therefore Eyerman claims; "Although with apparently less cultural baggage to hinder their acculturation, succeeding generations of American black have rediscovered their slave past and their blackness with increasing intensity"(110).

Morrison feels deeply the losses which Afro-Americans experienced in their migration from the rural South to the urban North from 1930 to 1950. They lost their sense of community, their connection to their past, and their culture. The oral tradition of storytelling and folktales was no longer a source of strength. Another source of strength, their music, which healed them, was taken over by the white community; consequently, it no longer belongs to them exclusively.

Therefore, the culturally productive centers like Harlem or the Black Colleges provided blacks the necessary haven to create their own values which would represent their beliefs, their political and cultural position a role which was largely fulfilled. This in turn led to a growth in awareness towards black history, culture and society which reflected back on the formerly mainly black communities with the effects of a magnifying glass.

To have roots is to have a shared history. The individual who does not belong to a community is generally lost. The individual who leaves and has internalized the village or community is much more likely to survive. Also, a whole community everyone is needed to raise a child; one parent or two parents are inadequate to the task. The lack of roots and the disconnection from the community and the past cause individuals to become alienated; often her characters struggle unsuccessfully to identify.

Chapter IV. Conclusion: Representation of Collective Identity in Morrison's Fiction

Toni Morrison's novels portray slavery and bitter experience of African-American people before civil war, which has been still dipped into black memory or their mind. Though this generation of black people haven't undergone as same experience as past generation had faced but the slavery or black suffering has been represented as black culture and black identity through Morrison's fictional work.

Morrison has weaved the relationship between her beliefs and their representation in the fictional world. The most dominant ideas of her novels is to create timelessness of her feeling in the novel. All black community, who have remained throughout world, they can feel painful case and make room within her appeal. By this understanding, Morrison has projected her characters almost in her fictional works.

Toni Morrison has developed all historical facts, emotional scenes and cultural difficulties through her novel. It demonstrates a larger-scale cultural effect of the slavery into Afro- American society. She has explored that bygone history of black people and she depicts that the overwhelming cultural trauma felt by Afro- Americans after civil war or black right movement.

Such terrible experience of Afro-American people, it still horrifies to afro- American people in American as well as other countries. So black people still seek their home and hesitate to live with white people. It is argued that black collective memory plays common origin of black people. All her novels present similar issues of black people and try to occupy black sentiment.

In the novel, *Beloved*, black victimized characters have gone under suffering as such sexual abuse, chain of slavery and inhuman white treatment. Morrison has viewed the literary text as an important site for the production of African- American culture and the extension of the African American cultural memory, which is driven by the desire to remember the horror and humiliation of slavery in *Beloved*. She attempts to recreate slavery through literary text because it wouldn't be remain in the memory of black people and they don't forget their Africa and origin of their culture. By such slave narrative, it represents black experience and even new generation realizes their difficulties. By portraying the characters like Sethe, She has attempted to expose a truth about the interior life of the historical figure and takes back to the dark history. As Morrison has able to show traumatic memories among black people and it creates a kind of painful experience.

Similarly, *The Bluest Eye* also brings similar black incurable wound and scratch at present situation. All the metaphors created by the writer are attempts by him to come to terms with his war experiences and to bring his difficult traumas into language, skillfully confessing and testifying to his listeners, the readers. His stories are personal and public sites of memory. They carry the past into the present and future.

All her novels highlight the physical and psychological suffering of people and that hit all the time into their memory. She has imagined such world and represented it as lifelike events. They can feel relax by out letting early suffering. These early events suggest the psychological operation of defense mechanism in order to displace other more painful memories that have been suppressed. New memories screen painful and older ones, which are traumatic and guilt-ridden memories.

They provide cultural information, they are a connection with the past, they protect, and they educate. The ancestors may be parents, grandparents, teachers, or elders in the community. Morrison believes that the presence of the ancestor is one of the relationships with ancestor.

She now has opportunity to redefine her identity on the basis of her cultural heritage and a new transformation from isolation into communal re-entry. Like the Sweet Home's tree and Paul's sapling, the symbol of wholeness, Sethe finds herself an identity. Morrison's shows the exploitation and devastation brought by the slavery on the African American people. It also reflects on how such devastation continues to oppress the slave people even after they gain their freedom and affects the individual identity of the people.

Morrison does blame racist who looks at black people like animals and torment their inner soul. But she also shows that there are some white people like Amy Denver who lend help to Sethe on her journey towards freedom. Thus racism helps to precede slavery and enslaved the body of inferior community. The phenomenon of slavery is responsible for immense changes in the life of African American people. It is indeed a traumatic experience for the people who were once slaves to Witness the ravaging forces of slavery. Upheavals brought by the conflict between the white and black rupture, destroy and strain the traditional structures in society.

The novels of Toni Morrison have penetrated deeply into the traumatic effects of slavery. *Beloved* respond to the traumatic effects generated by the clash between the two cultures. It deals with the plight of black people who have been exposed to western values. As the story unfolds, the reader is made aware of the conspicuous shape of the slavery. In the *Bluest Eye* Morrison reflects how Pecola quest for true women identity

which according to socially structure culture is being white with blue eye. Above that Morrison clearly mentions that even the black man sees white beauty as something to be admirable that's why Cholly Breedlove hates her daughter.

Being a black woman is like a crush during that time they are often exploited by white man as well as by black man. Hence, it is observed that Morrison probes the mind of the reader to examine the socio-economic, political and cultural problem during the time of slavery. Morrison has tried to convey that black race is the victims of oppression and injustices in the racist American society. During that time they have been tormented mentally as well as physically. Toni Morrison also portrays the black community with regards to blackism and the inner struggles of the individual as well as the class differences and social structures within the collectivity.

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