

## **I. Morrison, Jazz and Secular Tradition**

### **General Introduction**

A premier contemporary American novelist and the first African -American woman to win the Nobel Prize in Literature – Toni Morrison was born Cole Ardellia Wofford in Lorain, Ohio, in 1931 during the Great Depression. After her B.A. from Howard University and M.A. in English from Cornell University, Morrison has been engaged herself in the different academic areas especially contributing to the Afro American literature. She begins her carrier by lecturing at several Universities i.e. Howard University, Texas Southern University, The State University, Yale University and Princeton University. Besides authoring six novels Morrison has displayed a genius as a master writer in criticism of white American writer and Afro- Americans as well.

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.

Morrison novel continue the poetic and gothic branches of the Afro- American narrative tradition. Gothic in the sense that black poetic realistic like Morrison “strive more for truth of sensation and environment than truth of facts, focusing on the supernatural ties of the present to the past and on psychological and sociological concepts for their images of ethical conduct in world of mystery and in natural events,” poetic in the sense of the metaphoric and metonymic qualities of the languages, the substitution of figurative for literal expression as well as "drest blood strokes of color, distilled experience and fluting but sharp and frequently recurring images” ( Bell 269). According to Barbara Christian, Morrison's works are "fantastic earthly realism which deeply rooted in history and mythology, resonate with mixture of pleasure and pain, wonder and horror" (59).

The racial discrimination is one of the characteristics in the history of Afro- American. Morrison, therefore, can not 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 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. 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. (Laclair 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 with in 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 to state any truth in her novels for her there is 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 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 hybridity is pertinent for Morrison's writing and to 20th century America as well. Each of Morrison's novels is "anchored in an ever lasting social complexity and embraces new cultural and ethnic pluralism" (Peach 189). 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 out come 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. (37)

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 some thing 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*.

### **Critical Reviews on *Jazz***

Morrison's *s Jazz* invoked by miscegenation- the ambivalent responses characteristic or objection involves a transgression of the discrete boundaries by which

racess are differentiated. The desires for absolute physical racial separateness concomitantly involve a fear pollution of one racial group by another. For these reason, 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 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 [...] miscengenerated 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 genderlized 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 Europeans worker suffered from the shocks of the capitalist system of

production, although in a more direct and profound way. Just as the 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" (Michell 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 can not just reflect what has been reached the end-result without at the some time 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 need to reconstruct the situation in which they are 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 rooted ness, 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,s 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.

## II. Black Tradition

### Introduction

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" (Miller 131), 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 a 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: spirituals and secular. The former 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.

Emblematic of the sacred world view of the slave, the spirituals clearly represent a Creole form with deep African roots. Marring sacred African-American music practice with Christian musical tradition, the spiritual flowered in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as the Christianization of African-Americans religious understanding, the texts of the spirituals including Biblical stories, psalms and hymns emphasize optimism, affirmation and deliverance. The extraordinary sacred music-like much of African-American music-has helped African Americans to transcend their earthly oppression, if only momentarily. This psychic relief contributed to the spiritual reservoirs that Africans have found it necessary to construct and draw upon. Their mental health and growth as a people demanded the strategies of endurance and self-affirmation which the spirituals epitomize. The intertwined impulses of freedom and religious in the spirituals demonstrate an increasingly sturdy and collective sense of African-American identity.

An important aspect of the world of the spirituals was the personalization of the ties between biblical figures and African Americans. These fictive lies were affective: "My God", "King Jesus", "Sweet Jesus", "Sister Mary", and "Brother Daniel". Similarly, in the spirituals African-American likened themselves to the chosen people, the Jews of Israel, whose destiny it was to overcome persecution and deracination. God brought the Jews out of the bondage and he would do the same for African Americans secular as well as spiritual freedom then was understood to be a consequence of Christian faith. Resistance to oppression and wrong found support in

the emancipationist vision of Christianity in the spirituals "Steal Away to Jesus" was thus a signal for untold numbers of slaves to make the break and run to freedom.

In height of the holistic world of antebellum Africa Americans, especially slaves, their secular music-making was quite similar to their religious music making in style and power. Social occasions such as impromptu and planned parties and various seasonal ceremonies (like those marking the end of the planting and harvesting seasons), called forth music-making. Lyrically, this music ranged from the political and the satirical language critical of the subordination of African Americans, slaves especially to the ordinary and frivolous. The famous ex-slave Frederick Douglass recalled a striking example of the former his memories of slavery. One of the live observed: "We bake de bread, Dey gib us de crust"(490). Clearly these more subversive lyrics were most likely to be found in those situations where blacks were less constrained by whit surveillance.

Secular songs on the other hand are a modification and alternation to the changing shift of time. Almost any occasion, even work could be made more tolerable, even enjoyable, with the right musical accompaniment. Work songs consequently were particularly prominent in the secular music repertoire. Songs could be heard during housework, field work, industrial work and work on the wharves and waterways. Those African- American laboring on the lakes, river and oceans as well as the ports not only developed engaging tunes dealing wit their lives. They were also a vital conduct for the migration of musical influences. This is evident in the movement and cross-fertilization of black music's up and down the Mississippi River.

Music could also be heard on street corners, in late evenings or weekend slave gatherings, in the privacy of African- American homes. This music ranged from the secular to the sacred, instrumental and vocal. Certain public forms of secular musical

expression were notable for their effectiveness at combining work with song. Street cries were used by itinerant salespersons to draw attentions to their wares water calls were an effective means of communication in the water ways. Spirited field holders were observed throughout the plantation south. The distinctive and catchy African-American vocalizing traditions represented by field hollers, water calls and street cries struck many as ear. These kind of work music increasingly solo music, evident in African- American social gatherings to herald a counterpoint to the collectivist ethos so crucial to traditional (music making). As America gave an urban industrial look, there appeared changes also in the nature of slave work, there broadened the horizon of Negro culture and consciousness. Now time demanded new changes and the accordance in the field of "songs and music was secular song and music" (Levine 217).

### **Secular Music: Blues and Jazz**

Individual voices had been prominent in Afro-American music before the rise of blues. African- American music has ability to speak to basic human goals and desires, its willingness to grapple with the complexity of the human condition. Nowhere is this clearer than in the blues. The origin of the blues dates back to the turn of the 19th century and demonstrates the increasing personalization of musical expression, on the one hand, and the increasing emphasis on solo artistry on the other. This growth of the individual voice personifies the Post-Emancipation evolution of the "New Negro." Each succeeds generation's quest to achieve identity and purpose. In addition, it represents an insightful African- American perspective on the modern existential condition. This music borrowed harmonic and structural devices and vocal techniques from work songs and spirituals. These both (church music and secular work songs) formed call and response patterns. But unlike these other forms, this

music was usually sung not by chorus but by a single voice accompanied by one or more instruments. Solo music, of course, existed among the slaves and freed man almost any song could be sung as solo piece by the individual working alone. The chief forms of solo music that existed were lullabies and field hollers. Both of these arose out of situations of physical or social distance. Lullabies were addressed to infants or children too young to respond, while field hollers arose out of special isolation. With the end of slavery, the percentage of Negroes who worked alone or in very small groups increased and the use of field hollers unquestionably increased as well.

