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Embracing Collective Trauma through the Use of

Magical Realism:

A Social Psychological Study of Morrison's

Song of Solomon and *Beloved*

Thesis Submitted to the Department of Language and English Literature in

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Option: **Cultural Studies**

Submitted by   **Supervised by**

Miss Yassmine BOUKHALKHAL   Prof. Fewzia BEDJAOUI

Board of Examiners
Chairperson: Prof. Saliha CHELLI, Mohamed Khider University of Biskra
Supervisor: Prof. Fewzia BEDJAOUI, Djilali Liabes University of Sidi Bel Abbes
Examiner: Dr. Hichem SOUHALI, Moustafa Ben Boulaid University, Batna 2
Examiner: Prof. Ahmed Chaouki HOADJLI, Mohamed Khider University of Biskra
Examiner: Dr. Hanane SAIHI, Mohamed Khider University of Biskra
Examiner: Dr. Ramdane MEHIRI, Mohamed Khider University of Biskra

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This struggle [between the infinite and the finite] is a conflict defined not by the indifference of the two sides in their distinction, but by their being bound together in one unity. I am not one of the fighters locked in battle, but both, and I am the struggle itself. I am fire and water.

G.W.F. Hegel, *Dialectic: The Pulse of Freedom*

Dedications

*To my dear supportive parents, **Ameur** and **Rym Nacira HATTAB***

*To my lovely sisters, **Fahima**, **Khouloud**, **Baya HATTAB,** and to my brother, **Messoud CHAKHCHOUKHA***

*To my wonderful nieces **Hana Nessrine**, **Lina**, and **Amoul***

*To my friend **Khouloud BOUHALI***

*To my maternal uncles **Moustafa**, **Aziz,** and **Boualem HATTAB**,*

*To my beloved uncle **Said BOUKHALKHAL***

*To my grandmother **Baya**, to **Djailani CHAKHCHOUKHA**, and **Kheira GUERMAT***

*And to the memory of my grandfather **Abdelkader HATTAB** and grandmother **Rahila TALEB***

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Abstract

The African American collective trauma, as the manifestation of a fractured social fabric, impedes blacks' strife to realize racial equity. In fact, modern societies' politics rely heavily on racial inequality that leads stereotyped, oppressed groups to experience collective forgetfulness, bereavement, cognitive dissonance, and unhealthy psychological distance. The chosen novels are concerned with narratives of healing that address collective trauma as well as the possible tools that help in remembrance and recovery. Therefore, the present study endeavoured to conduct a social psychological study through the use of four theories; Cognitive Dissonance, Social Dominion Theory, Loss and Change Theory, and Construal Level Theory. It analysed Toni Morrison's most celebrated novels, *Song of Solomon* (1977) and *Beloved* (1987) as healing narratives. In *Song of Solomon*, she focused on identity coherence and its role in political engagement while in *Beloved* she addressed group remembrance which is important in legitimizing African Americans' political ideologies. The analysis revealed that the implementation of Magical Realism, due to its dual nature, helped in reconciling antagonistic spaces through the systematic pairing of opposite forces such as reality/myth, white/black, and African/ American. Toni Morrison, in both novels, counted on magic to create myths that would embrace other than repudiate reality.

Keywords: Collective trauma, African Americans, Magical Realism, healing, social psychology

List of Acronyms

BPP   Black Panthers Party

CDT   Cognitive Dissonance Theory

CLT   Construal Level Theory

CRM   Civil Rights Movement

NAACP   National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

SCLC   Southern Christian Leadership Conference

SDO   Social Dominion Orientation

SDT   Social Dominion Theory

SNCC   Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

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General Introduction

The years of African-American servitude in the New World (16th-20th century) marked the departure of abiding individual and communal complexes which resulted in collective and intergenerational traumas. In the case of African-Americans, collective trauma is the result of shared atrocious psychological as well as physical experiences of oppression between individuals of the same community under the supervision of white men. In fact, collective trauma has lasting effects for it does not only act on the surface, political level, but it could also penetrate in the deep structure of the society causing what is known as cultural trauma. In other words, the motives resulting in collective trauma are indeed political. Yet, healing cannot be realized by a political decision because the damage reached other dimensions and aspects of African American lives, such as their culture. Cultural trauma, in reality, developed when the African American society started to feel and witness a degradation of their identity and meaning.

This study sees collective trauma as the African American struggle in its grammatical, apparent manifestation. It deals with the physical, social, and political relationships and the outcomes of violating connections as such. On the other hand, cultural trauma revolves around the meaning abstracted from keeping or violating those relationships. Therefore, the African American artistic practice, as a cultural activity, tries to make sense of blacks' historical, social and political reality to aspire for better relationships that would grant collective and cultural healing. Accordingly, it

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is important to choose adequate techniques to reflect and make sense of the African American reality and history.

'Narratives of healing' is a way of coping with collective trauma that is popular in post-colonial societies such as North Africa, India, Latin America, and the Afro-American community. Narratives of healing quite often reflect the political reality of post-colonial societies through culture to heal collective trauma. In this regard, Morrison believes that "The history of African Americans that narrows or dismisses religion in both their collective and individual life, in their political aesthetic activity, is more than incomplete — it may be fraudulent" (qtd. in Hathaway 91). Therefore, it is essential to implement cultural tools for the sake of embracing collective trauma. Toni Morrison, for example, makes use of Magical Realism for its ability to equally reflect reality and culture because of its political and mythic nature.

Magical Realism, as a literary genre, has been significantly used by post-colonial writers such as Abdelouahab Aissaoui's *The Spartan Court* (2019), Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997), and the Latin American most celebrated Magical Realism novel, Gabriel García Márquez *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (1970). Magical Realism's potency to embrace collective trauma stems from its ability to provide narratives of process other than narratives of condition (63) as Brenkman labels Toni Morrison's work *Song of Solomon* (1977). In other words, Magical Realism does systematically pair antagonistic forces such as whites/blacks, orality/literacy, home/homelessness, and power/submissiveness to reach identity coherence. As a result, narratives do often open in a space dominated by forgetfulness and conflicts, and they end up with integrity and acceptance through a process of

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remembrance throughout the novel. Thus, the process of remembrance requires magical instruments attributed to culture and realistic instruments attributed to politics.

Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon* (1977), and *Beloved* (1987) illustrate the use of Magical Realism in two different ways according to the writer's approach to healing. In *Song of Solomon*, Morrison stresses the importance of healing individual trauma and its effects on healing collective trauma. Accordingly, she uses instances of Magical Realism to realize identity coherence. However, in *Beloved*, Magical Realism represents the novel's mythic structure since the protagonist, Beloved who embodies Magical Realism, is the one who prompts the construction of narratives. Therefore, Morrison in *Beloved* accentuates communal healing due to African Americans' shared past and experiences (Arunakumari 771).

The present study aims at analysing collective trauma and the implementation of Magical Realism for healing in Morrison's novels, *Song of Solomon* and *Beloved*. To analyse collective trauma in the novels implies having a closer look at the physical, social and political relationships of characters and how restoring those relationships would help in collective healing. Correspondingly, the researcher has chosen a social psychological study to include in the theoretical framework.

