

**Issam El Masmodi**

# The Historiographic Metafictionality of Toni Morrison's Trilogy

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**Bibliographic information published by the German National Library:**

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**Imprint:**

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ISBN: 9783346473684

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**Issam El Masmoudi**

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## Acknowledgments:

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I truly appreciate Dr. Mohamed Rakii for supervising this humble research project. I would like also to thank all the other professors of the SLCE master program for their beneficial wit namely Dr. Cherki Karkaba, Dr. Khalid Chaouch, Dr. Mly. Mustapha Mamaoui and Dr. Farida Mokhtari. The following dissertation is the accumulation of all what we have learned throughout the two years of the master program. Without the lectures and supervision of the abovementioned professors, the dissertation would not fortunately come into existence.

For my family again

The one duty we owe to history is to rewrite it.

*Oscar Wilde*

## Table of contents:

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Abstract .....	3
Introduction .....	4
Chapter I. Subjectivity / Posmodern Blackness.....	12
1. Intersectionality.....	12
2. Quest for a self .....	18
3. Deconstructing Subjectivity .....	25
Chapter II. Palimpsests .....	34
1. Paratext .....	34
2. Signifyin(g) on Jazzthetics .....	38
3. Parody .....	44
3.1 <i>Jazz an inverted Gatsby</i> .....	44
4. Pastiche .....	48
4.1 <i>Beloved</i> vs. <i>Huckleberry Finn</i> .....	48
4.2 <i>Paradise</i> vs. <i>On the Road</i> .....	52
Chapter III : Magic realism.....	57
1. Incredulity towards realism .....	57
2. Hauntology .....	67
3. Magical realism as a postcolonial counter-discourse.....	76
Conclusion .....	82
Work cited .....	88

## Abstract

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The aim of the following dissertation is to prove the postmodernity of Morrison's work. It is an attempt to underline the postmodern implications of Morrison's trilogy including *Beloved* (1987), *Jazz* (1992), and *Paradise* (1998). This is why; the following research finds it useful to rely on Linda Hutcheon's seminal work of *A Poetics of Postmodernism* (1988) as a guiding thread in the study of Morrison's trilogy. The originality of the following dissertation lies in the fact that Hutcheon's guiding theoretical work has come into being before the writing of Morrison's trilogy precisely one year after the publication of Morrison's first novel of the trilogy that is *Beloved*. The present dissertation is an academic attack on the critics who exclude Morrison while discussing novels under the category of postmodern fiction. Morrison is usually approached from different theoretical frameworks mainly black feminism, narratology, critical race theory, psychoanalysis and so on. However, the postmodern post-colonial Morrison has always been doomed to neglect. Hutcheon's notion of historiographic metafiction is an umbrella term that describes Morrison's postmodernity. The main aim of the dissertation is to simplify and thus breaks Hutcheon's theoretical work into three main chapters namely subjectivity, palimpsests and magic realism with their implication in Morrison's trilogy. The dissertation is supposed to be made up of four chapters. However, for some academic reasons, it was necessary to omit the first chapter, which is dedicated to Morrison's use of metafiction. Therefore, the reader will find out that the dissertation rely heavily on the historiographic dimension of Hutcheon's *A Poetics of Postmodernism* while neglecting its self-reflexive aspect. Nevertheless, the reader can find some of the implications of metafiction in the introduction. At last but not least, the last chapter of magic realism is attempt to supply the limitations of Hutcheon's seminal work on postmodern fiction by arguing that magic realism is part and parcel of Morrison's trilogy and thus of historiographic metafiction.

Keywords: historiographic metafiction, subjectivity, intertextuality, parody, pastiche, postmodernism, post-colonialism, magic realism, intersectionality, hauntology



## Introduction

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As an introductory note, it is worth to investigate Morrison's special use of language. Yet, language is part and parcel in the construction of what Linda Hutcheon terms metafiction. However, unlike the traditional conception of language, metafiction is more concerned with the Barthesian concept of metalanguage. That is, a language about language. The Nobel Prize committee for literature praises Morrison as a writer "who, in novels characterized by visionary force and poetic import, gives life to an essential aspect of American life" (Li, p. 90). Morrison's poetic language is the main reason for receiving prestigious prizes including the Nobel, the Pulitzer and the National Book Award. Morrison's language is a memory site. It is the language of a whole culture. It even underlines the untranslatability of the African American experience. The musicality of Morrison's fiction emanates from the music of Jazz and Blues that are inherent in the singing of slaves. The language of Morrison is characterized by the Russian Formalist concept of literariness. This literariness is what makes of Morrison's trilogy a work of literature. Literariness distinguishes Morrison's poetic language from the standard use of English. The literariness of Morrison's trilogy is achieved by using black vernacular English and oral storytelling. Morrison invents a literary technique called invisible ink to attract the reader's attention to the aestheticism of her texts. For instance, Morrison tells her audience that *Beloved* "is not a story to pass on" (p. 276). Morrison's coinage of invisible ink is thus an African American contribution to reception theory, which is first enhanced by Hans Robert Jauss and later developed by Stuart Hall in the realm of media. To put it in other words, the audience are no longer seen as passive consumers of fiction. On the contrary, Morrison engages her audience to participate in the construction of meaning.

It is inescapable to tackle Morrison's question of language without summoning her Nobel Lecture, which has become a manifesto on the philosophy of language. Through the art of storytelling, Morrison likens the practiced writer of fiction to an old blind woman and language to a bird. In brief, the moral of Morrison's account is to show how language is a living linguistic system for both power and agency. Morrison's speech is highly post-structuralist, since it is about the discursive nature of language. Morrison famously states,

The systematic looting of language can be recognized by the tendency of its users to forgo its nuanced, complex, mid-wifery properties for menace and subjugation. Oppressive language does more than represent violence; it is violence; does more than represent the limits of knowledge; it limits knowledge. Whether it is obscuring state language or the faux-language of the mindless media; whether it is the proud but calcified language of the academy or the commodity driven language of science; whether it is the malign language of law-without-ethics, or language designed for the estrangement of minorities, hiding its racist plunder in its literary cheek - it must be rejected, altered and exposed. It is the language that drinks blood, laps vulnerabilities, tuck its fascist boots under crinolines of respectability and patriotism as it moves relentlessly toward the bottom line and bottom out mind. Sexist language, racist language, theistic language - all the types of the policing languages, and cannot, do not permit new knowledge or encourage the mutual exchange of ideas (Nobel Lecture)

Although she does not explicitly allude to postmodernism and post-structuralism throughout her lecture, Morrison seems to paraphrase Foucault's concept of discourse in an African American context. Language is the medium through which the discourse of alterity finds its way. As Morrison suggests, this includes the discourses of racism, sexism and the language of theism as whole for the reason that it puts an end to the negotiation of diversity. Morrison's approach to language is similar to Edward Wadie Said's discourse of orientalism. Like Morrison, Said admits that he finds it useful to employ the Foucauldian concept of discourse in the identification of orientalism. Thus, in such a contemporary world that is marked by Foucauldian panopticism<sup>1</sup>, Morrison takes refuge in the power of the word. For instance, Morrison has edited a collection of essays under the title of *Burn This Book* co-written with

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<sup>1</sup> Pertaining to panopticon, a term that is first initiated by the philosopher of Jeremy Bentham. In fiction, the concept of panopticon is used as a metaphor for surveillance as in Orwell's *1984*. Foucault fully describes the panopticon as "a perimeter building in the form of a ring. At the centre of this a tower, pierced by large windows opening on the inner face of the ring. The outer building is divided into cells each of which traverses the whole thickness of the building. These cells have two windows, one opening onto the inside, facing the windows of the central tower, the other, outer one allowing daylight to pass through the whole cell. All that is then needed is to put an overseer in the tower and place in each of the cells a lunatic, a patient, a convict, a worker or a schoolboy. The back lighting enables one to pick out from the central tower the little captive silhouettes in the ring of cells. In short the principle of the dungeon is reversed; daylight and the overseer's gaze captures the inmate more effectively than darkness, which afforded after all a sort of protection" (Foucault quoted by Mills, p. 45).

prominent contemporary writers such as Paul Auster, Nadine Gordimer, Salman Rushdie, Orhan Pamuk, John Updike and others. *Burn This Book* is about the problematic of surveillance and censorship in the realm of literature. In this regard, Morrison argues that the methods of monitoring literature under authoritarian regimes includes “surveillance, censorship, arrest, even slaughter of those writers informing and the disturbing the public” (Morrison, p. 1). Morrison’s essay of *Peril* recalls Lenin’s politicization of literature as an instrument of political parties. It is also reminiscent of the act of burning book in *Fahrenheit 451*. Like Salman Rushdie, Morrison’s work has been removed from the shelves of the American libraries several times. More than that, her novels are even banned from school curricula.

In *A Poetics of Postmodernism*, Linda Hutcheon dismantles the main characteristics of contemporary fiction. She equates postmodern literature with what she calls historiographic metafiction. The coinage of the term means that postmodern literature is self-reflexive. That is, it refers to itself as an artifact. It also shows how postmodern post-colonial fiction is “engaged in a dialogue with history” (Nicol, p.123). The title of Hutcheon’s book alludes to Aristotle’s *Poetics*. In this way, *A Poetics of Postmodernism* is about postmodern narratology. The collocation of ‘postmodern narratology’ may sound paradoxical since narratology is seen as a branch of structuralism. However, the term of narratology that is coined by Tzvetan Todorov is as old as history itself. For instance, Aristotle assumes that a play must include a beginning, a middle and an end. Besides, the leading figures of narratology themselves has turned out to be poststructuralists. Yet, this shift should not be seen as a self-contradiction. For instance, Roland Barthes suggests that writing is not about the establishment of a particular school of thought. For Barthes, writing is like an intransitive verb, which does not need an object to be complete. In other words, writing is about the dissemination of meaning and not about the production of meaning. Toni Morrison’s trilogy which includes *Beloved*, *Jazz* and *Paradise* highly adheres to Hutcheon’s conception of historiographic metafiction. Therefore, it is worth to examine the postmodern narratological aspect of Morrison’s work. As long as the notion of ‘truth’ is concerned, Morrison takes advantage of the three postmodern concepts of metafiction, unreliable narrator and polyphony to rethink the subjectivity of history. Besides, there is not only one singular version of history but rather a plurality of histories. Morrison adopts the relativism of Nietzsche. Furthermore, historiography is linked to the Foucauldian dichotomy of power/knowledge. One should

interrogate who writes history first. From a feminist stance, the concept of history itself is doomed to the domination of patriarchy. It is for this reason why feminist thinkers alter the pronoun of his in 'history' with the female pronoun of her. HERstory is the counter discourse of the hegemonic narratives written by the patriarchs of history. Morrison does the same in her trilogy by rewriting the African American history from a black feminist point of view. For instance, *Beloved* aims at rewriting the forgotten story of a female slave named Margaret Garner who has committed infanticide in order to free her daughter from the horrors of slavery. In this way, Morrison's trilogy is equated with Lyotard's concept of little narrative or petit recit. As it is the case with the other narratives of Marxism, modernity and the enlightenment, slavery and colonialism can be also seen as metanarratives since these universal truths are about historical and human progress. Morrison counters the metanarratives of the white dominant culture with micro histories that are absent in historical books. The equivalent of Lyotard's concept of petit recit in post-colonial theory is Bhabha's concept of hybridity. Both concepts are anti-essential, in the sense that there is no longer one absolute history, but a multiplicity of histories. Morrison is aware of the role of fiction in the construction of the black community. For instance, in *Paradise*, the character of Patricia becomes an archaeologist in the Foucauldian sense. However, instead of the history of ideas, Pat digs deep in the genealogies of Ruby that is the history of African Americans as a whole encapsulated in Durkheim's concept of conscience collective<sup>2</sup>. In other words, Patricia retraces the postmodern concept of the archive in relation to the archaic history of African Americans with the help of oral history. In the end, Pat abandons her archival pursuit for the complexity of Ruby's genealogy. By doing so, Morrison joins the link between nation and narration that is the title of one of Bhabha's essays. Postmodernism treats everything as a narrative. Thus, history becomes a sort of discourse. The act of narration gives birth to the postcolonial concept of the nation. In other words, fiction turns into a rhetorical site of performing nationalism. Yet, like history itself, the question of the nation is a myth. For instance, Benedict Anderson usually draws a parallel between the term nation and

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<sup>2</sup> "Term in Durkheim's sociology, indicating the reality of society over and above that of the individual. Individual consciousness and moral conscience is derived from a normative order which coerces social members into thinking, judging and acting according to certain, socially desirable, norms" (Edgar and Sedgwick, p. 59)

imagination. By creating these micro histories of a minority group, Morrison questions the very metanarrative of Americanness that is biased in terms race.

Returning to Russian Formalism, as the concept of literariness, Morrison's use of metafiction revolves around the concept of defamiliarization. Again, Victor Shklovsky invents the term to underline the laying bare of literary language. He also calls it the making strange, in the sense that literary language makes the familiar appears unfamiliar. To better illustrate the relationship between metafiction of and defamiliarization, it is worth to dwell on the literary figure of Bertolt Brecht particularly his dramatic technique of alienation effect. In most of his plays, Brecht breaks the forth wall that separates the audience from the actors on stage. Thus, Brecht crosses the frontiers that delineate fiction from reality. For instance, a character could deliberately get offstage and directly talk to the audience. Like Brecht, by the use of metafiction, Morrison interrogates the problematic of truth in fiction. Postmodernism has always been occupied with the legitimacy of truth especially when it comes to the discipline of history and historiography. For instance, the postmodern thinker of Hayden White has made an upheaval change in the study of history. For White, history is no longer seen as a set of written fact. If there is one thing that history is not, it is the scientific field of writing past events. Like Hutcheon's concept of metafiction, White coins the concept of metahistory in order to question the fictional dimension of historiography. White argues that historians use a variety of narrative tactics in the writing of history including "Metaphor, Synecdoche, Metonymy, and Irony" (White quoted by Sim, p. 237). By doing so, White deconstructs the reliability of history by equating historians with fiction writers. Morrison applies the theory of White in fiction through the narrative techniques of metafiction, unreliable narration and polyphony. Once again, Morrison comes to prove Aristotle's claim of the superiority of fiction to history. For Aristotle, "the historian could speak only of what has happened, of the particulars of the past; the poet, on the other hand, spoke of what could or might happen and so could deal more with universals" (Hutcheon, p. 106). Thus, fiction becomes a sort of a lie through which Morrison tells the truth of African American history. Patricia Waugh defines metafiction as a "term given to fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality" (p. 2). Waugh's definition of metafiction adheres to Morrison's trilogy since the three novels destabilize the binary opposition of fiction and truth. For

instance, in the ultimate pages of *Jazz*, the book itself talks to the reader in saying “I can’t say that aloud; I can’t tell anyone that I have been waiting for this all my life and that being chosen to wait is the reason I can. If I were able I’d say it. Say make me, remake me. You are free to do it and I am free to let you because look, look. Look where your hands are now” (p. 256). *Jazz* turns into a flesh and blood narrator talking to the actual reader. By saying, look where your hands are now, Morrison steps from the fictional world of *Jazz* to the mundane reality of the reader while they are holding the novel of *Jazz* between their hands. In *Paradise*, Morrison does not directly allude to the fictionality of her text as in *Jazz*. On the other hand, metafiction is only achieved through Gerard Genette’s term of extra-diegetic narrator. Since Genette’s concept of diegesis means everything that takes place in the fictional framework of a particular novel, the narrator here seems to tell the story of Ruby from the outside of the novel’s actual setting. In the last line of the novel, Morrison reveals the real identity of the narrator, “now they will rest before shouldering the endless work they were created to do down here in paradise” (p. 318). In saying ‘here in paradise’, Morrison shows that the divine narrator is divulging the story of the dead women of the convent from the afterlife particularly from paradise, where the novel takes its title. The self-referentiality of Morrison’s trilogy alludes to its existential identity. Thus, the three novels become a mirror reflecting their own ontology. Morrison employs the technique of mise en abyme, a term made famous by André Gide, to make her trilogy look like a jigsaw puzzle. They are a kind of story within a story. By so doing, Morrison breaks the boundaries between fiction and reality by what is called in cinema as the suspension of disbelief. Hutcheon draws on the Freudian analysis of the Narcissus’ myth to show how metafiction is paradoxically self-reflexive and in the same time, engages the reader to be a co-participant in the construction of meaning. Morrison’s trilogy is not an easy read. It is written with the spirit of postmodern experimentalism. Thus, it is equated with Roland Barthes concept of the writerly<sup>3</sup> text. John Barth calls it the literature of exhaustion. Morrison’s trilogy is not set in a linear narrative sequence. Once again, the trilogy

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<sup>3</sup> What Roland Barthes calls writerly text has first emerged in *S/Z* while analyzing the short story of *Sarrasine* written by Balzac. The opposite of writerly text (scriptible) is the readerly text (lisible). The former is used to describe modern and postmodern novels such as those of Philippe Sollers whereas readerly texts are more concerned with the realist novel including the work of Balzac (Allen, p. 88). Barthes further develops the concept of the readerly text in *The Pleasure of the Text*, which marks Barthes’ shift from structuralism to post-structuralism. In *The Pleasure of the Text*, Barthes reintroduces writerly texts as the text of bliss unlike the work of realism that revolve around the concept of jouissance. Therefore, the avant-garde novels of Morrison, “like those by Bataille—or by others—, are written against neurosis, from the center of madness” (Barthes, p. 5)

is a site of the Russian Formalist concept of the plot as opposed to the story. The plot is the artistic rearrangement of events whereas the story is about the subsequent order of events as in the realist novel. Therefore, the reader of Morrison should consider her work in its totality because there is always something missing. For instance, Morrison employs the technique of the unreliable narrator to question again the notion of truth. Wayne C. Booth coins the concept of the unreliable narrator in relation to the implied author. The unreliable or reliable narrator is about the extent to which the narrator is in accordance with the intentions of the author. One of the greatest uses of the unreliable narration in literature includes the first seventy pages from William Faulkner's *The Sound and The Fury*. One may also consider of J.D Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*, where Holden Caulfield narrates the story of his teenage hood from a psychiatry. Unlike the omniscient narrator in *Beloved*, *Jazz* and *Paradise* are both narrated by unreliable narrators. The unreliability of *Paradise* is due to Genette's narrative component of distance. *Paradise* is an external narrator. It takes place on the outside of the narrative. External narration is not always as reliable as internal focalization. The narrator has not a full recognition about the characters of *Paradise*. For instance, when the narrator says, "They are nine, over twice the number of the women they are obliged to stampede or kill" (p. 3). As Stephanie Li argues, "this sentence implies that there are four, not five, women in the Convent, which Morrison carefully introduces in separate chapters, titled with their names. This glaring discrepancy reveals that as in *Jazz*, this narrator is also unreliable" (p. 101). Morrison maintains the technique of unreliable narration in *Jazz*. However, unlike the component of external distance in *Paradise*, the unreliability of *Jazz* is mainly about the ambivalence of the narrator. Yet, the reader never knows its identity. This narrative ambivalence springs from the narrator's confusion and self-interrogation concerning characters and events. At one moment, the narrator declares, "I have been careless and stupid and it infuriates me to discover (again) how unreliable I am" (p. 191). By doing so, readers suspect the authenticity of the narrative since they do not know whether they are reading the truth or pure fiction. The third and last narrative technique by which Morrison deconstructs the notion of truth in fiction has its origin Bakhtin's concept of polyphony. Stylistically speaking, Morrison is hugely indebted to Faulkner. Yet, she has written her master thesis on the work of William Faulkner and Virginia Woolf. She thus maintains the modernist tradition of fragmentation. The trilogy is narrated from different point of views. For instance, in

*Paradise*, each chapter bears the name of a character as in Faulkner's fiction. Fragmentation, like polyphony, is about the multiplicity of truths.

This dissertation adopts a variety of theoretical approaches including post-colonialism, black feminism, Marxism and critical race theory. However, postmodernism remains the main theoretical background of the dissertation particularly the work of Linda Hutcheon. This eclectic theoretical approach is itself postmodern. In answering the question what is postmodernism, Lyotard shows how eclecticism is one of the major characteristics of modern culture, "eclecticism is the degree zero of contemporary general culture: one listens to reggae, watches a western, eats McDonald's food for lunch and local for dinner, wears Paris perfume in Tokyo and 'retro' clothes in Hong Kong; knowledge is a matter for TV games. It is easy to find a public for eclectic works" (p. 76). This eclectic approach aims at examining Morrison's trilogy from different perspectives. It grants the dissertation a multiplicity of readings. Postmodernism is about diversity in terms of race, class, gender and culture in its complex sense. At any rate, the main thesis of the dissertation is the possibility and impossibility of approaching Toni Morrison as a postmodern writer. Thus, if this dissertation could have another title, it could be the postmodernity of Toni Morrison's trilogy.

The following dissertation is made up of three major chapters. Although these chapters have different titles, they are closely connected by what Hutcheon terms historiographic metafiction. The first chapter titled subjectivity or postmodern blackness is about the fragmented nature of postmodern selfhood. This identity crisis is the accumulation of a variety of discourses including racism, sexism as well as classism. This is why; it is worth to employ the concept of intersectionality coined by the critical race theorist Crenshaw and the post-colonial critic of Spivak to demonstrate how these various discourses impede the construction of one's self. The postmodernity of Morrison lies in the fact that she likens the search of selfhood to the postmodern search for meaning. Thus, subjectivity becomes a process of signification. Then, the chapter destabilizes the Manichaeism on which these discourses are built through Derrida's deconstruction. Yet, Morrison is herself a post-structuralist theorist since she undoes race and gender through the removal of these codes. The second chapter deals with intertextuality. The postmodern concept of intertextuality should not be understood in its traditional sense in terms of what Harold Bloom terms the anxiety of influence. Here, intertextual elements including paratextuality, pastiche and parody mainly



bridge the gap of the half presence of the past. Finally yet importantly, the last chapter is an academic attempt to complete the shortcomings of Linda Hutcheon's *A Poetics of Postmodernism*. In other words, it is about the magical realist aspect of historiographic metafiction that is absent from Hutcheon work and other postmodern narratologists such as Brian McHale.

## Chapter I. Subjectivity / Posmodern Blackness

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### 1. Intersectionality

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If Allen Ginsberg's disturbing *Howl*<sup>4</sup> portrays the post-war capitalist America, then *Beloved* is the howl of the American history of slavery. Through the use of memory, Morrison summons the horrors of the past into the present. Memory in *Beloved* is like what Hutcheon has written on D. M Thomas's novel *The White Hotel*, "memory defines and gives meaning to the subject. *The White Hotel* further complicates this relation of the subject to history through memory by inverting the function of the act of remembering" (p. 173). The historiographic metafictionality of *Beloved* condemns Sethe to be the subject of her own memory. Throughout the novel, Sethe is highly affected by the severe conditions of slavery. The critical race theorist, Kimberle Crenshaw has coined the concept of intersectionality in order to show how black women are doubly discriminated based on their race as well as gender. Crenshaw defines intersectionality as the following,

Discrimination, like traffic through an intersection, may flow in one direction, and it may flow in another. If an accident happens in an intersection, it can be caused by cars traveling from any number of directions and, sometimes, from all of them. Similarly, if a black woman is harmed because she is in the intersection, her injury could result from sex discrimination or race discrimination (p.149)

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<sup>4</sup> *Howl* is a long poem written in free verse by the beatnik poet of Allen Ginsberg. The poem conveys what Edvard Munch fails to say in words in his expressionist painting of *The Scream*. To put it simply, like *Beloved*, *Howl* is about the rage of a whole minority movement against the status quo of the United States of America during the post-war era.

One of the main instances in which race intersects with gender is when the engraver asks Sethe “ten minutes for nine letters” (*Beloved*, p.5). Sethe is forced to prostitute her body in order to have the epitaph of her dead daughter, Beloved, inscribed on her gravestone. The scene of the epitaph is “a memory site, a powerful zone of contact between the living and the dead. It performs the complicated function of calling to mind the departed as departed, that is, of foregrounding the present absence of the beloved” (Weinstock, p.74). In other words, the epitaph epitomizes Bhabha’s concept of the beyond.

In a foreword to her novel, Morrison writes about the primary motive behind the writing of *Beloved*, “in the eighties, the debate was still rolling: equal pay, equal treatment, access to professions, schools ... inevitably these thoughts led me to the different history of black women in this country—a history in which marriage was discouraged, impossible or illegal” (*Beloved*, p. xvii). *Beloved* views and reviews the past from a present perspective. It is a revisionist novel mainly about the condition of black women during slavery. Besides, in one of her interviews, Morrison identifies herself as a “black woman writer” (Morrison quoted by Wagner-Martin, p. 14). Morrison’s fiction is then crucial in the understanding of black feminism. For instance, the problematic of rape keeps reverberating throughout *Beloved*. Sethe commits infanticide so “that anybody white could take [her daughter’s] whole self for anything that came to mind. Not just work, kill, or maim you, but dirty you, Dirty you so bad you couldn’t like yourself anymore. Dirty you so bad you forget who you were and couldn’t think it up” (*Beloved*, p. 251). Sethe murders her own Beloved so to escape the post-traumatic events of rape during slavery. Pamela E. Barnett sums up the whole instances of rape in *Beloved* in the following,

Ella is locked up and repeatedly raped by a father and son she calls ‘the lowest yet’ (119,256), and Stamp Paid’s wife, Vashti, is forced into sex with a straw boss who later breaks his coercive promise not to sell her child (23) and again with an overseer (144). Sethe’s mother is “taken up many times by the crew” during the Middle Passage (62), as are many other enslaved women (180). And three women in the novel—Sethe’s mother, Baby Suggs, and Ella—refuse to nurse babies conceived through rape (p.72)

Rape damages the psyche of black women. Self-loathing is a major theme in Morrison’s debut novel *The Bluest Eye*.<sup>5</sup> The novel tells the story Pecola Breedlove, a young black girl, who has lost her mind because of her eager desire to become white. However, her father’s act of incest remains the main reason of Pecola’s madness. In her manifesto of black feminism, *Ain’t I a*

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<sup>5</sup> Morrison, Toni. *The Bluest Eye*. Vintage. 2007

*Woman*, particularly in a chapter entitled *Sexism and the Black Female Slave Experience*, Bell Hooks investigates the problematic of rape in relation to slavery. She argues that the white male patriarch uses rape as a tool to terrorize black female slaves. Rape is a process of dehumanization. It is used as a pretext to interiorize the ideology of slavery. After all, “rape meant, by definition, rape of white women, for no such crime as rape of black women existed at law” (p. 57). By rewriting the story of a runaway pregnant slave, Morrison demonstrates how black women are doubly discriminated by white patriarchy and slavery as well. Thus, Morrison rewrites the American history from a black feminist stance.