Field hollers tended to work in the fields, but Negroes who left the farms and plantations to get to the cities of first the south and then north were soon changing structurally similar work calls. In antebellum New Orleans, the streets were alive with black vegetable vendors, cruller seller, fish peddlers, shoe shines boys, girls balancing rice-cakes on their leads-each offering their wares and services in their won individualized time and rhythm. The narrators in *Jazz* talks about the pervasive presence of the music in connection to Joe's training in the jungle by Hunters Hunter:

Once, after pulling ten trout in the first four hour of dawn Joe had walked past that place and heard what he first believed was some combination of running water and wind in high trees. The music the world makes, similar to fishermen and shepherds, woodsmen have also heard. (76)

Not only does the music appeal people at work, but also its effect is far reaching. The narrator further comments; it hypnotizes "mammals [...]. Bucks raise their heads and gophers freeze. Attentive woodsmen smile and close their eyes" (176). Lawrence Levine writes:

Lydia Parrish remembered how the black farm workers in southern New Jersey in 1870s and 1880 would holler to each other across wide fields: the call was peculiar, and I always wondered how they came of such a strange form of vocal gymnastics, since I never heard a white person do any thing like it. (218)

Thomas Talley, a black scholar from Frisk University, recalled the field hollers he heard as a youngster in Tennessee during the late nineteenth century, "often these hollers would be wordless Hoo Wee Hoo hoo!"(qtd. in Levine 218).

Sometimes, they would include words and at other times they would articulate attitudes: I wants a piece of a hoecake I wants a piece O' bread/ well, I se so tried an' honey dot Ise almos' dead, sometimes, talking to himself: The gal I'm bovin' she can't be found.

Harold Courlander has divided hollers into two categories: calls and cries. The formers were used to communicate message to call people to work or to attract the attention of others. The latter were a form of self expression, "they cry of an individual attempting to verbalize, or more purely, vocalize his feelings. Both forms existed in slavery. (Levine 219)

The music provides a hint, guidance, zest and freshness at work. Every step the black people moved, music moved with them. This is how the narrator says of the movement of the character in *Jazz*, "The two girlfriends climb stairs, led straight to the right place more by the stride piano pouring over the door saddle than recollection of the apartment number" (64).

Gradually, the streets in black neighborhoods in the northern cities as Chicago and New York were filled with foods and smells that the nineteenth urban blacks from the rural south would have found familiar. By the 1920s and 1930s immigrants from



the South could stroll through markets in Fifth, Eight and Park avenues in Harlem and find yams, greens, rice and beans or other foods or herb they desired "Din' yo' Love' em/don' yoy' love' em/Greasy greans, land , Greasy greans", [. . .] "win alle erbs/Erbs e' de ting/ Erbs' meke sing/Erbs'e will bring/Ease to you' pain/Ease to you' pain, such lines of song very clearly convey a deep rooted love and reverence the Afro Americans paid to their past home" (Levine 220).

As we see the development of blues and later *Jazz*, the same subject matters is discussed above, the same musical repertory of the holler, the call and cries, the call and response did work. The blues is must more high lightened in *Jazz* through color images of blue at almost every page. The call and response pattern has significantly been accomplished in the whole jazz patterning in *Jazz*. In the conversation that follows, Alice Manfred asks the reason of Joe's killing of her niece Dorcas:

"Why did he do such a thing?"

"Why did she?"

"Why did you?"

"I don't know." (81)

Blues can be said to be the first almost completely personalized music that African Americans introduced. In all respects blues and jazz was almost typically African-American. The songs were equally expressive of the black laughter that Violet was taught by her grandmother to laugh, such laughter which "Violet leashed what she led forgotten until this moment: "that laughter is serious. More complicated, more serious than tears" (113). The laughter washes them off the pain that they are inflicted by. It released them momentarily:

Trouble in mind' I'm blue

But I won't be blue always

For the sun will shine in my black door some day.

Well trouble on May worried mind,

When you see me laughing,

I'm laughing just to keep from crying. (Levine 230)

"The Trouble in the Mind" of Richard M. Jones' 1920s song increases the trouble that the protagonists in *Jazz* have faced.

Like the spirituals of the 19th century, the blues was a cry for release, an ode to movement and mobility, a blend of despair and hope. Like both the spirituals and folktales. Blues was an expression of experience and feelings common to the group.

"It's not only what happened to you", John Lee Hooker has said, "It's what happened to your fore parents and other people. And that's what makes blues" (Levine 237).

During the first decade of the twentieth century a young Sidesy Beehet was imprisoned for the crime of walking in the wrong neighborhood in Galveston, Texas. While in jail he heard blues he was never able to forget. He remembers the singer: "[. . .] when I remember that man, I'm remembering myself, a feeling always had" (Levine 237-38).

In many respects jazz represents much the same phenomena as blues i.e. in terms of growing importance of the solo instruments and of the improvisation, *Jazz* manifested the same individualized emphasis that was essentially new to black music. But like blues, jazz too remained communal music. It can be summed up then, that the transition from slavery to freedom, from rural to urban,, from South to North from self-containment to greater exposure to the larger society, black secular music became increasingly dominant expressive mode of reflection of the decay of sacred universe. But with the changes and variations the black music underwent, it remained a group-oriented means of communication and expression.

## Secular Songs

Black secular conga and music were an addition to the expressive dimension of their state. A sense of protest was deeply rooted from the day of its emergence. Negro secular song has functioned primarily or even largely as a medium of protest would distort black music and culture. Blacks do not seem to have spent all their time reacting to white, and their songs are filled with commands on all aspects of life. Even though it would probably be the distortion to assume that a people occupying the position that negroes have in the American society could produce a music so rich and varied with allusions to their situation secular is not demented by such reaction; it offers a new window on to the lives and into the minds of a large segment of black population.

For millions of negroes during the century after emancipation, the normal outlets for protest remained closed. They were denied the right of political expression and active demonstration when black song is understood as protest and resistance in less restrictive and more realistic senses less political and institutional forms, it is taken to mean that the song served as a mechanism by which negroes could be relatively can do in a society that rarely accorded them that privilege, "could communicate this candor to others whom they would in no other way be able to reach, and assert their own individuality aspiration and sense of being" (Levine 239).

Blues and religious songs generally are not vehicles for the telling of explicit chronological, developed stories; this is a shared characteristic of all black song. "They never embody personal comment and reaction and put their message across through repetition hints, indirect references and allusion," Harold Courlander argues (420). As Bruce Jackson has maintained the structural units in negro folktales are typically the metaphor and live together not to create a story but instead accumulate

images to create a feeling. *Jazz* is structured in the same vein; its function is that of telling people jazz feel rather than a smooth plot. *Jazz* also therefore, is a document of protest, complaint and resistance to white dominance.

A number of twentieth century secular songs continued the symbolic practices of twentieth century slave lore, the most common of these were the ballads of the Boll Weevil the damaging of cotton by an insect in the 1890s, 1920s in the South, Mexico, Texas, Georgia plantation, Green plantation Country. The song had an indirect satire to the owners the double meanings were always hinted at. They believed that God finally sent the Boll Weevil to jumble them, to turn them bankrupt. In Texas, negroes sang of an equally indomitable gray goose who was shot white in fight a took six weeks to fall, six weeks to be packed, six weeks to boil and then neither fork nor knife could penetrate his skin:

So they throwd chin in the hog pen, lawd.Lawd, lawd,

He broke ol' Jerry's jawbone, lawd, lawd, lawd,

So they taken him to the sawmill, lawd, lawd laws,

He broke the saw's teeth out, lawd,lawd,lawd,

Finally, he was flying across the oven, lawd,lawd, lawd. (Levine 241-42)

The convicts took this song as a means to express their defiance against the inhumanities of the whites in their prison life. So it is not only for Howard Odum that the song reflected “paradoxes and contradictions” making negro “very secretive” (224), but for average readers.