Social psychology is a scientific field of study which started to protrude around the early twentieth century. In general terms, social psychology concerns itself with the scientific study of humans' behaviours, feelings, and attitudes toward society. It also studies the influence of society on individuals. Social psychology focuses on whatever is testable concerning human relationships be it physical or mental. Out of this

philosophy, significant theories have been developed such as Cognitive Dissonance Theory (CDT) (1957), Social Dominion Theory (SDT) (1992), Construal Level Theory (CLT), and Loss and Change Theory (LCT) (1974).

In a nutshell, CDT studies the existence of two opposed cognitions and the struggle to reduce that. SDT examines hierarchy in modern societies and the way its maintenance implies the use of power and oppression on marginalized groups. CLT is about the imagined realms of the mind and how and why psychological distance influences the performance of human beings in the present in relation to past remembrance or future aspirations. Finally, LCT revolves around grief and meaning and the way meaning restoration encourages grieving, and therefore, healing from trauma. The novels of Morrison are going to be analysed through the lens of the aforestated theories.

Based on the above contextualization of the novels under study, the thesis attempts to answer some guiding main and sub-research questions:

- How would the African American society achieve collective healing through the implementation of cultural devices?

    - Why does Magical Realism reign supreme over other healing cultural tools?

    - How could social psychology help in describing and making sense of the aesthetics of Morrison?

The study proposes the following research answers:

- Culture is an intrinsic aspect of the African American political and social life. Therefore, collective trauma might be the outcome of political and economic decisions and yet the restoration of social connections could be possible through the shared cultural background of the oppressed such as myth.

- Since myth is central to the culture of African Americans, on the one hand, in addition to their experience of whiteness in America through their institutions and hierarchy on the other, Magical Realism with its dual nature helps in healing the fragmented African American collective identity.

- The research novels, *Song of Solomon* and *Beloved*, display the importance of individual and group healing based on healthy social connections that would bring about political and cultural engagement. Hence, theories of social psychology would describe how Morrison moves from trauma to recovery through using Magical Realism in her novels.

A great body of literature deals with critics attributed to Morrison's works' *Song of Solomon* and *Beloved*. The critics derive from different fields and disciplines. Concerning women and feminist studies, there are significant contributions related to the works of Barbara Christian et al. (2007) and Hudson-Weems (2020). Moreover, Robert Samuels (2001), Elizabeth Abel et al. (1997), and Susan Mayberry (2021) are among the notable researchers who studied the works of Morrison from a psychoanalytical perspective. On the other hand, critics such as William Jefferson (2014) and Herman Beavers (2018) were interested in the political aspect found in Morrison's works. In addition, Morrison provoked even linguists to analyse her works, as Susan Behrens and Judith Parker (2012), and Ritashona Simpson (2007). However,

very few critics have analysed Morrison's works using the above-mentioned social psychological theories. However, there are academic papers discussing the notion of Cognitive Dissonance in literary and screen works such as Hichem Souhali's doctoral thesis *Cognitive Dissonance in Robert A. Heinlein's Starship Troopers: The Fascist Utopia* (2019)*,* as well as his article "Purposeful Psychonarratological Cognitive Dissonance: Starship Troopers Novel Vs Film" (2018).

Accordingly, the contribution of this thesis relies on constructing a new perspective to look at the widely analysed Morrison's works. It analyses all of the titles' variables; collective trauma and Magical Realism from a social psychological point of view in relation to the African American history. Therefore, it is more scientific than philosophical.

The works of Morrison achieved national and international fame. *Song of Solomon* and *Beloved* enjoyed wide recognition and gained prestigious awards such as the 1988 Pulitzer Prize for fiction and the 1978 American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters Award. The selection of such works and their approach are also linked to my personal motivation. I have come to encounter African American women on Twitter; they were depressed, had suicide tendencies, and most importantly, they always felt themselves as victims of racism. Therefore, my readings of Morrison's selected novels impressed me with their culture of healing and hope without faking happiness or having auto-victimization orientations. On the other hand, I believe that teaching/studying psychology helps in improving human behaviours. Accordingly, choosing a social psychological approach fulfils both: my aspiration to expand my

knowledge in the field and my understanding of how African American women feel in the American society.

The thesis consists of four interrelated chapters. The first chapter works as a historical background to the study. It gives more importance to the time the novels *Song of Solomon* (1977) and *Beloved* (1987) were written in as well as the time that the stories cover. For *Song of Solomon*, the story captures approximately 32 years, from 1931 to 1963. On the other hand, *Beloved* opens in 1873 despite the circularity of time where the past of Sethe always repeats itself; that is when she was a slave in Sweet Home around 1855.

Therefore, the first chapter spans the time which ranges between 1855 and 1987. It is an overview of the motives behind the American Civil War (1861-1865) in addition to the war itself. It then moves to historical events concerning the African American strife towards freedom and equity. As a result, the Niagara Movement (1905-1909), the Harlem Renaissance (1918-1930), and the Civil Rights Movement (CRM) (1950-1960) are the main focus of the chapter. The historical background marks the movement of the African American struggle from armed resistance to more institutionalized political activities. Finally, the chapter introduces the novels' author, Toni Morrison.

The second chapter is a theoretical framework that would clarify the methodology to be followed in analysing the selected novels. Moreover, it explains the main themes and variables of the research problem. The chapter is divided into three main sections. The first section deals with the definition of social psychology. It also

introduces the main theories that will help in analysing Morrison's novels; CDT, CLT, SDT, and LCT.

The second section of the second chapter presents the notion of collective trauma and its development historically before considering the term from a socio-psychological perspective. The African American experience serves as an example of collective trauma. It necessitates making use of the first chapter's knowledge to provide concrete examples of the African American community. After introducing the problem, the possibility of collective and cultural healing is considered relying on the solutions provided by social psychology.

The third section of the second chapter is concerned with Magical Realism. It first provides a brief historical overview of the development of the word within postcolonial spaces. Social psychological theories will then offer a new way of looking at Magical Realism and its role in healing postcolonial spaces.

The third and fourth chapters do, respectively, examine collective trauma in the novels *Song of Solomon* and *Beloved* and their approach to healing using Magical Realism. They do first present and compare the setting of the stories with the African American political and social status at that time which is mentioned in the first chapter. They will then make use of social psychological theories to make sense of collective trauma in the novels before displaying the adequacy of using Magical Realism as a tool to realize collective healing.

Chapter 1

The Formation of an African American Community

1.1 Introduction

The existence of African Americans in the New World dates back to a long history of suffering due to power practice. The inhumane institution of slavery obliged Africans to leave their homelands to be slaves in other people's lands. Blacks' resistance started to be more effective after the American Civil War (1861-1865) and the implementation of a new economic system in the American north. Their fight toward freedom and to be full American citizens is, in fact, a quest to form a politically recognized African American community. The present chapter traces the struggle of African Americans to establish ideologies and institutions that serve their political and social interests. The chapter stresses more the events that are considered important in analysing collective trauma and Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon* and *Beloved*.

