

## Chapter I: Introduction

### Morrison and Afro-American Tradition

The first African-American to win the Nobel Prize in literature, Toni Morrison is an important figure in literary debates concerning how and why one writes about a specific racial or cultural group. By the middle of the twentieth century, civil rights demonstrations and discussions about racial injustice began to shape literary and academic debates. Writers began to feel that marginalized groups, whether women, blacks, or Hispanics, were not finding their voice in an artistic world erected and maintained by white males. As a key player in the creation of a black literary aesthetic, Morrison has sought, over the course of her literary career, to create an alternative to dominant assumptions about how we read and write about people. As a member of an oppressed social group and as a woman, Morrison is interested in what it means to be subordinated and made invisible. Her writing is embraced by feminist critics who regard her prose style as distinctively female and who see her work as a continuation of Virginia Woolf's stream-of-consciousness narration.

Morrison was born in the small steel-mill town of Lorain, Ohio on February eighteen, 1931. The second of four children, Morrison was christened "Chloe Anthony Wofford" but changed her name to "Toni" when she was an undergraduate at university. Her home state of Ohio reflects Morrison's own interest in the hybrid African-American experience as it combines the northern industrial feel of its big cities with a southern atmosphere and rural history. Morrison's family history also mirrors her interest in that her grandparents had migrated to Ohio from the Deep South. Through them, Morrison is familiar with southern black lore.

Morrison is recognized as the most distinguished African- American novelist since Richard Wrights, Ralph Ellison and James Baldwin. As an author, she continued

to broaden the perspective of American literature by the stories; she felt were never told, stories about African- American girls, women and racial and social pressures the black people faced. She writes about the people with the sensibility of culture she grew up in. Morrison wants her work to focus on the joys and sorrows of their lives. She had been hailed by experts praising her ability to re- imagine the lost history of her people. Many of them, emotions and motivational elements in her works apply to all people, she works to insert and dispel many of the stereotypes present in writings by and about black people. Morrison herself claims that one of her motivations for writing as a black women writer is to allow her fellow black women to repossess and rename. With the unique use of language and through which she evoke signs of racial superiority, cultural hegemony and peripheral existence of people in the dominant conception of Americans which historically has posited itself as a transparent norms.

The racial discrimination is one of the characteristics in the history of Afro- American. Morrison, therefore, cannot remain deaf and dumb about dealing with racial issue taking race as a metaphor a means of referring to the forces, events and forms of degradation, economic prejudices and human panic. The nucleus features of American literature are individualism, masculinity the insistence upon innocence coupled to an obsession with figuration of the death and hell. Almost everywhere one can find the reference of identity in American literature. At the same time, Anglo- American mainstream narrative has misrepresented, ignored and failed to acknowledge the contribution of the Afro- Americans to the making of American life and art. Morrison attempts to do away with this stereotypical consideration.

The tendency to compare Morrison with James Joyce and William Faulkner on certain linguistic and narrative premises is more often nevertheless; distinction tests on one vital aspect of her work i.e. an exhaustive mythical exploration of place.

Morrison's another feature is to search for the nexus of the past and present. By fusing history and art, past and present, Morrison, "assets, interrogates and critiques the social, political and cultural aspects of the African Americans" (Michelle 49).

Morrison's role in evolving the American literature and by means of (this) bringing forth the often ignored Afro- Americans' literary tradition is the result of her high ambition, artistic sophistication, strong mythical powers and epic sweep. In Thomas Le Clair words, she draws on:

Oral narrative Afro- Americans folk- tales, Bible songs, Sermons, music and ghost stories delays distinctive, effortless, suggestive and provocative language—the language which black people love to play with. She even treats old ideas and situation with the languages the readers can speak and hear. (373)

The theme in Morrison's novel springs out complex ones desiring highly mental exercise. She introduces the characters who, in Barbara Rigey's words, "are both subject of and subject to, history events in real time, the succession of antagonistic movement that includes slavery, reconstruction, depression, war" (qtd in Peach 2). Her major protagonist:

. . . resort to bizarre types of crisis, resolution including murder, incestuous rape, bestiality and self mutilation, often within the context of parents- child relationship. Cholly Breedlove rapes his eleven years old daughter in *The Bluest Eye*; Era Peace burns her adult daughter in *Sula*; in *Beloved* Sethe murders her infant daughter Dorcas dies from Trace's bullet in *Jazz* ( Burton 170)

Emptying out the world sometimes gently, often with force and terror, these characters have amazing and terrible pasts- they must find them out, or be hunted by

them. Furthermore, these characters are eccentric and racial myths. She always denies stating any truth in her novels. For her, there are no final truth or complete man and woman. In spite of her creating disintegrated people to challenge traditional western identity and wholeness, her characters persevere in their effort to cope with or get victory over blockades in their way to self esteem, freedom and completeness.

Different locations of Southern America provide a proper setting for Morrison's fiction. The Southern landscape is related to psyche of and an ancestral refugee or the homeless blacks. For blacks it is both past and future. When the blacks migrated from South, it remained in their memory as Morrison contends in interview with Carolyn Denard, everybody's pasts "and the good old days and ma and pa grand ma and so on" (15). Her character submerges into deep memory for but do not bother to go back to South.

Morrison's fiction always has been concerned with the deconstruction of structures of reference within which the African Americans identity has been, and is constructed. Cultural hybridism is pertinent for Morrison's writing and to 20th century America as well. Each of Morrison's novels is "anchored in an everlasting social complexity and embraces new cultural and ethnic pluralism" (Burton 172). This assertion of plurality is symbolically manifested in the setting of *Jazz* in the city; a place full of cultural complexity and ever changing possibilities. Her novel can be seen as the root of collective and obsessive desire to find a complete identity. These fragmented identities are themselves the outcome of the racial, gender and geographical differences rather than absolute binaries.

To show up coming days, and to indicate that the future generation will be in safe hands, Morrison finally presents the ability of her characters negotiation with the environment where they had been. Therefore it is her special privilege to depict

southern ethics and manners because blacks are so familiar with South that they know each and every particles of it. As Carolyn M. Jones asserts:

Black Americans shaped the landscape of the American South. The houses that were built, the human beings that were nurtured in them, the forest that were cleared and the crops that were planted and harvested were all tended by blacks hands and formed by African cultural practices, technologies and sensibilities The landscape of the South in the beginning so alias to African slaves . . . (was) neither legally nor economically their own, but spiritually their own, through their own labor and under most difficult circumstances. (42)

History has a lot to do with her craft and mastery of writing about the buried and neglected history of black people. She examines the pain, wound and cries of slavery time and again. The devastating psychological, cultural, economical and racial effects of the periods on black people are the subject matter of study of her. The history that Morrison represents does not appear merely as something to be read nor does it appear to be a reference to the past events. On the contrary history for her is a great force which comes "From the fact we carry it with on many ways" (qtd. in Baldwin 275). This incapability, inevitability and all controlling force of history is the main point in Morrison's *Jazz*.

### **Major Themes of Morrison's *Jazz***

The novel borrows its title from Jazz music and the idea of music is discussed throughout the novel. Alice Manfred and the Miller sisters interpret Jazz music as the anthem of hell. The passion and pleasure that Dorcas and Violet find in the music is contrasted with the musical treatment of Joe's crime. When he shoots Dorcas, it is at a party where loud music is played to incite passion, "boil" the blood and "encourage"

misbehavior. For the entire novel, music is the weapon that the city weilds to control its citizens. The seasons and weather are determined by the presence of clarinet players in the street. Music also bears the sadness that can be juxtaposed to Violet's ribaldry and Joe's flared passion. Wild's disappearance takes place as her body is replaced with a trace of music and this sound haunts Joe's memory for the rest of his life. Similarly, the "blues man" who walks the streets becomes the "black-and blues man" and finally, the "black- therefore- I'm blues man", providing a critique of racism. The "blues" songs that the characters evoke are largely the consequences of suffering brought about by America's racist traditions.

Another theme is to give voice to the voiceless by stretching imagination of the characters by making them remembering their past and their lost history guiding their future. Conflict between the characters regarding their youth vs. age is also another theme Morrison wants to show. Memory, pain, history, sexuality, the fall in Eden, seduction, orphan hood, piety, social pretension, purgatory and improvisation are other sub themes we can see in *Jazz*.

The desires for absolute physical racial separateness concomitantly involve a fear pollution of one racial group by another. For these reasons, the mixed race figure has historically been in a trap of cultural anxiety within both black and white American discourses on cultural identity. Morrison signifies on the objection generated by miscegenation, intermarriage between races, in order to reformulate the mixed race figure in order to:

reconfigures the myth of origins associated with the mixed race figure .  
 . . deconstruct and reconfigures the identity politics of the . . .  
 miscengenated figure . . . reconfigures our attitudes (as member and  
 reader of social communities) towards the mixed race- figure , in order

to bring this occluded and problematic figure back into the corpus of black American. (Burton 173- 74)

*Jazz* provides a generational examination of three Southern black women whose lives are shaped and complicated by their racialized and genderized historical circumstances in the South. Morrison presents them as three significant movements of American history: American Slavery, Reconstruction and the Great Migration. Thus, in Eusebio Rodrigues' words Morrison's characters are "set against the bleak condition in the south at the time of segregation, the exploration is about movement from liberation to conservation"(175). Morrison inscribes her three characters-True Belle, Rose Dear and Violet and Joe Trace- three respective movements, American slavery, Reconstruction and Great Migration, by revealing how their particularized histories/stories inform their lives. As an artist writes history, Morrison has to travel the road not traveled before so as to bring out facts in an artistically imaginative way to the front. Morrison's understanding of history is a materialistic one. The Black slaves like the European workers suffered from the shocks of the capitalist system of production, although in a more direct and profound way. Just as True Belle lost her ability to connect with her own experience, the shocks of slavery "were everyday reminders to slaves that the masters possessed their very minds and memories . . . had indeed erased if not destroyed their histories . . . even as they owned their bodies" (Harris 330).

In recent years many African -American women novelists have written historical novels that the master narratives of history have not always truthfully represented the African- American experience. Margaret Walker, Octavia Butler, Sheryl Anne Williams all revisit the black woman's story during slavery and by so doing they examined the veiled, cloaked and sometimes misrepresented interior lives

of nineteenth century black people in bondage. The effects of upward social and economic mobility on African Americans during 1960s and 70s are interrogated by Pauline Marshall and Naylor's works, while both Alice Walker and Toni Cade Bambara examine the aftermath of 1960s. Historical fiction by black women writer as Justine Talley explains -may function as "Literature as recording history; literature as recovering history; literature as writing/righting history; and literature as shaping history" (Michelle 358). These historical concerns urge the imperatives to see how black women writers like Morrison employ literature to record, recover, write and shape history.

The domains between fiction and history, in which fiction is conceived as the representation of the imaginable and history as the representation of the actual, "must give place to the recognition that we can know the actual by contrasting it with or likening it to the imaginable" (White 99).