There are still voices of the workers digging railroad tunnel in the South expressing their wish to their “honey.” More direct and open secular work songs threaten the masters to leave the job. The songs also captured the funny of the prisoners against the prison captain who gave birth to a blue- eyed miscigenated body

in touch one of the woman prisoners. In the obscure symbolism of “devil” and “murder” they sometimes challenge the master “If you don’t the way I work jus pay me off, [. . .]. I can get another job an be my boss” (Levine 241), throughout 1920s they paint out the discrepancy between themselves and their employers, during the Great Depression, they sing of dispossession as “Niggers plant cotton Niggers pick it out/ white man pockets money, Niggers does without” (Levine 241), protest is not against the labor but low wages, the work of loading and unloading. Next to the arbitrary boss, the low pay and the poor working condition, the chief grievance was about the lack of legal justice. Therefore, the narrator in *Jazz* comments that many people died but the news papers will not publish. In 1915 black in Alabama song that if a white killed a negro they hardly carry it out to court, if a negro killed a white man they hang him like agate blues and other forms of secular song captured the demand and pressure of time. Their songs sang about massive burden of economic and social in justice, of disaster and calamities, of great depression and train collision, of blood, of murder, and race riots, of worked wars of the assassination of John of Kennedy and the administration of the presidents.

In order to close the discussion of the expression way: as a means of expression and arms of rebellion, sung communally or individually. Morrison has filled the space of *Jazz* with several such references which we have so long discussed.

### **Popular Culture**

An essential element of the enduring power of new world African music has been its integration of function and meaning. Not with standing significant similarities of form and content, continental and diaspora African music reflect significant differences. The latter demonstrates the intercultural interaction in the Americas among African, European and indigenous new world peoples. These dynamic

processes of cross-cultural contact and influence can be seen within and across the changing cultures of the interacting people. It can be stressed that the new world results of these patterns of intercultural influence can be seen in important ways as different from the traditional, pre-contact cultures. In other words, non-African influences, especially European and Native American ones, helped to shape the divergences between African cultures and New World African culture.

Principally because of intercultural impact, over the time these African - American cultures-like new world European and indigenous cultures- became blended. The process of borrowing and mixing go in innumerable directions. This would include cross- cultural influences among different African groups (or among different European groups) as well as such influences among Africans and Europeans. Indeed a critical element of the fashioning of new world African cultures is the ongoing tradition of cross-cultural sharing and meshing among Africans themselves. It can be reiterated that these mixed African- American cultures in crucial ways are unlike the primary or parent cultures from which they derive. This distinctiveness can perhaps best be represented by thinking of what happens to Africans and European in the America as Americanization.

The complicated process of Americanization or becoming American can be understood in many ways culturally speaking for African Americans music has been a critical medium for the creation and elaboration of a sense of identity as American as well as African –American. The inextricably bound historical identities of being at once both African –American and American define and complicate the culture, notably the music. Attracted by the beauty of the American ideal while at the same time repelled by the racism of the American reality, Africans sought to realize the

former by ceaselessly struggling to undermine the latter. The music vividly captures this powerful dialectic at the center of the continuing African liberation against.

The 1970s saw the emergence of funk and disco music- further elaboration of rhythmic texture. Funk is more blues- and performance-based Grittier and rhythmically more complex; disco is more pop and studio based; smoother and rhythmic simpler. The most influential recent development has been rap, a form marrying verbal fluency with musical lid beats sampled largely from various African-American music. The kind of creativity earmarked the rich African-American musical tradition, especially bedrock genres of blues, gospel and, jazz. These genres had their immediate origins in the post-emancipation period and the desire of free and emancipated black to substantiate their apparent gains. For untold number of ex-slaves especially, the ability to move from place to place signified freedom over time that commitment to migration in search of freedom would trans form the African-American experiences and in turn African-American music. In the late 19th century African Americans were overwhelmingly southern and rural. By 1970s they lived mostly in cities outside the South. Similarly, African-American music went from pockets of local, regional, and national notoriety in the late 19th century.

The technological advancements of the 20th century vastly accelerated the spread of popular culture with each new advance in mass communication- motion pictures, radio, television and the internet popular culture became an increasingly pervasive aspect of every day life. Popular culture is the common set of arts, entertainments customs, beliefs and values shared by large segments of society. Russel B. Nye founder of the study of popular culture wrote that "not until the appearance of mass society in the eighteenth century could popular culture, as one now uses the term, be said to exist" (qtd. in Bindas IX).

According to Nye, the industrial revolution and the rise of the democracy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries led to increased urbanization and the emergence of a powerful middle class. In 19th century European and North America, these trends created audiences for popular arts that were large, more concentrated, and more will off than at any point in history. As a result, more people shared a common culture than ever before.

Popular entertainment in the form of movies television, theater, music, recordings and concepts, books, magazines, sporting events, video games, restaurants, casinos, them parks and other attraction is one very recognizable aspect of popular culture. In his 1999 book *The Entertainment Economy: How MegaMedia Forces are Transforming our Lives*, Michael J. Wolf argues that "entertainment is becoming the dominant feature of American society". He says:

In choosing where we buy French fries, how we relate to political candidates, what airline we want to fly, hat pajamas we choose for out kids, and which mall we want to buy them in, entertainment is increasingly influencing everyone of those choices multiply that by the billion of choices that, collectively, all of us make each day and you have portrait of a society in which entertainment is one of its leading institutions. (qtd. in Bindas x)

It is partly this pervasive quality of popular culture that makes it worthy. James Combs -the author of *Pop Politics and Popular Culture in America*, explains that examining popular culture is important because it can shape people's attitude and belief:

Popular culture so much a part of our life that we can not deny its developmental powers [. . .] like formal education or family rearing



popular culture is part of our dreaming environment [ . . . ]. Though out popular culture education is informal usually do not attend to pop culture for its educational value it nevertheless provides us with information and images upon which we develop our opinions and attitudes. We would not be what we are, nor would our society be quite the same, without the impact of popular culture. (qtd. in Bindas XI)

### **Rap Music**

Although modern rap music as we know it emerged in New York city during the mid to late 1970s, it had its roots in the long history of the African diaspora. The music that served as a common language between disparate African people who had been separate from their lands, language groups, and cultures by the American slave trade led to diverse forms of African – American music, including gospel, blues, and jazz (and in turn, rock, soul and funk), and hip hop culture continues to be informed by the folkloric figures that suffuse these traditions.

A convenient starting point for this music is the protest music of the slaves and more generally the nature of music making among the slave. In his study of black culture Lawrence Levine writes that song in African cultures:

[ . . . ] served the dual purpose of not only preserving communal values and solidarity but also proving occasions for the individual to transcend at least symbolically, the inevitable restriction of his environment and his society by permitting him to express deeply held feelings while ordinarily could not be verbalized. (qtd. in Green 26)

Similarly in early African- American slave communities the centrality of song and other expressive arts including tales, proverbs, jokes and aphorisms reflected the importance accorded verbal improvisation and the significance of the spoken arts for

up holding "traditional values and group cohesion." Through song, slaves were also able to voice criticism. In slave protest music we find examples of early diasporic antecedents for the style and messages of rap. The amount of this 19th century rebellious music that survives pales in comparison with that of other slave music, but there is a significant enough body to make it worth considering. The images in "many thousand go" make a powerful statement against the cruelties of slavery, and there repeated words "no more" suggest, at the very least the possibility of retribution:

No more peck o' com for me, No more, no more;

No more peck o' corn for me, many thousand for

No more pints o' salt for me.