1.2 Blacks' Status Before and During the Civil War

The American Civil War (1861-1865) was the result of different political, social and economic factors attributed to blacks' actions or reactions to whites' policies. It is undeniable that there was a strict rigorous system that curbed and controlled blacks which was giving the impression that they have always been reacting instead of acting. Individual as well as collective "acts" of rebellion under that same firm system proved that blacks could be active without whites' stimulus. In the subsequent paragraphs, there must be a clear distinction to what is considered as blacks' actions or reactions as an approach to freedom which is important to mind to give an insight for the second chapter. That is by

taking into account the actions of blacks under a constant, steady way of life under whites' supervision, and blacks' reactions to new changes inside or outside the institution of slavery.

It is essential, right from the onset, to review the meaning and verities of the words *slave/slavery*. Since the 15th century, Europeans have been trading slaves in a process known as the triangular trading system. That is, the first route or leg of the triangular links Europe with Africa by sending goods there such as cotton. The second route is created by forcing Africans to work as slaves in the Americas. The third leg is the way back from America to Europe by transferring there the raw materials produced by slaves like sugar to Europe. The deported slaves established a new way of life which was highly influenced by a superior power in the Americas. The system was governed by the Royal African Company in England which had a monopoly over slave trade with the west coast of Africa (Pettigrew 2). There were, however, other traditional modes of slavery that date back long before the establishment of the Royal African Company. Those traditional modes of slavery have been RE-considered by the English. The first notable reconsideration has been the race-based classifications of slaves. Alexis De Tocqueville writes in his book *Democracy in America* that:

> The slave, amongst the ancients, belonged to the same race as his master, and he was often the superior of the two in education and instruction. Freedom was the only distinction between them, and when freedom was conferred, they were easily confounded together. (387)

The previous passage also demonstrates the temporality of the master-slave relationship just like bonded labour in England.

There is a special ambiguity in using the word 'slave' before seventeenth-century England and America as there existed, in parallel, concepts such as servants and servitude (Jordan 5). Indentured servitude was a labour agreement between servants and landowners which mostly ended up with the former's freedom. The servants were of different races and origins. Some servants were even blacks. Sometimes, even after the completion of the term of indenture, servants were denied their freedom the issue that brought forward a more determining term: slaves. The real distinction between a slave and a servant lied in the fact that "Slavery was a power relationship; servitude was a relationship of service" (Jordan 55). In other words, servitude was an agreement which secured the right for every involved person to equally show their opinions. However, slavery was about a dominant opinion by the powerful that oppressed the opinion of the powerless. When the time of servitude was intentionally extended, there occurred attempts to escape labour.

Jordan accounts the experience of John Punch (1640) as being the first recognized slave in America. He was a black servant who was asked/ obliged to serve for an additional term together with a Dutchman and a Scot. The three of them decided to run away before being captured and sentenced. The received sentence of Punch was different as he was asked to serve for a lifetime in favour of his master (75). Such individual acts of pleading for freedom by indentured blacks who were soon claimed as slaves by their masters paved the way for blacks' enslavement right before the establishment of the Royal African Company.

Before the American Revolutionary War of 1775-1783, there were some black attempts at rebellion, the most remarkable of which was the Stono Rebellion in 1739, in the colony of South Carolina. The rebellion was encouraged by the Spanish who were

antagonistic toward the British at that time. The Spanish promised the escaped slaves a free land. The rebellion was led by Jemmy who was a literate slave. The dramatic ending featured the execution of most of the runaway slaves and the death of a few whites (Jordan 120). Because of those kinds of rebellion, landowners as well as American militias feared and prohibited the arming or the enlistment of blacks. It would not be until the exploitation of the British to the slaves' situation to fight with them during the American Revolutionary War that they decided to enlist only free blacks (Lanning, *Defenders of Liberty* 64). The outcomes of the war were really promising and unprecedented for blacks. Lanning states that:

> Blacks who fought on both sides did indeed secure their freedom. Those in the US military were freed and those who joined Lord Dunmore were evacuated as free men to Nova Scotia, the British West Indies, and the newly established African colony of Sierra Leone. (*African Americans in the Revolutionary War* 8)

The ones who fought with the British, as it can be remarked, were obliged to be distanced from their people and land just like Solomon in the novel *Song of Solomon*.

After the war, the ordinance of 1787 initiated the prohibition of slave trade in the American north. That initiative was believed to be some sort of a deal between northern and southern states (Edgerton 34-35). The economic system to be followed at that time marked the fundamental reason behind the bargain. John Green displays the false idea to what was considered as a slavery-benefited south, and an ideal north. He assumes that there was an integrated economic system for the north's industrial system relied on the raw materials supplies of the south ("Slavery").

The precursory to abolish slavery and slave trade in the north gave hope to southern slaves to escape slavery and to join their fellow free blacks in the north. The prohibition and restrictions of such acts issued the Fugitive Slave Law of 1793. The latter law, however, was not effective in practice as the Supreme Court "asserted the constitutional right of recapture, but also stated that while local and state officials should enforce the Fugitive Slave Act, the national government could not mandate such compliance" (Rodriguez 302). The tension between northern and southern states over the social status of blacks, especially after the Mexican-American war, urged the great compromise of 1850.

Before the compromise, the Mexican-American war of 1846 was a real source of disrupt between northern and southern states. The war ended by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848. The war victory granted America two-fifth of the Mexican territory which was a centre of controversy (Kingseed 4). While slave adherents wanted to expand westward and claim the gained lands as based on the slave system, slave opponents refused the idea. The president Polk himself believed that there was "no probability that any territory will ever be acquired from Mexico in which slavery would ever exist" (Murrin et al. 355). Indeed, without Senator Henry Clay's suggested compromise, states' strife over westward expansion would have announced an antecedent Civil War.

One of the most important resolutions suggested by the compromise has been the agreement that dictated a basis for the gained Mexican lands classification as pro- or anti-slavery states. The agreement states that decisions upon which New Mexico and Utah, the newly gained lands, had to be considered as free or slave states had to be put in the hands of popular sovereignty other than the Congress (Kingseed 7).

The Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, as a part of the great compromise, filled the existed lacuna in the previous slave law of 1793. The congress granted southern American states the right to recapture previously runaway slaves as well as their children. The act, which is alluded to in the novel *Beloved* through the runaway protagonist Seth, also prohibited any collusion or protection of fugitive slaves by other states as it was considered as none of their business. The restrictions of the law led slaves to choose another destiny by escaping to nowadays Canada which had completely abolished slavery before America. Americans could not recapture runaway slaves to Canada because it was out of their political power (S. Wilson 842).

What was noticeable, during the period of the American Civil War, has been blacks' population. It is estimated that approximately "the number of black slaves in the United States increased sevenfold from 500.000 to 3.5 million in the three-quarter of a century from the end of the Revolution until their emancipation during and after the American Civil War" (Lanning, *African Americans in the Revolutionary War* 4). That dramatic increase in blacks' population foresaw an inevitable revolution by black slaves in America.