Accordingly, Morrison who engages history in her representation augment the actual history as written through the representation of the imaginable-history as imagined. In theorizing the historical novel, Geroge Lukacs posits that historical novel reflects and critiques the historical and material conditions of society. For Lukacs "Literature cannot just reflect what has been reached the end-result without at the sometime giving expression to (its) complicated path" (272).

In *Jazz* Morrison is offering a discursive engagement with history, therefore culture in order to contest the 'exclusion' or denigrate or misrepresentation of Afro-American experience and literary tradition within the historical discourse of the mainstream culture of whites who tended to assume Africans as "a kind of *tabula rasa* upon which the white man could write what he chose" (Levine 52). By naming her novel *Jazz* after jazz music, Morrison intends to show that African- American



literature in American life is no longer at the periphery.

To justify this very idea a cultural-historical study of the text is viable and indispensable as well. To recover the meaning of texts and to churn out any sense from them one needs to reconstruct the situation in which they emerged from. An exploration of a particular culture and a careful reading of a work of literature within which it is produced become necessary for the understanding of text and culture represented in it. Therefore, the focus of this paper will be on how a particular text *Jazz* voices the problems, challenges and experiences of the black people in United States; how a particular piece of literature *Jazz* traces the series of conflicts and confrontations:

Dispersion and rootedness, dislocation and relocation, trauma and triumph, silence and sounding, rapture and continuity, independence and interdependence, south and north, village values and urban attitudes. (Ryan and Mejoza 137)

*Jazz* is a major achievement in Morrison's attempt to give voice to voiceless Afro-American people through the literary tradition in America. *Jazz*, through its chords' voice of resistance empowering itself against the invisible yet all pervasive power of a dominant culture and time-honored oppressions. Further, the black artists do not make a remarkable distinction between the use of a human voice and the playing of a musical instrument. Thus, the human voice and instruments "speak" the same language & express the same feelings. In Morrison it is plausible to listen to the voice of the author as that of a rebel, voice of a revolutionary-rebelling against of white Puritan values: (patriarchy, thrift, temperance, piety and industry-as opposed to the constraints of the cultural ideology and approving the dynamicity or change a culture is prone to undergo) as well.

The study of *Jazz* will depend on cultural one, where culture is defined as a set

of beliefs, customs and traditions. Walter Lip Mann's view on culture is remarkable in this regard:

Culture is the name for what people are interested in their thoughts, their models, the books they read and the speeches they hear, their table talk, gossip, controversies, historical sense and scientific training, the values they appreciate the quality of they admire. All communities have a culture. It is the climate of their civilization. (qtd. in Kammen XVII)

It is a kind of resource which in *Jazz* is music which the African- American played and lived with. In another sense, it means a set of historically available alternatives of forms. History is decisive in constructing and changing cultural consciousness of people, so the emphasis will remain on holding culture as a dynamic, complex process in which the Afro Americans in particular use arrangements of status, power and identity. The study will rest on two significant aspects: the form and theme of text in relation to the music and musical legacy of the Afro-American literature.

## Chapter II: Racism and its Impact on Black Tradition

### Racism

Racism is the mistreatment of a group of people based on race, colour, and religion; a blind and pointless hatred, envy, or prejudice obviously expressed in the form of graffiti; intimidation or abuse, discrimination on offering jobs. Racial discrimination is often based on the discrimination of colour where the word 'discrimination' denotes the denial of equality based on personal characteristics such as race and color. Discrimination is based on prejudice and stereotype where the stereotype refers to forming an instant fixed idea of a group, usually based on false or incomplete information, and prejudice refers to prejudice based on ideas that are formed without any knowledge about others. Gretchen Gerzina defines racism as:

. . . an active or passive response to the specious belief that genetically transmitted traits are linked to social characteristics. . . . Racism at individual level involves a misguided personal belief that an entire racial group is deficient or superior because of a set of moral, intellectual, or a cultural trait that are thought to be indicated by the group's biological origins. (126)

Racism is the product of racial prejudice, and it works with 'biological and sociological definitions. Queen and Gruener define, "From the biological standpoint, a race is a large body of people, relatively homogenous as to inheritable, non-adaptive features . . . .There are various criteria of race-head, hair, skin color , stature blood group, and so on" (21).

Around the centuries, the basic concept of racism is dominated by the 'genetic determinism' or 'biological determinism', the theory that evinces the behavior of people and especially general behavioral characteristics of races. Racism, largely controlled by heritage, attributes the differences between the races to innate traits rather than social factors. This contemporary form of racism links itself to discourses

such as patriotism, nationalism, xenophobia, gender differences, etc.

This is an attempt to produce old racist wine in a somewhat new scientific bottle, although with certain novel twists: "the barbaric determinism to swastika type. But the use of new jargon has not diminished the gap between the meanings used in the past centuries to the present century. Still each 'historical circumstances' is shaping a distinct form of racism, "Racist ideologies and practice have distinct meanings bounded by historical circumstances and determined in struggle" (Gilroy 248).

Racism is founded on the belief in one's racial superiority over other. It encompasses the beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, and practices that define people on racial classifications. It involves a generalized lack of knowledge or experience as it applies to negative beliefs and attitudes. It uses the inflexible assumptions that differences are biologically determined and ' therefore inherently unchangeable. It doesn't take place in a vacuum, but rather is enacted and reinforced through social, cultural, and institutional practices that endorse the hierarchical power of one group over another.

Racism always emerges from race, a concept confused with ethnicity and culture. Race, in particular, is the classification of human beings into distinguishable groups that are based on innate and immutable physical characteristics, e.g. skin colour, hair texture, eye shape, etc. Ethnicity is a classification of individuals who share the common ancestry comprised of customs and traditions that are passed or between generations, e.g. religion, dress, and nationality; whereas culture on the other hand is a broader category that extends beyond race and ethnicity to include any group of people who share common lifestyles, which are passed on to members of the particular group, e.g. socio-economic status, sexual orientation, geographic location.

A child is not born a racist, but rather racism is a learned social phenomenon, via family, education, religion, the law, and the media. It is difficult to grow up in a society without adopting the world-views and biases of the society. He becomes a

`made' racist and subsequently perpetuate in the same society. It is based on the tendency toward adhering to and preferring the values and personal beliefs of one's own group; tendency towards associating with individuals or groups that have similar values and beliefs and therefore limiting the access of inter group contact and experience from which to draw; tendency toward categorizing information and using generalized assumptions, which often lead to stereotypes and negative biases; and judging the values and standards of minority group cultures by the values and standards of the majority group culture and labeling the former inferior.

The concept of `Negro race' as inferior and European civilizations as superior is based on the belief that `Negroes' lack certain qualities, such as lack of good social organization and social actions, lack of fellow-feeling, lack of originality of thought, and lack of artistic qualities especially `deficient on the side of mechanical arts', and in general, showing no tendency toward higher development'. These characteristics are made the basis for justifying slavery and slave trade. Paul S. Reinch in his *The Negro Race and European Civilization* justifies for blacks' "low social organization, and consequent lack of efficient social action, form the most striking characteristics of the Negro race" (3). Paul S. Reinch believes that the extant of the black race is the result of `race mixing' i.e. black race coming into contact with white race. "The mixed races produced by Europeans and Negroes exhibit some very fine qualities" (1). He believes that ". . . the twentieth century world will witness the formation of new mixed races and the attempt to adjust the mutual relations of all the various people that inhabit the globe" (2).

Racism is the belief of distinguishing human characteristics, often dealt with prejudice, that one group of human beings is inherently superior to another group of human beings. It is the matter of discussion that `Racism' springs from the term `race', but the use of race for the biological, psychological, sociological, and economic differences among the human characteristics are taken into considerations that these

qualities of one group make it either inferior or superior to each other. European supremacy over the globe for the last few centuries has given conducive milieu to purport that 'the white-skinned' beings are superior to the 'the black-skinned' or 'the brown-skinned' individuals. These facets of definitions are brought into practices that Negroes are inherently to set up a system of social, economic, and political benefits for whites at the expense of blacks. So the twentieth century racism faces the use of science to justify the whites' superiority to blacks. The interracial prejudice takes its form from physical slavery of 1860s to a more modified form of slavery.

The physical slavery with the use of forces helps develop psychological domination upon blacks' mentality. Science is there to support the existing superiority for its functions at the level of 'mind' and 'soul'. George W. Ellis writes about the psychological implications for justifying racism, ". . . we accept psychology as the science of the phenomena and functions of the mind and soul. Race is used as the mere convenience to designate the different branches of the human family" (11).

The psychology of race prejudice then involves the erroneous mental attitudes which one race entertains for or against another, formed in advance without its foundation on either reason or fact. Racial domination has permeated the society with the position of superiority and inferiority. This domination has created a state of double consciousness in the mind of Negroes. W.E.B. Du Bois writes movingly of the resulting sense of duality for black people:

Why did God make me an outcast and a stranger in mine own house?...  
the Negro of a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with  
second-sight in this American world, a world which yields him no true  
self-consciousness but only lets him see himself through the revelation  
of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness,  
this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of  
measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused

contempt and pity. (5)

This problem of 'colour line' as Du Bois writes is not only the main problem of the twentieth century but this twenty first century is also facing the same problem.

The emergence of 'new-racism' has been possible due to a few recent political and social transformations- liberal hegemony, postmodern multiculturalism- forming their background. New-racism could be defined as racism without race: a racism whose dominant theme is not biological heredity but the insurmountability of cultural differences, a racism which, at first sight, does not postulate the superiority of certain groups or peoples in relation to others but 'only' the harmfulness of abolishing frontiers, the incompatibility of life-styles and traditions..

The concept of coloured race prejudice has worked with the production of natural inferiority of black to white, physically, intellectually, religiously, socially, and morally. So, the whites take the advantages of superiority economically, politically, and socially. For the whites, the justification works as the relation with human and less human. The Negro is less human because he has " an oval skull, flat forehead, snout-like jaws, swollen lips, broad, flat nose, short crimped hair, calfless legs, highly elongated heels, and flat feet" ( Ellis 13). But still many views spring regarding the single human race that nature has endowed us. All the human beings have the same cephalic angle, texture of hair, shape of the head, color of the skin, size and shape, and size and height of brain, which have nothing to do with the capacity of the mind or the moral quality of the soul. A Negro is no more naturally inferior for he is the product of the complex and subtle forces of his milieu.

There is no question that the world is replete with distinct races. They have different physical characteristics, ancestry, and destiny. From the sociological point of view, if a race defines its distinct form and builds up its mythology of racial separateness, superiority, and destiny, like the 'Aryan' mythology in Germany, then the concept of superiority and inferiority evolves and that is how the white is the

victim of biasedness.