No more mistress call for me.

More common are songs that "sing

The Master." (qtd. in Green 28)

In these, slaves commented on and often lampooned their master's behavior and habits. The language was typically jocular with texts that might call attention to the master's attire courting habits, or treatment of his slaves. The texts could also be condemnatory, however, and encoded in such a way as to be understood only by the slaves themselves and misunderstood by the targets. This tradition of "employing song or rhyme for making oral commentary" derives from bardic forms common in Africa and the West Indies. Rife with parody, exaggeration and satire, the songs relied on slaves' improvisatory skills to entertain their fellows, usually at their masters' expense. Like their modern day Caribbean confreres, slave "toaster," or plantation "men-of-words" won the esteem of both their peers and masters by their wit and to wit while entertaining, a skill highly valued by planter and slave alike. The good rhyme might use his wits to confront others in situations which otherwise would have

resulted in whipping. Slaves could gain some advantage in encounters with their master by drawing on their abilities to improvise wittily. And in such situations, they often use irony to launch moral commentary at certain figures that made claims for themselves as agents of benevolence.

Emerging from U.S. black urban centers of the 1970s and 1980s, rap draws from such varied sources as jump-rope rhymes and other games chants and songs; competitive trickster toasts and bad man boasts such as those of stackable and shine; chanted sermons of black churches (including those of the Nation of Islam) the scat singing of jazz musicians such as Louis Armstrong and Cab Calloway, “vocalize,” jazz singing (fitting words and scat phrases to recorded jazz solos); favorite radio disco-jockeys pattern; and the widely popular black arts movement poetry of such writers as Nikki Giovanni, Amiri Baraka, Jayne Cortes, Gil Scott-Heron and the Last Poets – these latter in turn influenced by the poetry of Langston Hughes, Sterling Brown and other black poets working (in the circling pattern of influences so typical of the arts in America) in black vernacular idiom. Rappers themselves often cite African musical forms and their underlying sensibilities (along with on going political struggles on that continent) as key stone influences on their music, based, they say, on the idea of spoken or chanted words as the beats of a modern but ancient spirit driven drum. Musically speaking rappers also draw strength from the dancing rhythm and blues and reggae drum and brass lines and the highly charged (and irreverently sexualizes and politicized talk sing style of such musicians as James Brown, Sly Stone and George Clinton.

Rap music is characterized by sometimes, extremely deft rhymes and highly percussive stylized verse in observer calls it “verbal fire and ice” performed against a background of sound “sampled” from snatches of previously recorded music. This

sampling has given the music a patchwork music vigorously quilted together from fragments granting it a sparkingly pastiche like effect and a parodists attitude both toward the songs that are quoted and toward their traditions like much art associated with postmodernism, rap is often whimsically comical and self mockingly reflexive. It is important to remember that like its parents, rhythm and blues and jazz, rap is at once an in group ritual music, a performance music, and a dance music designed to make dancers to move together to its bloom box busting drumlins and machine fun like firings of chanted sound. It is animated music that celebrates black verbal and musical style; but it is also music that rejoices in the poetry of the human body in soulful, dance hall rocking music.

Many rap performers, drawing directly from vernacular sources describe (sometimes in the bawdiest of terms), sexual quests and imagined conquests along with fancies of power, mobility and access to money and its trinkets. One strain of this music, sometimes called “gangasta rap” offers raw and raucous testimony in language often intentionally offensive in its blunt vulgarity, brutal sexist diction and occasional anti Semitism from those who laugh at the idea that rappers should be role models. What the group NWA (Niggers Wid Attitude) says, it simply wants put it wants sex and money. Like bad man boasts and tricksters narratives dating back at least to the 1940s, NWA’s lyrics broadcast the will to meet a violent world with alluring, shocking fast talking, if necessary, with and fists and bullets despite disclaimers, gangasta rappers and others do teach their listeners (in something like the way that realist fiction writers teach their readers) by detailing in rive tingly raw terms the sever violent nature of life in the no exist realm of the black urban under class. Some even tap into the black prophetic tradition by urging listeners to awaken to new levels of

political and spiritual consciousness to read and to prepare to talk forthright action in a far downfall world.

Profoundly, rap is a music that makes room for young black performer to address black audiences (and anyone else who may be listening) in virtuoso rhyming language about serious matters of disempowerment and spiral drift and the urgent booming need for fundamental change.

### **Hip Hop Culture**

Of the many pop culture movements that currently influence styles, attitude, beliefs and even politics around the world few have had as extensive an impact as hip hop. Since its emergence as a term for the loose affiliation of African- American urban street fashions (especially those associated with graffiti art and break dancing), musical forms, and vocal styles during the nineteen seventies hip hop became in Tony Karon's words the "most important youth culture on the planet" (qtd in Green 15). Def Jam cofounder and hip hop mogul Russell Simmons goes even further going to like DMX, what Simmons means is that perhaps even more so than any other popular musical form including rock hip hop is the musical medium through which the story of life in America at the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st centuries is being told.

In every sense, a culture in its own right is hip hop. It is a constellation urban oriented intellectual and artistic field in clothing, film, fashion, and of course, music that has reached every corner of the globe. So pervasive is hip hop's influence in fact that it may be easy to take it for granted as a permanent feature of American's landscape. Indeed hip hop is a culture and rap music its most visible (and audible) artistic form. The closer we look for its sources and the further back we go the more we have to realize that rap was not "invented" all at once but was the out growth of

centuries of musical expression experimentation and innovation. In order to grasp the multidimensionality of hip hop and fully appreciate its value in contemporary life it is essential to regard its musical component in just such a broad historical context perhaps we might go so far as to say that hip hop springs not from any particular song so much as from the fundamentally ambivalent identity suggested by the term African-American. This can be argued that this ambivalence the ability to be two things at once is what defines the hip hop mode and accounts for the many dazzling paradoxes of hip hop culture.

From the dawn of the B-boy era, when DJs were just inventing the hip-hop vocabulary of scratching cutting and break beats behind the rhymes of the first MCs to the hip-hop explosion of the late 1980s to the global industry of today. Rap music assumed many apparently contradictory guises, for example the stress fractures that began as soon as hip-hop's potency as a subculture began to be co-opted by mainstream corporate culture. Although it was the ragged sonic collage of early rap that dragged black music out of the mostly white discos and back into the streets during the 1990s, it was a defanged, radio and MTV friendly and glossily pop oriented rap (represented by acts such as MC Hammer, Vanilla Ice and the Fresh Prince) that brought hip-hop to mainstream white suburban audiences during the eighties and nineties. Soon, elements of hip-hop music and aesthetics were making their presence felt on radio, television and in the movies, but not necessarily in the form desired by those within the burgeoning hip-hop nation. As cultural critic Nelson George points out, "While] hip-hop's values are by and large fixed its spirit of rebellion identification with street culture, materialism and aggression it is also an incredibly flexible tool of communication quite adaptable to any number of messages" (qtd. in Green 17).