The black female slave is not only subjected to the discourses of racism and sexism. Classism also obscures the possibility of her agency. The ideology of slavery is equated with the colonial discourse in terms of the Hegelian master/slave dialectic. Beside being a postmodern black feminist novelist, Morrison is highly postcolonial due to the images of the middle passage she depicts in *Beloved*. Because of the subhuman labor that the black female slave is engaged in, the black activist of Angela Davis echoes Karl Marx’s *Capital*, “in England women are still occasionally used instead of horses for hauling canal boats, because the labor required to produce horses and machines is an accurately known quantity, while that required to maintain the women of the surplus population is below all calculation” (Marx quoted by Davis, p. 11). There is the passage where Sethe compares the plantations of Sweet Home to the bottoms of the abyss (p. 6). Besides, Schoolteacher does not pay a cent for Sethe’s hard labor (p. 196). Therefore, one can deduce that slavery is a kind of precapitalist institution. However, instead of class, slavery is based on the struggle of race.

The coming of *Jazz* foreshadows W.E.B Dubois’ foretelling declaration that “the problem of the twentieth century is the color-line (DuBois quoted by Lister p. 81). *Jazz* inherits the racism of *Beloved*’s history of slavery. Mikhail Bakhtin’s concept of the “chronotope” is what makes *Beloved*, *Jazz* and *Paradise* a trilogy. Morrison sets the three novels in a chronological order. It begins with the Middle Passage of slavery, then the Roaring Twenties and it finishes with the Civil Rights movement (Tally, p. 71). The time/space setting is very significant in the study of *Jazz* because it coincides with the First World War. Violence is a recurrent theme in Morrison’s fiction. However, *Jazz* is about what Slavoy Zizek calls subjective violence<sup>6</sup>. For

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<sup>6</sup> In *Violence*, Zizek differentiates between subjective and objective violence “subjective violence is experienced as such against the background of a non-violent zero level. It is seen as a perturbation of the ‘normal’, peaceful state of things. However, objective violence is precisely the violence inherent to this ‘normal’ state of things. Objective violence is invisible since it sustains the very zero-level standard against which we perceive something as subjectively violent” (p. 2). To put simply, subjective violence is mainly ideological. It is the “violence

instance, Alice Manfred reads on the newspaper that “Man kills wife. Eight accused of rape dismissed. Woman and girl victims of. Women commits suicide. White attackers indicted. Five women caught. Woman says man beat. In jealous rage man” (*Jazz*, p. 95). The City is a site where race, gender and class come together. Racial violence is a driving force that haunts the characters of *Jazz*. The novel opens with a Hitchcockian scene. Violet is shown ripping the dead corpse of Dorcas in the church (p, 11). Violet’s violent act is not arbitrary. It is her traumatic past, which pushes her to commit such a bloody act. The repression of violence carries out violence in return. Violet’s violence is the result of the post-slavery racist America. Because of much violence, Violet is no longer seen as a unified self. A schism occurs at the level of her subjectivity. Violet incarnates the Freudian psychoanalytic divide of the self. Freud “divides the individual subject into his well-known instances – superego, ego and id – whose interaction is meant to explain the dynamics and woes of the psyche” (Zima, p. 8). After the death of Dorcas, Violet has become a totally other. Yet, she is conscious of this self-alterity. For instance, while she is sitting in the drugstore, Violet wonders “who on earth that other Violet was” (*Jazz*, p. 111). Violet is a Jekyll and Hyde character. The term alludes to Stevenson’s *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. The novella is about Dr Jekyll, who takes opium to transform into the evil Mr Hyde. In this way, Violet reaffirms Stevenson’s saying that “man is not truly one, but truly two” (p.68). This Kafkaesque split is enhanced by the symbolism of names. Sometimes, Violet is called Violent. By doing so, Morrison demonstrates that Violent is the alter ego or rather the persona of Violet.

The Foucauldian conception of discourse<sup>7</sup> demarcates the link between language and power. Thus, Morrison’s novels become a discursive space laden with different ideologies. One may wonder how does a black female novelist advocate the ideologies of racism and sexism. In fact, it is a paradox that illustrates the slipperiness of fiction itself. At any rate, the answer lies in what Wayne C. Booth calls the implied author. Booth defines the implied author as “the author’s ‘second self’. Whether or not the narrator is dramatized, the novel ‘creates an implicit picture of an author who stands behind the scenes’” (Booth quoted by Rawlings, p. 64). In other words, Morrison uses Booth’s implied author as mode of resistance in order to challenge the

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which is enacted by social agents, evil individuals, disciplined repressive apparatuses and fanatical crowds” (p. 10).

<sup>7</sup> In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault defines discourse as “the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualizable group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a certain number of statements” (p. 90). Foucault’s concept of discourse is relevant to Morrison’s novels in terms of racism, sexism as well as classism. These discourses feed on language in order to demonize the other be it a black, a female, a slave or rather a proletariat

white male gaze. For Morrison, language is a battlefield of both oppression and resistance. The double-edged mechanism of language is quite reminiscent of the Foucauldian dichotomy of power/resistance, “where there is power, there is resistance” (Foucault quoted by Mills, p. 40). The character of Wild exemplifies the black clichéd silenced woman. During his search for his father on his carriage, Golden Gray encounters a ‘naked wild black woman’, who belongs to the woods. There is a similarity between Wild and the incarnated Beloved in *Beloved*. When she is interviewed, Morrison usually draws an analogy between both characters. Wild and Beloved live in the same narrative epoch. Besides, both of them defy the definition of identity since they have no past or future (Brown, p. 380). There is a common link between discourse, stereotype and representation. All of these concepts serve ideological determinations. Every representation is by consequence a misrepresentation. Basing on stereotypes, representation becomes a process of dismemberment for the reason that it is a fraud copy of a given reality. Thus, the racist instance of Wild evokes Frantz Fanon’s experience in France when he is called a “dirty nigger” (Fanon, p. 257). By associating the black race with derogatory connotations, Morrison shows how the colonial discourse or rather; the white American dominant culture interpellates individuals into subjects. The term of “interpellation” is first coined by the French Marxist, Louis Althusser. Ideology, according to Althusser “hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects” (p. 173). Being a subject of various ideologies, Wild could not have the agency to represent herself. Thus, she turns out to be invisible, “she was powerless, invisible, wastefully daft” (Jazz, p. 211). The visibility and invisibility of race is an omnipresent theme in African American literature particularly in *Invisible Man*<sup>8</sup> by Ralph Ellison. Furthermore, in Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye*, Pecola Breedlove becomes invisible because of the beauty’s standards based on whiteness (p. 45). By describing her as ‘naked’, Morrison strips Wild of her identity as James Baldwin puts it, “identity would seem to be the garment with which one covers the nakedness of the self” (p. 67). This means that the other is crucial in the construction of the self. I am black because the other is white. Consciousness operates in terms of binarism. Wild’s nakedness triggers off Chantal’s reverberating quote in Kundera’s *Identity* “man don’t turn to look at me anymore” (p.21). In other words, the invisibility of race negates Wild’s being.

*Paradise* is a black feminist text par excellence. Like *Jazz*, *Paradise* begins with the ending. In most of her work, Morrison sums up the whole story in the first page. By the doing so,

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<sup>8</sup> In the prologue of Ellison’s *Invisible Man*, the reader encounters an unnamed protagonist, who goes invisible. The narrator is not one of Poe’s specters as he confesses, but the idea of his invisibility is explained by the simple reason that he is black.

Morrison highlights the poetic language of her fiction since the story is secondary. The hook of *Paradise* is definitely one of the most celebrated openings in American literature. “They shoot the white girl first. With the rest, they can take their time. No need to hurry out here. They are seventeen miles from a town, which has ninety miles between it and any other. Hiding places will be plentiful in the Convent, but there is time and the day has just began” (*Paradise*, p. 3). The main preoccupation that enthralls Morrison while writing *Paradise* is the reason why the patriarchs of Ruby have massacred the girls of the Convent. However, “since *why* is difficult to handle, one must take refuge in *how*” (*The Bluest Eye* my emphasis, p.6). In this regard, Morrison argues in one of her interviews that men are not the enemy in themselves. In fact, “the enemy is the concept of patriarchy, the concept of patriarchy as the way to run the world or do things is the enemy, patriarchy in medicine, patriarchy in schools, or in literature” (Morrison, p.18). By setting *Paradise* in an all-black patriarchal town, Morrison harshly criticizes the discourse of patriarchy, which is based on androcentrism. Bell Hooks defines patriarchy as,

a political-social system that insists that males are inherently dominating, superior to everything and everyone deemed weak, especially females, and endowed with the right to dominate and rule over the weak and maintain that dominance through various forms of psychological terrorism and violence (pp. 38/39).

The discourse of patriarchy does not only affect females. Hooks uses the term ‘imperialist white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy’ in order to describe the intersection of different ideologies on the character of Paul D in *Beloved* under the condition of slavery. The white patriarchal system of slavery manipulates both notions of masculinity and femininity. Paul D is thus regarded as a eunuch, which deprives him from a true sense of manhood. The terrorist invasion led by Steward, Deek and K.D on the women of the convent feeds on male dominance. They inherit the patriarchy of their Old Fathers mainly Zechariah through what Pierre Bourdieu terms “the habitus”<sup>9</sup>. The attack of the clan is thus “dominated by their domination” (Marx quoted by Bourdieu, p. 69). Besides, the female characters of *Paradise* undergo a post-traumatic experience because of the indoctrination of patriarchy. For instance, Mary Magna saves Consolata from the street garbage, where she is subjected to “dirty pokings” (*Paradise*, p. 228).

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<sup>9</sup> Throughout Bourdieu’s *Masculine Domination*, there is no explicit definition of the habitus. However, from the outset of the book, the concept of the habitus can be seen as the unconscious interiorization of masculine domination through the act of socialization, which affects the external behavior of a particular individual at a later stage (Bourdieu, p. 79).

K.D messes up the reputation of Arnette at the age of fifteen and Mavis hits the road because of her abusive husband.

## 2. Quest for a self

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In *The Identifying Fictions of Toni Morrison: Modernist Authenticity and Postmodern Blackness*, John N. Duvall suggests that the fictional work of Morrison consists of two phases. The first one includes novels such as *The Bluest Eye*, *Sula*, *Song of Solomon*, whereas the second phase is made up of *Beloved*, *Jazz* and *Paradise*. Unlike the first phase, which sheds light on the existentialist concept of authenticity, the latter is more concerned with postmodern subjectivity. Authenticity is “to become who you are” (Nietzsche quoted by Flynn, p. 64). Drawing on Heidegger, Sartre uses the concept of authenticity as a “matter of living the truth about ourselves, about our condition as human beings. The inauthentic person, in Sartre’s view, is living a lie” (ibid). The concept of authenticity is explicitly mentioned in both *Jazz* and *Paradise*. The sixth chapter from *Jazz* tells the story of the light skinned Golden Gray and his search for his father, Henry LesTroy. During Gray’s quest for his roots, the unnamed narrator of *Jazz* comments,

How could I have imagined him so poorly? not noticed the hurt that was not linked to the color of his skin, or the blood that beat beneath it. But to some other thing that longed for *authenticity*, for a right to be in this place, effortlessly without needing to acquire a false face, a laughless grin, a talking posture (my emphasis, p. 190).

Gray’s embarks on a journey of self-discovery. The quest for his unknown father is consequently a search for an authentic self. In *Paradise* particularly the section entitled *Divine*, the reader encounters the sixteen year Pallas. After she has been raped by the hunters and left by her boyfriend of Carlos as a substitute of her mother, Pallas finds her way to the Convent where “the whole house felt permeated with a blessed malelessness, like a protected domain, free of hunters but exciting too. As though she might meet herself here – an unbridled, *authentic self*, but which she thought of as a ‘cool’ self – in once of this house’s many rooms” (my emphasis, p. 177). The unequivocal reference to the concept of ‘authenticity’ shows Morrison’s awareness of the philosophy of existentialism and its role in the construction of her characters’ identity. The opposite of ‘authenticity’ is ‘bad faith’. According to Sartre, living in societies where oppression is overwhelming for instance the regime of Nazism, leads to the alienation of

the self. Sartre equates the concept of 'bad faith' with 'being-for-others'. He gives the example of the perfect waiter who is a slave for the image his/her customer wants him/her to be and not being his/her true self (Flynn, pp. 70/73). Returning to Duvall, his main argument is that "such notions of authenticity are in tension with postmodern conceptions of identity" (p. 154). This goes in harmony with the tenets of Hutcheon's historiographic metafiction in *A Poetics of Postmodernism*. The two examples of Golden Gray and Pallas incarnate Hutcheon's notion of the subject in process.

The pursuit of a self in *Beloved* should be seen a quest for freedom. The institution of slavery impedes the African American freewill. Enslavement deprives slaves from a sense of selfhood. For instance, Babby Suggs has lived "sixty years a slave and ten years free" (p. 104). The implication is that sometimes freedom becomes tasteless. Being free for ten years does not mean a thing since Babby Suggs has spent the majority of her life enslaved. Morrison ironically interrogates "what does a sixty-odd-year-old slavewoman who walks like a three-legged dog need freedom for?" (p. 141). To be a slave is to live a life, which is not yours. Slaves do not celebrate weddings. Funerals are not allowed only burials. Besides, slavewomen have no control over their own bodies, "slaves not supposed to have pleasurable feelings on their own; their bodies not supposed to be like that, but they have to have as many children as they can to please whoever owned them" (p. 209). The ultimate ambition of slaves is a free self. Nevertheless, slavery is legitimized by the law. For instance, the Fugitive Bill grants whites the right to track their runaway slaves all over the States and bring them back under the condition of slavery.

The utilitarian nature of slavery leads to what is known in postmodernism as the death of the subject. The term is initiated by the Marxist critic, Fredric Jameson, particularly in his seminal essay *The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, in which he defines postmodernism as late capitalism. Postmodernism, according to Jameson, is characterized by "the end of the autonomous bourgeois monad or ego or individual" (p. 15). The death of the subject does not literally mean the disappearance of the self. The end of the subject is only possible with other concepts including reification, commodification and alienation of the self. The postmodern condition gives rise to a scattered as opposed to a centered and unified subject. These Marxist concepts are relevant to the experience of *Beloved's* characters as long as slaves are regarded as a commodity. In other words, they are a property that one can own. Through the character of Denver, Morrison introduces the notion of the self that is no self, "this is worse than when Paul D came to 124 and she cried helplessly into the stove. This is worse. Then it was for herself.



Now she is crying because she has no self. Death is a skipped meal compared to thus. She can feel her thickness thinning, dissolving into nothing” (p. 123). Denver’s disappearance of the self is due to the emptiness that Halle, Buglar, Howard and Baby Suggs have left her with. Besides, the arrival of Paul D distantiates Denver from her mother Sethe. Therefore, the absence of her family causes Denver a feeling of displacement. However, what troubles Denver the most is the disappearance of Beloved. The ghostly presence of Beloved evokes the Derridean polarity of absence/presence. The interplay of the absent presence of Beloved is realised through light and dark symbolism. For instance, when “Denver looks where Beloved’s eyes go; there is nothing but darkness there” (p. 124). The black American critic, Henry Louis Gates claims that the problematic of the absence and presence of blackness is as old as the *Phaedrus* written by Plato. According to Gates, the absence of blackness from the Western discourse is explained by the fact that ‘black’ has always been a synonym of ‘blank’ (Pérez-Torres, p. 179). Again, slavery has a huge impact on what Morrison terms the ‘self that is no self’. The character of Baby Suggs is the oldest among the slaves of Sweet Home. Before she gets free from the plantations of Mr. Garner, Baby Suggs has always been treated as a commodity. It is worth to quote the passage at length in order to demonstrate how the institution of slavery has totally consumed the body of Baby Suggs,

Her hip hurt every single day—but she never spoke of it. Only Halle, who had watched her movements closely for the last four years, knew that to get in and out of bed she had to lift her thigh with both hands, which was why he spoke to Mr. Garner about buying her out of there so she could sit down for a change (p. 140)

This scene echoes Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, when the natives walk on four because of the imperial exhausting labor. As colonialism, slavery is marked by utilitarianism and exploitation. Both of the two discourses seek only profit under the pretext of “mission civilizatrice” (Said, p. xvi). The reification of slaves leads Baby Suggs to conclude that ‘there is no bad luck in the world but whitefolks (p. 89). Suggs’s conclusion is the aftermath of treating slaves as mere things.

Naming is a bearer of identity. Morrison’s fiction is a site, where names and naming are laden with symbolism and irony. For instance, In *Song of Solomon*, when freedom finally comes, Milkman’s used-to-be-slave grandfather has had to register in Freedmen’s Bureau. When they ask him where he is born, the grandfather says Macon. Then, they ask about his father’s name and he replies that he is dead. Thus, in such an ironical stance they have given him the name of Macon Dead (p. 23). In the same line of thought particularly in the preliminary pages of

*Beloved*, Morrison illustrates how the slaves of Sweet Home are named after their owner of Mr. Garner, “and they were Paul D Garner, Paul F Garner, Paul A Garner, Halle Suggs, Sixo, the wild man” (p.11). Names are crucial in the appropriation of slaves. The alphabetic order of Paul A, Paul D and Paul F gives the impression that there is no slight difference among the Pauls. They are considered as the same in the eye of their owner. The only difference occurs only at the level of the succession of alphabets. The overlap between slaves, names and their proprietor shows that “definition, belonged to the definers—not the defined” (*Beloved*, p.190). Furthermore, Baby Suggs moves to work for the abolitionist family of the Bodwins. When she is finally loose, Mr. Garner tells her that a free negro needs a new name. He suggests to her the name of Jenny Whitlow. However, Baby Suggs sticks to her original name because it reminds her of her husband. In this regard, Fabre argues that,

Names are an essential part of the legacy (of black people), and names have stories which, incongruous, preposterous as they are, must be cared for ... Blacks receive dead patronyms from whites ... names are disguises, jokes or brand names—from yearning, gestures, flaws, events, weaknesses. Names endure like marks or have secrets they do not easily yield (Fabre quoted by Lyles-Scott, p. 196).

Names and naming cannot be separated from the history of blacks. For instance, the majority of ex-slaves adopt the last name of Freeman. The character of Stamp Paid bridges the gap between naming and memory. Stamp Paid tells Paul D the story of his name. As a slave, he is used to be called Joshua. Yet, Paid changes his name in order to break loose from his traumatic past, “perhaps there he could find out if, after all these years of clarity he had misnamed himself and there was yet another debt he owed. Born Joshua, he renamed himself when he handed over his wife to his master’s son” (*Beloved*, p.184). The name of Stamp Paid is a traveling metaphor of his identity. While narrating, the story of his name goes in parallel with his escape from Mississippi to Memphis and from Memphis to Cumberland on the boat. Stamp could not bear the psychological wounds done to his wife Vashti by their master. Therefore, Joshua alters his name to Stamp Paid in order to efface the past and thus avoids self-shame.

In the same vein but in a different context, naming in *Jazz* is onomatopoeic. The term onomatopoeia stands for names, which their sound is the same to what they represent. Unlike *Beloved*, the quest for a self in *Jazz* is linked to motherlessness. *Jazz* is a novel about displacement and diaspora. The novel takes place during the Great Migration when whites were “terrified by the wave of southern Negroes flooding the towns, searching for work and places to live” (*Jazz*, p. 73). The migration of African-Americans from the south to the north

highlights the nomadic dimension of postmodern blackness. In a picturesque passage from *The Black Atlantic*, the postcolonial critic of Paul Gilroy compares the mobility of black's identity to the images of the ship as well as the vinyl. Both images are omnipresent in *Beloved* through the ship of the middle passage and the Okeh records in *Jazz*. The implication of the two images is that they are always on the move. For instance, the uprootedness of Morrison's characters recalls Gilroy's statement that the "modern black political culture has always been more interested in the relationship of identity to roots and rootedness than in seeing identity as a process of movement and mediation that is more appropriately approached via the homonym routes" (p. 19). The problematic of roots has always been connected to route. The term route is originally a French word, which stands for road. Therefore, there would be no search of identity and selfhood without the concepts of travel, migration, displacement, home, as well diaspora.

Postmodernism treats everything as a sign. Thus, "people become signs, part of the play of language" (Butler, p. 47). Morrison's play with language makes of subjectivity a process of signification. During his search for his mother, Joe talks in a postmodern jargon. For instance, when he states in a monologue, "give me a sign, then. You don't have to say nothing. Let me see your hand. Just stick it out someplace and I'll go; I promise. A sign" (*Jazz*, p. 210). The character of Joe Trace is Derridean. The last name of Joe 'Trace' is a key concept in the philosophy of Jacques Derrida. The concept of trace is aligned the Derrida's neologism of *différance*. In *Margins of Philosophy*, Derrida devotes a whole chapter to the definition of *Différance*, a concept, which is ironically undefinable. Alan Bass compares Derrida's *différance* to Hegel's concept of *Aufhebung*. According to Bass, both concepts are untranslatable (p. 20). In other words, *différance* is non-traceable. Derrida goes on, "the concept of trace is incompatible with the concept of retention, of the becoming-past of what has been present. One cannot think of the trace—and therefore, *différance*—on the basis of the present or the presence of the presence... since the trace is not a presence but a simulacrum of a presence" (Derrida, pp. 21/24). In her widely praised preface to Derrida's *Of Grammatology*, Spivak further illustrates the mechanism of *différance* by comparing the notion of trace to the search of meaning in a dictionary,

The structure of the sign is determined by the trace or track of the other which is forever absent. This is of course never to be found in full being. As even such empirical events as answering a child's question or consulting the dictionary proclaim, one sign leads you to another (Spivak, p. xvii).

Before he meets Dorcas, Joe has gone through seven changes. Apart from the biblical symbolism of the number seven, the idea of change refutes the fixity of identity. The seven changes are levels of identity's formation. The first change occurs when Joe has given himself the last name of Trace. Joe is the abbreviation of Joseph. Mrs. Rhoda has named Joe after her father. When Joe asks her about his real parents, Mrs. Rhoda replies "they disappeared without a trace" (*Jazz*, p. 149). In this way, Joe finally decides to adopt Trace as a last name, "I am Trace, what they [his parents] went off without (ibid). Joe's quest for his origin is thus a search for meaning. As Derrida's concept of 'jeu', the identity of Joe becomes a free play universe of signification with neither a beginning nor an end. The second change takes place in Vesper County. Henry LesTroy substitutes Joe's absent father. He shows Joe how to be man in a white America. Besides, LesTroy teaches Joe to hunt along with Victory. It is for this reason why they call him Hunter's Hunter. The idea of hunting is quite the same as the name of Trace. The metaphor of hunting highlights this chase for a never to be found identity. Joe leaves Violet for the eighteen years old Dorcas. Joe and Dorcas share the loss of the mother, "Joe makes her [Dorcas] feel valuable because of his immense hunger for her. His hunger stems from the absences and hollows that formed in him as the result of his status as an orphan like Dorcas" (Gillespie, p.84). There is a great deal of similarity between *Jazz* and *Song of Solomon* in relation to the quest for identity. For instance, the cave is a recurrent motif in both novels. Despite the fact that he cannot bear the idea of having a wild woman for a mother, Joe decides to look for Wild in the woods. While tracking the traces of his mother, Joe hears music coming from a cave. The moment he gets there, Wild disappears. Philip Page draws the link between *Jazz* and *Song of Solomon* by arguing that "Joe's fall into this womblike cave recalls Milkman's journey into the cave near Danville: both are associated with gold, with males' quests for their ancestors, and with blinding contrasts of light and dark" (p. 164). The quest for one's roots in literature is always associated to a landmark. For instance, Margaret Atwood, the postmodern-postcolonial counterpart of Morrison, associates the search of identity to the wilderness of Canada in *Surfacing*. In the penultimate pages of the novel, the unnamed protagonist of *Surfacing* finds rock paintings at the bottom of the lake, where her father has been drowned. As the rock paintings, the cave in *Jazz* dates back to prehistory.