Neither the ancient civilization nor the middle world civilization (before the fifteenth or sixteenth century) regarded and recognized human individuals in the name of race. For example, Greco-Roman people and Germanic barbarians never thought about the racial difference; they fought for mere bravery and regime. They distinguished themselves from 'others' in terms of appearance, customs, and language or theo-centricism, but not in the form of skin color. In the earliest human writing:

We can find more or less well-articulated views about the differences between "our own kind" and the people of other cultures. These doctrines, like modern theories of race, have often placed a central emphasis on physical appearance in defining the "Other," and on common ancestry in explaining why groups of people display differences in their attitudes and aptitudes. (Appiah 274)

The rise of national status towards the end of medieval era and the beginning of the modern era provided conducive environment for the germination of racism. To say even in more cow terms the discovery of America by the European whites was the central determining factor of human differences in the name of skin colour, and the rest of the myths are made on the basis of the same criteria. In the Victorian era many racialists believed that:

We could divide human beings into a small number of groups, called "races", in such a way that all the members of these races shared certain fundamental, biologically heritable, moral and intellectual characteristics with each other that they did not share with members of any other race. (Appiah 276)

Christian theology based on Bible clearly states that God created the world and first mortal human Adam and Eve. Christianity also believes that the human generations of the present world are the descendants of the original mortals. The



European or the American white racists have no answer to the very simple question, if Jesus be white, then how come he makes his own people have black and white skinned individuals? Does he intend to, deliberately, discriminate his own children? The question makes them speechless. But they are not there! Since the theology could not work science was waiting for them to make another justification that the blacks are still inferior to the whites.

### **Racism and its Relation to Trauma and Science**

Racism is the belief that race is the primary factor of human traits and capacities, and racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race. Scientific racism refers to the belief that the human species can be categorized into the inferior and superior groups on the basis of psychological data so that social policies can be implemented to promote the breeding of the superior groups and discourage the breeding of the inferior groups.

The middle nineteenth century racial investigation was concerned with establishing the issue of racism as the belief that racial difference was not merely based on the difference of the color of blacks and whites, but it was deemed scientifically valid issue and could be proved with biological and scientific means. The concept of race was defined on the certain criteria that were given scientific slogans. Stephen Jay Gould writes, "The language, concepts, methods and authority of science were used to support the belief that certain human groups were intrinsically inferior to others as measured by some socially defined criterion, such as intelligence or civilized behavior" (39).

Though Natural Science started its investigation on racism by the middle of the nineteenth century, 'science of racism' has come into existence only after the Second World War. The use of race in natural science radically changed the existing racial themes. Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species* gives the landmark development in the field of natural science, which supposes that the existence of

species is possible because of the inter-breeding to fit in the changing environment. Darwinian evolution theory and Mendelian science of heredity challenges the existing belief that physically, anthropologically the black-skinned individuals are inferior to the white-skinned individuals. 'Survival of the fittest' propounded by the English philosopher Herbert Spencer suggests that the weakest, the most useless members of society should be allowed to die. And later in 1883, English anthropologist Francis Galton; cousin of Charles Darwin, coined 'Eugenics', Greek word for 'to be well born'. Galton characterizes eugenics as a civic religion based on science. The theological expression of eugenics is called Beyondism, a term coined by Raymond B. Cattell, professor emeritus at the University of Illinois. Based on evolutionary theory, Beyondism teaches that the brightest and wealthiest should inherit the earth; anything less leads to the survival of the unfit and the demise of civilization.

Between First and Second World Wars, traumatic racism emerged as a major political and scientific concern. Elazar Barkan in *The Retreat of Scientific Racism: Changing Concepts of Race in Britain and the United States* studies about the development of racism in Science. The scientists started moderating from earlier racial typologies to the scientific knowledge for the egalitarian approach, and to resolve "the heredity versus environment debate" (327).

The rise of Nazism in 1930s and its consequent 'Aryan science' gave impetus to Nazi scientific racism; but scientists dismissed the so-called Nazi scientific racism. The scientists who approached racism couldn't analyze it objectively, but within the political, social, and intellectual affinities, racism was faced indirectly; the efforts to counter racism through institutionalized scientific channels were frustrated and anti-racist publications by individual became popular. The fear of Nazi led most scientists, who were hesitant to join the political frontier in the intellectual battle, to discredit racism. Only towards the end of the decade the scientific community declared its grudge against racism. To fight racism was almost equal to the subject to fight

Nazism. England failed to reach a consensus to condemn racism, and America never reached to formulate an official position. But the beginning impatience of Nazi in the beginning of 1940s materialized the campaigns for a number of anti-racist declarations. In America a group of distinguished geneticists at the International Congress of Genetics in Edinburgh, also known as the Geneticists Manifesto', and many other institutions asserted the principle of opposing Nazi racial theories; but the definition of racism in egalitarian cultural terms came in 1950 when UNESCO initiated its first statement on race in 1950. The campaign against anti-Semitism and racism was begun in the initiative of Franz Boas by May 1933. In the same year, Boas tried to get the council of the National Academy of scientists to pass a resolution against "the tendency to control scientific work from non-scientific viewpoints that are particularly among the nations of Europe" (328). Boas's effort to undertake a systematic effort to counteract the vicious pseudo-scientific activity of so-called scientists who try to prove the close relation between racial descent and mental character, was aimed at providing data to attack the racial craze by undermining its alleged scientific basis and creating opportunities to combat racist fallacies in an educational campaign.

In Britain, her intellectual minds, though later than Americans, established a committee to study the racial factor in cultural development only in 1934. But its work began only after two years to deliberate on the question of "a simple definition of race to serve as a guide to the general public in the discussions of the problems of to-day" (Barkan 330), and later conceded that these definitions were far from being generalizations from concrete realities and empirical; these were no more than logical concepts, postulated for the recognition that "racial disharmony have emerged from the sphere of intellectual inquiry and have been made the practical basis of discrimination"(Barkan 330). The visibility of the racial question turned anthropology into a popular topic and coupled a belief in objectivity and rationality.

Anthropologists and biologists were presumed objective in their scientific analysis of the questions of race; and racial prejudice was the source of scientific justification and scientists were trapped by the same blindness as the public at large. There were attacks in the 'The Aryan Doctrine' and Americans (Franz Boas and others) for resorting to the easier alternative egalitarianism as the "voice of the facile theorist . . . while the scientific investigator of the race, who refrains from dogmatism pending fuller inquiry, is still crying in the wilderness" (Boas 331). The committee's publication Nature's editorial emphasized the widespread ignorance among the public concerning the race issue and particularly blamed the divided anthropologists for being unable to communicate a clear message to the public. It studied the Aryan theories and Nordic, and the editorial concluded:

Such dogmatic assumptions, unfortunately, have their attraction for the political doctrine and the agitator; and it is perhaps to be regarded, therefore, that the International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological sciences did not see its aim to promote investigation into such racial problems on broad lines. The machinery may seem overweighty, but at least the truth would have been made available in authoritative form to all. (Boas 331)

On the other hand, there were Anti-racist scientists who opposed political racism, classified themselves as such and objected to the use of scientific theories to justify racial discrimination.

The evolutionary theorists also made an identical conclusion of the scientists about black inferiority that the blacks were the evolutionary predecessors of whites and that 'Negroid Stocks', having evolved long before whites, are both physically and mentally closer to its anthropoid ancestors. So, blacks were intellectually inferior to whites because they had evolved earlier. And another theorist said that blacks were intellectually inferior because they had evolved later for they have crossed the

evolutionary threshold into Homo sapiens long after other races and thus had had less time to develop. These absurd arguments were made by the so-called superior whites and enacted for them. Thus what can be inferred is the scientists and their scientific experimentations are not to discover anything new or to disprove anything but only to consolidate the existing belief that blacks are innately inferior to whites.

The racism defined in the name of religion also proved that Jesus Christ is white in color and only the whites are rightful heir to place themselves in the upper ladder of social strata. This theological racism interpreted from Biblical reference took a different dimension in the fifteenth and sixteenth century. In colonial era whites thought the impossibility of converting blacks into Christianity and postulated a new racism which can be called colonial racism. At this stage racism of belief transformed into racism of color. In the context of science, the discovery of modern science and many laboratorial experiences were carried out, but still racism was more theological than scientific. The argument of racism had not only confined to academic journals and scientific conferences but also had become a topic of debate in barrooms and cocktail parties; with scientific slogans, it received unprecedented coverage on the popular press. Despite the length and intensity of the debate, William H. Tucker writes "there has been no significant advance in scientific knowledge" (382).

Though waged with scientific experimentations, racism, in the twentieth century, has become more political. The extension of colonial racism to political racism is either used to keep up the political status or political authority, for the genetic differences between blacks and whites is replete with scientific propaganda, Tucker writes:

The question of genetic differences between races has arisen not out of purely scientific curiosity or the desire to find some important scientific truth or to solve some significant scientific problem but only because of the belief, explicit or unstated that the answer has political

consequences. (382)

Hitler's demarcation of the 'pure race' for Nazi is not merely the modern form of inequality though not biblically based on color distinction. Aristotle, a classical biologist, and his observation made it clear that "there are species in which the distinction is already marked, immediately at birth, between those of its members who are intended for being ruled and those who are intended to rule (383)". This Aristotelian inequality among human generations is no different than the famous English scientist Sir Francis Galton, though he observed the same even twenty two hundred years later: "it is thus clear that, just as some are by nature free, so others are by nature slaves, and for these latter the condition of slavery is both just and beneficial" (383).

So, this political exploitation of scientific results is a misuse of science; these are the efforts to prove the innate intellectual inferiority of some groups (blacks) which has led only to oppressive and antisocial proposals. Tucker writes "The judicious use of our scientific resources would seem inconsistent with the pursuit of a goal that is probably scientifically chimerical and certainly leads itself to socially pernicious ends" (384).

The revival of eugenics in America had more to do with ideology and money than with science. The scientist also believed that genetics could be used to prove the inferiority of blacks and the superiority of the white with Anglo-Saxon stock. The 'Pioneer Fund' was working in America to support the Eugenics Movement; and its original charter outlined a commitment to work for 'racial betterment' through studies in heredity and eugenics and to improve the character of the American people by encouraging the procreation of descendants of the original white colonial stock. This was another example to prove the same existing belief of black inferiority. It was no better than the Hitler's Nazi ideology of race. The similarities between Nazi ideology of pure race and White ideology of white superior race were the results propounded in

the support of scientific authority. The Pioneer Fund supported the December 11, 1977 *New York Times*' article, and characterized as having "supported highly controversial research by a dozen of scientists who believe that blacks are generally less intelligent than whites" (5). Pioneer Fund also contributed to the theory of Thomas Bouchard Jr., a psychologist at the University of Minnesota, and his conclusions that shyness, political conservatism, dedication to hard work, orderliness, intimacy, extroversion, conformity, and a host of other social traits are largely heritable; but the problem is that his scientific data and methods of analysis upon which his conclusions are based have never been released for objective scrutiny.

The people hate 'other' because of the color of their skin, and think that intelligence is determined by race. Some of the people are scientists. The scientists carried out IQ test and other examinations to prove the inferiority of non-white races. Scientists obtained ideas on race from society; they then proved these ideas using pseudo-scientific facts; the scientists then presented their proofs to society, thus reinforcing the racist beliefs of that society.