This very ambivalence, according to George, accounts for why “it has been so easy to turn every element of culture associated with hip hop into a product” and the resulting modification of the hip hop image can be seen as compromising rap’s ability to educate and empower the African-american audiences to whom it was originally addressed. On the other hand, as George takes pains to stress, “hip-hop survives even the crassest commercialism, or at least, it has so far” (17). Ambivalence then, is what allows rap music to loudly proclaim its materialism even as its appropriation of status symbols (nautical clothing, expensive jewelry, cars etc) criticizes and undermines the racial exclusionism of a privileged class that customarily keeps a great percentage of African Americans on the margins.

Hip Hop always thrived on its ability to challenge the musical, political and cultural status quo and although it may seem almost quaint to readers to imagine that the Adidas and gold medallion clad rappers of the early 1980s were once looked upon as figures of menace, Juan Williams’ article “*Fighting words: Racism, Sexism and Homophobia in Pop and Rap,*” first published in 1989, reminds us that concerns about the negative social impact of degrading, pornographic and violent lyrical content (in rock music as well as hip hop) have been in the public consciousness for quite some time. The aura of danger that surrounded much of hip hop from the beginning is due not to the content of any particular artist’s work, but rather is traceable to attitudes about rap music’s link to the so-called underclass (a predominantly black and this pan-ethnic population concentrated in some of America’s most economically depressed urban centers). As rap evolved beyond simple boasts and party rhymes and developed an increasingly political consciousness with the emergence of such groups as Public Enemy, Boogie Down Productions (BDP) the music

role as an observer of and commentator on the social realities of the underclass came to the foreground.

As Robin D.J Kelly suggests perhaps no aspect of hip hop garnered or profiled from controversy quite like gangsta rap. As gangsta rap developed from its earliest articulation, BDP's *Criminal Minded* to Ice- T's and NWA'S unvarnished stories of desperation, crime and police brutality in Los Angeles's infamous south central region and finally into a popular genre money drugs, and sex, a between the characters rappers play and the lives they lead, become inevitable. With as many different perspectives on the hip hop topic as there are vocal styles and subgenres to the music, ultimately there can be no satisfying answer to gather this culture's complexities under one single definition. Poet and author Greg Tate's often-reprinted (and even recorded, sampled, and remixed) poem *What is Hip Hop?* Obtains its power by tapping into the always and inexhaustibly dual nature of hip hop:

Hip hop is [. . .]. Black Nationalism [. . .].

Hip hop is not hung up on counter supremacy [. . .].

Hip hop is half black and half Japanese

Hip hop is black Prozac

Hip hop is black sadomasochism

Where the hurting ends and the feeling begins. (qtd. in Green 87)

Looking back over the last quarter of the twentieth century, perhaps Chuck D. put it best when he said, "hip hop is just black people's creativity and we have always been creative people. So it's just a term for the last twenty- five years" (qtd in Green 47).

African- American is vastly over represented among those Americans whose lives are the most economically and socially distressed. As William Julius Wilson has argued "the most disadvantaged segments of the black community" have come to



make up the majority of “that heterogeneous grouping of families and individuals who are outside the main stream of the American occupational system” (Wilson 8) ,and who are euphemistically called the underclass. With little or no access to jobs, trapped in poor areas (neighborhood, tenderloins red-light districts) with bad schools, and little social and economic opportunity, members of the underclass resort to crime, drugs, alcohol and other forms of aberrant behavior to make a living and to extract some degree of meaning out of their materially impoverished existence.

A focus in race suggest that race has had a unique cultural meaning in American society where in black had been oppressed in such a way as to perpetuate their inferiority and second class citizenship. Race in this context had a socially constructed meaning that was acted on by whites to purposefully limit and constrain the black population. The foundation of this social construction was the ideology of racism. Racism is a belief in the inherent inferiority of one race in relation to belief in the inherent inferiority of one race in relation to another racism both justified and dictated the actions and institutional decision that adversely affected the target group class explanations emphasized that relational positioning of blacks and whites in society and the differential access to power that accurse to the status of each group. Those classes with access to resources through the ownership or control of capital or through the occupational hierarchy were able to translate these resources into policies and structures through their access to power. In some cases this can be seen in the way in which those who controlled the economy also controlled the polity. In other cases it can be observed in the way in which institutional elites control institutions. In any case the class perspective emphasized the relative positions of blacks and whites with respect to the ownership and control of the means of production and to access to values occupational niches, both historically and contemporaneous. Because black

have traditionally had access to few of the types of valued resources they shared in interest with the other have not. As Raymond Franklin notes, “ Ownership carries with it domination; its absence leads to subordination”(172) and unequal status of African – American in the class perspective, grows out of the structured class divisions between blacks and a small minority of resources rich and powerful whites.

The emphasis on race creates problem of evidence. Especially in the contemporary period as William Wilson notes in *The declining significance of race*. It is difficult to the enduring existence of racial inequality to an articulated ideology of racism. He says, "The trail of historical evident proudly left in previous periods made less evident by heightened sensitivity to legal sections and racial civility in language" (Wilson 8).

By 1919, however the racial climate had become savage and murderous. In the rural south there was a sudden increase in lynching: more than seventy blacks, some of them war veterans, died at the hands of white mobs in 1919 alone. As narrator asserts:

[. . .] the silent black women and men marching down fifth avenues to advertise their anger over two hundred deal in East ST. Louis two of whom were her sister and brother in law killed in the riots. So many whites killed the paper would not print the number [. . .]. Some said the rioters were disgruntles veterans who had fought in all colored units were refuses the services of the YMCA, over there and over here and came home to white violence more intense than when they enlisted and unlike fighting was pitiless and totally without honor. (*Jazz* 57)

In the North, black factory workers faced widespread lay offs as returning white veterans displaced them from their jobs. Black veterans found no significant

new opportunities. And as whites become convinced that black workers with lower wage demands were hurting them economically, animosity grew rapidly. Wartime riots in East ST. Louis and elsewhere were a prelude to a summer of much worse racial violence in 1919. The Chicago riot was the worst but not the only racial violence during the so caked red summer of 1919s; in all, one hundred twenty people died in such racial out breaks in the space of little more than three months.

Racial violence, and even racially motivated urban riots, was not new. But the 1919 riots were different in one respect; they did not just involve white people attacking blacks. They also involve blacks fighting black. The NAACP signaled this change by urging blacks not just to demand government protecting but also to retaliate to defend themselves.

### III. Recreation of Black History in *Jazz*

#### **Sense of Loss: Excluded History of the Blacks**

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 of 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 actor 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 can not 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 migrant 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 attempt to control the world around them by negotiation bargaining and compromise. As Joseph Trotter conclude, “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 Africa-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 try 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 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 directly 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 strong 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. Through out 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 embodies 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 culture 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 travelers 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 cuties 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 wit out debt to a man called Clayton Bede. The dent rose from one hundred eighty dollars to eight hundred under him. Interest, he said, and al 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 non existent. Urban blacks tended to work as cooks janitors and domestic servants, as will 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 close knit ethnic communities within the cities 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 cite 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 Dreiser’s novel *Sister Carrie* (1900) exposed on troubling aspect of urban life the plight of women like Dreiser heroine, Carrie, who moved from the country side into the city and 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 was providing housing for the thousand of new residents who were pouring into the cities every day. The availability of cheap labor and the increasing accessibility of tools and materials reduced the cost of

building in the late nineteenth century and permitted anyone with even moderate income to afford a house. Most urban residents, however, could not afford either to own a house in the city or move to the suburbs. Instead, they stayed in the city centers and rented. Landlords tried 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 had become a term for slum dwellings only. The most tenements were, in fact, miserable places, with many windowless rooms, little or no plumbing or heating and often a row of private in the basement.