In *Paradise*, the concept of home enacts as the primary motive that sets the search for selfhood in motion. It also stands as a major theme in Morrison's fiction. Still, *Home* is the title of one of Morrison's novels. *Paradise* is a site of what James Clifford term the "trans-local" (Clifford quoted by Wagner-Martin, p. 123). The convent is a crossroad, where the female

characters of *Paradise* come together. Thus, the convent becomes a “‘contact-zone’”<sup>10</sup>. As the title of the novel indicates, the convent is a haven for the lost female characters descending from different cultural and social backgrounds. In other words, it is a home for the homeless. Besides, the prefix of ‘trans’ in Clifford’s concept of the “‘trans-local’” dismantles the postmodern and post-colonial transgress of borders from within the American soil. The female characters in *Paradise* including Mavis, Grace, Consolata as well as Seneca literally leave home to find ‘home’. The character of Consolata is the vehicle through which the girls of convent could have a sense of belonging. Besides, her name connotes consolation and solace. However, the irony is that the Christ-like Consolata is herself drown in alcoholism that she cannot escape from her past. When she states “‘they always come back to stay on’” (p.222), Morrison shows how the convent has become an origin. It turns out to be a site of maternal healing. For instance, every time Mavis comes back to the convent on her Cadillac, she finds a newcomer seeking solace from Consolata. The convent is a microcosmic example of home. On a larger scale, home for African Americans, belongs to Africa. Reverend Richard explains to Patricia, “‘Africa is our home, Pat, whether you like it or not’” (p.210). Richard carries on preaching, “‘home is not a little thing. I’m not saying it is. But can’t you even imagine what it must feel like to have a true home? I don’t mean heaven. I mean a real earthly home. Not some fortress you bought and built up and have to keep everybody locked it in or out. A real home’” (p.213). By alluding to Africa, Morrison joins the diasporic novelists of Salman Rushdie, Hanif Kureishi, V.S Naipul and others. Home, then, “‘becomes a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination ... it is a place of no-return, even if it is possible to visit the geographical territory that is seen as the place of origin’” (Brah quoted by McLeod, p.142). Moreover, Morrison’s definition demarcates the link between place and ‘home’. Place is something that one can own but the feeling of being ‘home’ occurs at an abstract level. In other words, ‘home’ becomes an imagined community as Benedict Anderson puts it.

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<sup>10</sup> The concept of “‘contact-zone’” is first coined by Pratt describing the spaces where “‘disparate cultures meet, clash and grapple with each other often in highly asymmetrical relations of dominance and subordination like colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out across the globe today’” (Pratt quoted by Ashcroft et al, p. 48). However, the concept is generally used to describe the interaction of identity and difference

### 3. Deconstructing Subjectivity

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Before the coming of postmodernism and post-colonialism, subjectivity has always been seen as unified, centered and essential. The traditional conception of subjectivity as unity starts with the Enlightenment particularly with Descartes, Kant and Rousseau. For instance, the Cartesian cogito ‘I think, therefore I am’ implies that “the self thinks. What it thinks of at this primal stage is itself, which it conceives to be a unity” (Mansfield, p. 19). Before investigating the mechanism of deconstructing subjectivity, it is worth to linger at the term deconstruction itself. Generally speaking, the minimalist label of deconstruction is used to describe the corpus of Jacques Derrida. In this regard, Derrida admits that “deconstruction is a word I have never liked and whose fortune has disagreeably surprised me” (Derrida quoted by Royle, p. 23). The proliferation of the term deconstruction has made of it a method. In fact, deconstruction “is not a school or an ‘ism’. There is no such thing as ‘deconstructionism’ (McQuillan quoted by Royle, p. 23). The Marxist critic, Terry Eagleton defines deconstruction as “reading against the grain’ or ‘reading the text against itself, with the purpose of ‘knowing the text as it cannot know itself’ (Eagleton quoted by Barry, p. 68). However, the use of the term deconstruction here in ‘deconstructing subjectivity’ is about the Derridean apocalyptic endism of the subject ‘I’. It is identical to the instance when Derrida declares the death of metaphysics,

That philosophy died yesterday, since Hegel or Marx, Nietzsche, or Heidegger—and philosophy should still wander toward the meaning of its death—or that it has always lived knowing itself to be dying (as is silently confessed in the shadow of the very discourse which declared *philosophia perennis*) ; that philosophy died one day, within history, or that it has always fed on its own agony, on the violent way it opens history by opposing itself to nonphilosophy (Derrida, p. 97)

The deconstruction of metaphysics or what Foucault terms the “episteme”<sup>11</sup> aligns with the prevalent discourse of alterity in Morrison’s trilogy. Throughout history, Derrida suggests that Western philosophy has always favored speech over writing. Derrida’s deconstruction of the episteme corroborates with Morrison’s destabilization of race and gender. For instance,

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<sup>11</sup> In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault defines the episteme as “a slice of history common to all branches of knowledge, which imposes on each one the same norms and postulates, a general stage of reason, a certain structure of thought that the men of a particular period cannot escape—a great body of legislation written once and for all by some anonymous hand” (p. 211).

throughout Morrison's work whiteness is always seen as superior to blackness. The black female is also inferior to both the white and black male. One may consider the example of slavery in *Beloved*, racism and classism in *Jazz* and patriarchy in *Paradise*. The discourse of alterity feeds on stereotypes in order to demonize the other. In a colonial context, Abdul R. Janmohamed argues that "colonialist fiction is generated predominantly by the ideological machinery of the Manichean allegory" (p.22). The texts of Joseph Conrad, E.M Forster as well as Rudyard Kipling always associate the colonized other with inferiority and the colonizer self with superiority. In Morrison's fiction for instance, the logic of Manichaeism privileges whiteness as divine while regarding blackness as satanic.

In one of the racist instances in *Beloved*, Sethe hears Schoolteacher telling his pupils to put her human features on the left and the animal ones on the right,

He [schoolteacher] was talking to his pupils and I heard him say 'which one are you doing? And one of the boys said, 'Sethe.' That's when I stopped because I heard my name ? and then I took a few steps to where I could see what they was doing ... Slow. I was about to turn around and keep on my way to where the muslin was, when I heard him say, 'No, no. That's not the way. I told you to put her human characteristics on the left ; her animal ones on the right. And don't forget to line them up' (p. 193)

As his name indicates, Schoolteacher teaches his young pupils the ideology of racism and white supremacy. The indoctrination of this white megalomania is inherited from one generation to another. This means that one is not born, but becomes racist. Ideology is constructed. Besides, Sethe does not even know what does the term 'characteristic' means. Not until Mrs. Garner tells her, "a characteristic is a feature. A thing that's natural to a thing" (p.195). Morrison traces back the history of white supremacy throughout the American literary canon. For instance, Morrison's reading of "Moby-Dick" in which Ahab's manic obsessiveness with the whiteness of the whale becomes a synecdoche for white America's compulsive relation to the African-American aspects of its culture, past and present" (Bloom, p. 1). The hidden truth of such ideologies in fiction becomes explicit in Morrison's non-fictional work particularly literary criticism. In *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*, Morrison examines the literary work of Poe, Hemingway, Melville, Cather and Twain in order to show to what extent the African presence of the black other is crucial in the construction of the American imagination. American identity has always been linked to the problematic of race. To be American is to be white (p. 47). Thus, Americans from African descents including Morrison struggle a crisis at the level of subjectivity. The post-coloniality of *Playing in the Dark* makes

of it a simulacrum of Said's *Orientalism* as Tessa Roynon argues, "Morrison pays tribute to scholars whose (then-recent) work challenged and unsettled Western cultural imperialism, such as Edward Said (to whose theory of 'Orientalism' her own theory of 'Africanism' in *Playing in the Dark* is clearly indebted)" (p. 94). Morrison's discourse of Africanism, which reduces blacks to a Lacanian radical Other recalls Said's conception of Orientalism as a "style of thought based on an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and (most of the time) 'the Occident.'" (p.2). The existential and cartographical schism of the world into two unequal parts renders the Orient the other of the Occident as is black is the other of white. The cruelty of schoolteacher and his ill-treatment to his slaves is a concrete example of Hegel's concept of the master-slave dialectic that is introduced in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*. According to Hegel, the other is essential in the realization of self-consciousness. The individual subject identifies itself to something that is external to the self. However, sometimes, the dialectic of self/other can be a threat because of existential fear. Thus, the self comes as the hegemonic master while the other negates itself to the position of a slave (Tidd, pp.16/17). *Beloved* is a neo-slave narrative, in the sense that it does not follow the same sequence of the outdated literary form of slave narrative such *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*. Usually, slave narratives marks the passage from the state of slavery to freedom. However, neo-slave narratives including *Beloved* are more experimental. Morrison deconstructs the American history of slavery in order to reconstruct a black postmodern subjectivity.

Subjectivity in Morrison's trilogy is restricted to the structuralist anti-humanist binarism of the signifier and the signified. Derrida's essay of *Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences* puts the fixed relationship between the signifier and signified under erasure. He declares the demise of structuralism. By doing so, Derrida enlarges the scope of subjectivity that has always been enchained by the dialectic Manichaeism. Structure, which is a basic unit in structuralism "has always been neutralized and reduced by the process of giving it a center or of referring it to a point of presence, a fixed point" (p.352). The notion of center effaces the free play of difference. Therefore, Derrida limits sign to the signifier and gets rid of the signified. The submission of the mental image of the signifier puts the process of signification at a dead-end. Poststructuralism highlights the limitations and shortcomings of structuralism. However, it is not a break with structuralism. For instance, the poststructuralists of Derrida, Barthes and Foucault build on De Saussure's theories in order to come up with their own. In *Mythologies*, Barthes goes beyond the Saussurean first level of signification that is a signifier and a signified. He thus coins the term metalanguage in order to generate a second level of



signification. The notion of metalanguage implies that there is always a surplus of meaning. Besides, the Foucauldian concept of discourse also deconstructs the unity and stability of subjectivity because of the power relations between slave/master, man/woman, black/white and so on.

The inclusion of hybrid characters in Morrison's fiction obscures the difference between blackness and whiteness. The presence of multi-racial characters in Morrison's novels dates back to *The Bluest Eye*. For instance, the half-white half-black character of Soaphead Church is obsessed with what Morrison calls "anglophilia". The latter advocates the racist ideologies of De Gobineau particularly his theory that "all civilizations derive from the white race" (p. 186). In *Jazz*, through the art of storytelling exemplified by True Belle, the reader learns about the mixed-race character of Golden Gray. True Belle works as a slave for her white lady Vera Louise. Gray is the last name of his mother Vera and Golden because his hair is as blond as Vera's. It takes eighteen years for Vera to tell Golden about his black-skinned father. In this, Golden enters into a transition of in-betweenness. He thus leaves his white mother in search of his black origin. This stance of liminality recalls Bhabha's concept of the 'beyond',

The 'beyond' is neither a new horizon, nor a leaving behind of the past ... we find ourselves in the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion. For there is a sense of disorientation, a disturbance of direction, in the 'beyond': an exploratory, restless movement caught so well in the French rendition of the words *au-déla* – here and there, on all sides, *fort/da*, hither and thither, back and forth (Bhabha, p. 1)

The concept of the 'beyond' is a sphere of hybridity. It is neither blackness nor whiteness but something in middle. Before he finds Henry LesTroy, Golden Gray "had always thought there was only one kind—True Belle's kind. Black and nothing. Like Henry LesTroy. Like the filthy woman [Wild] snoring on the cot. But there was another kind—like himself" (*Jazz*, p.177). Golden Gray's hybrid origin challenges the idea of an essential subject and embrace Bhabha's conception of subjectivity as a discursive space.

The push and pull factors of The Great Migration in *Jazz* are mainly economical. The City, the fictional Harlem, is marked by capitalism. Morrison's fiction has always been occupied by the question of class. For instance, in *Sula*, a black community inhabits a place called the 'bottom'. In *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison shows how capitalism gives rise to racism. Because of such a

capitalist economical system, Joe and Violet move north to the City for a better life. The north is always associated with prosperity. For instance, the narrator in *Jazz* famously admits “I’m crazy about this City” (p.15). In his seminal essay *Cultural Identity and Diaspora*, Stuart Hall takes advantage of the poststructuralist non-concept of ‘différance’ in order to debunk the doubleness of the center/periphery as well as south/el northe. Hall makes a shift from the repeatability and alterity of différance to the postmodern nomadism of the diaspora. For Hall, diaspora and cultural identity are “a matter of ‘becoming’ as well of ‘being’ (Hall, 225). The idea of diaspora as a matter of becoming is purely Deleuzian. The concept of becoming “explodes the ideas about what we are and what we can be beyond the categories that seem contain us: beyond the boundaries separating human beings from animal, man for woman, child from adult, micro from macro and even perceptible and understandable from imperceptible and incomprehensible” (Stivale, p. 99). The scene where waves of black people migrate up north on the train leads to the “emergence of the interstices” (Bhabha, p.2). The train acts like the ship of the middle passage. It is the embodiment of the liminal passage between the phantasm of the City and the left-behind past of Virginia.

Like *Sula*, *Paradise* is constructed in terms of binary thinking. From the very beginning of the novel, Morrison sets the setting into two halves. On the one hand, there is the purely patriarchal town of Ruby. On the other, there is the Convent, which is marked by matriarchy. The sixteen miles of distance between the two makes of the Convent as the other side of Ruby. However, they are not clear and cut from each other. The interaction of the two is what bestow tension to the novel. Morrison usually constructs a point of conflict in order to deconstruct essentialist thinking. Linden Peach draws an analogy between Derrida and Morrison in relation to the philosophical theme of good and evil in *Sula*, “Western thought, as the European literary theorist and philosopher Derrida recognized, is also characterized by a tendency to construct a hierarchy of values ... In *Sula*, this hierarchy, like the traditional binary opposition of good and evil, is resisted by the nature of the novel itself (p.45). Due to its narrative deconstruction of binarism, *Sula* is considered as Morrison’s first postmodern novel. Morrison continues this postmodern tradition in *Paradise* mainly through the dichotomies of patriarchy/matriarchy, male/female as well as white/black. Despite the fact that black/postcolonial feminism is against the Eurocentric attitude of French feminism, theorists such as Helene Cixous has also contributed to the disruption of female subjectivity. For example, Cixous interrogates,

Everywhere (where) ordering intervenes, where a law organizes what is thinkable by oppositions (dual, irreconcilable; or sublatale, dialectical). And all these pairs of oppositions are couples. Does this mean something? Is the fact that Logocentrism subjects thought – all system, related to ‘the’ couple, man/woman? (Cixous quoted by Malpas, pp. 71/72).

In *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles*, Derrida investigates the fragmented style of Nietzsche. The anti-feminist style of Nietzsche introduces the problematic of “‘truth’” as a woman. He presents ‘truth’ as a veiled woman. Thus, one should unveil it in order to reach the ‘truth’. In other words, “‘it could be said that if style were a man (much as the penis, according to Freud is the ‘normal prototype of fetishes’), then, writing would be a woman’” (Derrida, p. 57). Morrison dismantles phallogocentrism in *Paradise* through her experimental style of writing. Derrida coins the term ‘phallogocentrism’ in order to “‘deconstruct the Lacanian reference to the phallus as master signifier within the symbolic order’” (Wortham, p. 89). For instance, when they have established Ruby, the Old Fathers engrave the motto of “‘Beware The Furrow of His Brow’” (p. 86) on the Oven. The saying could be interpreted as a divine warning against hatred and racism. At a later stage, Morrison alters the motto in saying, “‘be the Furrow of *Her* Brow’” (p. 159). By providing a feminine version of the saying, Morrison challenges the phallogocentric history of Ruby. Like the 123 Bluestone Road in *Beloved*, the oven is a site of collective memory. Morrison deconstructs the patriarchal dogma of Ruby through fiction itself. Language is a discursive medium. Thus, Morrison engenders the phallogocentric language of the Old Fathers that is based on masculine domination.

Morrison deconstructs race through the removal of racial codes as she does in *Recitatif*. In this regard, Morrison states, “‘the only short story I have ever written, ‘Recitatif,’ was an experiment in the removal of all racial codes from a narrative about two characters of different races for whom racial identity is crucial’” (Morrison, p. xi). *Recitatif* is about two young characters who have met each other in the orphanage of St. Bonny. What is interesting about *Recitatif* is the fact that the reader never knows who is black and who is white. At one stage, Twyla admits that “‘it was something else to be stuck in a strong place *with a girl from a whole other race*’” (my emphasis, p. 203). The experimentation of *Recitatif* refutes the process labeling, in the sense that it should be read with no preconceived ideas neither about Twyla nor about Roberta. The coming of *Recitatif* and *Paradise* proves Foucault’s prediction when he has said that “‘perhaps one day, this century will be known as Deleuzian’” (Foucault, p. 343). Deleuze is mainly distinguished as a philosopher of difference along with Derrida and Morrison as well. Thanks

to her textual deconstruction of race, Morrison practices and thus celebrates the philosophy of difference. As in *Recitatif*, Morrison's *Paradise* begins and finishes with a mystery that is never solved throughout the whole novel. Morrison exposes *Paradise* with the following catchphrase, "they shoot the white girl first" (p.3). However, she never reveals who is who and which is which. It is up to the reader to figure out the disclosure of *Paradise*. This instance recalls Deleuze conception of difference in itself, in the sense that *Paradise* as well as *Recitatif* should be read with no point of departure in terms of race, gender as well as class. The concept of difference is no longer seen as the distinction between two species. The Deleuzian radical conception of difference emanates from the self as opposed to any external difference. Deleuze borrows Nietzsche's concept of the 'eternal return' in order to show how,

Difference is an event that is joyful; it is not the difference of this being or for this end. With each event of difference life is transformed; life becomes other than itself because life is difference. Consequently, the only 'thing' that 'is' is difference, with each repetition of difference being different. Only difference returns, and it returns *eternally* (Spinks, pp.85/86).

In each novel of Morrison's trilogy, the reader encounters a mysterious character who is beyond definition. One may think of Beloved in *Beloved*, the unreliable narrator in *Jazz* as well as the white woman in *Paradise*. Thanks to her experimental style, Morrison turns the discourse of otherness upside down. The other in Morrison's fiction is no longer seen as a subaltern. She challenges totalitarianism as it is depicted in Orwell's *1984* as well as *The Handmaid's Tale* written by Margaret Atwood. Totality effaces difference and shapes individual subjects in terms of sameness. The dialogic nature of Morrison's characters evokes the multiplicity of selves. As in the ethics of Emmanuel Levinas, the face of the other in Morrison's fiction is a "moment of infinity that goes beyond any idea which I can produce of the other" (Hand, p.36). Infinity replaces the reductive totalitarian perception of the other. To put in Segalen terminology, the self becomes an exot. Segalen coins the concept of 'exot' referring to those "persons possessing a great capacity for experiencing diversity and hence exoticism" (Segalen, p. 74). Furthermore, Segalen draws from Flaubert the term "bovarysm" to describe how "diversity lies at the very core of the individual, who imagines himself/herself as an other" (ibid). Morrison blurs the distinction between the self and the other. Thus, the removal the racial codes makes of Morrison a signifier with no ultimate signified. To conclude this chapter, it is worth to note again that Linda Hutcheon's *A Poetics of Postmodernism* forms a guiding thread in the study of Morrison's trilogy. By making a dialogue with history, historiographic metafiction hinders the

construction of one's identity through what Morrison calls 'rememory'. Peter V. Zima argues that the "word 'identity' raises questions concerning the definition of this frequently used and abused concept. Theorists of identity such as Heiner Keupp tends to use 'identity' and 'subjectivity' as synonyms" (p. 16). Subjectivity is a nomadic concept, in the sense that it is sometimes used interchangeably with identity. As we have seen, in the philosophy of postmodernism, it is illegitimate to deal with identity. Instead, "the term preferred by postmodernists to apply to individuals is not so much 'self' as subject" (Butler, p. 50). Morrison's black female characters are depicted as subjects for the reason that they are subjected to a variety of discourses particularly racism, sexism as well as classism. Therefore, the first chapter of this research paper finds useful to examine Morrison's trilogy under the eyes of intersectionality. Its main concern is the quest for a self. The search for an authentic self highlights the postmodern fragmentation of subjectivity. Besides, the names of Morrison's characters are onomatopoeic. For instance, In *Jazz*, Joe's last name of Trace triggers off the Derridean concept of 'trace'. In this way, subjectivity becomes a process of signification. In other words, Joe's search for selfhood resembles Derrida's deferral of meaning. The discourse of alterity is based on the binary opposition of the self and the other in terms of race, gender as well as class. Homi K. Bhabha's concepts of the "beyond", "in-between" and "liminality" play a major role in the deconstruction of what Abdul Jan Mohamed terms Manichean Allegory. These concepts wage war on totality and embrace the Levinasian conception of infinity. In the same vein, Morrison uses the technique of "removal of all the racial codes" (Morrison, p. xi). By doing so, the identity of Beloved in *Beloved*, the narrator in *Jazz* and the white woman in *Paradise* remains an enigma. It is for this reason why Morrison is regarded as a postmodern novelist. She does the same as the post-structuralists of Jacques Derrida and Gilles Deleuze. To put it simply, Morrison practices the philosophy of difference.

Despite her writings about racial difference, Morrison has been harshly criticized for being an essentialist. Postmodernism and post-colonialism are anti-essentialist. For instance, Edward Said has dealt with the Eurocentrism of the colonial discourse. To put it in Matthew Arnold's terminology, European culture is conceived as "the best that has been thought and said" (Arnold quoted by Ashcroft and Ahluwalia p. 86). Ironically speaking, Morrison falls in trap of essentialism that she is trying to deconstruct. *Paradise* is steeped in an intense afrocentrism. Ruby is an all-black patriarchal town. Therefore, it is based on the exclusion of both whites and women. This is made obvious when people of Ruby repeat the refrain of their Old Fathers, "Oklahoma is Indians, Negroes and God mixed. All the rest is fodder" (p.56). This "against

white'' (p. 104) attitude destabilizes the meaning of Americaness. Morrison usually associates the experience of African Americans to Native Americans in order to reconstruct American identity. In the utopian like town of Ruby ''there were no whites (moral or malevolent) around to agitate or incense them, make them ugly up the Oven and defy the adults'' (p.102). The afrocentrism of *Paradise* recalls Jean Paul Sartre description of Negritude as an anti-racist racism. According to Sartre, ''this antiracist racism is the only road that will lead the abolition of racial differences'' (p. 296). The only way to erase essentialism is by another counter essentialist discourse. Thus, Morrison employs afrocentrism as a kind of Spivakian strategic essentialism.

## Chapter II. Palimpsests

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### 1. Paratext

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According to Oxford English Dictionary, the term palimpsest denotes a manuscript on which it is written twice at the cost of the original. The term is made famous by Gérard Genette in order to describe literature in second degree. The palimpsest, according to Genette, is the refraction of the hypertext by another previous hypotext that is already written (Allen, p. 108). In this chapter, palimpsest works as an umbrella term that covers what Peter Barry calls “intertextual elements” (p. 91) including pastiche, parody and allusion. Intertextuality is as old as history itself. For instance, Baudrillard’s intertextual concept of the simulacrum can be seen as a “kind of latter-day platonism” (Barry, p. 85). At any rate, the use of intertextuality in postmodern thought has a different radical mechanism. Unlike the traditional conception of intertextuality, Hutcheon argues that postmodernism uses intertextuality to highlight historicity or Said’s concept of the ‘worldly’ giving the implication of the past presence of historical and literary texts (p. 125). The historiographic metafictionality of Morrison’s trilogy bridges the gap between the past/present dyad through intertextuality. The intersection of the postcolonial notion of the ‘worldly’ and the postmodernity of Morrison’s trilogy is what gives rise to fragmented postmodern subjectivity as it is analyzed in the previous chapter. Then, this section is mainly concerned with the postmodern use of intertextuality. First, it tries to shed light on the three biblical and gnostic epigraphs that begin the trilogy. Epigraphs constitute what Genette term the paratext, in the sense that they are neither inside nor outside the trilogy. The paratext includes titles, the name of the author, prefaces, epigraphs and all those liminal devices that take place in the threshold of a particular text. On the other hand, it is interesting to show how Morrison, to put in Henry Louis Gates terminology, signifies *Jazz* and *Beloved* on jazz music. Jazz aesthetics stand for Morrison’s employment of those rhizomatic experimental techniques coming from the music of jazz in her fiction. Ultimately, this chapter provide a comparative reading of Morrison’s *Jazz* and Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby* in terms of parody. Both novels provide two different perspectives of the Jazz Age. However, unlike parody, pastiche is a blank imitation. Morrison’s *Beloved* pastiches Twain’s *Huckleberry Finn* while *Paradise* pastiches Kerouac’s *On the Road* especially at the level of searching for identity.