The relation between whites and blacks has always been a matter of great concern for understanding human nature. European colonial expansion in America, Asia, and Africa has put forward some important factors in determining the power relation among the individuals residing in these continents. The relation between Caucasian and Blacks can be deemed more aggressive than the relation between Caucasians and the Orientals. In the earlier phase of colonialism, whites used coercive force for enacting the white superiority. Then in the second phase, they used science as the tool to prove the same. And the next phase they became more advanced in maintaining the sense of inferiority in the blacks and the sense of superiority in the whites. This phase is the phase of hegemony. In this phase, whites selected a group of blacks with the principle that blacks are born to serve whites, and to be like whites, and to reach God -who were less black generally because only whites were thought to

be closer to God. This division of light-skinned blacks and dark-skinned blacks had the greatest achievement in enslaving and colonizing the Africans. But what blacks could not understand is that within this 'White Man's Burden', the motive of whites was to maintain the existing power relation but in a more subtle way, and convinced with this 'Burden', blacks started competing within themselves, fighting within themselves, and judging within themselves thus following the same track of whites. This sense of mimicry is what Toni Morrison intends to depict in her novel. In *The Bluest Eye*, she writes:

They think they have outfoxed the Whiteman when in fact they imitate him. They think they are protecting their wives and children, when in fact they are maiming them. And when the maimed children ask for help, they look elsewhere for the cause. Born out of an old hatred, one that began when one kind of black man scorned another kind and that kind took the hatred to another level, their selfishness had trashed two hundred years of suffering and triumph in a moment of such pomposity and error and callousness it froze the mind. (306)

A colonized man's behavior, his attitude, and his belief are almost in opposition when he behaves with a Negro and with a white man. Black individual's "this self division is a direct result of colonialist - subjugation" (Fanon "On National Culture" 17) because this black individual comes with the confrontation of white minds' theories, which suppose that Negro is still in the process of evolution from monkey to man. He supposes that the language, he speaks, is incomplete and only white's language is capable to disseminate the complete human understanding.

According to Frantz Fanon language is not merely syntactical or morphological cohesion, it above all assumes cultural representation and civilization identity. A man who speaks a language not only disseminates what he means but also carries a world through his expression or implication; the mastery over any language



has to do with its immense power" (17-18).

A Negro who faces the problem of language- the language he should follow and the language he chooses- is at a state where his expression and implication both become confused because he suffers from 'an inferiority complex'. Frantz Fanon in his "On National Culture", writes:

Every colonized people - in other words, every people in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of its local cultural originality - finds itself face to face with the language of the civilizing nation; that is with the culture of the mother country. A colonized mind is in fear. So that he is even ready to renounce his own cultural standard. He becomes whiter as he renounces his blackness, his jungle. (18)

If a black man uses good English or French, the people of the same race commend him. One black praises the other because "He talks like a white man" (21). Fanon writes, "Furtively observing the slightest reactions of others, listening to his own speech, suspicious of his own tongue -a wretchedly lazy organ- he will lock himself into his room and read aloud for hours- desperately determined to learn diction" (21).

The loss of the originality and attempts to speak the so-called superior language (English, French, etc) is evidence of a 'dislocation'. The more Negro is educated, the more he suffers from the intensified inferiority complex and tries to struggle with it unceasingly.

The Negro adopts the language, which is peculiar to him for he tries to prove himself a more 'civilized' because he is in contact with the white man. He reaches to a position of a split personality: he has American and European on one side and African on the other. The American or European despises African, this split Negro-race, but the black roasts as his unchallenged master. Negroes think that the Europeans are

their civilisational Guru. His breathlessness is not merely physiological and psychological. His black mentality is not black problem, but the whites have permeated into the black mouths to chant their praises, to keep on their supremacy. This 'black cry' is beyond the black's problem.

The Negro develops a feeling of worthlessness in his life because of the lack created by the passivity, imprisonment, the negative- aggressive feeling etc. and cannot stand up to the world.

Colonization has always assigned a black man with the name of a savage or "the Negro". The recent African history is full of African culture to "racialize their claims and to speak more of African culture than of national culture" (Guex 220) is leading them up to a blind alley with the need to exist side by side with the European culture which tries to incorporate African culture in the "cultural matrix" in the name of universal cultural society-the nature of New-colonialism looms over their attitude. The colonialists' demarcation of Africans having no culture, being barbarous, and in the post-colonial era, these Africans who are attempting to prove their cultural manifestations is extremely another example of racial culture for which Fannon connotes to develop a 'national culture'. So blacks' effort for salvation and their attempt to escape from "supremacy of white man's culture the native feels the need to turn backward toward his unknown roots and to lose himself at whatever cost in his own barbarous people. Because he feels he is becoming estranged" (Guex 221). And his past doesn't give him any information and he confronts serious psycho-affective injuries and this finally results him into the individual without an anchor, without a horizon, stateless, and rootless.

If a Negro tries to go to his fellowmen to adopt the original culture or to be an invisible is to be a good nigger, he finds himself lost and tries to be a sort of nigger that the whites want him to be. He not only starts hating the whites but also starts hating his own race. His hatred of the history leads him to think about himself and

examines himself of being black. He curses himself for being black and develops a fantasy of being a white. He thinks that he needs to prove his superiority among his fellow members and starts competing with them: fighting them, hating them, and even killing them. Consequently the hatred begins from interracial conflict and surmounts to intra-racial conflict.

### **African Black Tradition**

The African-American tradition of song, story-telling and preaching found a precise outlet in the politics of the civil rights movement and beyond. With the increased importance of the mass meeting, often directed from local churches, expression was a vital component of the political process. On such occasion's expression found a variety of avenues, as it always had in traditional black life, Preaching, testifying, passion on stories of the movement and through the "freedom songs", which had taken on a precise relationship to the push for civil rights. What Richard King calls, these expressions are "the new language of public action" (11), and it can be seen in the oratory of Martin Luther King who built his speeches upon a diverse backgrounds of biblical, folk and slave stories to weave a persuasive, rhythmic song like pattern which asserted the individual power of the voice, but included the audience in the spectacle and the occasion. It is as Levine wrote of slave songs and Ellison of jazz, path, personal and political, individual and collective. Instead of a junk heap of isolated voices, unrelated experiences and forgettable characters, preachers formed a chain of connections, creating a 'choir of voices', the many in one. In King's speeches there is a strong attention to 'voice merging', or the bringing together of diverse moment into a harmonious whole, paralleling his style with the politics of integration for he stood.

Afro-American songs and music mark a distinct cultural signification in American hybrid culture. The genesis of Afro-American songs and music dates as back as the eighteenth century, or the time when the enslaved Negroes were

commercially deported to the southern plantation, rail-road construction and canal zones. These enslaved Africans could bring nothing with them but the memory of their past through which they could create a home, a cultural bond among the enslaved Negroes. Oppression and penalization of black victims is the history of Afro-Americans. In this sense, no history is complete without the reference to the situation in which Negroes were destined to live. The birth of their songs and music, therefore, is the product of the lynching, and the lashing the Negroes suffered. Badly (wildly) treated by their white masters, imposed to a dawn-to dusk manual labor, whipped, beaten and bled to death for no reason at all, the black slaves were unfeelingly handicapped. Primarily the songs were a great source of ventilation through which the oppressed feelings of people could pass away. Second, there was silence within them but could produce loud protest, and finally, they were a herald of future hope and regeneration.

Basically, there are two types of Afro-American songs and music: spiritual and secular. The formers are religious songs, which include hymns, church songs and prayer, slave's outcries of loss, separation, grief and mourning. The shrieks, groans moans and songs were in part strategies of survival and adjustment. Various descriptions of these haunting vocal messages noted their musicality as well as their insight into the captives' thoughts and feelings. These plaintive stirrings often found the captives seeking solace from their captors-pleading with, cursing and condemning them; bemoan their deadly living and ask for justice with god, finally solace them with the inevitable truth that death equals all: rich and poor, master and slaves.

The sacred ethos was the African derived ring shout: a counter-clockwise circled and propelled by the spirit, going from a slow motion shuffle to a more rapid rhythmic series of steps; religious worship services, informal and formal as well as sacred ceremonies like funerals might feature variations of this kind of holy dancing. Indeed the ring shout had been a vital crucible where in countless re-workings of

religious tunes evolved spontaneously. In those kinds of intensely charged ritual moments of ecstatic dancing and singing elements of various religious songs and messages were transformed into African-American sacred music, most notably the spiritual.

In conclusion, the theme in Morrison's novel springs out racism as a trauma. She presents her character suffering because of their race. Race becomes traumatic biologically, psychologically and sociologically while the succession of ant agonistic movement includes slavery, depression, alienation, violation, war, crisis, murder, incestuous rape, bestiality and self-mutilation, characters in Morrison's novels have either amazing and terrible pasts or are haunted by racial myths.

### Chapter III: Trauma of Racism in Morrison's *Jazz*

#### Racial Trauma in *Jazz*

Morrison portrays a series of negotiations between dispersion and rootedness, dislocation and relocation, trauma and triumph, South and North, village values and urban attitudes, capture and continuity, independence and interdependence, silence and sounding. These define the experience of diaspora for African Americans in her novel *Jazz* as it is true of the South to which enslaved African are commercially deported, the city-Harlem-is initially a site of exile. What defines this as a site of exile is the psychological condition, their longing for a resting place, their need to release painful memories and most importantly, their lack of self recognition.

Like their ancestors dispersed by the forces of slavery, Violet, Joe, Alice Manfred, and True Belle, are "the ones who had escaped from Springfield Ohio, Springfield Indiana, Greensburg Indiana, Wilmington, Delaware, New Orleans, Louisiana, after raving whites had foamed all over the lanes and yards of home" (38), and "the droves and droves of colored people flocking to pay checks and streets full of themselves" (58), the entire "wave of black people running from wants and violence" (33), are part of a continuing cycle of dispersion, that began but did not end with the *Middle Passage*.

This cycle of dispersion includes the flight of refugees via the underground rail road to point 'North'. The continuing migrations from the village to the city and from the city to the suburbs in pursuit of an ever more hazardous 'ascent'. The South functions as "home" for the men and women in the city in 1920's. The history of its evolution from a site of exile underscores the improvisations being generated in the novel. The pattern of improvisation that developed in the antebellum South the first site of exile constitutes a motif of transformation that served as a blueprint for

subsequent re-constructions of "home" in the Diasporas. These improvisations encompass religion, ethics, music folklore, dance, games, food, language, naming practices etc. The back cover of the novel *Jazz* reads:

Jazz is the story of a triangle of passion, jealousy, murder and redemption, of sex and spirituality, of slavery and liberation, of country and city, of being male and female, African American, and above all of being human. Like the music of its title, it is a dazzlingly lyric play on elemental themes, as soaring and daring as a Charlie Parker solo, as heartbreakingly powerful as the blues. (Back Cover)

The blurb of the book itself indicates the slavery system highlighted in the novel.