The black population was not the primary reason behind the war as it was a strong catalyst for its outbreak. The compromise of 1850 did not completely settle the conflict between northern and southern states. The American social and political situation has deteriorated following the presidency of Abraham Lincoln in 1860 and states' rights (History. com).

The story of Abraham Lincoln's journey to presidency is crucial in understanding one of the most important factors that paved the way for the American Civil War. In 1820,

the Missouri Compromise suggested to balance the number of the states which were either for or against slavery by considering the state of Missouri as a slave state. The new westward lands, meaning the Louisiana territory, were not counted as within-borders states. For that, the Louisiana territory was organized by a federal administration. In 1854, Stephen A. Douglas introduced the bill of Kansas-Nebraska act because of his economic agenda. Douglas wanted to construct a railroad passing through the westward territory. To realize his aspiration, he needed to reorganize Louisiana by dividing it into two open-to-vote states, Nebraska and Kansas. He needed also the support of southerners to legitimize the bill (P. Anderson 12-14).

According to Labaree, Northern politicians felt threatened because the new bill would repeal the compromise of 1820 that limited the practice of slavery. In addition, Douglas was with the idea of popular sovereignty. Therefore, there existed a high possibility that Nebraska and Kansas would be slave states. Surprisingly, the bill was ratified amongst the sharp debates between southern and northern politicians. The later events led to the dissolution of the Whigs Party and the creation of the Republican Party for the first time with the appearance of an important figure, Abraham Lincoln. Abraham Lincoln, also praised for his hard work in the novel *Song of Solomon*, was against slavery, and he was active during the conflict over the westward expansion against Stephen Douglas. What seemed as a solution to the problem for Republicans and Northerners, at that time, was propagating the migration to Kansas to vote against slavery. Southerners, in return, sent groups who, unfortunately, were the cause of 50 kills. Bleeding Kansas of 1855 happened (Labaree).

The president Abraham Lincoln was a liberty advocate. Before his election, southern states were aware of his political tendencies concerning enslavement. Rest assured that the president may plan for abolishing slavery in the south, seven states seceded from the Union to be followed by four others soon after. They have formed what became known as the Confederate States of America, the event that marked the beginning of the American Civil War (Kingseed 47).

The situation of slaves in the south, at the beginning of the war, was promising as it gave them some hope. Nevertheless, when it comes to their status quo at that time, they were still under control. To change their status and situation, slaves were escaping to the north and joining the Union forces. The enigma that tantalized historians was the question of how slaves were granted their freedom in the south. John Green assumes that despite Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation in 1863 which challenged the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, it can be said also that blacks have freed themselves. According to Green, the president did not free slaves in the south who were under the control of the Union even if he had the authority to do so. In that respect, some historians would presume that slaves have emancipated themselves by escaping to the north. ("The Civil War Part 2")

Escaping was not really the reason behind slaves' emancipation, but the consequences attributed to it. The Union needed the support of the runaway slaves. However, it seemed unconstitutional to keep them while the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 was still applied. The Emancipation Proclamation did effectively guarantee the needs of the Union to weaken the Confederate States of America, Burrus M Carnahan in his book *Act of Justice: Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation and the Law of War* says:

In its final form, the Emancipation Proclamation was based on two of the government's belligerent rights under the law of war. It relies on the right to seize and destroy enemy property for reasons of military necessity, and on the right to seek allies through promising liberty to an oppressed people... As a military measure, the president saw emancipation primarily as a means of weakening the rebels by withdrawing slave labor from the Confederate economy and adding the labor of newly freed slaves to the Union war effort. (117)

The plans of the President Lincoln were successful and beneficial to both slaves and the Union. Slaves were risking escape for a noble cause as to free themselves and their own people. On the other hand, the north benefited from the support of runaway slaves.

The war had been considered as the bloodiest war before the Vietnam War 1955-1975 with approximately 620,000 deaths (Kingseed 28). The war reached all Americans' doorsteps, and touched all aspects of life causing the birth of a new nation. It united Americans in unprecedented ways as notions of north and south have melted into unity. The war also did formally end slavery in the south, and grant black suffrage for African American males five years later. The 15th Amendment that gave the right for black males to vote was ratified in 1970. It reinforced the passages of the thirteenth and fourteenth amendments that abolished slavery, and recognized blacks as American citizens. It states: "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, colour, or previous condition of servitude" ("Constitution of the United States," amend. 15, sec. 1).

The great challenge for Americans, especially the African American community, was their self-perception as American citizens after the war. According to the New York

Times (1867), the Civil War "leaves nothing as it found it... Great rights, great interests, great systems of habit and of thought disappear during its progress. It leaves us a different people in everything" (Griffin 43-44). The political bridging of racial divide seemed to stay at the level of theory for the decision was considered as precipitated by whites. It was not easy for masters to perceive themselves as being part of an objective social status. Even if the white community in *Song of Solomon* was not the focus of the novel, Morrison refers to their unacceptance of an existing free black society. The need to subjectify their social status caused a growing dissatisfaction among the African American community which sought to be full American citizens since the Civil War has resulted in "different" "great rights" and "great interests".

The other outstanding event in 1855, on the political level, was the first official election of a black clerk: John Mercer Langston as the clerk of the town of Brownhelm, Ohio (History, Art, & Archives). The other fortunate political event was the election of President Abraham Lincoln (1860), and the law the congress has passed during the early years of his presidency concerning runaway slaves. The Confiscation Act (1861) which dictated the illegitimacy of re-enslaving runaway slaves by Confederate owner (Siddali 165). The year 1855 is the time when Sethe in *Beloved* was a slave in Sweet Home.

1.3 The Niagara Movement and the NAACP

White southerners wanted to enforce their supremacy through passing laws that limited blacks' freedom between 1865 and 1866. The laws were known as the Black Codes which were considered social and economic necessities. The agrarian south was still in need for blacks' services while still ensuring a master/slave relationship. The laws mainly

created a new labor system that forced freed blacks to work in whites' lands and be paid a year after. One of the laws stated that vagrancy was a legitimate reason for arresting bearing in mind that newly emancipated blacks were homeless. Further injustices to be thrown into the bargain included preventing them from having other jobs other than farming or serving; otherwise, they had to pay high taxes (Dickerson 43-45). Black Codes were replaced later by the Jim Crow laws (1877-1964). Black codes were the first white ideologies that were institutionalised in the new hierarchical American society.

The difference between Black Codes and Jim Crow laws was that Jim Crow Laws, as Tischauser claims, extended their power to not just include laws related to labor, but they have also formed an entire system based on racism which administrated African American lives (1). For example, some of the Jim Crow laws were dedicated to preserve whites' social status by suggesting separate accommodations for blacks.

About early activism, Angela Jones believes that the segregation of the south has led to the emergence of great black activists prior to the CRM 1954-1968. One of the most important political and social activism was the Niagara Movement which lasted for five years from 1905-1910 (83). Its legacy, however, has been as influential as the chosen name of the movement. It featured the guidance of the first African American who obtained a doctorate degree: William Edward Burghardt Du Bois.