Before the epigraph, there is the peritext. This zone, Genette argues, belongs to the publisher. It includes the cover, the author’s name and the title page (p. 16). Genette differentiates between

three kinds of naming including onymity, anonymity as well as pseudonymity. Morrison's name falls within the last category. Toni is not the real name of Morrison. According to Rachel Lister, Morrison is born as Chloe Ardelia Wofford. However, during her under graduation years at the University of Howard, Chloe has altered her name to Toni Morrison. Moreover, she has always preferred to submit her manuscripts under the name of Toni Morrison particularly in her debut novel *The Bluest Eye* (Lister, p. 1). On the other hand, Stephanie Li argues that Morrison's first name is a "reference to Anthony, the baptismal name she received after converting to Catholicism when she was twelve" (Li, p. 12). Besides, the pseudonym of Toni Morrison evokes Charlotte Bronte's assertion of adopting Christian male names as a pen name, "we [The Brontes] veiled our own names under those of Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell; the ambiguous choice being dictated by a sort of conscientious scruple at assuming Christian names positively masculine, while we did not like to declare ourselves women" (Bronte, p. 16). Victorian literature is mainly dominated by male novelists including Dickens, Hardy and others. Thus, for most feminist writers, Victorianism is seen as an epistemological struggle for writing. Signing her novels by the name of Toni, Morrison pays "homage to the convention... anonymity runs in [her] blood. The desire to be veiled still possess [her]" (Woolf, p. 63). The experience of realist novelists such as The Brontes and George Elliot is relevant to that of Morrison. Just like women, blacks are excluded from the realm of literature. Even if they have the right to write fiction, whites should always add a preface, so their work may look authentic. One may think of the Dick and Jane prologue in *The Bluest Eye*. Yet, most of Morrison's novels are removed from the shelves of libraries because of their provocative impression on the white reader. Concerning the titles, each novel of the trilogy consists of one word title. First, *Beloved* alludes to Sethe's reincarnated daughter, who comes back to torment her. Second, *Jazz* is a deceiving title since there is no reference to jazz music throughout the whole novel. Instead, *Jazz* is used as a metaphor for jazz aesthetics. Morrison's *Jazz* is a jazz novel, in the sense that it is based on improvisation as a free jazz song. The title of *Paradise* is ironical. Morrison "has often mentioned that her original title for *Paradise* was *War*" (Roynon, p. 64). The irony resides in the fact that there is nothing heavenly about *Paradise*. The novel opens and finishes with chaos, lost souls, violence and discrimination. Thus, *War* sounds an appropriate title for *Paradise*.

The epigraph is located in a third space. It is in the in-between of the peritext and the intertext. It is neither off text nor between the lines. The epigraph thus deconstructs the idea of textuality and intertextuality. The epigraph in particular and the paratext in general are "neither on the



interior nor the exterior: it is both; it is on the threshold; and it is on this very site that we must study it, because essentially, perhaps, its being depends upon its site” (Genette, p. xvii). The first paratext in *Beloved*, “Sixty Million and more” can be read as an epigraph and an epitaph as well. Morrison writes *Beloved* in memoriam of the dead people of the middle passage. Nevertheless, Harold Bloom argues, the reader is not sure whether Morrison dedicates her novel to the six million Jews or the six million African American slaves (Bloom, p. 8). By doing so, Bloom draws an analogy between the historical racial genocides of the middle passage and the holocaust. Postmodern historiographic metafiction rewrites historical events such as the holocaust, World Wars, Chernobyl, and slavery in order to revise history. For instance, *The Crying of Lot 49* written by Thomas Pynchon is highly acclaimed as a post-holocaust text. In an attempt to distance himself from Nazism, Oedipa Mass’ psychotherapist admits that “if I’d been a real Nazi I’d have chosen Jung, nicht wahr? But I chose Freud instead, the Jew” (Pynchon, p. 102). As Pynchon, Morrison’s epigraph is a lamentation for the untold history of both the Jews and African American slaves. The second epigraph in *Beloved* is taken from the *New Testament* particularly from *Romans*,

I will call them my people,  
which were not my people;  
and her beloved,  
which was not my beloved.

The biblical reference from the *Romans* is rewritten as a poem for the departed Beloved. the liminality of the epigraph and the epitaph mediates between the dead and the living. *Beloved*’s biblical paratext recalls Derrida’s concept of the ‘supplement’. The epigraph can be considered as such since the ‘supplement’ includes all the peritexts that are off-text. In other words, the epigraph supplements the main text that is *Beloved*. Derrida deduces, “the supplement is maddening, because it is neither presence nor absence” (Derrida quoted by Royle, p. 49). Linden Peach contextualizes the biblical paratext in *Beloved*. “its title [epigraph] comes from a part of Paul’s epistle to the Romans in which he in turn is quoting Hosea in the Old Testament. One of Hosea’s three children is called ‘not beloved’, a representative of the Israelists who had been temporarily rejected as punishment for their own betrayal” (Peach, pp. 99/100). In this context, the divine paratext ‘I will call them my people’ comes into being reclaiming the loss of the people. The existence of Beloved relies on the remembrance of her name. This is why Beloved keeps telling Paul D “call me my name” (p. 117). It is no coincidence that Morrison’s last word in *Beloved* is “Beloved” (p. 275). As in the epigraph, the name of Beloved is a call

from the haunting past of slavery. It should not be doomed to oblivion. A contrapuntal reading of the epigraph may be useful in order to dismantle its hegemonic subconscious. Similar to Derrida's reading against the grain, Edward Said's contrapuntal reading is a "form of 'reading back' from the perspective of the colonized, to show how the submerged but crucial presence of the empire emerges in canonical texts" (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, p. 92). The epigraph is an instance of Gramscian hegemony<sup>12</sup>. The Bible has always been used by the Roman Empire as a pretext to justify colonialism. Here, Morrison quotes from The Bible particularly *Romans* to show how slavery is legitimized by the apparatus of the church. Besides, as in the epilogue of *The Bluest Eye*, the epigraph is a white lens through which the rest of the novel should be read.

The two remaining epigraphs in *Jazz* and *Paradise* are extracted from the same reference. Both epigraphs appear on *Thunder, the Perfect Mind*, a chapter from the gnostic scriptures that are discovered in Egypt. The Nag Hammadi has a huge influence on contemporary literature and art in general starting from Morrison's *Jazz* and *Paradise* to Umberto Eco's *Foucault's Pendulum* (Taussig et al, p. viii). The first epigraph in *Jazz* paves the way for several themes that are previously dealt with including the dialogism of postmodern subjectivity,

I am the name of the sound  
and the sound of the name.  
I am the sign of the letter  
and the designation of the division.

Considering Morrison's literary history, there is a slight change between *The Bluest Eye* and *Jazz*. This shift is an artistic crossover from the graphic to the phonetic. For instance, in *The Bluest Eye*, the concept of beauty undergoes the process of commodification. Pecola is driven mad by the idea of becoming white. As the title indicates, *The Bluest Eye* depends on sight. On the other hand, *Jazz* begins with a sound that is 'Sth' (p. 3). Therefore, the first line in the epigraph 'I am the name of sound' places the two novels in contrast. As long as postmodern

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<sup>12</sup> The Italian Marxist critic of Antonio Gramsci first initiates the concept of hegemony. Gramsci shows how the ruling class dominates by consent without the exercise of power. The epigraph is thus an instance of hegemony because it pushes the colonized subject to believe that the act of slavery and imperialism are justified by the apparatus of the church. According to Gramsci, "hegemony arises from the power of the ruling class to convince other classes that its interests are the interests of all. Domination is thus exerted not by force, nor even necessarily by active persuasion, but by a more subtle and inclusive power over the economy, and over state apparatuses such as education and the media, by which the ruling class interest is presented as the common interest and thus comes to be taken for granted. Hegemony is important in imperialism because the capacity to influence the thought of the colonized is by far the most sustained and potent operation of imperial power in colonized regions. Indeed, an 'empire' is distinct from a collection of subject states forcibly controlled by a central power by virtue of the effectiveness of its cultural hegemony" (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, p. 44)

subjectivity is concerned, the epigraph is highly Derridean. The concept of *différance* is omnipresent in Morrison's fiction. The two first lines from the epigraph are about the mysterious identity of *Jazz*' unknown narrator. In saying, 'I am the name of the sound/and the sound of the name', Morrison illustrates that the narrator is neither a sound nor a name but something beyond the reach of the reader's imagination. Thus, as Derrida argues, one cannot think of *différance* as one cannot think of the identity of the narrator.

In *Paradise*, the epigraph is written in italics. It takes place in the in-between of the novel. It is neither on the outside nor on the inside but somewhere in the middle. Therefore, *Paradise*'s paratext embodies Genette's definition of an epigraph. That is a "quotation placed en exergue [in the exergue], generally at the head of a work or section of a work; literally, en exergue means off the work; which is going a little too far" (Genette, p. 144). Quoting Stendhal, Genette maintains, "the epigraph must heighten the reader's feeling, his emotion, if emotion there be, and not present a more or less philosophical opinion about the situation" (p. 158). The functions of the epigraph may vary. However, the gnostic epigraph in *Paradise* "consists of commenting on the text, whose meaning it indirectly specifies or emphasizes" (Genette, p. 157). The paratextual epigraph in *Paradise* is a comment on the novel itself, whose significance "will not be clear or confirmed until the whole book is read" (p. 158). The second half of the epigraph foreshadows the ending of *Paradise*,

and go up to their resting place,  
And they will find me there,  
And they will live,  
And they will not die again.

After the terrorist attack on the girls of the Convent, the novel comes to the denouement. In the ultimate pages of *Paradise*, "Consolata lies in the arms of Piedade (whose name means 'compassion' in Portuguese). In death, Consolata experiences reunion with the mother, a fullness and a completion that are total" (stave, p. 72). Therefore, the four last lines of the epigraph can be read as a prolepsis of the reunion of Consolata and Piedade in the paradise-like ocean after the former has been killed by the patriarchs of Ruby.

## 2. Signifyin(g) on Jazzthetics

The paratextuality of *Jazz* may be deceiving at first sight. At the semiotic level, the outset of Morrison's novel gives the impression that is a historical novel about the evolution of jazz. This is intensified by the capitalized title of *JAZZ* as well as the purple color of the cover, which is a reference to the Blues. However, after the reading of *Jazz* from cover to cover, readers may change their mind for the reason that they never come across jazz music and musicians throughout the whole novel. This means that the manifestation of jazz in *Jazz* as well as *Beloved* is not thematic but rather aesthetic. By doing so, Morrison adopts Kerouac's technique of spontaneous prose. Jazz is a main influence on the Beatniks particularly Kerouac, Ginsberg and Burroughs. By the creation of spontaneous prose, Kerouac invents a kind of writing like "jazz and bop, in the sense of, say, a tenor man drawing a breath, and blowing a phrase on his saxophone, till he runs out of breath" (Russell, p. 26). For instance, Ginsberg's masterpiece of *Howl* is written in one sitting. Like *Howl*, *Beloved* and *Jazz* are produced with the spirit of jazz experimentalism. Morrison's fiction is fused with the music of jazz. The connection between the two is better illustrated by Horace's well-known dictum "ut pictura poesis—the poem should be like a picture" (Horace quoted by Albright, p. xi). Morrison is the inverse of Horace. *Beloved* and *Jazz* are written as a jazz performance. Besides, jazz is postmodern. The non-linear high and low notes of jazz are rhizomatic. By the concept of the 'rhizome', Deleuze means,

A form of plant that can extend itself through its underground horizontal tuber-like root system and develop new plants. In Deleuze and Guattari's use of the term, the rhizome is a concept that 'maps' a process of networked, relational and transversal thought, and a way of being without 'tracing' the construction of that map as a fixed entity ... rhizomes have no hierarchical order to their compounding networks. Instead, Deleuzian rhizomatic thinking functions as an open-ended productive configuration, where random associations and connections propel, sidetrack and abstract relations between components. Any parts within a rhizome may be connected to another part, forming a milieu that is decentered, with no distinctive end or entry point (Colman, pp. 232/234).

Like jazz, Morrison's trilogy is rhizomatic, in the sense that is non-linear. It has neither a beginning nor an end. The non-conventional writing of *Beloved*, *Jazz* and *Paradise* is chaotic. Unlike the realist linearity of narration, Morrison's trilogy is based on jazz improvisation. It is non-hierarchical in terms of binary thinking. Furthermore, Jazz music is nomadic, mobile and diasporic. One of the main tenets of postmodernism, according to Peter Barry, is to challenge "the distinction between high and low culture, and highlight texts which work as hybrid blends of the two" (p. 91). The emergence of jazz is characterized by what Terry Eagleton calls

‘culture wars’. For example, Krin Gabbard traces back the etymology of the word jazz throughout history. In the turn of the century, jazz comes into existence as the low culture of Afro-Americans in the districts of New Orleans particularly with musicians such as Louis Armstrong. However, “by the 1950s, jazz had become an elite music” (p. 5). The origins of jazz are African American. Basing on Thomas Kuhn, the colonization of jazz by whites has led Scott DeVeaux to conclude that “jazz history, like all history, is usually written backwards” (p. 4). Because of its tautological proliferation, jazz has become a cultural industry. To put in in Theodor Adorno’s terminology, it is a kind of perennial fashion because of massification, standardization as well as commodification. As with fashion, Adorno argues, “what is important is show, not the thing itself; instead of jazz itself being composed, ‘light’ music, the most dismal products of the popular-song industry, is dressed up” (Adorno, p. 122). Before being penetrated by capitalism, jazz has always been and will always be crucial in the construction of black subjectivity. For instance, the highly influential jazz figure of Miles Davis is a symbol of black pride. Jazz and Blues are part of black collective consciousness. The music of the Blues originates from the pain of slavery. In *Beloved*, “they [slaves] sang they the women they knew; the children they had been ; the animals they had tamed themselves or seen others tame. They sang of bosses and masters and misses; of mules and dogs and the shamelessness of life” (p. 108). The spirit of Black music is everywhere in *Beloved* as well as *Jazz*. It is a metaphor of freedom in midst of slavery and discrimination. Slaves sing in the plantations. They sing on the ships of the transatlantic passage. Jazz and Blues migrate with blacks from the south to the north and from the condition of slavery to freedom. As James Baldwin states in *Sonny’s Blues*, a short story that blends music in fiction, black music is “the only light we’ve got in all this darkness” (Baldwin quoted by Simawe, p. xii). Besides, Jazz and the blues have always been connected to the concept of ‘race’.

The black music of jazz in *Beloved* and *Jazz* is equated with the Russian Formalist concept of ‘skaz’. As in Twain’s *Huckleberry Finn* and Salinger’s *The Catcher in the Rye*, the concept of skaz is “used to designate a type of first-person narration that has the characteristics of the spoken rather than the written word” (Lodge, p. 18). Thus, *Jazz* and *Beloved* are skaz novels since they highlight the importance of the spoken rather than the written word. This is made obvious by the paratextual epigraph in *Jazz* “I am the name of the sound and the sound of the name”. Morrison paraphrases the epigraph in *Beloved* in saying, “in the beginning there were no words. In the beginning was the sound, and they all knew what the sound sounded like” (p. 259). In a Derridean way, Morrison privileges the phonocentric oral dimension of her texts.

Orality is a counter discourse to the Eurocentric literary canon of the West. This passage demonstrates that the “English word is much younger than the sound patterns of music that originated in African culture” (Eckstein, p. 134). Morrison maintains this African oral tradition in *The Bluest Eye* with expressions like “Quiet as it’s kept” (p. 5). *Jazz* begins with the sound “sth”. The same sound is uttered in *Beloved* by a black women “when she misses the needle’s eye” (p. 172). With these black oral vernacular statements, Morrison rewrites the hegemonic history of white America from the margin.

Jazz aesthetic refers to “literature that incorporates the riffs and improvisation of jazz music” (Page, p. x). In other words, jazz aesthetic is about the inclusion of experimental literary techniques that stem from the music of jazz into literature. Then, the term of jazz aesthetic is linked to the poststructuralist notion of intertextuality. The concept of intertextuality is first coined by Julia Kristeva by which she means “the passage from one sign to another” (McAfee, p. 26). Kristeva further illustrates her concept of intertextuality that has always been doomed to misconception,

The term inter-textuality denotes this transposition of one (or several) sign system(s) into another; but since this term has often been understood in the banal sense of ‘study of sources,’ we prefer the term *transposition* because it specifies that the passage from one signifying system to another demands a new articulation of the thetic—of enunciative and denotative positionality. If one grants that every signifying practice is a field of transpositions of various signifying systems (an inter-textuality), one then understands that ‘place’ of enunciation and its denoted ‘object’ are never single, complete, and identical to themselves, but always plural, shattered, capable of being tabulated. In this way polysemy [multiple levels or kinds of meaning] can also be seen as the result of a semiotic polyvalence—an adherence to different sign systems (Kristeva quoted by McAfee, p. 26).

Kristeva’s poststructuralist conception of intertextuality is paradoxically indebted to the formalism of Bakhtin and the structuralism of Saussure. Bakhtin is the first one to introduce what is known in postmodernism as intertextuality. His theory of dialogism underlines the multiplicity of voices in the literary genre of the novel. However, Bakhtin’s theory of dialogism remains reductive because of its limitation of polyphony only to the literary genre of the novel. On the contrary, Poetry can be dialogic as well. One may think of T.S Eliot’s *The Waste Land*, which draws on different travesties including Baudelaire’s poem *Au Lecteur* (Eliot, p. 6). Besides, T. S Eliot himself has highly contributed to the development of intertextuality before

its appearance as a postmodern concept. For instance, in his seminal essay, *Tradition and the Individual Talent*, Eliot makes clear that “no poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone; you must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead” (Eliot, p. 115). Intertextuality refutes the autonomy of texts. Literature and art are no longer seen as a self-contained urn as in New Criticism. Cultural productions bear on an existing body of literature. Morrison bases *Beloved* and *Jazz* on the vernacular nature of jazz music. By so doing, Morrison embodies Levi-Strauss’ notion of the bricoleur<sup>13</sup>. At any rate, the most relevant theory of intertextuality to Morrison’s use of jazz aesthetic is Henry Louis Gates’ Signifyin(g). From a post-colonial point of view, Gates’ concept of the Signifyin(g) is used as,

A metaphor for formal revision, or intertextuality, within the Afro-American literary tradition’ (ibid.: xxi). ‘Signifyin(g)’ represents the peculiar relation African-American writers have with regard to Standard English and the vernacular of black American speech. Like Derrida’s term difference, ‘Signifyin(g)’ exemplifies the features and processes of language to which it refers (Allen, p. 167).

As Julia Kristeva, Gates is another example of the return to Bakhtin and Saussure. However, unlike Kristeva, Gates’ theory of the Signifyin(g) is highly post-colonial. The connection between African and African American literary heritage is relational. In other words, as in Saussurean structuralism, a signifier refers to an already signified. For example, Morrison’s *Beloved* signifies on the African-American literary genre of Slave Narratives.

On the back cover of *Jazz*, the novel is described “like the music of its title, it is a dazzlingly lyric play on elemental themes, as soaring and daring as a Charlie Parker solo, as heartbreakingly powerful as the blues” (*Jazz*, back cover). Here, the comparison of Morrison to Charlie Parker is not arbitrary. The latter is known as the master of improvisation in jazz. The Signifyin(g) on Jazz aesthetic musicalizes Morrison’s fiction. This is achieved by the use

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<sup>13</sup> In his essay *Structuralism and Literary Criticism*, Genette burrows from Claude Levi Strauss the anthropologist concept of bricolage and employs it in literary criticism. For Genette, a bricoleur “creates a structure out of a previous structure by rearranging elements which are already arranged within the objects of his or her study. The structure created by this rearrangement is not identical to the original structure, yet it functions as a description and explanation of the original structure by its very act of rearrangement. To put this simply, the bricoleur-critic breaks down literary works into ‘themes, motifs, key-words, obsessive metaphors, quotations, index cards, and references. In other words, s/he rearranges the original literary work into the terms of literary criticism. The critic can then display the work’s relation to the system of ‘themes, motifs, key-words’ which make up the literary system out of which the work was constructed” (Allen, p. 16).

of long and short sentences that grant *Jazz* a syncopated rhythm. Moreover, Morrison herself comments,

The book (*Jazz*) is a jazz gesture. Jazz is improvisational. You must be creative and innovative in performance. Even errors take you on to a new level of attainment. Writing is another form of music. There was a time when black people needed the music. Now that it belongs to everybody, black people need something else, which is theirs. That's what novels can do, what writing can do. I write in order to replicate the information, the medicine, the balm we used to find in music (Morrison quoted by Rice, pp. 168/169)

Beside improvisation, Morrison employs the jazz technique of call and response. In jazz music, call and response occurs when a member of a particular band play something and then another member play it back. Each chapter in *Jazz* is a call and response to another chapter. For instance, in the ultimate pages of the first chapter, the narrator states "He is married to a woman who speaks mainly to her birds. One of whom answers back: 'I love you'" (p. 37). Then, the reader turns the page to the second chapter and reads "Or used to" (p. 39). Thus, the first chapter is the call and the second chapter provides a response to this call and so forth. In *Beloved*, the jazzthetic technique of the call and response takes other forms. In her analysis of the previously passage of the singing slaves led by Hi Man (*Beloved*, p. 108), Rice discusses the technique of call and response in relation to the symbol of the chain. Through a syntactic parallelism between the singing slaves and Morrison's prose style, Rice argues, "the chain that had imprisoned them is literally their liberating tool as it provides them with a method of communication with which they can improvise their way to freedom" (p. 166). In one of his essays, Eckstein argues that *Beloved* is structured as Coltrane's signature album, *A Love Supreme* (p. 144). For instance, the call and response interaction between Sethe, Beloved and Denver is similar to the call in response pattern in Coltrane's *Psalm*.



### 3. Parody

#### 3.1 *Jazz* an inverted *Gatsby*

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Hutcheon argues that “postmodern intertextuality is a formal manifestation of both a desire to close the gap between the past and present of the reader and a desire to rewrite the past in a new context...it uses and abuses those intertextual echoes... inscribing their powerful allusions and subverting that power through irony” (Hutcheon, p. 118). This quote in particular is highly relevant to the intertextual connection between *Jazz* and *The Great Gatsby* written by Fitzgerald. Historiographic metafiction does not only bridges the gap between the past and present. By the use of intertextuality, postmodern fiction even mocks history. *Jazz* uses and abuses *The Great Gatsby* in order to subvert Fitzgerald’s Eurocentric portrayal of the Jazz Age. Therefore, *Jazz* is steeped in parodic irony. Linda Hutcheon argues,

Parody is a perfect postmodern form, in some sense, for it paradoxically both incorporates and challenges that which it parodies it also forces a reconsideration of the idea of origin or originality that is compatible with other postmodern interrogations of liberal humanist assumptions (Hutcheon p. 11).

Parody is another postmodern intertextual element that is used in the rewriting of history. Ironically, Morrison incorporates parody in *Jazz* in order to reconsider *The Great Gatsby*. As Umberto Eco states, “the postmodern reply to the modern consists of recognizing that the past, since it cannot really be destroyed, because its destruction leads to silence [the discovery of modernism], must be revisited: but with irony, not innocently” (Eco quoted by Hutcheon, p. 90). Due to its ironic revision of the modern text of *The Great Gatsby*, Morrison joins postmodern novelists of Umberto Eco, Salman Rushdie, Thomas Pynchon, Kurt Vonnegut and so on. However, unlike Umberto Eco, Ihab Hassan, François Lyotard and other postmodern theorists, Hutcheon does not regard postmodernism as a break with modernism. By doing so, Hutcheon adopts Habermas’ theory of modernism as an incomplete project. Hutcheon deduces that historiographic metafiction is double-coded. The concept of double-coding is originally coined by Charles Jencks, who is known as an architectural critic. Jencks argues that,

Post-Modernism is fundamentally the eclectic mixture of any tradition with that of the immediate past: it is both the condition of Modernism and its transcendence. Its best works are characteristically double-coded and ironic, because this heterogeneity most clearly captures our pluralism. Its hybrid style is opposed to the minimalism of Late-Modern ideology and all revivals which are based on an exclusive dogma or taste (Jencks quoted by Allen, p. 186).

Hutcheon applies Jencks' double-coding of post-modern architecture to historiographic metafiction. According to Jencks post-modern or rather late-modern architecture is a combination of the high and the low as well as the old and the new. Therefore, from Hutcheon's point of view, historiographic metafiction is both modern and postmodern. The same goes for Morrison's *Jazz*, it is a postmodern novel that it takes place in the modern era of the Jazz Age.

Many critics of Morrison are aware of the mimicry of *The Great Gatsby* by *Jazz*. For instance, Tessa Roynon states that "in *Jazz* Morrison voices an alternative version of the 'Jazz Age,' of modern American urban life, to that reified by *The Great Gatsby*" (Roynon, p. 107). Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* depicts the zeitgeist of modern America. Fitzgerald has given this era the name of Jazz Age. However, it is also known as the Machine Age because it is characterized by the invention of the telephone, the photograph, cars, motion pictures as well as jazz itself. Fitzgerald is a crucial figure in American modernism along with Hemingway, Faulkner and others. There is a great similarity between *Jazz* and *The Great Gatsby*. For instance, the names of characters. Daisy could be seen as the counterpart of Violet. Both characters bear the name of a flower. Besides, *Gatsby* and *Jazz* are set in the same state that is New York. Characters from both novels walk by the same streets and avenues. For example, Nick and his fellows "drove over to Fifth Avenue, warm and soft, almost pastoral, on the summer Sunday afternoon" (Fitzgerald, p. 19). For Alice in *Jazz* "the Fifth Avenue was for her the most fearful of all" (p. 70). Ironically, the Fifth Avenue in *Gatsby* is associated with the luxury of driving old cars while in *Jazz* it is place of discrimination and violence. Moreover, the music of jazz is everywhere in *The Great Gatsby*. There is always music coming from the house of Mr. Gatsby. The great images of jazz music are part of Mr. Gatsby's big parties in his gigantic mansion. The narrator of Nick Carraway better illustrates these magical moments. For instance, in saying "the music had died down as the ceremony began and now a long cheer floated in at the window, followed by intermittent cries of 'Yea-ea-ea!' and finally by a burst of jazz as the dancing began" (p. 81). In the same place, "by midnight the hilarity had increased. A celebrated tenor had sung in Italian, and a notorious contralto had sung in jazz,

and between the numbers people were doing ‘stunts’ all over the garden’’ (p. 31). Generally speaking, the music of jazz in *The Great Gatsby* is linked to big parties and white well-to-do people who are “‘paralysed with happiness’’ (p. 8). In contrast, jazz in *Jazz* adds a gloomy dimension to the novel. For instance, in the streets of the City, black people keep singing something like, “‘Blues man. Black and bluesman. Blacktherefore blue man. Everybody knows your name. Where-did-she-go-and-why man. So-lonesome-I-could-die man’’ (p. 143). This chorus might be an allusion to Louis Armstrong’s song of *Black and Blue*. The lyric of this song takes the reader back to the times of slavery. The connection between blacks and the Blues is deeply rooted in history. This is why, Paul Gilroy has argued that “‘black musical expression has played a role in reproducing what Zygmunt Bauman has called a distinctive counterculture of modernity’’ (p. 36). Basing on the postmodern sociologist of Zygmunt Bauman, Gilroy assumes that Morrison’s *Jazz* provides a counterpoint to Fitzgerald’s conception of modernism. The industrial modernity that is celebrated in *The Great Gatsby* has huge negative effects on African-Americans. The capitalist upheaval changes that take place in the Roaring Twenties is the major reason of blacks’ Great Migration. The relocation of blacks from the South to the North is mainly economical.