While the standard narrative of the 1920s depicts black people, painters, writers, musicians thriving under the liberal patronage of whites in the roaring twenties, the Harlem Renaissance Era, in *Jazz*, Morrison explores the twin aspects of the *Jazz Age* and the *Jim Crow Age*. Acutely aware of the many gaps in the national historical consciousness, twinning the lenses in *Jazz*, she focuses on both the art that accompanied the living, and the living that required the art. In so doing, Morrison reveals how African diasporas expressive arts conferred the agency necessary for gaining access to the 'site of memory', and thereby, the transformation of the city into a new Milieu de memory, Harlem, U.S.A. The background to the novel is saturated with details about the violence of slavery; the violence of the post- Reconstruction period was orchestrated and no less intense. This violence created an unspoken rage and unacknowledged sorrow that knocked the survivors down and out. In *Jazz*, the Black people flocking into the city in the 1870s, through 1920s have their bearing. By and large, they are emotionally depleted by the traumas which triggered their

involuntary exile. Their initial as survivors is to bury the past in order to build a new future. Consequently, they do not talk about the loss of parents, spouses, siblings, dolls, home, dignity that preceded their flight. More than anything else, the characters are driven by the need to find a resting place in which to touch, name, express the complex emotions within white narrator comments on the characters longing for "rest", she concludes that it would exacerbate rather than resolve the crisis:

This notion of rest, it's attractive to her, but I don't think she would like it. They are all like that, these women, waiting for the ease, the space that need not be filled with anything other than the drift of their own thoughts. But they wouldn't lime it . . . because what is waiting for them, in a suddenly idle moment, is the seep of rage . . . or else into a beat of time, and . . . they don't know where from. (16)

Instead of a state of "rest", the novel depicts the characters searching for and sometimes finding a place of rest in which to cope with 'the seep of rage . . . and sorrow'. Like the 'site of memory' this 'resting place' "functions as a gear from transforming trauma into triumph, silence into sound (voice)" (17). The most prominent resting place depicted in *Jazz* is music. Like their ancestors who constructed the mode of analysis and articulated first, in the spirituals and later, in the blues, survivors in the city have created a resting place in *Jazz*.

Describing the "tide of cold black faces" (19) marching down Fifth Avenue following the Chicago riots in which hundreds of black people were killed, the narrator states, "What they meant to say but did not trust themselves to say the drums said for them, and what they had seen with their own eyes and through the eyes of others the drums described to a T" (54). Like "a rope cast for rescue, the drums spanned the distance, gathering them all up and connected them. Alice, Dorcas, her



sister and her brother-in-law, the boy scouts and those in the windows above" (58).

For Alice, the drums help to put in focus the connection between her own grief and that of the people with "frozen black faces" (45). While she is able to decipher in the drums an articulation of "fellowship discipline and transcendence" (60), she is unable and perhaps unwilling to interpret the full complexity of its message.

Deciphering the music's full message would require her to confront the emotion to which she feels untitled anger. Her suppression of this emotion leads to a futile/fragile struggle to keep "the fifth Avenue drums separate from the belt-buckle tunes vibrating from pianos and spinning on every victrola" (85), because of the low status assigned to this music:

She knew from sermons and editorials that it wasn't real music-just colored folk's stuff: harmful certainly; embarrassing, of course; but not real, something hostile that disguised itself as flourish and roaring not serious. Yet Alice Manfred swore she heard a complicated anger in it seduction . . . . It faked happiness, faked welcome, but it did not make her feel generous, this juke point, barrel hooch, tonk house, music . . . through the glass pane to snatch the world in her fist and squeeze the life out of it for doing what it did and did and did to her and everybody else she knew or knew about. (59)

Unwilling to attend to the other statements in the music, Alice Manfred is unable to move beyond the crisis in her own life and in Dorcas's life. She is also unable to help Dorcas to negotiate the destructive and potentials in this new environment. Violet's appearance in her life is a symbolic entry of that mediational and liberating capacity of the music. The narrator states:

When Violet came to visit (and Alice never knew when that might be)

something opened up . . . . The thing was how Alice felt and talked in her company. Not like she did with other people with Violet she was impolite. Sudden Frugal No apology or courtesy seemed required or necessary between them. But something else was-clarity perhaps. The kind of clarity crazy people demand from the not-crazy. (83)

Their conversation functions as a 'site of memory', a resting place in which the two women recall and remake an enabling identity and purpose. In its depiction of Violet's and Alice's journeying to the past-events, the novel suggests the re-construction of home, identity and purpose are complementary acts. In addition to the crisis of homeless, this new phase of dispersion also produces the crisis of parentless ness exposed by Dorcas's death. The retrospective movement of the narrative shows that the immediate 'absence' of missing parents has a considerable impact on this flock of orphans. These characters have lost mother and father to the tide of racist violence rising with the abandonment of reconstruction in the 1870s. Violet loses initially her father, then her mother to the backlash that followed. Violet's "Phantom father had been mixed in and up with the Readjuster Party and when a verbal urging from landowners had not worked, a physical one did the trick and he was persuaded to transfer himself someplace, anyplace else" (99-100).

Crushed by the burden of caring single handedly for their five children, her mother, Rose Dear, suffers a mental break down, and eventually commits suicide. In 1888, after her daughter's breakdown, the grandmother, True Belle, returns to care for the grand children and fills their heads with Baltimore stories of the boy, Golden Gray, who's unmarried and pregnant white mother had accompanied to Baltimore as a "slave" thirty three years earlier. Like Violet, Joe is also an orphan. At the teenage, he was told that his parents", disappeared without a trace" (24), he gives himself the last

name "Trace" because "The way I heard it understood her (Mrs. Rhoda Williams) to mean the 'trace' they disappeared without was me" (124).

A generation younger than Violet and Joe, Dorcas lost her parents in the Chicago riots of 1917. Both of her parents died in a very bad way and she saw them "after they died and before the funeral men fixed them up" (200). Deeply traumatized by her parents' death, "she went to two funerals in five days and never said a word" (57). Although Felice's parents are both alive, the absence occasioned by their live in jobs in Tuxedo Junction leaves her feeling just as orphaned. By her own reckoning, their visits home on days off add up, annually to "Thirty-four days I'm seventeen now and that works out to less than six hundred days. Less than two years out of seventeen" (200). Given prevalence of fatherless and motherless ness, the novel asks in the words of Violet, "where the grown peoples? Is it us?" (110). The "grown people" capable of responding to the characters' need for direction and recognition are the people whom Morrison calls "ancestors." Extending its theological usage in African religion/culture to designate the community of deceased elders who continue to fulfill sustaining roles in the lives of their descendants.

Morrison uses the term "ancestors" to designate living elders who are "benevolent" "protective" and "wise" with a similar responsibility and capacity. Dorcas' death is a direct result of betrayal, a betrayal by the parents or adults who had abandoned their traditional role of advisor with a strong connection to the past. Indeed, Dorcas is implicated in several instances of betrayal. Alice Manfred's reliance on the news paper for "information" and her decision to imprison herself rather than telling to the killer whales about her niece's murder is also a betrayal to Dorcas. Joe's attempt to use her to compensate for the "inside nothing he traveled with" (120) since experiencing his mother's rejection. Violet's refusal to recognize in her rival a

mishandled child. Their actions demonstrate that the adults in the novel all lack the knowledge of how to respond to their own need, a knowledge that, the novel suggests, come from knowing” what the old folks did to keep on going” (137). The narrator says and his actions indicate that Joe didn’t know. Neither did Violet and Alice Manfred. Having buried the remains and wiped out the traces they are unable to recall and re chain this sustaining capacity, including the capacity to make wholesome choices on their own behalf. The erasure of memory impairs the process of improvisation. Reflecting on her own upbringing and her parents “heated control,” Alice recalls that she, “swore she wouldn’t, but she did, pass it on. She passed it on to her baby sister’s only child” (77). Without the remains (memory) available to them, these adults all strike the wrong “key” in their interaction with Doracs. Consequently, when Violet recalls and examines the memories of her grandmothers parenting, her rejection of the parts connected to the transference of the image of whiteness (via the stories of Golden Gray) which had destabilized her self-image is as her recollection of True Belle’s laughter. As she explains to Felice:

Now I want to be the woman my mother didn’t stay around long enough to see. That one. The one. She would have liked and the one I used to like before. . . . My grandmother fed me stories about a little blond child. He was a boy, but I threw of him as a girl sometimes, as a brother sometimes as a boyfriend. He loved inside my mind. Quiet as mole. But I didn’t know it till I got here. The two of us. Had to get rid of it. (208)

By confronting their own (experience of) betrayal, Violet and Alice are able to reclaim their creative potential. Violet’s ability to formulate this critical question indicates an already present recognition of missing ancestors and of their own

capacity and responsibility for attaining that role and demeanor; “where the grow people is it us?” (110) their recovery marks the beginning of transformation that extends out ward to include Joe, Felice and other. This pattern of transformations to call and response dynamics in which the lead singer or speaker prompts a collective articulation that echoes and extends the direction of the call. So that after examining the “remains” of her own childhood Violet “calls” Joe to do the same. The narrator tells us that “meaning to or not meaning to she got him to got through it again . . .” (119). For Joe, as for Violet and Alice, transformation requires journeying to the memory and going through it again. This transformation prepares them for the responsibility of parenting Felice, a resurrected Dorcas observing the arrival of “another true-as-like-Dorcas, four marcelled waves and all,” the narrator erroneously predicts. What turned out different was who shot whom” (6). As narrator later explains, “I saw the three of them, Felice, Joe and Violet” (221). This three some construct a different dynamic because Violet and Joe have consciously reclaimed ancestor role with the responsibility and capacity for being “advising benevolent, protective and wise.” The improvised outcome of the nurturing Felice, and Felice enlivening them, confirm that the three have successfully negotiated another phase of dispersion by reclaiming the capacity for, “putting their lives together in ways . . . never dreamed of” (221).

On Violet’s part, the decision to Dorcas is a last-ditched to cope with the crisis precipitated by the news of the murder and the love affair Violet responded to the crisis exemplifies the pattern of improvisation in the novel. Only partially successful in her effort to avenge herself by stabbing the dead girl's corpse she decides to “punish, Joe by getting herself a boyfriend and letting him visit in her own house” (4). Lacking the interest sustain this relationship, she decides next, “to fall back in

love with her husband” (5). Although she goes looking for information about Dorcas, she confesses her own underlying need for a “home” a resting place in telling Alice Manfred, “I had to sit down somewhere. I thought I could do it here” (82). Through her resurrection of Dorcas, Violet re- makes a home, release her pain, and re- claim her own creative capacity. In tracing these three movements, she adds a fourth by reviving a livable future for herself, Alice Manfred, her husband Joe, Dorcas’s friend Felice and others. In order to incorporating elements of the spirituals, the blues and jazz, the narrative technique in *Jazz* makes extensive use of sampling. Morrison introduces the trope of sampling in a jazz- like signification on the name “ Trace” which riffs on and recalls the remains from which a new whole must be reconstructed and on Joe’s profession as cosmetics salesman, equipped with a sample case from which the woman selects. As a call-and- response technique, sampling involves the conscious repletion of the theme, lyrics, beat or any other identifiable segment of a specific prior work in anew composition. Morrison’s sampling of a diverse selection of African diaspora expressive forms- including the slave narratives, photographs and black musical forms invigorates the motifs of resurrection and reconstruction at the heart of the novel. *Jazz* also underscores the novel’s cultural genealogy.