More importantly, the movement grew in opposition to the Atlanta Compromise of 1895. The compromise was some sort of an unwritten agreement between Booker T. Washington who was the first president of Tuskegee Normal and Industrial Institute. He was the most African American influential figure between 1895 and 1915, more than white southerners, and some other important African American icons.

The primary aim of Washington was to secure a basic free education for all blacks (Lawson and Lawson 47). In return, he and his followers accepted segregation and their exclusion from job opportunities other than industrial training (Hakim 188). That accomodationist philosophy provoked the need for a more radical movement as the founders of the Niagara Movement "refuse to allow the impression to remain that the Negro-American assents to inferiority, is submissive under oppression and apologetic before insults" (NMO 3). The new counter-movement weakened the ideological influence of the Atlanta Compromise which seriously started to be affected following Washington's demise in 1915 (Lawson and Lawson 47).

During the course of three years, the members of the non-profit organization increased, significantly, from 29 members in the first meeting to 450 members. Black women were excluded from their meetings, at the beginning, to be included later in the following years. The organization initially held its meeting secretly near Canada away from segregation. The movement aspired later the formation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) (Rudwick 177).

The multidimensional interests of the movements' Declaration of Principles are an important point to ponder on. The movement did embrace political, social and economic problems that were facing the American Negro resulting from the Black Codes and the Jim Crow laws. The Declaration of Principles did first introduce the progress of blacks' performance inside the American society so that their call for equal rights would be just and more diplomatic. The document included eighteen principles about rights, and it concluded its items with a principle that dictated a list of duties. The simplest, yet substantial maxims of the movement have been the call for their rights concerning

suffrage, education, economic opportunity, and civil liberty (Niagara Movement Organization, n.d.).

Just as the Niagara Movement has influenced the Atlantic Compromise, the latter's achievements before the Niagara Movement contributed to the dissolution of the organization. As a matter of fact, the abstractness of the movement was its chief weakness which has been identified by critics. As a matter of fact, the organization did not accomplish in reality any apparent achievements unlike the practical success of the Atlantic Compromise. Therefore, the ideology of Washington proved it potency to be institutionalized unlike the Niagara movement. The radical movement did not enjoy the same luxuries as Washington did as regarding the support of whites and finance. Du Bois' experience concerning leadership· and social activism was even incomparable with Washington's who was a tactician, an influential politician and a diplomat. For example, because of Du. Bois' lack of monitoring, there were a lot of struggles between the organization members, However, the real victory of the movement was represented in laying the groundwork for one of the most successful black associations, the NAACP (Rudwick 198-200).

The fundamental motive behind the formation of the NAACP was the 1908 Race Riot in Springfield, Illinois (Bond 9-10). The riots broke out following deceptive accusations of Mabel Hallam who allegedly claimed that she has been raped by a black man (Kim 14). The NAACP was formed in 1909 by Du Bois, Wells, Mary White Ovington and many others. What is worth noting about the association is its efforts to achieve civil rights through recourse to the court. That is apparent upon the formation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Legal Defence Fund

(NAACPLDF) which was founded in 1940. The NAACPLDF helped African Americans who could not afford counsel (King 225).

Between 1946 and 1954, the NAACP made significant legal victories the most important of which has been Brown v. Board of Education on May 17, 1954 (Williams 93). The legal victory of the case ended school segregation which violated the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment (Klarman 57). The event marked the beginning of the CRM 1954-1968. The NAACP is still an active organization even nowadays.

1.4 The Harlem Renaissance

Political activism was not the only tool to pave the way for the CRM 1954-1968. Cultural movements did play a major role in shaping and reshaping the identity of black Americans even during tough times. For example, on the artistic and political levels, the American Revolution initiated important contributions of African Americans on the national level. For example, it is highly significant that the first written history of African Americans encouraged unity and the sense of national pride. That was through William C. Nell (1855) published book, *The Colored Patriots of the American Revolution* (Nash, 2015). Moreover, in 1859, the African American, Harriett Wilsen, published the first novel written by a woman entitled *Our Nig; Or, Sketches from the Life of a Free Black* (Mulvey 17).

Emphasizing black Americans' identity helped activists as well as their community to figure out what they exactly wanted, it is worth noticing so far that the concept of African Americans has been roughly dealt with in the first title due to the political status of

blacks before the Civil War. While tackling the Niagara Movement, it is clear that in the Declaration of Principles 1905 the use of the concept "African Americans" was avoided. It was, rather, substituted by the concept "the Negro-American". The Harlem Renaissance of the 1918-1930s, however, marked the revival and the celebration of the African heritage which gave the notion of African Americans more legitimacy. What is meant by legitimacy is instead of being referred to or identified as Africans on a racial-basis, i.e. based on their skin colour, it would be more adequate to adopt the African culture as a part of their identity.

The Harlem Renaissance movement did not only try to change blacks' self-perception, but it also tried to open a dialogue with white Americans; the kind of dialogue that challenged whites' new perceptions of the New Negro. The nullification or appropriation of old stereotypes, to put it in Alain Locke's words, did not "follow that if the Negro were better known, he would be better liked or better treated. But mutual understanding is basic for any subsequent cooperation and adjustment" (Locke and Reiss 9).

After a long time of a separate but equal treatment, the Harlem Renaissance activists wanted to find a common ground between the two races instead of maintaining the old representation as being the opposition of two extremes: one being necessary good and civilized, the other bad/evil and inferior. That kind of reconsideration of blacks' perception by whites was important in the quest of the formation of the African American identity.

The artistic corpus of the Harlem Renaissance cultural movement was not narrowed down into a specific artistic trend. There were no rules to what the New Negroes

had to follow to project themselves coherently through art. George Hutchinson believes that it "was never a cohesive movement. It was, rather, a product of overlapping social and intellectual circles, parallel developments, intersecting groups, and competing visions" (1). Indeed, there was no other better way other than the nature of the movement to defend the subjectivity of the Negro who was historicized in his very presence. The diversified cultural productions and trends discarded the generalization of the black character.

As to the parallel development that Locke refers to, there were different changes in the world in general and in the United States in particular which affected the movement's orientation. It was the end of the First World War which was the first American war that blacks participated in (147). The war fostered blacks' sense of nationalism. More importantly, it gave them the chance to face their own racial problems and to challenge whites' principles since they were fighting for world freedom and democracy (Schneider 1). The economic prosperity of the Roaring Twenties 1920-1929 facilitated for blacks to engage in an intellectual experience (Hudlin 8). African Americans could be culturally productive as long as they had time to do so.

There were a lot of writers and poets of the Harlem Renaissance who exceeded the limited list of its most famous figures. It is important to not forget about the individualism of black artists while talking about their contributions. It is even among the famous black artists that their themes were diverse. Jean Toomer (1894-1967), Walter White (1893-1955), Zora Neale Hurston (1891-1960), Nella Larsen (1891-1964), Langston Hughes (1901-1967) and many others have tackled different issues using diverse styles. Their themes and styles reflected their experiences and the way they engaged in experimenting, realism, and psychology (Howes ix-x).