One another point of similarity between the two novels is the portrayal of the modern urban city, which is a major theme in literary modernism. The ekphrastic images of the city are no nowhere intriguing more than the poems of T.S Eliot, Charles Baudelaire as well as W.H Auden. Nick Carraway and the unnamed narrator of *Jazz* both share their fascination of the city. It is worth to note that Harlem in *Jazz* is referred to as the City with a capital C whereas in *Gatsby* it is uncapitalized. By doing so, Morrison highlights the experience of blacks with modernity and modernism. The twenties has witnessed a black rebirth at the level of the arts that is known in African American literature as the Harlem Renaissance. Despite the fact that Morrison does not explicitly alludes to poets and jazz musicians from that era, the reader can feel the spirit of that age because of *Jazz*’s impressionistic musicality and the picturesque depiction of the City. The first chapter in *Jazz* is loaded with strong images of the modern Harlem. For instance, one could read,

I’m crazy about this City. Daylight slants like razor cutting the buildings in half. In the top half I see looking faces and it’s not easy to tell which are people, which the work of stonemasons. Below is shadow where any blasé thing takes place: clarinets and lov-making, fists and the voices of sorrowful women. A city like this one makes me dream tall and feel in on things. Hep. It’s the bright steel rocking above the shade below that

does it. When I look over strips of green grass lining the river at church steeples and into the cream-and-cropper halls of the apartment building, I'm strong. (p. 15).

For Morrison, Harlem is like T. S. Eliot's representation of London in *The Wasteland* or Baudelaire's Paris in *The Flowers of evil*. Harlem is the origin of black modernity. Morrison evokes Walter Benjamin's recognition of Baudelaire as the first modern poet. The symbolism of the City in *Jazz* is quite reminiscent of Baudelaire's *Parisian Scenes* in *The Flowers of Evil* in terms of modernity. In *The Great Gatsby*, there is almost the same fascination with machine-like New York. Nick Carraway famously states, "I begin to like New York, the racy, adventurous feel of it at night and the satisfaction that the constant flicker of men and women and machines gives to the restless eye" (p. 37). Like the realist paintings of Edward Hopper of the urban New York, Fitzgerald's symbolism grants *Gatsby* an artistic scenery. For instance, in his portrayal of the passage between New York and West Egg, where the mansion of Jay Gatsby is located, Fitzgerald maintains "this is a valley of ashes—a fantastic farm where ashes grow like wheat into ridges and hills and grotesque gardens" (p. 16). Because of its fascination with the city, *The Great Gatsby* forms a call and response with *Jazz*. In *Gatsby*, Carraway states "up in the city" (p. 98). Then, the narrator of *Jazz* replies "I'm crazy about this City" (p. 15). While dealing with the theme of the urban city, Fitzgerald and Morrison are indebted to T. S. Eliot. In *The Burial of the Dead* from *The Waste Land*, Eliot states "Unreal City, Under the brown fog of a winter dawn, so many, I had not thought death had undone so many" (p. 7). The surrealism of *The Waste Land* is echoed in *Jazz* and *The Great Gatsby* in their description of the city as a dream.

From a post-colonial perspective, the parody of *Gatsby* by *Jazz* could be read under the light of the politics of writing back to the centre by Ashcroft et al. "Inspired by Rushdie's argument about the need to decolonize the English language. *The Empire Writes Back* ... epitomized the increasingly popular view that literature from the once-colonized countries was fundamentally concerned with challenging the language of colonial power" (McLeod, p. 28). Because of his representation of 'negroes' as mere shadows, Fitzgerald evokes Achebe's criticism of Conrad as a "thoroughgoing racist" (p.79). Moreover, in saying "Mr Gatsby's dead" (p.106), Carraway directly refers to Marlow's famous declaration of Mr. Kurtz' death.

## 4. Pastiche

### 4.1 Beloved vs. Huckleberry Finn

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Unlike inter-textuality, parody and pastiche, according to Genette, rely on the reader's knowledge of the literary canon for the reason that the hypotext does not explicitly refer to the hypertext. For instance, Morrison does not tell her readers that *Jazz* is written as a parody of *Gatsby* or *Beloved* as pastiche of Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*. It is up to the reader to figure out the difference. Genette states that "hypertextuality, as a category of works, is in itself a generic or, more precisely, transgeneric architext: I mean a category of texts which wholly encompasses certain canonical (though minor) genres such as pastiche, parody, travesty, and which also touches upon other genres – probably all genres" (Genette quoted by Allen, p. 108). However, before Genette's hypertextuality, Fredric Jameson has coined the postmodern concept of pastiche particularly in his groundbreaking essay *The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Jameson famously states,

In this situation, parody finds itself without a vocation; it has lived, and that strange new thing pastiche slowly comes to take its place. Pastiche is, like parody, the imitation of a peculiar or unique, idiosyncratic style, the wearing of a linguistic mask, speech in a dead language. But it is a neutral practice of such mimicry, without any of parody's ulterior motives, amputated of the satiric impulse, devoid of laughter and of any conviction that alongside the abnormal tongue you have momentarily borrowed, some healthy linguistic normality still exists. Pastiche is thus blank parody, a statue with blind eyeballs: it is to parody what that other interesting and historically original modern thing, the practice of a kind of blank irony, is to what Wayne Booth calls the 'stable ironies' of the eighteenth century" (Jameson, p. 16).

Jameson differentiates between parody and pastiche. Unlike parody, pastiche is devoid of satire. Morrison's *Jazz* is parodic because it mimics Fitzgerald's *Gatsby*. On the other hand, pastiche has a variety of aims. For instance, Morrison pastiches *Huckleberry Finn* in favor of Twain's abolitionist stance. However, for Jameson the main implication of pastiche is to highlight the flatness and depthlessness of postmodern art. Pastiche leads to the "emergence of a new kind of flatness or depthlessness, a new kind of superficiality in the most literal sense, perhaps the supreme formal feature of all the Postmodernisms" (Jameson, pp. 9/10). Postmodern art and

literature are characterized by what Jameson terms the waning of affect. They are emptied out of intellectual depth. Thus, to put in Baudrillard's terminology, postmodern fiction and Morrison's trilogy in particular become a kind of simulacrum. Like Disneyland, Morrison's trilogy undergoes Baudrillard's third-order simulation, where the real is lost. Baudrillard argues that "Disneyland is presented as imaginary in order to make us believe that the rest is real, when in fact all of Los Angeles and the America surrounding it are no longer real, but of the order of the hyperreal and of simulation" (Baudrillard quoted by Lane, p. 89). Pastiche gives birth to the culture of simulation. Postmodern fiction is about plagiarism. Literature is no longer as it is used to be but rather a copy of another copy. Jameson applies Baudrillard's concept of the simulacrum to literature. For instance, while dealing with historical fiction, Jameson states that the "logic of the simulacrum can now be expected to have a momentous effect on what used to be historical time. The past is hereby modified: what was once, in the historical novel as Lukacs defines it, the organic genealogy of the bourgeois collective project... has meanwhile itself become a vast collection of images, a multitudinous photographic simulacrum" (Jameson quoted by Roberts, p. 128). Here, Jameson's argument about the simulation of the historical novel is similar to Hutcheon's historiographic metafiction. Postmodern fiction wages war on Georg Lukacs's definition of historical fiction. History is omnipresent in Toni Morrison's trilogy. However, she does not tackle history the same way as in the realism of Walter Scott for example. The novel of the nineteenth century "could access 'history' as a real thing ... but postmodern art cannot access history in this way; history becomes merely a set of styles, depthless ways of approaching the past 'through stylistic connotation'" (Roberts, p. 128). History that has always been considered as a raw material in the historical novel becomes a simulacrum. Thus, the hypotext itself becomes a space of creativity, plagiarism, pastiche and parody. As Roland Barthes concludes "the birth of the reader must be at the cost of death of the author" (Barthes, p. 148). The poststructuralist notion of the death of the author gives rise to response theory. It is up to the reader to work out the intertextuality of a postmodern text as *Beloved* in its hypertextual relation to *Huckleberry Finn*.

Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* is written at the heights of the Reconstruction Era. On the other hand, *Beloved* is published in the eighties of the twentieth century. However, Morrison's novel takes place in the postbellum America in the same time when *Huckleberry Finn* has come to existence. Thus, the two novels include the same themes mainly the escape to freedom. There are scenes in *Beloved* that are pastiched from *Huckleberry Finn* particularly the encounter between Sethe and the white character of Amy. In his appraisal to Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*,

Ernest Hemingway states that “all modern American literature comes from that one book” (Young, p. 166). Metaphorically speaking, American fiction including *Beloved* springs from one model novel that is *Huckleberry Finn*. All the American fiction follows the same literary pattern of Twain. Fitzgerald, Hemingway and Faulkner have all agreed that *Huckleberry Finn* is the greatest American novel of all time. Because of his images of freedom along the Mississippi river, Harold Bloom compares Huck to other prominent characters from the American literary canon. “Classic American literature, however, does not easily permit societal definitions of freedom. Hester Prynne in *The Scarlet Letter*, Ishmael in *Moby-Dick*, Thoreau at Walden Pond, Emerson confronting the past: all provide images of isolation as an inner freedom” (Bloom, p. 7). Before the investigation of the pastiche passages of freedom in *Beloved*, it is worth to show how *Huckleberry Finn* highly adheres to Hutcheon’s historiographic metafiction. *Huckleberry Finn* is self-reflexive. The main character of Huck knows that he is the creation of Twain. For instance, in the opening lines of the novel, Huck honestly states,

you don’t know about me without you have read a book by the name of *The adventures of Tom Sawyer*; but that ain’t no matter. That book was made by Mr. Mark Twain, and he told the truth, mainly. There was things which he stretched, but mainly he told the truth. That is nothing. I never seen anybody but lied one time or another, without it was Aunt Polly, or the widow, or maybe Mary. Aunt Polly—Tom’s Aunt Polly, she is—and Mary, and the Widow Douglas is all told about in that book, which is mostly a true book, with some stretchers, as I said before (Twain, p 5).

Beside the metafictionality of *Huckleberry Finn*, Huck raises the postmodern problematic of fiction vs. truth. In saying, “there was things which he stretched, but mainly he told the truth”, Huck is thus skeptic of Twain’s narrative, in the sense that it does not tell the whole truth. Like Morrison’s trilogy, *Huckleberry Finn* is postmodern. Huck’s skepticism is reminiscent of Derrida’s disbelief in biographies or the novels of William Golding, where writing becomes a process of lying. Besides, *Huckleberry Finn* alludes to a myriad of Shakespeare’s soliloquies. While *Beloved* pastiches *Huckleberry Finn*, the latter in turn pastiches the work of Shakespeare. Fiction is about simulation. As the layers of an onion, one work leads you to another. The self-reflexivity and intertextuality of *Huckleberry Finn* makes of it a good example of historiographic metafiction.

One of the main manifestations of pastiche between *Beloved* and *Huckleberry Finn* occurs at the level of language. Both novels rely on Gates' concept of the Signifyin(g). This concept is not only limited to the use of intertextuality. It also highlights the African American vernacular English that it has its origin in African oral tradition. Sometimes, Gates drops the (g) in order to characterize Black English from the standard use of English. In the paratextual threshold of *Huckleberry Finn*, Mark Twain emphasizes in an explanatory note that "in this book a number of dialects are used, to wit: *the Missouri negro dialect*; the extremist form of the backwoods Southwestern dialect; the ordinary 'Pike Country' dialect ; and four modified varieties of this last" (Twain, p. 3). Twain employs the Negro dialect in order to differentiate the speeches of the slave of Jim from the rest of the characters in the novel. For instance, in a conversation with Huck, Jim utters "Say—who is you? Whar is you? dog my cats ef I didn' hear sumf'n. Well, I know what I's gwayne to do. I's gwayne to set down here and listen tell I hears it again" (p. 8). Whenever the reader comes across the Negro dialect, it means that it is Jim who is talking. Ngugi wa Thiong'o has once said "language carries culture, and culture carries, particularly through orature and literature, the entire body of values by which we come to perceive ourselves and our place in the world" (Thiong'o quoted by McLeod, p. 24). Twain's use of black dialect is ideological. The black vernacular is deeply rooted in the history of slavery. In a highly symbolic image, the same scene is echoed in *Beloved*. When she steps out to the back door of the Bodwins, Denver glances at a black figure kneeling on the words "At Yo Service" (p. 255). The sculptor of the black figure is accompanied with a slogan written in the Negro dialect. As in Twain, Morrison highlights the discursive use of Black English as a mean to maintain the ideology of slavery.

In *Playing in the Dark*, Morrison argues "freedom has no meaning to Huck or to the text without the specter of enslavement" (p. 56). The romanticism of Twain recalls Said's words on Nerval and Chateaubriand. *Huckleberry Finn* is "a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes" (p. 1). Twain sets the story of Huck's escape from his abusive 'Pap' in parallel to that of Jim. Without Jim, the freedom of Huck will never be possible. *Beloved* pastiches the sixteenth chapter from Twain's novel, where Huck deceives the two white men in order to save the life of the runaway slave of Jim. The equivalent of Huck in *Beloved* is Amy, a young white girl, who helps Sethe to survive the horrors of Sweet Home. Amy assists Sethe in giving birth to Denver on the Ohio River during her escape. The subversion of Huck and Jim by Amy and Sethe always implies Morrison's rewriting of history from a black feminist stance.



## 4.2 Paradise vs. On the Road

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As *Jazz* and *Beloved*, *Paradise* also forms a dialogue with other hypertexts from the American literary canon particularly Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* as well as Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*. Pastiche is not always explicit. For instance, *Paradise*'s intertextual relationship to *On the Road* and *The Scarlet Letter* adheres to Genette's structural transtextuality. For Genette, transtextuality or textual transcendence is "what poetics has been attempting to describe via the confused and misleading tools so far discussed. It includes issues of imitation, transformation, the classification of types of discourse, along with the thematic, modal, generic and formal categories and categorizations of traditional poetics" (Allen, p. 100). Genette belongs to the structuralist trend of intertextuality. He coins the term transtextuality to distance himself from the self-contained conception of intertextuality of post-structuralism. As a response to Derrida's famous dictum "there is nothing outside the text" (Derrida quoted by Royle, p. 62), Genette's transtextuality is based on the structuralism of Ferdinand de Saussure. The signifying of the hypotext on the hypertext is like the relationship between the signifier and the signified. In other words, *Paradise* pastiches a pre-existing body of literature by what Saussure refers to as *langue* as opposed to *parole*. Transtextuality is an umbrella concept that includes intertextuality, paratextuality, metatextuality, hypertextuality and architextuality. Morrison's pastiche of *On the Road* and *The Scarlet Letter* is characterized by Genette's metatextuality, since *Paradise* "unites a given text to another, of which it speaks without necessarily citing it (without summoning it), in fact sometimes even without naming it" (Genette quoted by Allen, p. 102). Therefore, at the level of textuality, *Paradise* transcends itself implicitly to other texts including *On the Road* and *The Scarlet Letter*. Pastiche in *Paradise* mainly is thematic. *Paradise* is a road novel for the reason that it draws on Kerouac's postmodern theme of mobility. Besides, *Paradise* does not imitate *On the Road* and *The Scarlet Letter* from cover to cover. To a partial extent, pastiche occurs only in the opening scene and the chapter dedicated to the character of Mavis.

It is worth noting that the novels outlined in this chapter share one common theme that is the search for identity. Besides, all of these novels are written by American figures. It starts with Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* to the late novel of *Paradise* written by Morrison. As in *Beloved*, Huck's journey along the Mississippi is a synecdoche for the crisis of the American identity. Kerouac keeps Twain's tradition alive on the highways of the States. Sal Paradise, the

counterpart of Huck, hits the road in search of a lost America. For instance, the American Dream is a central theme in *The Great Gatsby*. Nevertheless, before Fitzgerald, Hawthorne has dealt with the Puritan dream of an America as a city upon a hill in *The Scarlet Letter*. As the rest of modern literary works, *The Great Gatsby* is about the decline of the human values because of the American Dream that is based on Benjamin Franklin's pragmatism. The effects of the capitalist American Dream of Gatsby is echoed in *Jazz*. Morrison attempts at providing a unique version of the American Dream. In fact, Morrison's dream is similar to that of Martin Luther King in his famous speech *I Have a Dream*. In other words, it is the dream of an America with no racial discrimination. This is what Morrison's work is all about. For instance, *Paradise* is a utopian world of an all-black community. Morrison's denial of whites is explained by their impediment of the construction of a black subjectivity.

Like Morrison, Hawthorne rewrites the history of the Puritans from the feminist perspective of Hester Prynne. The latter is condemned to wear the scarlet letter of 'A' as a punishment for committing the sin of adultery. Throughout *The Scarlet letter*, Hawthorne criticizes the hypocrisy of the Puritans. Ironically, Hester Prynne falls in an extramarital relationship with a Puritan minister named Arthur Dimmesdale. In fact, Hawthorne has preceded contemporary writers like Atwood to tackle issues such as religious fundamentalism as well as patriarchy. *Paradise* pastiches the poignant opening scene from *The Scarlet Letter*. Both novels starts with an intense symbolism. As in Genette's description of metatextuality, Morrison transforms the scene of Hester Prynne at the prison door with the massacre of the girls in Convent. In this regard, Tessa Roynon argues that "in a powerful counterpoint to the opening chapter of *The Scarlet Letter*, Ruby has prided itself on needing neither a prison nor a cemetery" (p. 72). Hawthorne is known for his symbolism of the American Romanticism. He uses characterization in order to represent a whole community or an apparatus such as the Puritan church. The Puritan community and the patriarchs of Ruby symbolize masculine domination. Like *Paradise*, Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* is a feminist novel written by a male figure to criticize the discourse of patriarchy. Both novels include female protagonists, who live in an Orwellian dystopia. Hawthorne states "the founders of a new colony [the Puritans], whatever Utopia of human virtue and happiness they might originally project, have invariably recognized it among their earliest practical necessities to allot a portion of the virgin soil as a cemetery, and another portion as the site of a prison" (p.40). The Puritan forefathers try to create their own city upon the hill. A utopian place, where there is no evil and sin. On the other hand, the utopianism of the Puritans' is repeated in *Paradise*. For instance, Ruby is an all-black "town full of

immortals” (p. 296). However, a feminist reading of both novels shows the opposite. The discourse of patriarchy renders *Paradise* and *The Scarlet Letter* dystopian novels. Besides, witchcraft is a recurring motif in the two novels. Hawthorne is born in Massachusetts. Therefore, his ancestors have witnessed the trials of the notorious Salem’s witches. For instance, Hawthorne alludes to the persecution of the witches in saying “it might be, too, that a witch, like old Mistress Hibbins, the bitter-tempered widow of the magistrate, was to die upon the gallows” (p. 42). The equivalent of Mistress Hibbins in *Paradise* is Consolata. The latter possesses supernatural powers such raising the dead and the practice of black magic.

Kerouac’s *On the Road* is the manifesto the Beat Generation along with Ginsberg’s *Howl* and Burroughs’ *Naked Lunch*. These works portrays the zeitgeist of the post-war America. The Beatniks have their own share in the American literary canon. The point of intersection of the Beatniks and the African American literature lays in Stuart Hall’s term of a subculture<sup>14</sup>. The two form a minority within a major culture. To put in Allen Ginsberg’s terminology, both minorities are “treated like a Jew under Hitler, driven mad in the streets to seek relief from unendurable pain and social degradation imposed on [them] by police bureaucracy and organized crime” (Ginsberg, p. 442). Besides, *On the Road* offers an excellent example of Morrison’s theory of Africanism. Kerouac is usually criticized for stereotyping Negroes, Arabs and Mexicans. For instance, through the stylistic device of oxymoron, Kerouac gives the name of Mr. Snow to a black character, who lives next to Sal’s friend Remi. Besides, in an oriental fashion, Sal has always the dream of an Arabian figure chasing him across the desert (p. 225). Sal’s exotic dream recalls Edward W. Said’s conception of culture as imperialism. The presence of Arabs in Kerouac’s text evokes the killing of an Arab in *The Stranger* and the death of Arabs in *The Plague* written by Albert Camus (Ashcorft et Ahluwalia, p. 104). Without Morrison’s concept of Africanism, *On the Road* would not have the same literary reputation. Most importantly, Kerouac’s literary technique of spontaneous prose is based on the improvisation of jazz music. Besides, the term Beat Generation coined by Kerouac is deeply rooted in the African American culture. According to Jamie Russel, “the word ‘beat’ had been used in African-American jazz circles for years to mean exhausted or broke” (p. 10). The tunes of jazz grant *On the Road* an aesthetic dimension. The music of Bop is everywhere in Kerouac’s *Magna Carta*.

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<sup>14</sup> Basing on Gramsci’s concept of hegemony and Althusser’s concept of ideology, Stuart Hall shows how subcultures including Blacks, Hippies and Beatniks construct a counter-discourse against the major culture through the notion resistance (Procter, p. 89).

*On the Road* could be read as an autobiographical sketch of the Beatniks. Sal Paradise is the alter ego of Jack Kerouac. The character of Carlo Marx is based on Allen Ginsberg whereas Old Bull Lee is the representative of William Burroughs. *On the Road* is a novel about self-discovery. Sal and Dean are the alternative of the Conradian characters of Marlow and Mr. Kurtz. In *Heart of Darkness*, Mr. Kurtz is merely a sound for Marlow while in *On the Road* Dean is a sort of vision for Sal. Like Marlow and Mr Kurtz or Carraway and Jay Gatsby, the relationship between Dean and Sal is a matter of fascination. Dean Moriarty's father is a symbol of America. Therefore, the search for the lost father is the quest for national identity as in Atwood's *Surfacing*. Yet, both writers are of Canadian descent. Kerouac sums up the whole novel with these ultimate two lines "I think of Dean Moriarty, I even think of Old Dean Moriarty the father we never found, I think of Dean Moriarty" (p. 278). The Old Dean Moriarty is a metaphor of the Beatniks' lost identities. Because of the capitalist status quo of America and its Kafkaesque bureaucracy, Sal and his friends have always been alienated within the borders of their own country. This is why; most the Beats have spent their lives outside of the American soil. Mobility is major characteristic of the Beatniks. As the title of the novel indicates, Sal Paradise is always on the move. In the introduction to their book *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari quotes Kerouac to consolidate their concept of the rhizome,

America is a special case. Of course it is not immune from domination by trees or the search for roots. This is evident even in the literature, in the quest for a national identity and even for a European ancestry or genealogy (Kerouac going off in search of his ancestors). Nevertheless, everything important that has happened or is happening takes the route of the American rhizome: the beatniks, the underground, bands and gangs, successive lateral offshoots in immediate connection with an outside. American books are different from European books, even when the American sets off in pursuit of trees. The conception of the books is different. *Leaves of Grass*. And the directions in America are different: the search for arborescence and the return to the Old World occur in the East. But there is the rhizomatic West, with its Indians without ancestry, its ever-receding limit, its shifting and displaced frontiers. There is a whole American 'map' in the West, where even the trees form rhizomes. America reversed the directions: it put its Orient in the West, as if it were precisely in America that the earth came full circle; its West is the edge of the East. (India is not the intermediary between the Occident and the Orient, as Haudicourt believed: America is the pivot point and the mechanism of

reversal.) The American singer Patti Smith sings the bible of the American dentist: Don't go for the root, follow the canal... (p. 19).

*On the Road* is the incarnation of the Deleuzian rhizome. Sal's journey is chaotic. The structure of the novel is sporadic and non-linear. Morrison's *Paradise* pastiches the postmodern nomadism of *On the Road* particularly the chapter devoted to Mavis. It is no coincidence that one of Mavis' children is named Sal. If one combines the name of Mavis' daughter to the title of Morrison's novel, they will consequently get the name of Sal Paradise. That is, Kerouac's alter ego. *On the Road* is the most celebrated road novel of all time. It has inspired many remarkable figures including the Nobel Prize Laureate for literature Bob Dylan especially his popular song *Like a Rolling Stone* (Shumway, 116). In the work of Kerouac, Dylan and Morrison, mobility is about the theme of rootlessness. Here, mobility is not equated with the synonym of travelling. However, it is mainly linked to the search for roots. For instance, Sal Paradise is "trying various road and routes" (p. 12). This instance brings back Gilroy's idea of route as the homonym of the term root. Mavis Albright and Sal Paradise embark on a journey within the framework of what James Clifford calls the trans-local. The only difference is that *Paradise* is made up of one-way trip while *On the Road* is divided into three major trips. However, California remains the final destination for both characters. Besides, in *Paradise*, Morrison repeats the same jargon of Kerouac. For instance, when she states "in a week Mavis was on the road" (p. 32), she directly alludes to Sal's recurrent expression "I was on the road again" (pp. 67/72/92). Furthermore, Mavis and Sal have the same car of the Cadillac. Tessa Roynon sums up the main aspects of pastiche between Sal and Mavis. Both characters exemplify the "failure of the 'American Dreams' of freedom, wealth, progress, and happiness, and the pertinacity of those dreams. Each woman subverts the paradigm of the travelling male hero (epitomized by Sal Paradise in Kerouac's *On the Road* (1955) by ending her self-proclaimed mission to California or Mexico (or elsewhere) in the middle of an Oklahoman 'nowhere' (p. 66). As long as pastiche is concerned, Morrison always mimics other texts with the subversion of her characters into black female protagonists. As what she does with Twain, Morrison creates Mavis as a feminist response to Kerouac's polemic character of Sal Paradise.