Dorcas is a woman-child who survives the pain of losing both parents, who “went to two funerals in five days, and never said a word” (57). She is the woman caught between the hunger for a mother’s/ father’s love and lore’s touch. She is the lover whose orphan- grief surfaces in her relationship with Joe, and who “in her sixteenth year . . . stood in her body and offered it to the either of the brothers for a dance” (64). “Dorcas (had) been acknowledged appraised and dismissed in the time it takes for a needle to find its opening groove” (67). And she is the woman whose “tough manner” and historical consciousness appear in her closing testimony “I don’t

know who is that woman singing but I know the words by heart” (193). On the other hand, Felice’s resilience enables her to survive the loneliness caused by her parent’s absence. Her double-consciousness appears in her confusion over the ring given to her by her mother “I love it, but there’s a trick in it and I have to agree to the trick to say it’s mine . . . . A present taken from white folks, given to me when I was too young to say No thank you” (211). She is the self -possessed lover who is nobody’s “alibi or hammer or toy” (222). Her newly developed historical consciousness gives her the resolve to tell her mother “I know about it, and that it’s what she did, not the ring that I really love” (215). For the pair, the conviction that Joe’s constant crying “is as bad as jail” (4) is an acknowledgement of the crisis confronting Violet’s determination to respond to this crisis. The narrator notes that although Violet’s name came up “at the January meeting of the Salem women’s club as someone needing assistance” (213). The club mobilized itself to come to the burnt- out family’s aid and left Violet to figure out on her own what the matter was and how to fix it” (4). The narrator informs that:

for a long time she pestered the girl’s aunt, a dignified lady who did fine work off and on in the garment district, until the aunt broke down and began to look forward to Violet's visits" for what the narrator calls " a chat about youth and misbehavior. (6)

A new season of re-making: Joe found work at Pay dirt, a speakeasy night job that lets him see the city do its unbelievable sky and run around with Violet in afternoon day light" (222). Violet's transformation is to identify only one instrument. For each of the characters in the ensembles—Violet, Joe, Alice, Dorcas and Felice, the participant-narrator, have distinct sounds. The recognition of crisis she had fought to deny hearing the music engulfs Alice Manfred with the death of her niece: "Idle and

withdrawn in her grief and shame, she whittled away the days making lace for nothing, reading her newspapers, tossing them on the floor, picking them up again. She read then differently now" (75). Her encounter with Violet gives her the resolution to confront what the narrator calls her 'war thoughts'. In Violet's company, she pursues these thoughts to a point of self-discovery. The charity demanded of her in her conversations with Violet gradually extends beyond these conversations to illuminate to her private meditations. For example, the narrator mentions that "Every week since Dorcas' death, during the whole of January and February, a paper laid bare the bones of some broken women" (74). By March, however, the text calls attention to Alice's new way of reading (knowing, one that is less concerned with facts and more with truth in timbre:

Defenseless as ducks, she thought or was they? Read carefully the news accounts revealed most of these women, subdued and broken, had not been defenseless or, like Dorcas, easy prey. All over the country, black women were armed . . . . Natural prey? Easy picking? "I don't think so." Aloud she said it." I don't think so . . . . Black women were armed, black women were dangerous (and) deadlier the weapon they chose. (74-75)

Her new ability to wrest truth out of facts prevents her from dismissing Violet as merely 'embarrassing', 'unappealing' and 'dangerous'.

Instead, the narrator tells us, Alice waited this time in the month of March, for the woman with the knife. But Alice was not frightened of her now "as she had been in January and as she was in February; the first time she let her in" (79). As her ability to interpret her own and other people's action increases, Alice begins to map a more complex course for herself and for Violet. Her expanded interpretive capacity



increases her moral and creative capacity. She takes responsibility for having "mishandled" Dorcas, and musters the courage to "move away from the tree lined street back to Springfield" (222). Through their conversations and inner reflections Alice and Violet come to clear recognition of what Morrison calls the "buried stimuli" in their childhood and youth that generated the present configuration of their lives or their relationship, the narrator says, "By this time the women had become so easy with each other talk wasn't always necessary. Alice ironed clothes and Violet watched. From time to time one murmured something, to herself or to the other" (112).

The jazz pattern of solo and ensemble variation resonates in the intersecting notes of transformation playing throughout the novel. Morrison uses the language of women's domestic tasks-sewing, ironing, hairdressing to announce this call- and-response pattern of assistance. Violet and Alice form a symbolic Dorcas society committed to the task of restoring and re-clothing their own wounded psyches. While Violet inspires and supports Alice's self-interrogation and self-discovery, the reciprocal dimension of the exchange between the two women is suggested by the references to Alice's mending of Violet's torn sleeve and coat lining. The narrator comments, "Her stitches were invisible to the eye" (111). At the end of the novel, when Felice's appearance gives Joe and Violet the opportunity to re-make themselves as parents, the novel emphasizes the reciprocal dimension of this re-making when Violet offers, "Come back anytime, ends need clipping"(214). Not only that she wants Felice to "come to supper, why don't you. Friday evening. You like catfish?"(210). The final glimpse of Felice indicates that she has become very much like Violet, "nobody's alibi or hammer or toy" (222). Morrison points to the world of thought that winds through women's task in acknowledging here, as in *Beloved*, the "eternal,

private conversations that take place between women and their tasks" (172).

Consistent with her initially simplistic mode of interrogation, Alice Manfred takes the linear route ironing first one part, then another, without repetition. Violet by contrast, takes the route that circles back to the beginning, requiring her to-re-do the sleeve with which she started. Significantly, the women do not seek access to another realm in which to rest; the work itself provides a context for 'rest' thought and analysis Morrison suggests that women individual do have "conversations" with their tasks. Conversations articulated through motion-are indicators of a world of inquiry of thoughts being infolded, refolded, mended, stitched and pressed.

The narrator , a "player" of the record of blues narratives often fatal to woman, so "sure" that "one would kill the other" (220), that Violet would by shooting Felice, attempt another "bluesy" revenge on Joe and Dorcas, turns out to be not only "unreliable" but just plain wrong. This mistake changes what seems to be this narrator's initial view of the role of African American history should play in their lives, as expired early in the novel:

At last, every things ahead. The smart ones say so and people listening to them and reading what they write down agrees. Here comes the new. Look out. There goes the sad stuff. The bad stuff. The way everything –nobody- could –help stuff. The way everybody was then and there. Forget that History is over, you all, and everything's ahead at last. (7)

The description emulates the surface gaiety of the urban jazz resulting from hopeful migrant's expectations of the city. However, the narrator continues this description with the locale: "In halls and offices people are sitting around thinking future thoughts about projects and bridges and fast-clicking trains underneath"(7). The

"trains underneath" this jazzy outlook on the possibilities of urban life for African American migrants signal, through the blues trope of the railroad and its difference in meaning for men and women, the potential undoing of the temptation of historical amnesia. The point of *Jazz* is to listen to that clicking to refuse to disremember the prince of the ticket. The narrator's subterranean blues reference points to the reckoning with their pasts the characters must engage in on a level at once profoundly disturbing and yet conducive to agency and transformation. For at the end of the novel symbols previously coded by the narrator as tragic are transformed in to a new sense of community and intimacy between Violet, Joe and Felice. Violets offer to chip Felice's "ends" when in the past she had noted from Dorcas's photograph that the girl's hair had needed it. Joe remarks "This place needs birds" (214), when those birds, at the beginning of the novel, have been a source of pain to his wife. Most significantly, Felice offers "I'll bring some records. When I come to get my hair done" (215), whose narratives have played a key role in the violence between Joe, Violet and Dorcas and yet whose mention occasions Joe's announcement, then "I best find me another job" (215).

The past for these characters does not have to be "an abused record with no choice but to repeat itself at the crack" (220), which keeps doing at the beginning of their lives and at the beginning of the novel. The narrator, confronting history says "lift the arm from the needle" (220). So that new grooves or narrators can be etched into the record of African- American history. For African- American women, however, this etching requires listening to and critiquing dominant historical accounts that excluded totalize, or even fashionably commodity and stylize certain aspects of their experiences, as in the case of women of classic blues. Referring fondly to her characters the narrator expresses her revised view of history role for African

Americans:

. . . saw them now they are not sepia, still losing their edges to the light of a future afternoon. Caught midway between was and must be. For me they are real. Sharply in focus and Clicking. I wonder, do they know they are the sound of snapping fingers under the sycamore living the streets? When the loud trains pull into their stops and the engines pause, attentive listeners can hear it. Even when they are not there, when whole city blocks downtown (the south) and acres of lined neighborhoods in Sag Harbor cannot see them, the clicking is there.

(227)

This captures Morrison's acute attention to the level of material, historical and cultural detail that falls outside of traditional history. While the crossroads-and- train have been the dominant symbol cluster of "authentic" African American experience which need only listen attentively for what has been left out. Her portrayal of Harlem in *Jazz* through the trope of the phonograph-and-record as narrator becomes a site of contesting narratives of black female experience and the material conditions of labor and living that have both determined and silenced their identities. In *Jazz*, the honesty of the technologically, re-gendered narrator in pointing out her unreliability allows the characters to decipher and transcend the plots she initially intended them to fulfill giving both Violet and the reader at the end of the novel, agency to lift the needle and transcend the groove in which it has been struck for far too long. As we listen to the silences, cracks and skips, Morrison's unreliable narrator plays, we can joyfully, as we are encouraged to do, change the record. Her pervasive significance on blue *Jazz* and Harlem imagery, as well as her allegorical use of the narrator as technological composite of the phonograph and record to play cultural narratives which its

characters both respond to and resist creates an African- American female crossroads from which readers can and should re-audit the music and history of 1920s Harlem.

### **Alienated Feeling of Blacks**

The novel deliberately mirrors the music of its title, with various characters improvising solo compositions that fit together late a whole work. The tone of the novel also shifts with these compositions, from bluesy laments to upbeat, sensual ragtime. The novel also utilizes the call and response style of Jazz music, allowing the characters to explore the same events from different perspectives.

This book utilizes the style of untrustworthy narrators, in which reality is altered slightly by the storyteller's emotions and perspective. Narration switches every so often to the viewpoint of various characters, inanimate objects, and even concepts. The book's final narrator is widely believed to be Morrison or perhaps the book itself.