Experience and experimenting were used in a quest to find one's racial identity. Making meaning of the world seemed as a great challenge for blacks. They have needed to show how African Americans' stories of experience looked like, and how they experimented with language to suit those stories' experiences. For that, most African American works at that time were necessary autobiographical.

The elements of realism were displayed in the literature of Walter White (1893-1955), Zora Neale Hurston (1891-1960), and Helene Johnson (1906-1995). The realistic sense of humour, representing the horrors of southern racism, and the use of street languages helped in mirroring the African American society which needed to be communicated as it was to whites and to other fellow blacks (Howes 45-47). The aim, as it seems to be, was to achieve a mutual understanding with whites and to create a sense of community with blacks.

Once again, how writers and poets dealt with psychology reflected the various perceptions of blacks about themselves as well as about the world. There were major themes which oscillated between projecting the harsh reality of racism and embracing it; from violence, passing and chaos to the overcome of racial issues (Howes 23-118). It is important later to link the mentioned psychological trends to imaging and imagining in the following chapter.

The Harlemites' drama did not enjoy the same characteristics of flexibility as their literature did. Drama, at that time, had not been yet prepared for antagonistic presentations or representations. In that regard, the classical question of Frantz Fanon's "what does the black man want?" (Fanon 10) changed dramatically to what did the black man want in respect to himself, his community and the whole American society? Due to political

intentions, experimenting with self-perception was challenged by other circles of experiences in addition to meaning and mainstream history that recognized the supremacy of white men.

Playwrights had to deal with several delicate issues at the same time while still conveying coherent and effective messages. David Krasner, in his essay *Negro Drama and the Harlem Renaissance,* believes that the expected audience of the Negro's theoretical performance were of a dualistic nature (57). The dichotomies white/ black, anti-racial/ordinary, black radicals/ black accomodationists, blacks' antagonism/ whites' tolerance and white's antagonism/ black's tolerance had to meet on a common ground. The challenge of playwrights was to attract all of those social categories without any exclusion. In order to decide upon the aforementioned oppositions, Du Bois in 1926 suggested a 'four-us' rule as a reference to the Harlem Renaissance drama which was 'about us, by us, for us and near us (Krasner 58). That is, their very Negro stories had to be written by them to their own ordinary people in their black neighbourhood.

Lynching, which is also a theme in the novel *Beloved*, was one widespread theme among playwrights along with Marxist criticism which was shedding light on the "peasant class of the Negro group" (Krasner 61-62). The theme of protest drama also found its place on the black theatre despite the four-us rule of Du. Bois and the oppositions of Alain Locke who wanted it to be an only folk drama. As there were plays that did reflect the real situation of blacks at that time, there were also others which portrayed the past reality of blacks in the antebellum era (Krasner 68).

African Americans used music to literally voice their experiences and frustrations. The popular jazz music has been first originated in New Orleans. It is true that composing

such music was aspired by the Africanity of blacks, but according to musicology, their music was influenced by aspects from the American music (Howes 84). The appropriated African American music represented the hybridity of two different cultures.

It has already been indicated that several factors helped in the emergence of the Harlem Renaissance. Nevertheless, nothing promoted its prosperity and fame as the Jazz and Blues music did. That period of time is referred to as the Jazz Age by historians and Americans. Its roots, however, dated back to the pre-Harlem movement, the issue that had served as a background to what followed. From the early famous jazz composers has been Scott Joplin (1868-1917) who was popular for his ragtime style (Howes 84). His masterpiece, *The Entertainer* (1902)*,* did later inspire Koji Kondo to include it in the celebrated game, *Super Mario* (1985).

The African American musical arena consisted of talented male and female artists. Making bands was, also, the fashion of that age. Jazz composition and arrangement featured stars like Joe King Oliver (1885-1938), Louis Satchmo Armstrong (1900-1971) (Howes 85) and Ella Jane Fitzgerald (1917-1996). The latter was significantly active and talented as he made tours in Europe and called on to include his music in other audio-visual arts. King Oliver's music was used in worldwide famous shows like the T.V show *Tom and Jerry* (1975-1977). For Blues which indicated the colour of grief and sadness, William Christopher Handy (1873-1958) was known as the Father of Blues due to his forerunning initiative to arrange and write down blues as well as his significant role as a source of inspiration to the following African American artists (Howes 88).

Surprisingly, Du Bois was not that satisfied about the style of music that the Harlemites embraced. For him, that kind of music was nothing but a debased and debasing

culture (Lutz 139). He, instead, exalted classical music and spirituals due to his religious character and due to his belief in Talented Tenth which is a concept that suggested the talent and ability of one in ten African Americans to become a leader due to his western education and manners. From the most widely known classical pieces are *Plantation Melodies for Violin and Piano* (1901) by Harry T. Burleigh and *From the Cotton Field* by Clarence Cameron White (1920) (Howes 98).

The Harlem Renaissance artists also celebrated visual arts such as painting. The aim of painting was to keep alive their cultural memory through tackling historical stories (Tribe 391). The historical stories which had been already written limited their works' originality despite the fact that they have been able to be creative. The main themes tackled by prominent African American painters such as Aaron Douglas (1899-1979) included pre-salve Africa, slavery in America, the reconstruction era, migration, lynching and trials (Tribe 394). The creativity lied in choosing the perfect school of art as well as the themes that could reflect their aims. In fact, the above-mentioned writers illustrated their ideas using the avant-garde art movement, Cubism which emerged in the early twentieth century in France, and involved a subjective combination of perspectives as a way to depict the world.

From the powerful themes tackled at that time is the American Great Migration from 1910 to the time of the Harlem Renaissance. Tolnay believes that the Great Migration had and is still having significant consequences whether for the American white or black society. He believes that migration changed the demography of America as well as the distribution of its population with approximately six million migrants (209), (see appendix 3).

Therefore, the theme of migration might have been rich artistically since it summarized the entire African American struggle which led them to escape the south beside the experience of massive migration and group assistance. Moreover, the migration might have been associated with the middle passage experience, but in less restricted circumstances, and with hope and different expectations. Accordingly, the art expressed in the Harlem Renaissance is a culture of healing by celebrating the African American heritage on the one hand and by projecting the history of suffering that African Americans have long been experiencing, on the other hand.

The Harlem renaissance succeeded in transferring momentous messages the most significant of which was the right of blacks to be considered as full American citizens. The cultural movement had more benefits for blacks' self-perception in relation to their African American community than in relation to whites. Their aim to achieve a mutual understanding with whites was still far from reaching at that period even if it seemed the opposite. Black artists' culture was perceived by whites as being exotic other than rewarding (Lewis 134). For example, white playwrights' interest in the African American drama derived from the peculiar black dramatists' themes. Whites did even give chance to black actors to perform on their white theatres' stages (Howes 79-81). On the flip side of whites' kind of interest, Harlemites felt that they were at the risk of being once again stereotyped and identifies by whites. They, rather, wanted to be understood as human beings.