### **Memory, Trauma and Self -Identity in the City**

The cityscape seems to be no substitute for what the voice calls "the hurt" (54). Traces of loss resurface and inscribe themselves in the characters' lives and the stories enslaved and broken bodies tell from major topics in Morrison's novels. In *Jazz*, the half-moons on Dorcas's checks and forehead indirectly testify to the torture she endured as a child, when she witnessed her father and mother stomped and burned to death during the East St. Louis riots. These little scrawls on her flesh trace a symbolic track only Joe can follow: "I bought the stuff she told me to, but glad none of it ever worked. Take my little hoof marks anyway? Leave me with no tracks at all?" (130). The Pun on Trace, Joe's last name, underlines the unpredictable pattern of a hunt which is much more than a solitary tracing through or asphalt jungles. The strategy of the "country boy", "country man" (129) seems to lay the foundation of an aesthetic of traces. The sense of loss, the "inside nothing" (37), he acknowledges while looking for his absent mother in the woods of Virginia, resurfaces dangerously in New York, rising to new aesthetic expressions. Paradoxically, on city ground, the self is at once more sheltered and more exposed. For Joe, as for the others when their:

Soles hit the pavement- there was no turning around [. . .]. There, in a city, they are not so much new as themselves: their stronger, riskier selves. But on this Urban hunting around ground they soon forget" what loving other people was like and language like the same intricate, malleable toy designed fro their play. (32-33)

Joe's internal and emotional space is thus projected first on to his beloved and eventually on to the streets of Harlem. The track is both organic and geographical and the fragmented textual strategy reflects the processing his own ravenous desire.

And as the cycle of his forced relocations comes to an end, he is only left with elusive signs to decipher. Joe can barely articulate the actual and metaphorical figures in black- to borrow a little from Gates- he sees on Dorcas' face. And the narrative voice remarks at the very end, something is lacking, he can not figure in the missing fragments:

I started out believing that life was made so that the world would have someway think about itself, but that it had gone awry with humans because flesh, pinioned by misery, hangs on to it with pleasure[. . .]. I don't believe that any more. Something else you have to figure in before you can figure it out. (22-28)

What the voice cannot pin down seems to be the very sense of absence, the unbearable feeling of loss which structures the (narrative/novel) and its characters vice, Joe is defined as "Trace, what (my parents) went of without." As his adopted mother- Mrs. Williams explains "O honey, they disappeared without a trace. The way I heard it I understood her to mean the 'trace' they disappeared without was me" (124). The reenactment of this first abandonment during the Dorcas episode threatens the entire frame of Joe's topology of the familiar. New York turns into an alien and

alienating metropolis with a multiplicity of ethnic, social and age stratifications. The original uniqueness and unity of the city seem to have disappeared. "Place", in the sense Eudora Welty defines it, "turns into some nondescript space which needs to be conquered and claimed all over again. Harlem is no longer the city that danced with" (him) (32). It has become the locus of contending desires reigning supreme in a dangerous oscillation between hunting down and never hurt(ing) the young:

Joe is wondering about all this on an icy day in January [. . .] from Virginia, and even longer from Eden [. . .] when he sets out, armed, to find Dorcas. He isn't thinking of harming her, or, as Hunter had cautioned, killing something tender. She is female. And she is not prey [. . .]. He is haunting for her though [. . .]. He stalks through the city and it does not object or interfere [. . .]. The city looks as uninhabited as a small town. (180)

The narrative voice's attempts to structure the narrative puzzle appear deliberately to reproduce jazz call and response pattern and what Ralph Ellison called "the unstated meanings of the blues idiom" (207). Figuring in the major fragments implies, then, figuring out the voice's shifts just as a musical improvisation might shift to a different basic chord. It entails the reuniting the traces of loss shaping the selves of the various characters, as well as the pieces of the voice's complaint. In *Jazz* what is left unarticulated, unresolved is often materialized by blank spaces, "Crevices" (227) in between the different sections. As critic Paula Gallent Eckard says, "Jazz as narrator constructs the text" (67). And pain seems to be the major topic of these spaces of improvisation. In *Beloved*, they metaphorically fill in the gaps left by the tests concealed stories. As Baby Suggs comments, "Not a house in the country ain't packed to its rafters with some dead Negro's grief" (5). In *Jazz*, they substitute for the hidden

trail for the tale Dorcas never told before dying or for the empty spot left by her fame on Joe and Violet's mantelpiece, because "the space where the photo had been was real" (197). And of course, these spaces remain technically open and punctuate each and every section in the book; they operate as non-vocal, strictly formal framing devices and commentaries on the various narrative threads. And as they weave in the different pieces of this circular, enmeshing musical and narrative structure, they provide unexpected variations in "just circles and circles of sorrow" as Morrison says in *Sula*. In this sense, they are very much asking to the blues' disillusioned comment on life and what Ralph Ellison famously called:

(Its) impulse to keep the painful details and episodes of a brutal experience alive in one's achieving consciousness, to finger its jagged grain and to transcend it, not by the consolation of philosophy but by squeezing from it a near-tragic, near-comic lyricism. As a form, the blues is an autobiographical chronicle of personal catastrophe expressed lyrically. (78-79)

Before wondering if the storytelling process has not gone wrong, the voice actually comes up with alternatives scenarios which always remain in a state of indeterminacy. The city can in turn frame and release its inhabitants. It functions both as some open and closed ground. While overtly critical of Joe for pursuing the younger Dorcas, the narrator nevertheless evokes the possibility of some parallel narrative trail:

Makes me wonder about Joe [. . .] .No Wonder it ended the way it did. But it didn't have to, and if he had stopped trailing that little fast thing all over town long enough [. . .] who knows how it would go? It's not a thing to tell to another man [. . .].All I know is I saw her buying candy

and the whole thing was sweet [. . .].I needed to be there, where it was all mixed up together just right [. . .] and where that was, was Dorcas. (121-22)

Reading the text is a form of reaching the city, whose "breath [. . .] races through (Joe) like laughing gas brightening his eyes, his talk and his expectations" (34), the indeterminate, the discontinuous turn into indices of some potentially exhilarating space of personal freedom, a space of literary and urban promise. Slipping through textual cracks, Joe eventually comes in contact with some idealized figure of the beloved in the urban vortex. Summoning up the dead girl's figure seems to function as a trope in Morrison's fiction. It operates as a structuring motif threading together the three novels in the trilogy. It allows for harmonic progression between calls and responses, or calls and silences in the text. It weaves in fragments of *Paradise* while connecting with the previous figure of the beloved:

I call her beloved so that I can filter all these confrontations and questions that she has in that situation... and then to extend her life...her search, her quest, all the way through as long as I care to go into the twenties where it switches to this order (Dorcas in *Jazz*) girl. Therefore, I have a New York uptown-Harlem milieu in which to put this love story, but beloved (Dorcas) will be there also. (Morrison 208)