Before the 19th century, black migration from rural to urban areas occurred within the south but after the turn of the century, migration to the North became increasingly important. There is the capacious, all-knowing voice of the anonymous speaker in the third person announces: "The wave of black people running from want and violence stream in 1906 . . ." (*Jazz* 33). In the summer of 1916, a steady stream of the descendents o slave flowed north to the booming war economics of Pittsburg, Chicago, and Detroit. Their arrival quickly reached flood stage. In two years, the demographic shift involved the uneasy mingling of the cultures of Southern and northern blacks and the eventual evolution of a new urban African- American future. Two major forces sparked the exodus, the Boll Weevil invasion destroyed the region's cotton crops and eliminated a major source of employment of black's couples with nascent industrialization, and it transformed the mobility of employment and job once set aside for blacks become covered by whites. At the same time the war in

Europe created hundreds of thousands of jobs in the North and a shortage of unskilled labor. Recruitment from the South began cautiously but gained momentum as fears of tapping into reserves of unqualified black labor were replaced with experiences of finding numerous able and willing substitutes.

While individual migrants cited a myriad of reasons for leaving, a faltering southern economy and booming forces were played out. The emphasis on the primacy of economic forces turned the migrants into “objects.” As Lawrence Levine observes:

As undisputedly important as the economic motive was, it is possible to overstress it so that the black Migration is converted into an inexorable force and Negroes are seen once again not as actors capable . . . . But primarily as beings who are acted upon Southern leaves blown north by the winds of destitution. (37)

In the rush to migrants from derisive labels, they sacrificed the rich examples of their “pragmatic economic” (137) behavior. It cannot be denied that migrants left the “land of suffering” when ubiquitous exploitation reached intolerable levels. But it does call for a more balanced view of their goals and options, as Silvia Pedraza suggests, “to capture both individuals as agents, and social structure as delimiting and enabling” (qtd. in Marks 137). Labor migrants were active participants in the migration process. They decided the timing of moves, making decisions about location, specific employment and even the nature of that employment. They constantly attempted to control the world around them by negotiation, bargaining and compromise. As Joseph Trotter concludes, “In fundamental ways, they actively shaped and directed their own existence” (137). Their motivations were rarely heroic, romantic or uplifting. The South in 1916 was not so much a backward region as an isolated one. In comparison to

those in the Northeast and Midwest, Southern workers were grossly underpaid. Wages in South were only about two third of those paid elsewhere. As the narrator adds, “Nine dollars a bale, some said, if you grew your own; eleven: dollars if you had a white friend to carry it up for pricing. And for pickers, ten cents a days for the women and a case quarter for the men” (34). Mechanisms that would have facilitated the normal movement of labor from low wage to high wage settings were all but absent. The South’s separation from the rest of the country was due to several factors: its unique institution of slavery, its slow recovery from the devastating civil war, race riots, lynching. And it's over reliance on cotton.

The heyday of the creation of the African-American ghettos in the Northern cities of United States was in the 1920s, which some called their “formative years.” Generally, before the migration, blacks were dispersed in several areas of the cities in sections small in number. The narrator asserts “Even if the room they rented was smaller than the heifers stall and darker than a morning privy . . .” (32). They were compelled to live in “a railroad flat in the tenderloin” (127), often they lived in relative obscurity and invisibility, the 1920s witnessed a much greater concentration, in Chicago, on the Southside, in New York in Harlem, and in both North and South Philadelphia neighborhoods. The concentration was related to “tangible issues such as competition for better paying jobs, scarce housing resources, and the struggle for control over the city’s government and other institutions” (qtd. in Marks 141). Whites would flee areas when blacks moved in and tried conversely to keep blacks out. Bring black migrants in the city, Joe Trace and Violet faced same problem “when we moved from 140th street to a bigger place on Lenox, it was the light -skinned renters who tried to keep us out” (127). The whole apparatus of government participated in creating *de facto* segregation under a general assumption that separation was best.

Black migrants lived in a very restricted, economic arena. To survive, they rather quickly had to find a job and make money. This reality influenced their entire decision-making. The world they shaped as a result was very pragmatic, limited and ever-changing migrants themselves highlighted economic concerns with much greater frequency than anything else. Migrants of the Great Migration shared with many who had come before a simple dream to make it. To ignore this dream or to embellish it with complex passion trivializes the experience.

Although the structure of *Jazz* evokes jazz music, the story of the novel tells of the African-American life in Harlem during the mid 1920s. We do not get an affirmative jazz alternative to the objectification and commodification of African-American life in the city. Instead we get loss and nostalgia for a rural black folk culture. Despite its postmodern skepticism, Kimberly Chabot Davis says *Jazz* "also retains an African-American and modernist political commitment to the crucial importance of deep cultural memory, of keeping the past alive in order to construct a better future" (Davis 75). As she does in *Sula* and *Song of Solomon*, Morrison notes in *Jazz* the loss with which African-Americans were encumbered as they left the rural South to the urban North, where they were directed by industrial capitalism and modern American mass culture in the city. They forgot and therefore moved away from their past.

African blacks migrated to the city looking for the American dream but it does not turn out to be paradise or salvation. Instead, they were exploited for their labor. When Joe and Violet Trace first arrived in the city Joe did "day work" and "cleaned fish at night." It took him a while before he could get "hotel work" (81 - 82). In the city the women were broken. The newspaper headlines read: "Man kills wife. Eight accused of the rape dismissed; women and girl victims of; women commits suicide.



White attackers indicted. Five women caught; women say man beat. In jealous rage man” (74). In the city Violet becomes soft, weak and crazy in contrast to the string Violet from rural Virginia who could load “hay and handle the mule wagon like a full grown man” (92). Alice resists the city and the objectification of her body by white men, even Dorcas becomes objectified as the image of male gaze. Throughout the *Jazz*, the reader are told, how the migrants in the city forgot their past. The Dumfrey family came to the city “trying to sound like they ain’t from cotton” (88). Joe Trace struggles a long time with his loss of the memory of the south. He tries to remember the way it was when he and Violet were young. Other blacks came to the city for a visit and forgot to go back to tall cotton or short "Discharged with or without honor, fired with or without severance, disposed or without notice, they hung around for a while and they could not imagine themselves anywhere else” (32). Also in the city, they forgot nature, little pebbly creeks and apply trees” (34). The city did not offer hope, fulfillment and salvation for those blacks.

Salvation for urban blacks is the rural South and its folk culture, which is presented in *Jazz* as being merely different. The city women like Joe’s voice because, "it had a pitch, a note that heard only when they visited stubborn old folks who would not budge from their front yards and overworked fields to come to the city" (74). Joe Trace lings for his mother, who is embodied in rural black folk culture.

Morrison in *Jazz* offers the periphery in the character of Wild and in Southern black folk culture, the social spaces where African Americans refused from objectification spaces where they could escape representation by the dominant society. Wild is the only character in *Jazz* who represents rural Southern black folk culture. She is defined as being different. Wild represents a primal, pre modern, primitive state of blacks

As Andrea o' Reilly argues that wild is the "archetypal wild woman . . . her lexicon is specifically the primal, original 'language' of the body" (O' Reilly 273). In assuming that Southern blacks were different in the post modern sense, *Jazz* assumes that Wild and Southern black folk cultures are not touched by modernity. But this notion of modernity omits any reference to the peripheral capital that Wild and rural southern black folk culture must compensate for the value (labor hours) they transfer to central capital. In constructing Wild and black folk culture as merely different, as primitive or as pre modern, Morrison neglects systematic linkage between industrial modern society of the 1920s and peripheral rural capitalism. Industrial capitalism subsumes living labor by minimum subsistence salaries to such marginalized individuals, Wild and other black folks who sold their labor at subhuman prices. In the cotton crops of Palestine, Virginia where people travel twenty miles to pick cotton, "the pay was ten cent for young women, a quarter for men" (30). She earned \$2.2 for three weeks of picking cotton. These minimum subsistence salaries are linked to urban capitalism.

The late 19th century was an age of unprecedented geographical mobility as African Americans left the declining agricultural regions of the east at a dramatic rate. As Joe Trace remembers, "we got married and set upon Harlon Rick's place near Tyrell. He owned the worst land in the country Violet and me worked his crops for two years. When the soil ran out when rocks was the biggest harvest, we are what I shot" (126).

Some of those who left were moving to the newly developing farmlands of the west. But almost all were moving to the cities of the East and the Midwest. Among those moving rural South for industrial cities in the 1880s were Southern blacks. They were escaping the poverty , debt, violence and oppression they faced in the rural south

Joe Trace, recalls those early days in the south which drawn him tip to toe with debt:

Then old man got fed up and sold the place along with our debt to a man called Clayton Bede. The debt rose from one hundred eighty dollars to eight hundred under him. Interest, he said, and all the prices he said went up . . . .Violet had to tend our place and walk the plow on his too, while I went from Beer to cross land to Goshen working. Slash pine some of the time mill most of it. Took us five years, but we did it.

(126)

They were also seeking new opportunities in cities opportunities that were limited but usually an improvement over what they left behind. Factory jobs for blacks were rare and professional opportunities almost nonexistent. Urban blacks tended to work as cooks janitors and domestic servants, as well as in other service occupations. Equally striking was the diversity of the new immigrant populations. Most of them were rural people and for many the adjustment to city life was painful. To help ease the transition, some national groups formed chose knit ethnic communities within the city's neighborhoods (often called "immigrant ghettos")that attempted to re-create in the new world many of the fractures of the old. Ethnic neighborhoods offered newcomers much that was familiar.

Above all, perhaps, the expansion of new arrivals in city spawned widespread and often desperate poverty. Poverty and crowding naturally breed crime and violence. That reflected in part a very high level of violence in some no urban areas like the American South where lynching and homicide were particularly high; and the west where the rootlessness and instability of new communities like cow towns, mining camps and the like, created much violence. But the cities contributed their share to the increase in crime as well. Native-born Americans liked to believe that

crime was a result of the violent proclivities of new arrivals' groups and they cited the rise of the gangs and criminal organizations in various ethnic communities. The city was a place of strong allure and great excitement yet it was also a place of alienating impersonality and, to some, a place of degradation and exploitation. As Theodore Dressers' novel *Sister Carrie* (1900) exposed on troubling aspect of urban life, the plight of women like Dressers' heroine, Carrie, who moved from the country side into the city, found themselves without any means of support. Carrie first took an exhausting and ill-paying job in a Chicago shoe factory; then she drifted into a life of sin, exploited by predatory men. Many women were experiencing the same dilemmas as Carrie experienced in fiction.

One of the greatest urban problems is providing housing for the thousand of new residents who are pouring into the cities every day. The availability of cheap labor and the increasing accessibility of tools and materials reduce the cost of building in the late nineteenth century and permitted anyone with even moderate income to afford a house. Most urban residents, however, cannot afford either to own a house in the city or move to the suburbs. Instead, they stay in the city centers and rent. Landlords try to squeeze as many rent-paying residents crowded into narrow brick row tenements. The word "tenement" had originally referred simply to multiple-family rental building. But by the late nineteenth century it has become a term for slum dwellings only. The most tenements are, in fact, miserable places, with many windowless rooms, little or no plumbing or heating and often a row of private in the basement.