When the exotic would cease, there would have been two alternatives; either whites would make efforts to understand blacks, or they would turn their back on blacks' culture. Unfortunately, the movement did not last for a long time to figure out which of the

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alternatives would have been realized. The Great Depression of 1929 ended the movement which was still in its early stages for the African American fight against discrimination, and to discover themselves. The cultural movement did, indeed, pave the way for the CRM (1954-1968). Arthur Schomburg believes that the Harlem renaissance helped African Americans to aspire for the future because "The Negro must remake his past in order to make his future" (qtd. in. Tribe 401). Despite the short period of the Harlem Renaissance, it was sufficient enough to prepare for the CRM.

1.5 The Civil Rights Movement

Internal conflicts or civil wars, revolutions and manifestations have never been, throughout history, the outcome of a single motive or event. The physical outbreak of any conflict is the result of two interrelated factors which are root causes and immediate causes. The root causes, sometimes referred to as the underlying causes, consisting of problems that have been taking place in the society for a considerable amount of time. On the other hand, immediate causes, mostly a single event, are instant factors that lead to the manifestation of conflicts by the once oppressed group of people (Goldin et al. 115). The reason behind the uprising is not that those oppressed groups could not endure persecution anymore, but because they have started to gain some kind of power which was exactly the case for the CRM (1954-1968).

Slavery, segregation, the American Civil War, political activism of the early twentieth century, the Great Migration, and the Harlem Renaissance all served as root causes of the CRM. The 1940s, however, was a crucial phase in the history of blacks'

struggle. The accelerated events that the period witnessed urged the occurrence of the immediate cause.

In the nineteen-forties, America was more concerned with its foreign affairs. It was the period of the Second World War in which the country needed the help of all of its citizens including blacks. Just like the entire country's status quo, discrimination was also present in the industries that produced armed services and war supplies which pushed blacks to organize a march to Washington D.C. (M. Anderson 4). Blacks' protest ended before it begins because President Franklin D. Roosevelt answered their call in due time (Vargas, 2007). The end result was ending segregation in defence industries and government (M Anderson 12).

According to the official website of the NAACP, there was a significant increase in the association's membership hitting 600,000 members by 1946 ("Our History"). During that same year, blacks' discrimination and intimidation increased significantly after the WWII. The NAACP, in its turn, urged the National Emergency Committee against Mob Violence (NECMV). The committee succeeded in convincing the President to establish a committee on civil rights to promote protecting civil rights equally for all citizens (Juhnke 593). As it was mentioned earlier, the Brown V. Board of Education which ended school segregation was an important and crucial victory in the history of African Americans' Civil Rights movements.

The CRM began in the mid-twentieth century; that does not mean that there had been no previous civil rights movements as it has been stated before. The enlisted root causes in addition to the empowerment of blacks by the victory of political activism led to

the prosperity of the 1954-1968 movement. The period did, as a matter of fact, witness a series of victories.

What is believed to be as the immediate cause of the movement has been the Montgomery Bus Boycott (1955). There was that famous story about an African American woman who refused to seat in the dedicated place for blacks in a bus leading to her imprisonment which led to boycotts. Rosa Parks, the hero of the story, was not a simple African American woman who did not care about refusing to give her seat to whites. She was a political activist, and it was that very act of activism that made her a centre of controversy among historians. The controversy was about her real intention behind rejecting bus segregation (Winters 22-23).

Right before the incident of Rosa Park, there was a black leader in the making. Martin Luther King Jr. (1929-1968) was the most influencing black figure during that period. Inspired by the great Indian leader Mahatma Gandhi (1930), Luther King encouraged blacks to use civil disobedience to achieve their goals other than violence (M Anderson 18). When the NAACP secretary, Rosa Park, was sent to jail, black ministers of Montgomery decided to establish an organization, the Montgomery Improvement Association (MIA), to protest against the government's decision. The young twenty-six years old Luther King with a PhD title was nominated to be the MIA organization's leader, and he was. After more than a year, the boycott succeeded in ending Montgomery bus's segregation (Hansen 8).

Luther King did not agree much with the policy of the NAACP which believed in recourse to justice and court. He had faith in nonviolent resistance. For that reason, he established the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) together with other

political activists, and he shared leadership with his friend Ralph Abernathy (M Anderson 19-20). The aim of the Christian-themed organization (SCLC) was to financially support civil disobedience in the south. The organization was not active for three years after its foundation (Hansen, 9).

During the presidency of Dwight David Eisenhower (1953-1961), however, the first civil rights act was passed since the Reconstruction Era (Blaustein and Zangrando 454). Following the success of the Brown v. Board of Education in desegregating schools in 1954, some white southern activists initiated a counter-movement to oppose blacks' integration. Their strategy of Massive Resistance led to prevent nine black students from entering a high school in Little Rock, Arkansas by an Arkansas National Guard under the orders of the Governor Orval Faubus. The unconstitutional decision of the governor created a growing unrest between black and white activists. The conflict urged the intervention of President Eisenhower who enacted the Civil Rights Act of 1957 (M Anderson 28-29).

The Civil Rights Act of 1957 was not only dedicated for school segregation. The act led to the formation of the United States' commission on Civil Rights which, in addition to hindering the violation of school laws, it also granted blacks the right to vote without whites' restricting laws ("Our Mission"). The act was amended by the Civil Rights Act of 1960.

In 1960, four African American students were denied to be served in the segregated restaurant of Greensboro college of North Carolina. Inspired by previous acts of nonviolent demonstrations, they refused to leave the restaurant until it closed. Things did not stop there as the sit-in protest lasted until summer, and it was joined by similar "ins"

protestations in the south such as the right to read at public libraries (read-ins), and the right to swim at public beaches (wade-ins). The protests attracted a massive number of students across the country eventually resulting in the formation of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) (Levy 13-14).

In 1960, Boynton v. Virginia decision led to the Freedom Riders' movement of 1961. Bruce Boynton was a student who used whites' facilities in a Trailways bus station in Virginia. Upon his action, he got arrested and received the support of the NAACP. The case was closed by pronouncing that interstate bus segregation was unconstitutional. The Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) was an organization established in 1942 to advocate nonviolence, but King's SCLC had better reputation than CORE's (M Anderson 23). The CORE untrusting Jim Crow laws in the south, suggested the idea of freedom riding. The idea was to test the credibility of the Boynton decision by recruiting white and black volunteers to use one another's transportation facilities. Some riders were arrested and serious riots broke out in the south especially in Birmingham, Alabama. Despite the arrest, freedom riders were not afraid and continued their riding journeys pending for the government's action. In 1960, Attorney General Robert Kennedy ordered the Interstate Commerce Commission to issue regulatory laws that desegregated transportation facilities (Anderson 24).