## Chapter III : Magic realism

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### 1. Incredulity towards realism

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If Lyotard defines the postmodern condition as the “incredulity towards metanarratives” (p. xxiv), then postmodern fiction can be seen as the incredulity towards realism. Morrison’s trilogy refutes Aristotle’s concept of mimesis. Thus, it draws on the literary experimentation of both modernism and postmodernism. The literary style of Morrison is the extension of Ezra Pound’s dictum “make it new” (Pound quoted by Nicol, p. 18). Morrison challenges the conventional style of writing. Her novels are not set in a straightforward narrative. She burrows a myriad of literary techniques from the Modernist figure of William Faulkner including stream of consciousness and fragmentation. For instance, In *Beloved*, Morrison leaves a whole chapter unpunctuated whereas various characters narrate the main events of *Jazz*. Basing on Faulkner, Morrison thus continues the experimentation of modernism. On the other hand, *Paradise* is mainly influenced by the postmodernist concept of *écriture féminine* coined by Helene Cixous. Morrison employs this experimental feminine writing to deconstruct the phallogocentric language of patriarchy. Thus, this chapter is mainly concerned with Morrison’s rejection of realism as a mode of representation. It also provides more explanations about the magical realist aspect of historiographic metafiction that is missing from Hutcheon’s *A Poetics of Postmodernism*. Referring to Brian McHale and Linda Hutcheon, Eva Aldea argues, “certainly these two theorists place a number of novels widely referred to as magical realist within their consideration of postmodernism. However, neither offers a specific definition of magical realism as a distinguishable part of postmodernism” (p. 8). Although she does not like the label of magic realism, Morrison’s work is often categorized among the most celebrated novels of the genre including Marquez’s *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Morrison uses magic realism as a postcolonial counter discourse to rewrite the history of African Americans. Thus, the trilogy of Morrison becomes a hybrid space of the past/present dyad. Derrida’s concept of hauntology is very significant in the construction of such a narrative liminality. This Derridean specterality haunts most of the characters in the trilogy.

Thus, Morrison personifies the past in terms of a ghost that triggers off the Freudian return of the repressed. Consequently, the postcolonial collocation of cultural translation becomes very crucial in the understanding of Morrison's transgressive work as long as it is about the human experience of displacement whether it is temporal or spatial.

Despite the ongoing debate between modernism and postmodernism, both schools of thought share "a dissatisfaction with nineteenth-century realism" (Nicol, p. 18). Before dealing with the anti-representational attitude of postmodernism and modernism, it is worth to note that there are some novelists, who are modern and postmodern at the same time. For instance, the literary figure of Samuel Beckett is considered as a late modernist. Moreover, the fact that he tackles themes like waiting and nothingness in *Waiting for Godot*<sup>15</sup> makes of him a postmodern writer. William Faulkner is usually classified as a key modern novelist along with Virginia Woolf and James Joyce. Nevertheless, the fragmentary nature of his novels is highly postmodern for its multiplicity of truths. On the contrary, Morrison is postmodern due to the rewriting of the American history from a black feminist point of view. Still, she takes advantage of the modernist literary techniques of stream of consciousness and fragmentation. Thus, there is no clear cut between both schools of thought. Postmodernism is the radical extension of modernism. For instance, without structuralism, there would be no post-structuralism. The postmodern iconoclasts of Derrida, Barthes, Foucault and Deleuze build on a priory set of theories to deconstruct structuralism itself. At any rate, before the coming of modernism and postmodernism, literature and art have always been captivated within the contours of realism. Here, it is worth to linger on one of the classical texts in literary criticism. That is *Poetics* written by the Greek philosopher of Aristotle. Despite its conciseness, Aristotle's *Poetics* has a huge influence in the domain of criticism. One cannot read a particular text on realism or narratology without coming across the name of Aristotle. Furthermore, the title of Hutcheon's *A Poetics of Postmodernism* is highly indebted to Aristotle. Having *Poetics* in mind, Hutcheon's work is an attempt to highlight the aesthetics of postmodern fiction. Throughout *Poetics*, Aristotle sets the

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<sup>15</sup> *Waiting for Godot* is a play written by the Irish novelist and playwright of Samuel Beckett. The play is a key text in what is known as the Theatre of the Absurd. Beckett is among the key figures of this theatrical genre along with Eugene Ionesco and Harold Pinter. As its title indicates, *Waiting for Godot* is about the two characters of Vladimir and Estragon. The two characters keep waiting for Godot, who never appears. The play is made of two acts; the second act repeats the first. This repetition grants to the play the affects of boredom and the postmodern themes of waiting and nothingness. Besides, the interior monologue of Lucky is a landmark in postmodern fiction for its fragmented language. Like Morrison's trilogy, the monologue of Lucky is skeptic toward the notion of truth in relation to language. If Saussure thinks that language is relational and can thus constitute the world, postmodernism and particularly post-structuralism argues that language could not convey meaning. Therefore, language could no longer have access to the concept of truth because it always betrays our intentions. This is what Morrison is trying to show using metafiction, polyphony and unreliable narration.

main foundations of realism through his concept of mimesis, the Greek word for imitation. In the fourth part of his seminal work, Aristotle famously quotes,

Poetry in general seems to have sprung from two causes, each of them lying deep in our nature. First, the instinct of imitation is implanted in man from childhood, one difference between him and other animals being that he is the most imitative of living creatures, and through imitation learns his earliest lessons; and no less universal is the pleasure felt in things imitated (p. 8)

As Aristotle suggests, poetry and art are about the imitation of nature through the medium of language. The term nature is used as a synonym of life. Aristotle offers examples from the Greek drama in order to consolidate his theory of mimesis. However, according to Aristotle, Homer remains the only poet, who perfectly combines the component of imitation along with the dramatic form particularly in *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*. Thus, Aristotle concludes “imitation, then, is one instinct of our nature” (p. 8). Before Aristotle, Plato has dealt with realism in his remarkable *Republic* that it is written in form of dialogues. In order to illustrate his Theory of Ideas, Plato often draws the image of the cave, “imagine people chained up in a cave in such a way that they are facing a bare wall. Behind them a fire burns, and objects are held in such a way that the light of the fire throws their shadows on the wall. If the people in the cave had known no other life, Plato argues, would they not mistake these shadows for reality?” (Edgar and Sedgwick, pp. 185/186). Through the example of the Allegory of the Cave, Plato better illustrates his ontological ideas of realism, which is simultaneously a sort of idealism. Plato argues that life is just a mere copy of another existing world. The legacy of Greek philosophy is rediscovered multiple times particularly during the Renaissance and Neo-classicism. In the realm of literature, Aristotle’s concept of mimesis has influenced the major novels of the Victorian era. This includes “Balzac and Flaubert in France, Tolstoy in Russia, and Dickens and George Elliot in England” (Nicol, p. 18). For these writers, a novel is literally the reflection of society.

During the turn of the century particularly with the coming of modernism, literature is no longer, to put it in Stendhal terminology, seen as a mirror reflecting reality. Modernism has witnessed a radical break with realism and tradition as a whole. Therefore, modernism comes with new innovative style of writings that are experimental. This could be explained by the fact that realism could no longer have access to the concept of truth especially at the epistemological level. The anti-realist attitude of modernism is echoed in postmodernism. For example, Gilles Deleuze argues that “the aim of writing should not be representation but invention”



(Colebrook, p. 4). The philosophical corpus of Deleuze is deeply rooted in literature. For him, art is not about the reflection a particular reality. On the contrary, art is about the concept of becoming, in the sense it should create new affects and assemblages. Thus, we can think of Morrison's trilogy as what Deleuze calls minor literature. In an essay entitled *Postmodernism and Experiment*, the postmodern narratologist of Brian McHale wonders if postmodernism continues the experimentalism of modernism or not. To defend his argument, McHale relies heavily on Lyotard for the reason that the latter is regarded as the first initiator of postmodernism to the European intelligentsia. For Lyotard "postmodernism is the name for the avant-garde impulse within modernism" (McHale, p. 141). Here, both McHale and Lyotard use the term avant-garde interchangeably with experimentation. Therefore, Lyotard argues that post-modernism is experimental by nature. Language can be experimental. Thus, Morrison's trilogy becomes a space of Wittgensteinian language games in terms of stream of consciousness and polyphony. The two techniques are interrelated, in the sense that every stream of consciousness novel is usually dialogic.

No one can deny that the origins of stream of consciousness are deeply rooted in the domain of psychology. The term stream of consciousness is a metaphor used to indicate "an approach to the presentation of psychological aspects of character in fiction" (Humphrey, p. 1). Thus, every stream of consciousness novel is by consequence psychological. The American psychologist of William James first coins the term. Sigmund Freud has also influenced the writers of this genre. For instance, Humphrey urges his readers to "think of consciousness as being in the form of an iceberg—the whole iceberg and just the relatively small surface portion. Stream-of-consciousness fiction is, to follow this comparison, greatly concerned with what lies below the surface" (p. 4). This instance directly alludes to the Freudian metaphor of subconsciousness as the underneath bottom of an iceberg. The events of a stream-of-consciousness novel occur at the level consciousness before the utterance of the characters' speeches. Starting from this definition, Humphrey does not include all the works that deal with memory and interior monologues in the category of stream-of-consciousness. For instance, the modern classic passage of the madeleine in *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu*, does not make of Proust a stream-of-consciousness novelist for the reason that it does not take place at the pre-speech level of consciousness. Despite its profound analysis of this literary genre, Humphrey's *Stream of Consciousness in the Modern Novel* has its own limitations. One of the shortcomings of Humphrey is the restriction of stream of consciousness only to the modernist novelists of Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, William Faulkner as well as Dorothy Richardson while there are

postmodern novelists who perfectly use stream of consciousness as the modernists. This includes Thomas Pynchon, Williams Burroughs, Jack Kerouac and of course Toni Morrison.

In the second part from *Beloved* particularly the twenty-second chapter, Morrison takes advantage of the stream of consciousness technique to rewrite the traumatic events of the transatlantic passage,

They are not crouching now we are they are floating on the water they break up the little hill and push it through I cannot find my teeth I see the dark face that is going to smile at me it is my dark face that is going to smile at me the iron circle is around our neck she does not have sharp earrings in her ears or a round basket she goes in the water with my face (*Beloved*, p. 212)

The unpunctuated passage evokes Morrison's epigraph of the Dick and Jane in her debut novel *The Bluest Eye*<sup>16</sup>. Morrison's lack of punctuation shows the disordered and chaotic nature of the African American identity. For Morrison, stream of consciousness is very significant to dismantle the subconscious history of America. Unlike the previous chapters, this section is mainly narrated from *Beloved*'s point of view in terms of an interior monologue. Thus, *Beloved*'s first person stream of consciousness breaks the monotonous and overwhelming tone of *Beloved*'s omniscient narrator. Usually, the scenes that features the ships of the middle passage are written as monologues. One may consider Eugene O'Neill's play of *The Emperor Jones*, where Jones imagines himself among the black slaves on the deck of the ship (p.15). Through these interior monologues, the reader sinks deep in the forgotten history of the dead slaves thrown into the sea.

By using stream of consciousness, Morrison is highly indebted to William Faulkner. More than any modernist figure, Faulkner has always occupied the imagination of Morrison especially at the aesthetic level. For instance, *Beloved*'s flow of consciousness looks similar to that of Quentin in Faulkner's chef-d'oeuvre *The Sound and Fury*,

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<sup>16</sup> In the paratextual thresholds of *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison begins the novel with an epigraph taken from the Dick and Jane curriculum. The epigraph is repeated twice. The first is punctuated while the second is left without punctuation. By doing so, Morrison uses the epigraph as a symbol for the ideology of whiteness, which results in Pecola's psychological disorder. As in *The Bluest Eye*, the lack of punctuation in *Beloved*'s monologue demonstrates her fragmented subjectivity because of the traumatic events of the middle passage.

*Father will be dead in a year they say if he doesn't stop drinking and he won't stop he can't stop since I since last summer and then they'll send Benjy to Jackson I can't cry I can't even cry one minute she was standing in the door the next minute he was pulling at her dress and bellowing his voice hammered back and forth between the walls in waves and she is shrinking against the wall getting smaller and smaller with her white face her eyes like thumbs dug into it until he pushed her out of the room his voice hammering back and forth as though its own momentum would not let it stop as though there were no place for it in silence bellowing (Faulkner, p. 107).*

Here, is it worth to draw a comparison between Quentin and Beloved. The consciousness of both characters goes back and forth from the present setting of the novel to the past. The subconscious occupation of Quentin by Mr. Compson is the same as the mother-daughter relationship of Beloved to Sethe. Thus, this liminal passage of the past and present binarism obscures the notion of a fixed identity. Many postmodern novelists employ such an anachronous narration in order to highlight the postmodern conception of subjectivity. For instance, in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, the narrator of Offered keeps wavering between the memories of her beautiful past and her dystopian presence in the Republic of Gilead. These kinds of narrative challenge the Aristotelian conventional structure of the plot, that is "a beginning, a middle, and an end" (Aristotle, p. 15). Stream-of-consciousness fiction refutes the Platonist fixity of time as in the realist novel. On the contrary, novels like *Beloved* as well as *The Sound and the Fury* are more concerned with the Bergsonian fluidity of time. Basing on cinematography, Humphrey argues that the time and space montage is crucial in the understanding of a stream-of-consciousness work. There are two kinds of montage. The first type is restricted to Joyce. For instance, In *Ulysses*, the component of time remains stagnant while the consciousness of Leopold Bloom keeps moving from one place to another. Faulkner favors the temporal over the spacial flow of consciousness as in the above quoted passage of Quentin. Before he commits suicide, Quentin's memory moves back in time from the wedding of his sister Caddy to Benjy's relocation to the asylum in Jackson. This is enhanced by the use of italics. All of these events happen in the mind of Quentin while he is in Harvard. Ironically, by giving him a watch as a present, Mr. Compson symbolically puts an end to Quentin's life. Mr. Compson adopts the nihilist philosophy of Nietzsche since, for him, time is the *reductio absurdum* of all human experience. In *Beloved's* interior monologue, Morrison does not conform to the components of time and space used by Faulkner and Joyce. By doing so, Morrison shows "the timelessness of her [Beloved] presence as well as the un-lived spaces of

her life'' (Mobley quoted by Bloom, p. 38). Beloved defies the ontological definitions of being. Thus, Beloved becomes a metaphor of the collective memory of the Afro-Americans.

Stream-of-consciousness fiction is dialogic by nature. However, not any polyphonic novel does include the technique of stream of consciousness. All the novels discussed by Humphrey are polyphonic. For instance, in *Mrs. Dalloway*, Woolf narrates the first section of her novel from multiple views of Clarissa's consciousness. In its portrayal of Dublin, Joyce's *Ulysses* rely on three main points of views including that of Leopold, Stephen as well as Molly. Although it is not included in Humphrey's book, *Beloved* follows the same modernist patterns of stream of consciousness. For instance, the previously quoted monologue of Beloved is also narrated from different point of views of both Sethe and Denver. Therefore, the three chapters form a call and response as in jazz music. First, Sethe's account is mainly about the return of Beloved. A return that sparks the memory of Sethe. Morrison quotes, "BELOVED, she my daughter. She mine. See. She come back to me of her own free will and I don't have to explain'' (p. 200). The link between the monologues of Sethe and Beloved is bound by the feminist theme of black motherhood. Throughout this chapter, Sethe shows what it means to carry Beloved on her back and Denver in her stomach under the severe conditions of enslavement. Second, Denver's monologue is about her fascination with her reincarnated sister. Before she comes back, Beloved has always been an abstraction for Denver. When she has lost Beloved, Sethe used to tell Denver about her gloomy past of her escape for freedom. Denver maintains "BELOVED is my sister. I swallowed her blood right along with my mother's milk. The first thing I heard after not hearing anything was the sound of her crawling up the stairs. She was my secret company until Paul D came'' (p. 205). Denver shows her deep fascination to Beloved. Denver is the mediator between Sethe and Beloved. In other words, she has witnessed Sethe's bloody act of murder while she is still in her womb. In a metaphorical image, Denver depicts the mixture of the blood of slavery with the milk of sisterhood. The call and response of the three monologues grants Morrison's trilogy a Bakhtinian touch. As in the use of stream of consciousness, Morrison also borrows from Faulkner the technique of fragmentation. Stylistically speaking, Morrison draws on Faulkner's style of writing in terms of multiple narration and temporal distortion. Starting from *The Bluest Eye* to her last novel *God Help the Child*, Morrison usually restates the same events of a novel from different point of views. By doing so, Morrison pays homage to Faulkner's technique of fragmentation famously used in *The Sound and The Fury* where, four characters narrate the downfall of the once snobbish family of The Compsons. Besides, Morrison usually entitles the chapters of her novels in the names of characters. For

instance, *Paradise* is made of nine chapters. Each chapter begins with the name of a female protagonist except the first that holds the name of *Ruby*. This Faulknersque technique of fragmentation bestows Morrison's work a heteroglossic dimension. Nevertheless, Morrison's use of fragmentation differs from that of Faulkner for the reason that heteroglossia in modernist fiction is not intentional as Brian McHale argues,

Polyphony, in other words, is *inadvertent* in modernist writing, an unintended side-effect of Heteroglossia. Postmodernism erects this adventure into a positive principle; the side-effect is shifted to the center. Instead of resisting centrifugal tendencies, postmodernist fiction seeks to enhance them. Heteroglossia is used here as an opening wedge, a means of breaking up the unified projected world into a polyphony of worlds of discourse (McHale, p. 167)

If Hutcheon's historiographic metafiction is aware of its fictional status, postmodern fiction is also aware of its integration of theory. Morrison's trilogy can be included in what is called as theoretical fiction. Most of postmodern thinkers are also practiced writers of fiction. Umberto Eco and Julia Kristeva are two examples of the theorists who perfectly enhance their theoretical background in literature. Figures like Barthes, Deleuze and Foucault think of their theoretical work as fiction. Deleuze considers of *A Thousand Plateaus* a non-conventional novel. Each chapter forms a sort of plateau. Barthes divides his books in terms of 'romans sans histoire' and 'romans sur histoire' while his eponymous autobiography is almost a novel. On the other hand, Derrida has always the desire to write fiction whereas *The Order of Things* written by Foucault is classified as a novel (Greaney, p. 3). Like the French theorists, Morrison experiments *Jazz* with the polyphony of Bakhtin. *Jazz* is anti-realist, in the sense that its chapters are not set in a chronological order. Like the paintings of Pablo Picasso, *Jazz* is made of collages. Due to its inclusion of Bakhtin's experimental theory of dialogism, *Jazz* becomes a cubist tableau made of multiple languages, truths, identities and point of views. Morrison skilfully shifts from the third person narration of her unreliable narrator to the first person narration of Joe, Dorcas, Felice and Violet. For instance, the unreliable narrator begins the fourth chapter of *Jazz* by the Kafkaesque split of Violet's subjectivity. Three pages later, Morrison alters the third person of 'she' with the speaking pronoun of 'I' of Violet. Thus, the reader's imagination moves from the narrator's perception of Violet to the latter's own consciousness. Therefore, the schizophrenic divided self of Violet is seen from two different points of views. Morrison employs Bakhtin's theory of dialogism to better illustrate this schism that take place at the level of discourse and subjectivity. Unlike Foucault, Bakhtin uses discourse to underline the actual use of language in

fiction. In other words, Morrison's employment of the dialogism of language goes in parallel with the dialogism of subjectivity that is inherent in Violet's multiple identities. The same applies to the other characters of Joe and Golden Gray. Joe's motherlessness intersects with Gray's search for his father. As it is the case with Violet, and particularly in the opening of the remaining chapters, the narrator offers the same introductory account of each character. Then, the reader delves deep into the fragmented consciousness of characters themselves. However, unlike the rest of the novel particularly in the chapter before the last, Felice narrates her own version of the ending of *Jazz*. As Dilsey in Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*, Felice's chapter provides a counterpoint to the death of her closest friend, Dorcas.

Morrison continues the self-referential integration of theory in *Paradise*. This shows that "theory can once again become part of the story rather than about it. One of the tasks of modern fiction, therefore, is to displace, energize, and re-embody its criticism-to literally reunite it with our experience of the text" (Sukenick quoted by Hutcheon, p. 144). Morrison takes advantage of the French feminist notion of *écriture féminine* to destabilize the phallocentrism of *Paradise*. By doing so, Morrison blurs the distinction between theory and fiction. Morrison's inclusion of feminine writing in *Paradise* is steeped in the postmodern conception of subjectivity. Like the structuralists and poststructuralists, Morrison strongly believes that subjectivity is deeply rooted in discourse. This instance brings in mind Lacan's revision of Freud particularly his theory of consciousness structured as language. For instance, in *Jazz*, Morrison uses Bakhtin's theory of dialogism to highlight the multiplicity of identities. Similarly, in *Paradise*, she employs what Cixous terms *écriture féminine* to underline Kristeva's theory of *subject en procès*. Due to its use of the experimental feminine writing, *Paradise* thus embodies Elaine Showalter's concept of the gynotext<sup>17</sup> as opposed to androtext. Helene Cixous first coins the term of *écriture féminine* in her groundbreaking essay of *The Laugh of the Medusa*. In this essay, Cixous urges women to unthink<sup>18</sup> the traditional way of writing fiction. She argues that "women must write through their bodies, they must invent the impregnable language that will wreck partitions, classes, and rhetorics, regulations and codes" (Cixous, p. 886). For Cixous, language is discursive for the reason that it privileges the structuralist anti-humanist notion of the phallus as a dominant signifier. Thus, by the invention of *écriture féminine*, Cixous engenders the phallogentric

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<sup>17</sup> The feminist critic of Elaine Showalter invents the concept of gynocriticism to rewrite the history of literature from a feminist point of view. Gynocriticism is a huge field, which includes "the history, styles, themes, genres, and structures of writing by women; the psychodynamics of female creativity; the trajectory of the individual or collective female career; and the evolution or laws of female literary tradition" (Barry, p. 124).

<sup>18</sup> This is the English translation of Cixous' neologism of the term 'Dé-pense'. Like the Derridean concept of *différance*, Dé-pense has also double meaning, which are to unthink and to spend

language of literature. Although it is mainly concerned with women, feminine writing is also practiced by male writers such as James Joyce and Jean Genet. Cixous' écriture féminine wages war on Freudian psychoanalysis. In the Oedipal stage, Freud argues that the female infant undergoes the experience of the penis envy and the fear of castration. Thus, he labels it as a Dark Continent for women. However, Cixous replies that this “*Dark Continent is neither dark nor unexplorable*.—It is still unexplored only because we’ve been made to believe that it was too dark to be explorable” (p. 885). Thus, Cixous prefers what Kristeva terms the semiotic over the symbolic for the reason that the semiotic is a maternal sphere par excellence. The semiotic is equated with Lacan’s mirror stage. It is also called the chora. Kristeva takes this concept from Plato to show “the space in which meaning that is produced is semiotic: the echolalis, glossolalias, rhythms, and intonations of an infant who does not yet know how to use language to refer to objects, or of a psychotic who has lost the ability to use language in a properly meaningful way” (McAfee, p. 19). Morrison has probably read the work of Cixous and Kristeva. She also favors the pre-linguistic realm of the semiotic because the symbolic is a patriarchal space. Therefore, Morrison literally adopts Cixous’ writing the body. In *Beloved*, she writes with the white ink. Cixous uses this metaphor as an allusion to the maternal milk. For instance, “Denver took her mother’s milk right along with the blood of her sister” (p. 152). Moreover, in a metaphorical image, the scars of slavery has formed a tree on Sethe’s back. Morrison writes with Sethe’s body to revise the imperialist white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy of slavery. Morrison maintains this experimental writing in *Paradise*, where she gives architecture feminine and masculine features,

The female-torso candleholders in the candlebra hanging from the hall ceilings. The curls of hair winding through vines that once touched faces now chipped away. The nursing cherubim emerging from layers of paint in the foyer. The nipple-tipped doorknobs. Layabouts half naked in old-timey clothes, drinking and fondling each other in prints stacked in closets. A Venus or two among several pieces of nude statuary beneath the cellar stairs. She even found the brass male genitalia that had been ripped from the sinks of tubs, packed away in a chest of sawdust as if, however repelled by the hardware’s demands, the sisters valued nevertheless its metal. Gigi toyed with the fixtures, turning the testicles designed to release water from the penis (p. 72).

Morrison’s writes with the body to set the girls of the Convent aside from the patriarchal town of Ruby. Unlike the rest of the novel, this passage is characterized by the Barthesian concept of

jouissance. By using the postmodern feminist concept of *écriture féminine*, Morrison deconstructs the cocksureness<sup>19</sup> of Ruby's patriarchs.