*Up town* in the 1920's embodies the sense of wonder the frontier used to embody, the lure of a city which will not necessarily be a complex trap. For in the early days of the *Jazz Age*, ethnic stratification did not function yet as a sign of entrapment into public and private hells. In the *Traces'* city space is reconfigured. Suddenly, urban destiny is no longer a collective phenomenon. Joe comes up with his own design: if the blues functions as a site of group memory, reclaiming the cityscape

as his own allows him to come up with an alternative representation of reality. Space is transfigured:

(We) moved uptown [...]. Bad times had hit them, and landlords white and black fought over colored people for the high rents that was okay by us because we got to live in five rooms even if some of us rented out two. The buildings were like castles in pictures and we who had cleaned up every day's mess since the beginning knew better than anybody how to keep them nice. (127)

In the urban world, the status of the self is constantly called into question. It is necessarily redefined so that a viable identity can be retained. Having tasted the confines of the city, the characters meet their own limits; they try and fail to rearrange some figures/traces in a familiar space. Throughout Morrison's fiction, Page argues, and particularly in *Jazz*: "Characters are caught in a flux of becoming[...] have trouble, developing fulfilled selves for lack of adequate relationships with parents, spouse, family, neighborhood, community and/or society" (55).

Like, Joe, Violet- one of the novel's major figure has great difficulty understanding herself and her world in alien urban surroundings in the city. She quickly realizes that she is losing memory with the loss of family and loss of fertility, "all those miscarriages—two in the field, only one in her is—were inconvenience than loss [. . .].By and by longing became heavier than sex: a panting, unmanageable craving [. . .].Violet was drowning in it, deep dreaming [. . .] mother-hunter knocked her down and out"(107-8).

Violet's distant and fading memory of her childhood is reflected by her own barrenness, her frustrated attempt to kidnap a child and her violent action against dead body of Dorcas. Her orphan status is manifested in her inability to be a mother. Truly



a "New Negro," Violet attempts to mediate her private rural self with her daughterless urban self. Interrogating the modernist mood, Morrison reveals through the migratory character of Violet that the residual manifestations of African-American modernity were culture shock and alienation. Violet struggles with alienation. The narrator makes readers peep onto a Violet aware of another Violet, "that Violet" within her. The angles of the telling keep shifting constantly, and shuttling between the Violet that was in the country, the Violet that is, and the one whose psyche has been deformed by her twenty years in the city. So that people call her "violent." Violet's action can be understood as "a crooked kind of mourning for a rival young enough to be a delighter" (32). Violet's urban self in Harlem is characterized by the alienation, isolation and fragmentation she feels in the city of the Promised Land. Violet very tellingly reveals, "Before I came north I made sense and so did world" (207). The south becomes, in Violet's memory, a metaphor for wholeness. The crest of Violet deformed, a psyche peaks after her husband Joe kills his young lover, Daces Before the catalytic event, Violet had revealed her fractured self in several ways; by sitting down in the sheet, by sleeping with a baby doll, and by attempting to kidnap a baby. Concerning Violet's split self, one thinks certainly of Du Bois's theory of racial double consciousness. This sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of other, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. However, the nature of Violet's double consciousness encompasses not only issues of race but also issue of gender as well as regional displacement. Morrison further reveals fragmentation and her double – consciousness by describing her alter ego in terms of "that other Violet." Whenever she thought about that Violet (the one who was brave), saw through her own eyes, "she knew there was no shame there, no disgust that was hers alone" (94).

In the south after meeting and marrying Joe trace "that" Violet had been strong, assertive, and resilient Violet comes to recognize that her love for Joe-the man she chose engenders her sense of wholeness in the south .But this realization is obscured by the dazzle of the city. Her fear of loss – of losing him as she had her mother and her father- returns as she is faced with losing, Joe to the memory of his dead lover. Retreating into silence a metonym perhaps of the silent lives lived in urban apartment buildings like Violet's violent thought:

I got quiet because the things I couldn't say were coming out of my mouth anyway [. . .]. The business going on inside me I thought was none of my business and none of Joe's either because I just had to keep hold him any way I could and going crazy would make me lose him.

(97)

Significantly, Violet's wholeness occurs after she establishes a sisterly bond with Alice Manfred, Dorcas aunt, from whom she seeks motherly counsel. As in many of Morrison's novels, mothering is not always done by one's mother or by one who is generationally older. Interestingly, Alice and the dead Dorcas are pivotal characters in Violet's quest for wholeness as they provide what she lacks in the North and family and community. After Alice advises Violet, "You got anything left to you to love, anything at all do it [. . .]. Nobody's asking you to I'm saying make it, Make it" (112-13), they share moments of liberating laughter, a gift of survival Violet had learned from True Belle but had forgotten on the city. By returning to laughter, Violet may begin anew As a result, she sees herself a new "Violet thought about how she must have looked at [Dorcas's] funeral [. . .] she laughed until she coughed"(140). After she sees herself objectively as well as subjectively, Violet noticed, "at the same time as

that Violet did" (114), that the season was spring. This simultaneous recognition of nature's rebirth at her own rebirth symbolizes Violet's reconciled self.

The text of Dorcas reveals the tremendous impact the city makes on the young and the defenseless. It deludes them into believing that they are free to do what they want and get away with it. They do not realize the insidious 'plans' of the well laid-out streets of the city that makes people do what it wants. The intoxicating rhythms of its music with *Jazz* beat never stop, they urge every day to "come and do wrong" (67). City life is essentially street life. Country images, when used for city life, become charged with iron. Young men are sheikhs "radiant and brutal" (120) or else, 'rosters' that never pursue but lie in wait for the 'chicks' to pass by and find them. Country tracks for hunting become city trails as Joe discovers, "The city pumps desire" (34), and transforms love into a soaring of "love appetite" (67). Only a nameless parrot in a case can utter an 'I love you' in the city.

### **Recreating History: Regaining Cultural Pattern**

African- American expression provides a means of claiming, 'I' through telling personal and cultural histories that together form a vital strand of black experience not given space in traditional white history books. Instead of dominant culture's control of language, African- American culture took up the call to re-establish its own history as a means of political and social assertions. Through a diverse "telling", using a variety of avenues through which to express its own vision and to tell its own story rather than the 'whitened ' version. The use of memory has become central to this process for it allows the inclusion of stories that were excluded or denigrated or erased from the versions of white history. African myths, folklore, the command stories and tales of slavery and freedom can be passed on orally. If the books, media and other techniques of the mainstream dominant culture denied space and access to these stories then other

ways had to be found to express the continuities of black life. For bell hooks this means habits of being that were a part of traditional black folk experience that "we can re-enacted, rituals of belonging[. . .] (the) shining of stories, that taught history, family genealogy and the facts about the African- American past" (hooks 39).

Morrison depicts 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 which define the experience of diaspora for African Americans in her novel *Jazz*. As was true of the South to which enslaved African were 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 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. 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 reconstructions of "home" in the diasporas. These improvisations encompassed religion, ethics, music folklore, dance, games, food, language, naming practices etc.

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 lacunae 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 made 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" 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". 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 one 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", 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 parentlessness 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 1988, 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's 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 rather than armed orcas. Joe's attempt to use her to compensate for the "inside nothing he traveled with" 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 Dorcas. 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 thought 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 grown people is it us?”(110) their recovery marks the beginning of transformation that extends outward to include Joe, Felice and others. 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 go 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 out come 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’s 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 girls' 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 he 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 select. 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.