Therefore, Morrison in search for the nexus of the past and present the help of history and art to bring forth the often ignored Blacks' untold trauma caused by racism. Joe Trace and Violet both are the victims of racism. They lose their parents

and are brought up by traumatic circumstance while they face the same problem in the rest of their lives. Alice and Violet came to clear recognition of what Morrison calls "buried stimuli." Morrison personifies trauma of these characters with Violet's bird which she buys cheap but is ill. The bird isn't lonely because it was already sad when she buys it out of a flock of other. Neither food, nor company nor shelter is important for it but music.

The characters lack traditional western identity and wholeness to cope with victory in their way to self-esteem, freedom and completeness. They suffer with fragmented identities, racial, gender and geographical differences.

## Chapter IV: Conclusion

### Trauma of Racism

The novel revolves around racism which is the mistreatment of a group of people based on race, color, and religion. It is a blind and pointless hatred, envy, or prejudice obviously expressed in the form of graffiti, intimidation or abuse, and discrimination on offering jobs. Similarly, discrimination is based on prejudice and stereotype where the stereotype refers to forming an instant fixed idea of a group, usually based on false or incomplete information, and prejudice refers to prejudice based on ideas that are formed without any knowledge about others.

The middle nineteenth century racial investigation was concerned with establishing the issue of racism as the belief that racial difference was not merely based on the difference of the color of blacks and whites, but it was deemed scientifically valid issue and could be proved with biological and scientific means. The concept of race was defined on the certain criteria that were given scientific slogans.

*Jazz*, a developing process in narrative tradition of African American novel, is not merely a historical gloss upon the semantics of the word jazz and a rediscovery of one of its older meanings for the purpose of recreation of a particular time and place but also a process of peeling away the layers of artifice to get at what is. It might be ugly, it might be shameful, it might be beautiful, it might be revelatory but all those things are true and part of the American experience of the African blacks in America. Much more of African history can be seen –a curious and unusually objective witness to race, and race- relations, prejudice, minstrelsy, Jim Crow, lynching, two World Wars, civil rights, Great Migration and solitude, loneliness, devastating depression, the nearly unbearable burden of consciousness, suffering, cruelty, negotiation and

finally search. Comparatively, the African -American novel has its grip in combined oral and literary traditions of African Americans than to the Euro-American novels. The Quest for usable community and identity power in racist, capitalistic and violent white power structure have shaped black experience itself in American social realm, the African- American literature particularly novel, is one of the symbolic literary forms black Americans have produced. *Jazz* is not far away and unapproachable from this symbolic act.

Racial trauma is the process of going back and feeling alienated in the new culture or system of what one feels he/she is not from the particular society. The novel *Jazz* is not a solitary, self-referential signifying system but a symbolic socio-cultural act depicting the characters suffering from cultural trauma. *Jazz* is, African-American's quest for identify (his/her) struggle against human alienation, and of course, against being a symbol of the abyss of estrangement, a deep political and philosophical resonance that, in fact, give America an aesthetic and crucial forms of social and cultural engagement that blacks and the political culture of United States itself used as forms of dissent against the human alienations: first abolition, then reconstruction and finally the civil rights movement. Morrison along with her contemporaries employs myths and symbolic acts to explore the disparity between American myths and American reality, towards individualism in their aesthetics.

Morrison represents suppressed realms of social experience from a minority perspective which engages rather than suppresses difference and which aims to represent a non-coercive and a more diverse conception of ethnicity. She develops her personal and national identities finding the voiceless are voiced within and against the distinctive pattern of values, orientations of life and shared historical memories, she acquired from and contribute to African- American culture.

The novel has full of racial trauma in which the forces of slavery, Violet, Joe,

Alice Manfred, and True Belle, have escaped from Springfield Ohio, Springfield Indiana, Greensburg Indiana, Wilmington, Delaware, New Orleans, Louisiana, after raving whites had foamed all over the lanes and yards of home. This cycle of dispersion includes the flight of refugees via the underground rail road to points 'North'. The continuing migrations from the village to the city and from the city to the suburbs in pursuit of an ever more hazardous 'ascent'. The South functions as "home" for the men and women in the city in 1920's. The history of its evolution from a site of exile underscores the improvisations being generated in the novel.

In the novel, the retrospective movement of the narrative shows that the immediate 'absence' of missing parents has a considerable impact on this flock of orphans. These characters have lost mother and father to the tide of racist violence rising with the abandonment of reconstruction in the 1870s. Violet loses initially her father, then her mother to the backlash that followed.

Human beings have had at least some of biological capacities on which culture depends. These abilities are to learn, to think symbolically, to use language and to employ tools and other products in organizing their lives and adapt to their environment. So far as this process of acculturation is concerned, black Americans have been shaped by a distinctive history: slavery, the South(downtown), Emancipation, Reconstruction, post-Reconstruction, Jim Crow, Urbanization, Civil Rights Movement and most importantly racism which has resulted in the process of double consciousness, ambivalence and double vision that best explore the complex, creativity of black American culture and character. Because of the *Middle Passage*-blacks initial separation from Africa and the denial of their humanity by whites, subordination imposed by ceremonial acts of segregation (due to skin color, sex, class) and to an ultimate reintegrating with community in full recognition of their human and civil rights (as African- American) is still in progress. These processes



continue to be embedded in *Jazz* and African- American blacks of African toot thematically and structurally are drawn of features of African-American symbolic genres-language, values, convictions of this distinctive historical, cultural and socio-psychological experience. This interpretative history is therefore, reconstructed, rediscovered, reclaimed, regained and linked with the African- American literary tradition. By its theme and structure *Jazz* is dominated by black seeking freedom from the restraints imposed by the destruction of their backgrounds by whites masters and from all sort of oppression, to realize the full potential of one's complex bicultural identify as an African- American. The archetypal journey begins in physical or psychological bondage and ends in almost redemptive regained music that can quickens the sad bird, renders people's pain and so transmutes and transcends it. Though it may be ambiguous form of deliverance the way *Jazz* ends in.

To sum, an Afro-American canonical story is the chariot to quest for freedom, liberty and personal and communal wholeness, which is grounded in social reality and ritualized in symbolic acts inclusive of African- American music-jazz, the music that speaks and speechifies the stories of African- American people through the currents of history. The music plays and evolves liberation, searches and finds African- American identity and many people agree that it is the only unhampered, unhindered expression of complete freedom.

### Works Cited

- Appiah, Kwame Anthony. "Race." *Critical Terms for Literary Study*. Ed. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin. Chicago: Chicago Press, 1990. 274- 87.
- Baldwin, James. "The Artist's Struggle for Integrity." *The Harlem Book of the Dead*. Ed. Camille Billops. New York: Morgan and Morgan Inc., 1978. 278- 293.
- Barkan, Elzar, "The Retreat of Scientific Racism: Changing Concepts of Race in Britain and the United States." *Racism: Essential Readings*. Eds. Ellis Cashmore and James Jennings. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2001. 326- 336.
- Bell, Bernard W. *The Afro- American Novel and Its Tradition*. Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1987.
- Boas, Franz. *Race, Language, and Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1940
- Bulmer, Martin, and John Solomos. *Racism*. New York: Oxford University Press. 1999.
- Burton, Angela. "Signifying Abjection: Narrative Strategies in Toni Morrison's Jazz." *Toni Morrison*. Ed. Linden Peach. New York: St. Martin's, 1998. 170- 93.
- Christian, Barbara. *Black Women Novelists: The Development of a Tradition*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1980.
- Denard, Carolyn. "Blacks, Modernism, and the American South: An Interview with Toni Morrison". *Studies in Literary Imagination*. Ed. Robert D. Satelmayr. Georgia: Georgia State University Press, 1998. 1- 16.
- Du Bois, W.E.B. *The Souls of Black Folk*. Ed. Nathan Huggins. New York: Greenwood Press, 1986.
- Fanon, Frantz. "The Man of Colour and the White Woman." Trans. Charles Lamb Markmann. *Black Skin White Masks*. New York: Grove Press, 1967. 68- 83.
- - -. "On National Culture." Trans. Constance Farrington. *The Wretched of the Earth*.

- New York: Grove Press. 1967. 206-248.
- Gerzina, Gretchen. "Racism." *The Encyclopedia Americana*. Ed. Padmini Mongia. New Delhi: Oxford UP, 1997. 120- 27.
- Gilroy, Paul. "The Whisper Wakes: The Shudder Plays, Race, National and Ethnic Absolutism." *Contemporary Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*. New Delhi: Oxford, 1991. 240-249.
- Gould, Stephen Jay. *The Mismeasure of Man*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1981.
- Guex, Germaine. *The Taming of Solitude: Separation Anxiety in Psychoanalysis*. Trans. Philip Slotkin. London: Routledge, 1973.
- Harris, Trudier. *Fiction and Folklore: The Novels of Toni Morrison*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991.
- Hooks, Bell. *Black Looks: Race and Representation*. Boston: South End Press, 1992.
- . -. *Ain't I a woman : Black Women and Feminism*. Boston, MA: South End Press, 1981.
- Jones, Carolyn M. "Southern Landscape as Psychic Landscape in Toni Morrison's Fiction." *Studies in Literary Imagination*. Ed. Robert D. Sattlemayer. Georgia: Georgia State University Press. 1998. 42-47.
- Kammen, Michael. *American Culture American Tastes: Social Change and the Twentieth Century*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf Inc. Press, 1999.
- Le Clair, Thomas. "The Language Must Not Sweat: A Conversation with Toni Morrison." *A Critical Perspective Past and Present*. Eds. Henry Louis Gates and K. A. Appiah. New York: Amsted Press, 1993. 371- 77.
- Lukacs, George. *The Historical Novel*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1983.
- Michelle, Angelyn. "Something I know That Woman: History Gender and the South in Toni Morrison's Fiction." *Studies in Literary Imagination*. Ed. Robert D.

- Sattlemayer. Georgia: Georgia State University Press, 1998. 49-53.
- Morrison, Toni. *Jazz*. London: Vintage Books, 2001.
- Queen, Stuart A., and Jenette R. Gruener. "Social Pathology: Obstacles to Social Participation." *Racism: Essential Readings*. Ed. Ellis Cashmore and James Jennings. New Delhi: Sage Publication, 2001. 27- 34.
- Reinch, Paul S. "The Negro Race and European Civilization." *Racism: Essential Readings*. Ed. Ellis Cashmore and James Jennings. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2001. 1- 9.
- Rodrigues, Eusebio. "Experiencing Jazz." *Modern Fiction Studies*. Vol. 39.3-4 (Fall/Winter):1993. 170- 190.
- Ryan, Judylyn. and Estella C. Mejoza. "Jazz, On the Cite of Memory." *Studies in Literary Imagination*. Ed. Robert D. Sattlemayer. Georgia: Georgia State University Press, 1998. 127- 43.
- Tucker, William H. "The Science and Politics of Racial Research." *Racism: Essential Readings*. Eds. Ellis Cashmore and James Jennings. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2001. 380- 85.
- White, Hayden. *Tropics of Literary Discourse*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.