## 2. Hauntology

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The use of *écriture féminine* by Morrison does not only deconstruct the phallocentrism of *Beloved* and *Paradise*, it even grants them a magical realist dimension. Morrison “dismiss the claim that she is a magical realist because, as she states, it appears that she is copying Latin American culture and doesn't have ‘culture to write out of’ (Gilroy quoted by Ann Bowers, p. 88). Even though she rejects the label of magical realism, Morrison's novels highly adhere to this literary genre. Moreover, the novels of *Beloved*, *Paradise*, *Jazz* and *Song of Solomon* are usually discussed by the critics of magic realism along with the canonical work of the genre namely Marquez' *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Rushdie's *Midnight Children*, Okri's *The Famished Road* and Carter's *Nights at the Circus*. It is no coincidence that the same magical realist novels are included in Hutcheon's *Poetics of Postmodernism*. This shows that there is a strong relationship between historiographic metafiction and magic realism. Both literary genres are transgressive by nature. Besides, the two genres underscore the postmodern incredulity toward realism. In this line of thought, Ihab Hassan argues that “‘postmodern art is irrealist, aniconic. Even its ‘magic realism’ dissolves in ethereal states; its hard, flat surfaces repel mimesis” (p. 506). In other words, the term realism in ‘magic realism’ is not about the platonic concept of representation. On the contrary, magic realism is anti-realist. However, despite the fact that she relies on the magical aspect of magic realism, for Morrison, the history of African American is still real. The postmodernity of this genre resides in the fact that it conceals the difference between reality and fantasy. For example, the experimental use of the feminine writing makes the familiar looks unfamiliar in Morrison's trilogy. For example, characters are fascinated with the fantastic architecture of the Convent in *Paradise*. While she was discovering the Convent for the first time, “Gigi tiptoed over and leaned close to see who was the woman with I-give-up face. ‘Saint Catherine of Siena’ was engraved on a small plaque in the gilt frame. Gigi laughed—brass dicks hidden in small plaque in a box; pudding tits exposed on a plate—but in fact it didn't feel funny” (p. 74). The non-conventional setting of the Convent in *Paradise*

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<sup>19</sup> Terry Eagleton uses this concept referring to “those who wield sexual social power maintain their grip” (Eagleton quoted by Tidd, p. 98). The concept of cocksureness is used interchangeably with the Derridean concept of phallogocentrism.



and the growing tree on Sethe's back in *Beloved* incarnate Salman Rushdie's definition of magic realism as the "commingling of the improbable and the mundane" (Rushdie quoted by Ann Bowers, p. 3). By the use of magic realism, Morrison creates a hybrid space. That is neither utopian nor dystopian, neither real nor magical, neither oral nor literary, neither historical nor fictional. However, it is space that is entangled in the in-between. It is a sort of place without a place. To put it in Foucault's terminology, the magical realist events of Morrison's trilogy takes place in a heterotopian<sup>20</sup> space. Therefore, Morrison's novels deviate from the real setting of the trilogy to the space of the other. This is intensified by the magical realist imagery of the haunted house of 124 in *Beloved*, the phallogentric décor in *Paradise* and the talking parrots in *Jazz*.

It is worth to note that the implications of Morrison's use of magic realism are mainly ontological. The term ontology refers to a branch of philosophy that deals with existence including Sartre's existentialism. There are variants of magic realism. However, the haunting ghosts of the dead in Morrison's trilogy usually trigger off ontological as well as post-colonial interrogations. In this vain, the magic realism of Morrison's trilogy evokes Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, where the protagonist of Gregor Samsa wakes up to find himself metamorphosed into a grotesque insect. Maggie Ann Bowers argues that Kafka is the first to influence what Franz Roh later terms magic realism (p. 25). Kafka has also influenced Deleuze's concepts of minor literature and becoming. More than any other fictional character, the metamorphoses of Samsa into an insect better demonstrates the Deleuzian concept of becoming-animal. To this end, the same could be said on the reincarnated ghost of Beloved because "becomings are demonic, a term they [Deleuze and Guattari] specifically place outside the order distinguishing the divine and the satanic. Beloved may be a becoming-human of desire, but at the same time as she is also a becoming-other, a becoming-ghost, of the human... Beloved can never be fully conceptualized because she is continually in a state of transition" (Aldea, p. 70). These existentialist questions raised by the character of Beloved corroborate with McHale's ontological conception of postmodern fiction. Basing on the Russian Formalist

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<sup>20</sup> Foucault coins the concept of heterotopia in his essay *Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias*. The essay has been first delivered as a lecture by Foucault in March 1967. Basing on the phenomenology of Gaston Bachelard, Foucault comes up with his own poetics of space. Heterotopia is placed somewhere between utopia and reality. Foucault compares the concept of heterotopia to the metaphor of the reflection in the mirror. This reflection mediates one's own real presence with their utopian image in the mirror, which is unreal. Magical realism is heterotopian because it deviates from reality in the same sense that psychiatric hospitals, prisons and rest homes are a deviation from the norms of society.

concept of the dominant, Brian McHale captures the consequentiality of postmodernism in relation to modernism. McHale argues,

The dominant of modernist fiction is *epistemological*. That is, modernist fiction deploys strategies which engage and foregrounds questions such as those mentioned by Dick Higgins in my epigraph: ‘How can I interpret this world of which I am a part? And what am I in it?’.. How is knowledge transmitted from one knower to another, and with what degree of reliability?; How does the object of knowledge change as it passes from knower to knower?; What are the limits of the knowable? And so on... This brings me to a second general thesis, this time about postmodernist fiction: the dominant of postmodernist fiction is *ontological*. That is, postmodernist fiction deploys strategies which engage and foreground questions like the ones Dick Higgins calls ‘post-cognitive’: ‘Which world is this? What is to be done in it? Which of my selves is to do it?’ Other typical postmodernist questions bear either on the ontology of the literary text itself or on the ontology of the world which it projects, for instance: What is a world?; What kinds of worlds are there, how are they constituted, and do they differ? (pp. 9/10).

For McHale, Faulkner’s *Absalom Absalom* is the threshold through which the dominant shifts its focus from the modernist epistemological problematic of knowledge to the postmodernist ontological question of being. This ontological shift is explained by Faulkner’s use of magic realism. *Absalom Absalom* “‘is what we might call a metaghost story, a novel about ghosts and haunting, how ghosts are made and how we come to be haunted and being haunted and ghosted do to us, but one in which actual ghosts are notably absent’” (Hurley quoted by Davison, p. 61). Davison includes *Beloved* along with Faulkner’s *Absalom Absalom* and Poe’s master text *The Fall of the House of Usher* under the category of Southern Gothic. All of these texts take place in the South of the United States. Besides, they are gothic because they are set in haunted houses and macabre atmospheres. Like Poe’s *The Fall of the House of Usher*, in *Beloved* “‘psychological distress often accompanies architectural decay’” (Davison, p. 50). Morrison connects the historical trauma of Sethe to the poltergeistism of 124. For instance, Morrison begins *Beloved* with the following “‘124 was spiteful’” (p. 3). The malice of 124 is the result of Sethe’s psychological trauma of slavery. The ghost of Beloved incarnates the traumatic history of African Americans. Therefore, 124 becomes an anthropomorphic space made of a “‘conflagration of hasty voices’” (*Beloved*, 172). Thus, one can conclude that the magical realism of Morrison’s trilogy is inherent once again in her predecessor of Faulkner.

In the same vein, the French philosopher of Jacques Derrida builds on McHale's ontological ideas of postmodernism. Thus, he coins the concept of hauntology that is the combination of the verb to haunt and ontology. In a response to Francis Fukuyama's famous declaration of the end of history, that is the end of Marxism at the sake of neo-liberalism, Derrida quotes Marx anew "A spectre is haunting Europe – the spectre of communism" (Derrida quoted by Sim, p. 41). Derrida conjures the ghost of Karl Marx into the present. Derrida's *Specters of Marx* is about the resurrection of Marx in a time when figures like Fukuyama declares the end of ideology. Drawing on Shakespeare's play of *Hamlet*, Derrida wages war on this endism of Marxism. Therefore, Derrida opposes other postmodernists such as Daniel Bell, who argues that "ideology, which was once a road to action, has come to be a dead end" (Bell quoted by Sim, p. 18). On the contrary, like the ghost of *Hamlet*, Derrida raises questions about the haunting presence of Marxism with respect to "what is the being-there of a spectre? What is the mode of presence of a spectre?" (Derrida quoted by Lucy, p. 112). In this way, the Bard's *Hamlet* becomes a key text in the understanding of Derrida's concept of specterality or hauntology. This is explained by the fact that *Hamlet* is the most philosophical dramatic work written by Shakespeare. Derrida's begins *Specters of Marx* by an epigraph taken from Hamlet that is, *time out of joint*, to show that,

The alignment of the dead with the living constitutes a kind of impossible temporality. Like the ghost, this alignment cannot be located within historical time, or the specterality, of this alignment is also perfectly mundane. Everyone knows that responsibility extends not only to the living but also to dead and those who yet to be born. So we might say that what ghosts do (regardless of any belief in them) is to intensify something we already know. Yet we might also say that, like Hamlet, we are prone to forgetfulness and need ghosts to remind us of our responsibility, if not to remind us that responsibility is always overwhelming (Lucy, p. 114)

Historiographic metafiction opens the horizon in the discussion of Derrida's spectropolitics. Like the specter of Marx, Morrison personifies the past in terms of a ghost. Like a specter, history "never dies, it remains always to come and come back" (Derrida quoted by Sim, p. 61). To put it in Derrida's terminology, the revenants of *Beloved* in *Beloved*, *Dorcas* in *Jazz* and the dead children of Mavis in *Paradise* show the responsibility of the dead in the resurrection of the Afro-American past that is doomed to oblivion by the living. Most of historiographic metafictional novels include the magical realist notion of specterality. The concept of hauntology is transgressive when it comes to the rewriting of history. The metaphor of the ghost

highlights the self-presence of the haunting past. For instance, like Toni Morrison, Hutcheon considers of Maxine Hong Kingston as a historiographic metafictional writer due to her skepticism toward Chinese history. On the other hand, Kingston also takes advantage of the magical realist concept of specterality to make her way to this buried past. In *The Woman Warrior: A Memoir of a Girlhood Among Ghosts*, Kingston “express the misrepresented history of Chinese America from an insider position in a community where discussion of the past is taboo. The narrator incorporates and adapts Chinese oral storytelling traditions, with many tales of ghosts, to her own Californian context with a view to creating a Chinese American communal memory” (Bowers, 55). Moreover, in a similar fashion to the exposition of the reincarnated ghost in the first pages of *Beloved*, Isabel Allende’s magical realist novel of *The House of the Spirits* “opens with the magical setting in which ghosts, extraordinary happenings and extrasensory perception are commonplace” (Bowers, p. 42). Gabriel Garcia Marquez remains the main influence in the writing of Morrison’s trilogy. Yet, both writers share their fascination to the literary figure of Faulkner as Marquez explicitly states in his Nobel Prize lecture. Marquez’ *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is the key model of the magical realist novel of all time. Magical realism is everywhere in the novel. The solitude in the title of Marquez’ masterwork is both psychological and physical. The magical town of Macondo is set in a place isolated from the extern world, a place that dates back to prehistory. Without the mysterious gypsy character of Melquiades, modernity would never reach the town of Macondo. The magical realism of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* manifests in the scenes, where Gabo depicts children with pigtails because of incest. Magic is also realised by the Derridean concept of hauntology through the specter of Aguilar. However, the most stunning magical scene in the novel is that of Remedios the Beauty when she ascends to heaven. Morrison seems to echo the magical realist spirit of *Hundred Years of Solitude* throughout her trilogy. For instance, the utopian town of Ruby in *Paradise* is the equivalent of Marquez’ magical Macondo. As Marquez, Morrison dedicates the first chapter of *Paradise* to the story behind the establishment of Ruby. Yet, both towns are founded by male patriarchs namely Zechariah and José Arcadio Buendia. Bringing in mind Carlos Fuentes’ comment on the town of Macondo, Ruby “begins to proliferate with richness of a Columbian Yoknapatawpha” (Fuentes quoted by Bloom, p. 7). This means that Faulkner remains the main influence in the recreation of both mythical towns. Besides, *Beloved* imitates the scenario of the gypsies’ arrival in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. For example, Sethe, Denver and Paul D go to a carnival in the town made for colored people, where they are excited about “‘seeing whitepeople loose: doing magic, clowning, without heads or with two heads, twenty feet tall or two feet tall, weighing a ton, completely tattooed, eating

glass, swallowing fire, spitting ribbons'' (p. 48). The carnival grants *Beloved* a magical setting reminiscent of the Arabian Nights. Moreover, in the same day, the omniscient narrator of *Beloved* has seen the shadows of Denver, Sethe and Paul D holding hands while they are not in real. In addition, it is no coincidence that after their return from the carnival, they have found the flesh and blood Beloved waiting for them on the steps of 124. Thus, the most frequent magical realist instances of *Beloved* take place in this chapter. Morrison's representation of the carnival is steeped in the episodes that feature the caravans of the gypsies in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Through the caravans that form a sort of carnival, Marquez joins the realism of the Colombian's history to the magic of the gypsies. Each time of the year, Melquiades brings new magical technological tools to the prehistoric Macondo, where time is eternal. For instance, one time, "along with many artifices, they brought a flying carpet. But they did not offer it as a fundamental contribution to the development of transport, rather as an object of recreation. The people at once dug up their last gold pieces to take advantage of a quick flight over the houses of the village'' (OHYS, p. 31). Moreover, one of the recurrent motifs in both novels is the concept of memory. In *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, a strange plague sweeps the town of Macondo. The plague causes the inhabitants of Macondo a loss of memory, "it was the insomnia plague'' (OHYS, p. 45). Here, the plague is metaphor for the amnesia of collective history, which is the main concern of Morrison in *Beloved*. In this regard, Morrison states "nobody will want to read this: the characters don't want to remember, I don't want to remember; black people don't want to remember, white people don't want to reminder. I mean, it's national amnesia'' (Morrison quotes by Wagner-Martin, p. 77). Thus, one can easily deduce that the magical aspect of Morrison and Gabo's novels is mainly about the rewriting of history. This is why; magical realism is regarded as a main characteristic of historiographic metafiction. However, Hutcheon's *A Poetics of Postmodernism* pays no attention to these manifestations of magical realism in its discussion of postmodern fiction.

Returning to Derrida's genealogy of ghosts, Morrison pastiches Marquez's passage of the haunting specter of Aguilar throughout her trilogy. *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is about the rise of and fall of Macondo throughout seven generations. Thus, the complexity of Gabo's style manifests in the novel's intricate characterization. It is for this reason why Marquez places a map of characters in the first page of his masterwork. The novel begins with the present setting of the novel that is of Colonel Aureliano Buendia facing the firing squad, and then it goes back in time to tell the story of the historical establishment of Macondo in terms of analepsis. In the preliminary pages of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, the reader learns about the incident of

Aguilar's death, whose ghost will haunt the rest of Buendia family. After he has won the cockfight from Prudencio Aguilar, José Arcadio Buendia could not bear the words of Aguilar, "maybe that rooster of yours can do your wife a favor" (p. 21). However, the reader knows in advance that the patriarch is potent. His wife Ursula, who is also the cousin of José, wears her chastity undergarment for fear of giving birth to iguanas. In such a dramatic irony, José brings his spears and pierces the throat of Aguilar. From that moment on, the ghost of Aguilar comes back to torment José's ill doing. For example, "one night, when she could not sleep, Ursula went out into the courtyard to get some water and she saw Prudencio Aguilar by the water jar. He was livid, a sad expression on his face, trying to cover the hole in his throat with a plug on his face made of esparto grass" (OHYS, p. 22). Morrison seems to fuse Aguilar's specter with the half-presence of African American history. First, in *Beloved*, after Sethe commits infanticide by murdering her daughter in order to escape slavery, the revenant of Sethe's daughter comes back in the flesh and blood character of Beloved. This instance recalls Melquiades' return from the dead after his fellows have thrown him the depths of Java Sea. Then, the rebirth of the physical body of Beloved is a pure magical realist event. Like the specter of Aguilar, the ghost of Beloved keeps threatening Sethe's life. For instance, before the coming of Beloved, Sethe tells Denver that somebody has choked her. Pages later, thanks to the conversation of Denver with Beloved in the woods, the reader figures out that Beloved is the one who has been trying to choke Sethe. Denver states, "I saw your face. You made her choke" (p. 101). Besides, Morrison eclipses *Beloved* with a highly magical realist imagery. Beloved literally consumes the body of Sethe. This shows the heavy impact of slavery upon the memory of Sethe. The traumatic history of slavery swallows her body. While Sethe's body shrinks, Beloved becomes bigger to the extent that characters themselves could not recognize the difference. For instance, Ella "looked it in the eye. It was standing right next to Sethe. But from the way they describe it, don't seem like it was the girl I saw in there. The girl I saw was narrow. This one was big. She say they was holding hands and Sethe looked like a little girl beside it" (p. 265). Magical realism implies the changing identity of Beloved. After she has totally consumed the body of Sethe, Beloved disappears leaving only her traces on the imagination of the reader. Second, in *Jazz*, following her death not long after Violet has ripped off her corpse during the funeral, the ghost of Dorcas comes back as a revenant to disrupt the daily life of Joe and Violet. As the narrator argues,

In Violet and Joe Trace's apartment, the rooms are like the empty birdcages wrapped in cloth. And a dead girl's face has become a necessary thing for their nights. They each take turns to throw off the bedcovers, rise up from the sagging mattress and tiptoe over cold linoleum into the parlor to gaze at what seems like the only living presence in the house: the photograph of a bold, unsmiling girl staring from the mantelpiece (p. 21)

The photograph of Dorcas acts like the return of Paul D in *Beloved*. In other words, the photograph triggers off Morrison's neologism of rememory. Ironically, by giving her the photograph of her niece, Alice condemns Violet to be the prisoner of her memory. The specter of Dorcas keeps hovering in the house up there on Lenox. The fact that leads the narrator to show how the girl's memory has become "a sickness in the house—everywhere and nowhere" (pp. 39). On the other hand, the specterality of Dorcas works differently with Joe. He kills Dorcas under the pretext of not loving him anymore. Joe thus evokes Oscar Wilde's famous stanza "each man kills the thing he loves, by each let this be heard, some do it with a bitter look, some with a flattering word, the coward does it with a kiss, the brave man with a sword!" (p. 232). However, unlike Wilde, Joe does it with a rifle. Despite the fact that he has put an end to her life, Dorcas keeps floating on the mind of Joe. For instance, Joe "remembers his memories of her; how thinking about her as he lay in bed next to Violet was the way he entered sleep. He minds her death, is so sorry about it, but minded more the possibility of his memory failing to conjure up the dearness" (p. 40). The politics of hauntology do not work well with the character of Joe. Since the time he has killed her, his memory of her dwindles to the extent that he cannot conjure up the dearness of the three months. In the end of *Jazz*, like *Beloved*, Dorcas comes back from the grave to narrate her own chapter. Therefore, Dorcas equates Derrida's spectral concept of the supplement. While dealing with his concept of 'jeu', Derrida argues,

That this movement of play, permitted by the lack or absence of a center or origin, is the movement of *supplementarity*. One cannot determine the center and exhaust totalization because the sign which replaces the center, which supplement it, taking the center's place in its absence—this sign is added, occurs as a surplus, as a supplement. The movement of signification adds something, which results in the fact that there is always more, but this addition is a floating one because it comes to perform a vicarious function, to supplement a lack on the part of the signified (Derrida, pp. 365/366).

Dorcas returns after she has been presumed dead. As Felice puts it, she revives "true-as-life Dorcas" (p. 230). Therefore, she comes back to supplement the missing end of *Jazz*. To put it

in Derrida's terminology, Dorcas' resurrection is the "result of a lack which must be supplemented" (Derrida, p. 367). The narration of Dorcas goes back in time to the night when Joe has hunted her in the party. In this chapter, the reader has more extra information about the death of Dorcas by which Morrison begins her novel. Dorcas explains the reason why she has chosen Acton over Joe. Dorcas admits, "Acton gives me a quiet look when I ask for seconds? He worries about me that way. Joe never did. Joe didn't care what kind of woman I was. He should have. I cared. I wanted to have personality and with Acton I'm getting one. I have a look now" (p. 222). Dorcas knows in advance that Joe will come to the party to take revenge because she has left him as a substitution for Acton. As a final reason and because of Joe's old age, Dorcas argues that the party "is not the place for old men; this is the place for romance" (p. 224). Dorcas picks Acton because he supplies her with what Joe could not. The supplementarity of Dorcas is highly Derridean. Like the work of Derrida, Morrison's trilogy should be read in the light of specterality. The genealogy of ghosts governs the work of Derrida. Even the concept of deconstruction by which Derrida comes to be known is steeped in the logic of hauntology. As in a dictionary, Nicholas Royle underlines the specterality of deconstruction,

**Deconstruction** n. not what you think: the experience of the impossible: what remains to be thought: a logic of destabilization always already on the move in 'things themselves': what makes every identity at once itself and different from itself: a logic of specterality: a theoretical and practical parasitism or virology (Royle, p. 24).

Like the philosophy of Derrida, Morrison's literary heritage is about specterality. Each novel haunts the other. The intertextual relationship between each novel is thought of as a specter. Morrison seems to haunt her own writings. For instance, *Beloved* is hailed as the first novel through which Morrison initiates the concept of specterality. Thus, the ghost of Beloved spooks the other novels in the trilogy. The same magical realist element of hauntology occurs in *Paradise*. For instance, Mavis suffocates her two babies by letting the doors of the Cadillac closed. The unintentional death of Merle and Pearl gives Mavis pangs of conscience. Thus, the ghosts of her dead children travel with her during her trip to the Convent. This shows how the notion of hauntology defies both notions of time and place. Mavis leaves her house in order to get her mind free from the tragic event. However, the specters of her dead children follow her wherever she goes. Once, Mavis tells her mother that "they are going to kill me, Ma" (p. 31). Afterwards, Birdie asks Mavis "were the twins trying to kill you too?" (p. 31). Here, the pronoun "they" refers to the dead children of Merle and Pearl. Like Ursula, Mavis feels the half-presence of her children in the Convent. For instance, when Morrison states, "left alone



Mavis expected the big kitchen to lose its comfort. It didn't. In fact she had an outer-rim sensation that the kitchen was crowded with children—laughing? Singing?—two of whom were Merle and Pearl” (p. 41). The haunting ghosts of Merle and Pearl seem even to follow Mavis to the Convent, a place that is supposed to be a sanctuary for the female characters of *Paradise*. One last point about the magical ghostliness of Morrison's trilogy is the fact that hauntology is bound with the concept of myth. Morrison is indebted to the West African archetype of the Abiku child. Chinua Achebe defines the Abiku or the Ogbanje as “one of those wicked children who, when they died, entered their mothers' wombs to be born again” (p. 77). Morrison thus embodies Mircea Eliade's theory of the eternal return of myth in the form of a ghost.

### **3. Magical realism as a postcolonial counter-discourse**

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Historiographic metafiction is soaked in the politics of post-colonialism. While dealing with Gabo's exemplar of magical realism, Linda Hutcheon sees *One Hundred Years of Solitude* as both “metafictionally self-reflexive and yet speaking to us powerfully about real political and historical realities: ‘it has thus become a kind of model for the contemporary writer, being self-consciousness about its literary heritage and about the limits of mimesis... but yet managing to reconnect its readers to the world outside the page’” (McCaffery quoted by Hutcheon, p. 5). Like Marquez, the self-reflexivity of Morrison's trilogy works as what Slemon terms a speaking mirror. In other words, Morrison employs metafiction to refer back to an existing political reality through Edward Wadie Said's concept of the wordly. In this regard, Stephen Slemon argues, “the magic realist text reflects in its language of narration real condition of speech and cognition within the actual social relations of a post-colonial culture, a reflection Garcia Marquez thematizes in *One Hundred Years of Solitude* as a ‘speaking mirror’ (p. 12). For instance, the twelfth chapter of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* witnesses the arrival of the Banana Company, which is an American capitalist crew led by Mr. Brown. Soon, the company has transformed Macondo into a town full of wooden houses. They have also built railroads to connect the solitary Macondo with the rest of the world. However, for Marquez, the arrival of Mr. Herbert and Mr. Brown is seen as an invasion. It is no coincidence that in the same chapter all of the seventeen Aurelianos have been massacred. This instance in particular is deeply rooted in the colonial history of Columbia. The chapter is a tribute to the victims of the American capitalist companies who are seeking only profit. In other words, the chapter is a “reconstruction of the Ciénaga massacre” (Minta, p. 93). Chinua Achebe echoes the same

scene of this imperial arrival in his post-colonial novel of *Things Fall Apart*. Achebe's novel features the arrival of a white missionary by the same name of Mr. Brown. The latter builds the first church in the village. He thus puts an end the Igbo culture and thus reterritorialize the modern culture of the colonizer. Unlike Gabo's novel, colonialism in *Things Fall Apart* is mainly a reference the Nigerian history of the British imperialism. Like its predecessors, Morrison's use of magic realism is mainly post-colonial. Throughout her trilogy, Morrison shows how the dominant culture deterritorializes the diversity of America in order to reterritorialize a white supremacist America. Slavery is an imperial act used to eradicate the black 'race' that is crucial in the construction of Americanness. Therefore, the trilogy comes as a counter narrative to the texts that Morrison outlines in her critical work of *Playing in the Dark*. Morrison characterizes these texts by the concept of Africanism that is the presence of the black race as a mere shadow in the identification of the white self. Like Gabo's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and through the inclusion of magic realism, Morrison shows how "all versions of the past are incurably fictitious ... literature can never bring the past back to life, and its clear challenge to recognize that what we have been reading has, of course, been a fiction all along" (Minta, p. 94). This quote evokes Chinua Achebe's writing of *Things Fall Apart* as a counter discourse to the colonial alterity of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. For instance, *Beloved* is a revisionist novel that tends to rewrite the history of slavery that one cannot find in historical books. *Jazz* is a black counter text to the white modernity of Fitzgerald's Jazz Age. Furthermore, *Paradise* corroborates with Frederic Jameson's Marxist explanation of magic realism. Jameson associates magical realism with the pre-capitalist third world countries. In this way, Jameson's Marxist approach of magical realism meets with Bhabha's postcolonial concept of hybridity because magical realism is an "encounter of the pre-capitalist and the capitalist, articulated as the pre-colonial and the colonial" (Aldea, p. 108). As the magical town of Macondo in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, the town of Ruby in *Paradise* is set in a pre-capitalist and thus a pre-colonial America. Ruby is a utopian pre-historical town reminiscent of the recent world of Marquez, where "things lacked names, and in order to indicate them it was necessary to point" (OHYS, p. 1). The link between Marquez' *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and the trilogy of Morrison leads to Homi K. Bhabha's conclusion in his groundbreaking introduction to the collection of essays *Nation and Narration*, "magical realism after the Latin American Boom, becomes the literary language of the emergent post-colonial world" (Bhabha quoted by Aldea, p. 105). Accordingly, the ghostliness' of Morrison's trilogy triggers off Bhabha's post-colonial turn in cultural studies. The remaining of this dissertation turn its attention to the work of Bhabha on cultural translation due to its complementary relationship with magical realism. Both

concepts are about transgression, in the sense that they defy binary thinking through what Bhabha terms the third space, liminality and the in-between.