Violet isn't simply two-dimensional- Violet and violent. She is the woman-child whose resilience enables her to survive:

[. . .] . The pain inflicted again and again" by the loss of home, father and mother and who learns from this" The important thing, the biggest thing [. . .] was to never have children. Whatever happened, no small dark foot would rest on another while a hunger mouth said, mama?  
(102)

She is also a woman whose double-consciousness appears in her double eyes vies of Dorcas as both the "scheming bitch," the woman who took the man ." and " the daughter who fled her womb," "mama's dumpling girl," who had braved mammy made poisons and mammy's urgent fists, she could have had the best-dressed hair in the city"(109). She is the rejected lover determined first, to "punish" Joe, then to become who he'd rather me be" (82). And she is the woman who sisters Alice through the mounts of grief and anger, the woman who reclaimed her historical consciousness, and who get (Joe) to go it through it again (119), assisting him in doing the same. Alice Manfred's character shapes her like a resilient woman who, having been raised under her parents' heated control swore she wouldn't pass it on, but "did [. . .]. Passed it on to he baby sister's only child [. . .] and made Dorcas her own prisoner of war" (77). She is the dignified seamstress whose double-consciousness manifests in her

simultaneous "colored folks stuff." And in her simultaneous recognition of the "completed anger" (59), within it, she is the rejected lover, enraged by her husband's other choice whose:

Favorite (revenge that plumped her pillow at night was seeing herself) the dream Mount a horse, then ride it and find the woman alone on a road and gallop till she ran her down under her four iron hooves; then black again and again until there was nothing left but tormented dirt signaling where the hussy had been. (86)

Her historical consciousness enables her to recognize "a real thing", "You got anything's left to you to love, anything at all do it" (112) and who reclaims the creative capacity that allows her return to Springfield to "the dedicated care of an old friend" to provide "cheerful company and the necessary things for the night"(11).

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 love'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 O 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 then 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, blacked women were dangerous (and) deadlier the weapon they chose.  
(74-77)

Her new ability to wrest truth out of facts prevents her from dismissing Violet as merely "embarrassing", "unappealing" "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 actions 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 the what Morrison's 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 each other 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 ability 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 Marfred 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 "conversations" with their tasks.

Conversations articulated through motion-are indicators of a world of inquiry of thoughts being infolded, refolded, mended, stitched and pressed.

Morrison critiques the assumption that a single agent can make, unmake, or re-make any circumstance. While Joe is clearly responsible for the murder of Dorcas, the novel reveals that many more people were responsible for her death. The acknowledgement and simultaneous dismissal of the "resolution" authorized by the dominant culture provides the opportunity for a larger interrogation of blame. Causality, punishment / responsibility and resolution/ forgiveness: "the dead girls' aunt didn't want to throw money to helpless lawyers or laughing cops when she knew the expenses wouldn't improve anything. Besides, she found out that the man who killed her niece cried all day and for him and for Violet that is as bad as jail" (4). While the aunt and the narrator both reject "helpless lawyers" and "laughing cops" neither abandons the pursuit of justice. Instead of jail, he and they (Violet and Alice) all get the blues as such. It is the blues as release that propels the characters toward a liberating recognition. Here, Morrison summons the institution to which African American traditionally restored. The novel identifies the blues as not simply an art form, but as a model/institution of intervention. Consistent with this "blues ideology", Violet, Alice, Joe and Felice assist each other in naming essential areas of their lives in order to regain control and re-sound a purpose. The completion of pattern of transformation is announced with the arrival of a new season of re-making:

Sweet heart. That's what that weather was called sweetheart weather, the prettiest day of the year. And that's when it started. On a day so pure and steady trees preened [. . .] and men coming out of their shops to look at it, to stand with their shops to look at it, to [. . .] look around at a street

that spreads itself wider to hold the day. Disabled veterans [. . .] stop looking glooming at working men [. . .]. And the women tip-tapping their heels [. . .] on the sidewalk cracks because they were glancing at the trees to see where that pure, soft but steady light was coming from [. . .]. The sweetness of the day tickled them, made them holler" I give you everything I got! you come home with me!". (195-96)

And this is the day when the artists, Young men on the roof tops charged their tune; spit and fiddled with the mouthpiece for a while and when they put it back in and blew out their cheeks it was just like the light of that day, pure and steady and kind of kind. You would have thought everything had been forgiven the way they: Played [. . .] the brass was cut so fine [. . .] but high and fine like a young girl singing by the side of a creek [. . .] ankles cold in the water [.. .]. That's the way the way the young on brass sounded that day. Sure of themselves, sure they were holy, standing up there on the rooftops, facing each other at first, [. . .] lifted those horns straight up and joined the light just as pure and steady and kind of kind. (196-97)

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 Americans 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 amnesic. 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' 'I love you's had, at the beginning of the novel, 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 doesn't 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 at the beginning of the novel, because, according to Victrola narrator, confronting history can "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 Africa 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 can not 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.

And finally the image of Felice, walking into the Trace's apartment with an "Okeh record" and "some stew meat wrapped in butcher paper" (6) fulfills all of the obligations that her "happy" name suggests. Her entry into the apartment after her Okch record, a Victrola, additional records, and a bird follow. And just as Felice entered, her presence restores flesh and youth to the traces. They are eating again. The Trace's began to dance with joyful without hesitation. Felice states:

Mr. Trace moved his head to the rhythm and his wife snapped her fingers in time. She did a little step in front of him and he smiled. By and by they were dancing. Funny, like old people do and I laughed for real. Not because of how funny they looked. Something in it made me feel I shouldn't be there. Shouldn't be looking at them doing that (214).

And her physical presence in Trace's is able to do what Dorcas could not. For the Traces, Dorcas was ultimately a mere photograph and only "the space where the photo had been was real" (192). Violet imagines Felice as "another true-as-life Dorcas" (197) and she is finally able to fulfill her "mother-hunger" by cooking dinners for Felice and offering to do her hair.

Morrison's objective in *Jazz* is not simply to uncover the galaxy of buried memories of past motivating the actions of a handful of black people or to reveal the means by which this 'handful' regains and re-sounds a whole some purpose. Rather, the novel's most important contribution is in providing a mechanism for uncovering the many galaxies that regain our entire social, economic, cultural and historical universe and thereby a blueprint for constructing more fully human relationships.

## Conclusion

*Jazz* an evolutionary 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 looks at a situation and says there you are. 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. Therefore, *Jazz* is the product of social and cultural forces that formulate the author's attitudes toward life of African- American entangled between African- American self. 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.

Alluding to social, political and cultural history and insistence that the reader understand allusions in order to understand event, experience, re- memory and outcome, Morrison creates narratives that are simultaneously artful. The novel *Jazz* is not a solitary, self-referential signifying system but a symbolic socio-cultural act. *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.

As a member of an oppressed and minority social group, 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.

African- American culture has its historical roots in the "downtown" and the dynamics of sex, ethnicity and class. Culture provides key aspect of human adaptability and success cultural forces constantly mold and shape human biology and behavior. The most critical element of cultural traditions is their transmission through learning rather than through biological inheritance. Culture itself is not biological. 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 therefore, reconstructed, rediscovered, reclaimed, regained, and links them 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 (if there is one) is the chariot to quest for freed literacy, personal and communal wholeness, that 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 the music free that many people agree it is the only unhampered, unhindered expression of complete freedom.



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