Going back to the interchangeable relationship between mythology and magic realism, in her most magical realist novel of *Song of Solomon*, Morrison exploits the Greek myth of Icarus in order to highlight the liminality of the transatlantic passage. *Song of Solomon* opens with a highly symbolic magical realism reminiscent of Joyce mythical flight from Dublin,

The North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance agent promised to fly from Mercy to the other side of Lake Superior at three o'clock. Two days before the event was to take place he tacked a note on the door of his little yellow house:

At 3:00 P.M on Wednesday the 18<sup>th</sup> of February, 1931, I will take off from Mercy and fly away on my own wings. Please forgive me. I loved you all.  
(signed) Robert Smith Ins. Agent...

When the dead doctor's daughter saw Mr. Smith emerge as promptly as he had promised from behind the cupola, his wide blue silk wings curved forward around his chest, she dropped her covered peck basket, spilling red velvet rose petals. The wind blew them about, up, down, and into small mounds of snow. Her half-grown daughters scrambled about trying to catch them, while their mother moaned and held the underside of her stomach. The rose petal scramble got a lot of attention, but the pregnant lady's moans did not. (pp. 3/5).

Despite the surrealist entry of *Song Solomon*, the flight of Robert Smith ends in failure. The death of Mr. Smith gives birth the main character of Milkman. Unlike Mr. Smith, Milkman's grandfather of Solomon truly belongs to those flying Afro-Americans who grow wings in order to fly back to their African origin running away from the institution of slavery. This instance in particular incarnate Salman Rushdie's emblematic quote, "we are translated men" (Rushdie quoted by Trivedi, p. 4). According to Harish Trivedi, here, Rushdie takes advantage of the etymology of the term translation in order to describe the condition of being in the in-betweenness of two spaces. Critics now use Rushdie's quote as a metaphor for the writers of diaspora including Toni Morrison. Rushdie's quote anticipates Trivedi's introduction of the bestial concept of cultural translation. The proliferation of the term translation shows the postmodern nature of conceptual vagabondism. At first, translation has always been understood as the translation of languages. Then, it is used as the translation of cultures. However, the

coming of Homi K. Bhabha heralds the postcolonial turn in translation studies. As Trivedi argues, “if there is one thing that Cultural Translation is not, it is the translation of culture” (p. 4). In other words, the collocation of cultural translation demonstrates the transnational and transitional displacement of the diaspora. Therefore, the mythical flight of Mr. Smith offers an excellent instance of cultural translation as long as the daemonic doubling of what it means to be half-African and half-American has always been annoying Morrison. Besides, the biblical name of the flying character of Solomon recalls Rushdie’s satanic misnaming of the holy prophet of Mohamed into the fictional character of Mahound. Therefore, bringing Mircea Eliade in mind, *Song of Solomon* and Morrison’s trilogy as whole become a hybrid space of the sacred and the profane. Magic realism is transgressive by nature. As Bhabha argues, the hybrid aspect of magic realism is about heresy. Yet, even the term of magical realism is hybrid. For instance, basing on Deleuze, Aldea states, “magic, as we have seen, is precisely a movement of deterritorialization, divergent from the territoriality of realism” (p. 113). To this end, Bhabha famously quotes,

If hybridity is heresy, then to blaspheme is to dream. To dream not of the past or present, nor the continuous present; it is not the nostalgic dream of tradition, nor the Utopian dream of modern progress; it is the dream of translation as ‘survival’ as Derrida translates the ‘time’ of Benjamin’s concept of the after-life of translation, as *sur-vivre*, the act of living on the borderlines. Rushdie translates this into the migrant’s dream of survival: an initiatory interstices; an empowering condition of hybridity; an emergence that turns ‘return’ into reinscription or redescription; an iteration that is not belated, but ironic and insurgent. For the migrant’s survival depends as Rushdie put it, on discovering ‘how newness enters the world’ (Bhabha, p. 324).

The magical realism of Morrison develops Bhabha’s idea of cultural translation as a kind of survival. Walter Benjamin coins the term in order to show how the translated target text is the extension and continuation of the original. Derrida then deconstructs Benjamin’s liminal passage that exists in the inbetween of life and death through his concept of *sur-vivre*, living on or the afterlife. Later, Bhabha exploits the Benjaminian-Derridean concept of *sur-vivre* to give rise to the untranslatability of the diasporic experience. The ghostliness of Morrison’s trilogy means that living the in-betweens of the present and past is “living in the midst of the incomprehensible” (Bhabha, p. 308). The revenants of *Beloved*, Dorcas well as Merle and Pearl are what Bhabha means by the newness that has entered the world. It is the world of post-colonialism and postmodernism, a brave new world of dystopia because of cultural translation.

Morrison's ghosts are the boundary through which the half-presence of history begins. The trilogy thus becomes an intervening space of the past and the present dualism. It a space of negotiating difference. As Bhabha argues, Morrison "renews the past, refiguring it as a contingent 'in-between' space, that innovates and interrupts the performance of the present. The past-present' becomes part of the necessity, not the nostalgia, of living" (p. 10). The unhomely presence of ghosts in Morrison's trilogy confirms Derrida's deconstruction of Benjamin's notes on translation. In the sense that, "a text is original insofar as it is a thing, not to be confused with an organic or a physical body, but a thing, let us say, of the mind, meant to survive the death of the author or the signatory, and to be above or beyond the physical corpus of the text, and so on. The structure of the original text is survival" Derrida quoted by Royle, p. 64). The remnants of the past is similar the post-structuralist notion of the death of the author. Morrison dies. However, as Derrida states, her texts keep *living on*. Due to magical realism, Bhabha quotes Morrison's *Beloved* as the exemplification of the unhomely along with Nadine Gordimer. The unhomely fictional world of Morrison is the space where the personal meets the political. The study of Morrison work is about the Levinasian reading of the inwardness of African American history from the outside. For instance, in *Jazz*, there is the instance where magical realism intertwines with Bhabha's blasphemous nature of hybridity. In a highly symbolic imagery, "the parrot, shivering and barely turning his green and blond head, told her [Violet] each time, 'Love you' (p. 115). Morrison seems to pastiche the magical feature of a talking bird from *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Violet's pet recalls Gabo's "parrots painted all colors reciting Italian arias (p. 16). The symbolism of the talking parrot underlines the heresy of cultural translation. In other words, it is about utopian dream of freedom and the nostalgic nightmare of slavery. The talking parrot interprets Maya Angelou's verse, "for the caged bird, sings of freedom" (p. 194). Thus, Violet "took the birds from their cages and set them out the windows to freeze or fly, including the parrot that said, 'I love you' (p. 11). Morrison thus begins *Jazz* in such a magical realist imagery. The characters of Morrison become the interpreters of the African American culture. Morrison reiterates Lahiri's dictum, "I translate, therefore I am" (Lahiri quoted by Trivedi, p. 6). Turning thus the Cartesian cogito upside down.

In *Paradise*, Morrison employs a different variant of magical realism. Since *Paradise* is a feminist novel, Morrison's use of magical realism is pertinent to what Patricia Hart terms magical feminism<sup>21</sup>. Like Angela Carter, Isabel Allende and Olga Tokarczuk, Morrison's

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<sup>21</sup> Patricia Hart first uses the term of magical feminism in relation to Isabel Allende's *la casa de los espíritus*. According to Hart, Allende's use of magical realism is mainly feminist. For instance, she argues

magical feminism emanates from the inferiority of otherness. The othered self adopts magical feminism as a counter-discourse to destabilize the power of the hegemonic self. Like post-colonialism, magical feminism is also transgressive, in the sense that it subverts the alterity of patriarchy. *Paradise* is a discursive space, where the personal is again political. For instance, the magical powers of Consolata spring from the subordination of male domination. Mary Magna, the spiritual mother of Consolata, raises the dead. Like an omnipresent goddess, “she sees everything in the universe” (p. 47). When walks, she bears light like a lamp. Mary Magna stands in opposition to the patriarchs of Ruby. She is the universal matriarch whose magical power defies the discourse of patriarchy and the capitalist subordination of women in the private sphere. As Connie tells Mavis, “she is my mother. Your mother too” (p. 48). Besides, *Paradise* uses magic as a synonym of witchcraft. Magic symbolizes female empowerment. In the end of the novel, the convent turn out to be a coven (p. 276). The magic of *Paradise* happens in the witchlike basement of the convent. Under the supervision of Consolata, the female characters of *Paradise* lay “naked in candlelight” (p. 263). They even cast spells in Latin reminiscent of the afro-Brazilian rituals of the Candomblé.

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that “the magical realism in *The House of the Spirits* is associated only with the women of the novel and lessens with the domination of the male world of political violence in Chile. However, she also notes that the magical qualities of the female characters are purposefully undermined in the novel. Arguing that it is a form of feminist criticism of the patriarchal control over the women’s lives” (Bowers, p. 69).

## Conclusion

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The death of Toni Morrison heralds what is called in literary criticism as the death of the novel. Postmodern critics like John Barth and Milan Kundera argue that the art of the novel has reached its end. The act of writing a novel in the age of cyborgs, a concept so dear to Donna Haraway, is like composing one's of Beethoven symphonies. In other words, the symphony would not have the same impact as it is used to do in the past. So does the novel. The prophecies of the media critic, Marshall McLuhan, come to be true. Printed media including the novel is dead at the cost of electronic books. Probably, this is what Barth means by the concept of exhaustion. Like classic art, the novel is no longer useful. If Joyce has turned out to be blind at the end of his life, postmodern writers such as Beckett, Golding and Morrison end up being mute. To put in other words, what these writers do is to interrogate the usefulness of fiction itself in a post-industrial era. To what extent literature could tell the truth. This is the most disturbing question that occupies the minds of contemporary writers. One might think of the absurd silence in the plays of Beckett, the blank pages of Golding's novels and the fragmented style of Morrison. Modernism and postmodernism are both skeptic toward the notion of truth. However, the difference between both schools of thought lies in the Russian Formalist concept of the dominant as it is analyzed in the last chapter of this research project. The dominant of modernism is mainly epistemological whereas postmodernism is more concerned with ontology. This apocalyptic tone of historiographic metafiction is also echoed in postmodern philosophy and theory. For instance, Roland Barthes kills the authority of the author. The latter is no longer the godlike originator of meaning. This is what is called in literary theory as the death of the author. To summon Derrida again, nothing exists outside the text or rather outside the context. The biographical background of author should not be taken into account. What matters is the text itself. Therefore, the death of the author gives rise to the birth of the reader. As in Morrison's trilogy, the responsibility of the reader is to rearrange the plot of the novel in order to construct meaning and thus reach the ultimate truth behind the story. On the other hand, Foucault maintains this apocalyptic attitude of postmodernism with what he terms as the death of Man. The individual has always been the focus of human sciences since Greek philosophy. For instance, the speaking 'I' of the Cartesian cogito suggests that the individual is already a thinking subject. By the death of Man,

Foucault suppresses the essence of the human nature to analyze how discourse shapes the individual selves into subjects. For him, the human sciences of psychology and sociology has reached their end. Freud is dead since the individual has always been the object of psychoanalysis. In the same vein, Deleuze and Guattari invent the concept of schizoanalysis as opposed to psychoanalysis to develop Foucault's death of Man. The term schizo challenges the idea that there is a psyche at all. The self is always in a flux. The death of Man is equated with the Deleuzian concept of becoming in the sense that it defies the traditional mechanism of psychology. Before Foucault and Deleuze, Derrida is the first to declare the death of the term structure itself that govern the discourse of human sciences. For Derrida, there has been always a point of departure in the study of the episteme. This includes Man, consciousness, God, existence, essence and so on. This is why, postmodernism is considered as a kind of post-existentialism. Derrida seems to convert Sartre's existentialist dictum of existence as a predecessor of essence. The present dissertation that is about to end has more or less tried to dismantle the endism of the postmodern subject in the trilogy of Morrison. With the help of Fredric Jameson particularly his notion of the death of the bourgeois ego, we have seen how the characters of *Beloved*, *Jazz* and *Paradise* are at issue with the existentialist concept of authenticity. The death of the subject leads to the disappearance of the self. Jameson approaches the postmodern concept of subjectivity from a Marxist approach. Therefore, death of subject in Morrison's trilogy is about the reification and the depthlessness of the postmodern subject. In *Beloved*, Sethe undergoes a process of commodification because of slavery. Capitalism of the Roaring Twenties gives birth to schizophrenic characterless in *Jazz*. Here, schizophrenia should not be understood in its traditional sense. Schizophrenia is more concerned with the waning of the effect. Ihab Hassan places the concept of schizophrenia as the opposite of paranoia in his well-known chart that demarcates the link between modernism and postmodernism. The alienation of Joe and Golden Gray is the result of the morbid depthlessness of postmodern culture. Again, the female characters in *Paradise* are the subjects of the patriarchal system of Ruby. The discourse of patriarchy that feeds on masculine domination is what makes Foucault's death of Man more concrete. The focus is no longer put on the individual but rather on the discourses that shape them as postmodern subjects. Postmodernism and post-colonialism favor the concept of subjectivity over the conventional and outdated term of identity. It is worth to summon again Gilroy's simile of roots as the homonym of routes. Subjectivity is a lifelong project, in the sense that is always on the move



like the ship of transatlantic passage or the turning vinyl of a jazz record. Kristeva calls it the subject in process. This is why, the dissertation find it useful to draw a comparison between Morrison's trilogy and classic novels from the American literary canon including Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* which Hemingway claims as the model of the American modern novel. One more thing, Morrison seems to subvert the masculine characters of the canon with female characters to destabilize the white male gaze and thus rewrite the history of America from a black feminist stance. For instance, *Paradise* is the feminine rhizomatic equivalent of Kerouac's road novel, *On the Road*. The character of Pallas shows again that the problematic of subjectivity is as old as the American history. Francis Fukuyama continues the apocalyptic attitude of postmodernism. Fukuyama famously declares the end of history by which he means the triumph of democratic liberalism over all the precedent totalitarian regimes mainly communism. According to Fukayama, the fall of Berlin's wall is the threshold through which communism has reached its deadlock. The term history does not mean a set of subsequent historical events. On the contrary, Fukuyama's conception of History is closer to that of G.W.F Hegel, Alexander Kojève and Karl Marx. The end of history leads to what Fukuyama terms the last man. If Jameson thinks that late capitalism results in schizophrenia and the end of the subject, then Fukuyama argues that democratic liberalism leads to the disappearance of the Platonian concept of the thymos, which is responsible for the production of self-esteem. Like Jameson and Fukuyama, Morrison echoes this Marxist endism of history by saying that history is over particularly in the preliminary pages of *Jazz*. This instance recalls the deconstructionist reading of Derrida to the Nietzschean fragment of *I have forgotten my umbrella*, in the sense that Morrison's endism of history here is out of context. There is no transparent link between the events of *Jazz* and the end of communism as Fukuyama argues by the end of history. Still, capitalism and classicism are one of the main themes of *Jazz*. Thus, by saying that history is over, Morrison evokes Marx's idealism of living in a communist society, which is characterized by the end of the bourgeoisie. From an African- American point of view, the death of history may be the end of the white capitalist supremacy. The apex of this postmodern nihilism is Baudrillard's loss of the real, which is closely related to Morrison's trilogy in terms of metafiction. Baudrillard takes the radicalism of postmodern to the limit. For instance, his claim of the inexistence of something called reality has led many critics to label him as the most postmodern nihilist. Baudrillard suggests that there are levels of simulation. On the one hand, there is first and second orders of simulation. At this level, the difference between reality and

representation is blurred. Morrison's use of metafiction can be categorized in this level of simulation since her trilogy refers to itself as a literary work of art. In the introduction, we have seen how the omniscient narrator of *Beloved* tells their reader that the novel is not a story to pass on. Here, the narrator breaks the fictional borderlines that distantiate the actual reader from reality and fiction. Moreover, in *Jazz*, Morrison personifies the novel by very act of telling the reader to look where their hands are now meaning that they are holding the novel of *Jazz*. Thus, the first and second orders of simulations are more concerned with historiographic metafiction including Morrison's trilogy and the surrealist paintings of René Magritte, where fiction is real and the real is fiction. The third order of simulation, also called hyperreality, is the loss of real. There is no more an original copy of such a given reality. Baudrillard gives the example of Disneyland and the Gulf War to show how the postmodern world turn reality into a simulacrum. For instance, the media often report wars on news and films such as Coppola's *Apocalypse Now*. This has led Baudrillard to claim that Gulf war did not take place. As the cold war, the logic of hyperreality turns the real into the virtual. However, Baudrillard's claim has received harsh criticism by urging him to think of the Holocaust. Could it be, too, an instance of the hyperreal propaganda?

It is worth to note that the apocalyptic tonality of postmodernism derives mainly from the nihilism of the German thinker of Frederic Nietzsche. More than any other philosopher, Nietzsche has paved the way for the main tenets of postmodernism. Foucault hails Nietzsche as the first postmodern thinker. Even before postmodernism, Nietzsche is also a major influence on modernism. For example, Faulkner's technique of fragmentation echoes Nietzsche's skepticism toward the metaphysical concepts of truth and knowledge. This research project has more or less tried to show the impact of Faulkner on the writings of Morrison especially at the stylistic level. Thus, like Faulkner, Nietzsche is everywhere in the work of Morrison. She even adopts Nietzsche's conception of persepctivism, a doctrine that refutes the existence of an ultimate truth. Morrison is skeptic toward the notion of truth especially when it comes to historiography. Morrison takes Nietzsche's perspectivism to the extreme through the literary techniques of metafiction, unreliable narration as well as polyphony. The problematic of history is also omnipresent is Nietzsche's work through what he terms genealogy. Foucault develops the Nietzschean concept of genealogy into his archaeological analysis in order to show how history is about the dichotomy of

power/knowledge. Throughout the trilogy, we have seen how Morrison becomes an archeologist in the Foucauldian tradition by the very act of rethinking the African American history. As long as history is concerned, it is worth to note that one of the main limitations of this dissertation is the overwhelming focus on the historiographic aspect of Morrison's trilogy while neglecting its metafictional dimension. These shortcomings are mainly explained by the constraint of time. Besides, the implications of the metafictional self-reflexivity of Morrison's trilogy are very rare and usually intricate. This is why; the present dissertation finds it useful to discuss the postmodern uses of metafiction in Morrison's trilogy only in the introduction. Going back to the influence of Nietzsche on Morrison and postmodernism in the light of Hutcheon's historiographic metafiction, Morrison implicitly uses Derrida's deconstruction in what she calls the removal of the racial codes. She takes advantage of the Derridean concept of *différance* in order to make of subjectivity as a process of signification. In fact, Nietzsche has preceded Morrison and Derrida in the tackling these aporias in philosophy and literature. Derrida's deconstruction is just the repetition of Nietzsche's anti-foundationalism. The same thing applies to Deleuze; his philosophy of difference is highly indebted to Nietzsche's idea of the eternal return that is a remedy for the nihilistic death of the Christian conception of eternity. Morrison is both Deleuzian and Nietzschean because she strongly believes in the eternal return of difference in terms of race, gender and class.

Although the main theoretical approach of this dissertation namely postmodernism has received harsh criticism mainly from Marxist thinkers, it is still relevant to the work of Toni Morrison particularly under the umbrella of what Hutcheon terms historiographic metafiction. For instance, Habermas calls the leading figures of postmodernism and post-structuralism as young conservatives. Terry Eagleton, on the other hand, is distinguished as one of the main significant opponents of postmodernism. Through his ironic writings, Eagleton shows how the golden age of theory has ended. A sort of an after-theory highlights the contemporary era. The illusions and contradictions of postmodernism leads to the emergence of post-postmodernism. As Eagleton argues, God is neither a structuralist nor a post-structuralist. This is enhanced by Foucault's diagnosis of Aids, the suicide of Deleuze, Barthes' accident on a van and the confinement of Althusser into a psychiatry. To oppose Eagleton's death of theory, which is paradoxically postmodern even so he claims himself to be a Marxist, theorizing is an open-ended process. There is no such thing as the death of theory or the death of the novel.

For instance, the historical event of 9/11 shows that colonialism is still with us. Post-colonialism is not dead. Now, we are witnessing what is termed neo-colonialism. Despite the fact that Morrison is postmodern, she strongly refutes Barthes' concept of the death of the author, which is again another version of Nietzsche's dictum of the death of God. Morrison's novels are deeply rooted in what Edward W. Said's calls the worldly. The worldliness of the text highlights the material presence of Morrison's trilogy. To oppose Barthes, Morrison is not dead. In other words, Morrison's work is affiliated to the social and historical politics of the African American collective memory. Thus, Morrison's trilogy refutes the reductive assumption of structuralism when it comes to the remoteness of the text from the world.

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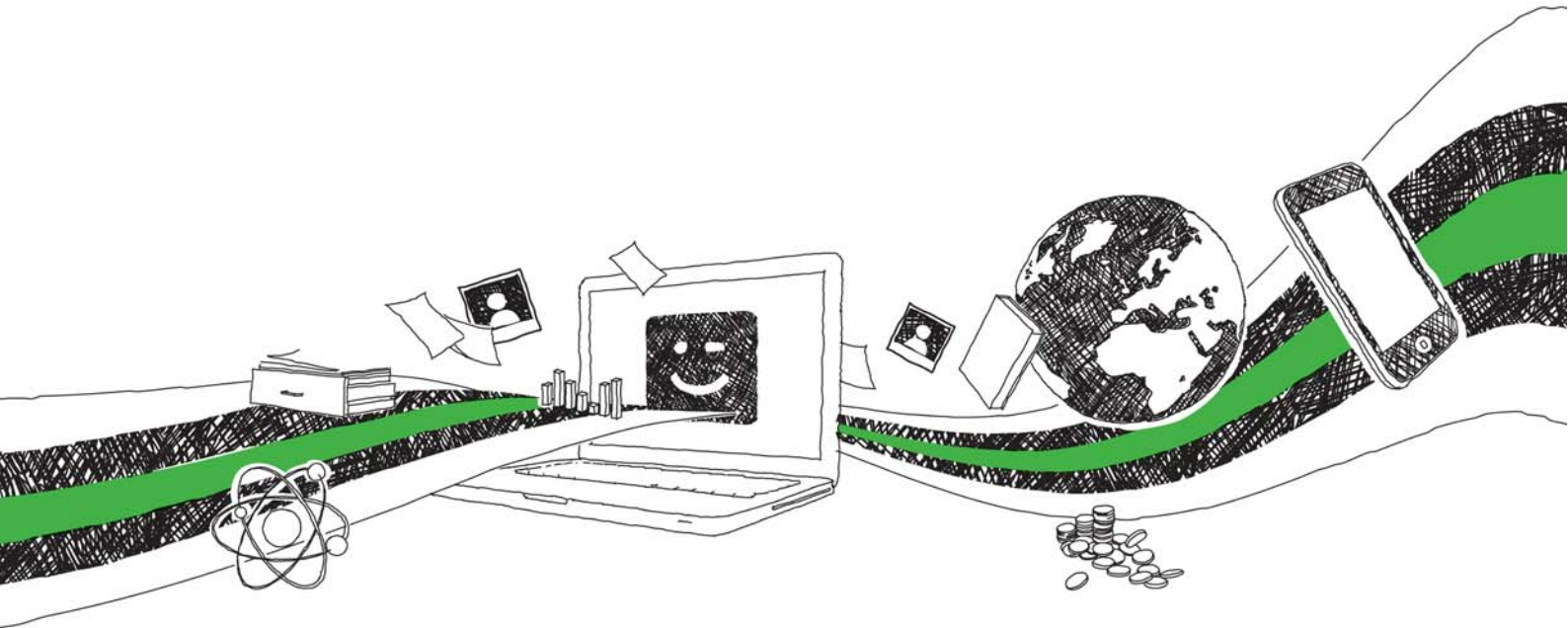


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