The turning point in the history of African American's civil rights fight has been the Washington March of August 28, 1963. President J.F Kennedy (1961-1963), unlike previous presidents, delivered an address on national television defending CRM. He suggested a more determining civil rights bill that was still lacking the approval of the congress. Meanwhile, the leader Philip Randolph (1889-1979), the one behind ending

discrimination in defence industries, was preparing for a march to Washington D.C for the limited job opportunities. Randolph was soon joined by African American organizations thinking that the congress would be influenced by their action. Although it did not seem as a good idea for President Kennedy, he proclaimed his support to them. There were over 250.000 protestors who listened to songs and speeches near Lincoln Monument by leaders from different organization the most famous of which was Luther King's *I Have a Dream* (1963). The gathering and the speech of MLK was televised. Unfortunately, President Kennedy was assassinated in that same year, 1963, leaving African Americans wondering about the future of the civil rights project. The new president Lyndon B. Johnson (1963-1969), nonetheless, continued working on the project until the enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Anderson 31).

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was much significant because it included the need for federal support. The Act "Prohibited discrimination in public accommodations, in employment, and in programs that received federal funding (including education); it also provided increased federal protection for the civil rights of African Americans" (Levy 91). Despite the enactment of the civil rights project, and the efforts to end all kinds of discrimination, black southerners were disenfranchised by intimidation and restricting laws such as literacy tests, poll taxes and grandfather clauses.

The Freedom Summer of 1964 and the Selma Campaign of 1965 offered a great example to the challenges that African Americans had to undergo before being able to vote. In the segregated state of Mississippi, few blacks were registered to vote. During summer, the Council of Federated Organizations (COFO) started a campaign to register as many blacks as possible for the upcoming elections. White elites also participated in the

phenomenon by offering a well-programmed educational plan. From the results of the Freedom Summer, as well, was the formation of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) as a response to the Mississippi Democratic Party (MDP) which excluded all blacks from its membership. White segregationists unsatisfied by the progress of the Freedom Summer project, they caused riots. Churches were bombed, houses were burned, many workers as well as volunteers were killed or injured, and many more were taken to jail. Nevertheless, the fight kept going on, and the Freedom Summer activists' biggest triumph has been its contribution in fastening the enactment of the Voting Rights of 1965 (Felix, 2014).

The other important event that forced President Johnson to sign the Voting Rights Act was the Selma March. After the Freedom Summer, Luther King and the SCLC decided to attract more attention. They have chosen Selma which had a long bad history of segregation to march to its courthouse. There were a series of marches before achieving victory. In the first march of January 1964, there were but few events that strengthened the march like the participation of schoolteachers and schoolchildren in other separate marches. The second march of February resulted in the arrestment of the most of the marchers. In the third time, the SCLC planned a march from Selma to Montgomery on Sunday, March 7. The march was faced by Alabama state troopers who attacked them; some died and plenty were injured. The incident, known as Bloody Sunday, shocked the American public who got informed through media coverage. In the next march, many whites joined the march and assisted the SCLC in addition to the help of the President who sent federal troops to protect them. The march finally achieved its aim by the signing of the Voting Rights Act on August 6, 1965 (Levy 91).

During the Freedom Summer, three volunteers from the SNCC were killed by the Ku Klux Klan leading the committee to reconsider its ideology. Stokely Carmichael (1941-1998), who was an active figure during the Freedom Summer, headed the SNCC in 1966. His philosophy of opposing nonviolence introduced the notion of Black Power. The concept was not about the orientation of one specific group, but it was used by other groups like the Black Panthers. Black Powerists advocated violence as a self-defence tool, and believed in blacks' self-esteem. The SNCC became more radical when H. Rap Brown took its lead resulting in its demise. The summer of 1967 riots were attributed to the incitement of Brown who was arrested. Eventually, the SNCC was dissolved marking the beginning of the CRM's end ("Student Non-Violent" 1038).

The two most important Black Power organizations are the Nation of Islam (NOI) 1930 led by Malcolm X and later the Black Panthers Party (BPP) (1966). The Black Power was mainly influenced by the Nation of Islam. It became, then, a movement that supported the belief of extremism by the BPP. The Black Power insisted on Black Nationalism as a trend while emphasizing black pride and black self-determination. The most dominant theme of their nationalism is race. As a matter of example, the Nation of Islam undermined white supremacy by its substitution of black supremacy. Black supremacists believed that whites were the ones who were inferior. The two organizations, however, differed in conceiving blacks' popular culture for while the NOI discarded it; BPP glorified it (Ogbar 9).

In Oakland, California, Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale created the main ten rules and program of BPP on October, 1966. The rules were divided into what the BPP wanted and what they believed. What they wanted was of a more radical nature than other

organizations that were famous at that time. They looked for freedom through power and self-determinism. The BPP asked for their rights to be fully fulfilled in reality. That is obvious in the statement of the allness and fullness of their rules. The rules claimed for full employment and full education, and asked for all blacks to have a decent housing, to be exempt from military service, and to be all freed from prison or, otherwise, to be all tried by people from their communities, and most importantly to have a land. The program also contained regulatory principles for the members of the party (Foner 14).

Just like their ideology, the kind of art that the BPP popularized was radical in regard to white supremacy. For example, they believed that "We, the Black Panthers artists, draw deadly pictures of the enemy —pictures that show him at his death door or dead—his bridges are blown up in our pictures—his institutions destroyed—and in the end he is lifeless—"(Foner 16). Black Panthers made it clear that their aim was not violence even if it was apparent in the rules they established and the art they created. They insisted that violence was just a means of self-defence for the Panther, as a matter of fact, does not attack only if it is attacked. They believed that American cops were unjust because they were killing unarmed black people. The BPP did not call for random killing just like white cops, but they sought justice through fighting back. They also called all Americans even whites to assist them to revolutionize history and beliefs of the American society. Their call for the participation of all Americans came from their faith in the power of people. The BPP had Marxist tendencies (Foner 13).

The classical CRM ended in 1968 with the assassination of Luther King. In 1967, when the laws that seemingly granted blacks their rights as full American citizens were enacted, Luther King had plans to improve the quality of blacks' social status. He

organized the Poor People's Campaign in 1968, and decided to assist workers' strike in Memphis, Tennessee. There he was assassinated on April, 4th. Following his assassination, 130 American cities witnessed riots, and the President Johnson was obliged to absorb people's anger. The president ended housing discrimination based on skin colour through passing the Fair Housing Act of 1968 (Ware 811).

1.6 Racism in Disguise: Post-Racism Strategies for Power Practice

When the CRM started to fade out by 1968, the situation of African Americans was supposed to improve at least at the level of theory. In fact, not all of historians were that optimistic about the status-quo or the future of African Americans after the CRM. William J. Wilson, for example, was among the historians who had positive attitude towards the new system followed to organize society. In 1978, he confirmed in his book *the Declining Significance of Race* that "Class has become more important than race in determining black life-chances in the modern industrial period" (150). In other words, W. Wilson believed that the focus of the American policy shifted interest from race-based stratification to job-based stratification. This claim might hold true in some situations of the Africa American history. For example, many promising events occurred in 1987 concerning different life aspects, business health and medicine, literature, military, education, and politics. From the notable events were the appointment of General Fred A. Gordon as a Commandant of Cadets and the election of the first African American mayor who won by public vote.

Other critics believe that the new economic system holds racist orientations in disguise. For example, Kandice Sumner an African American educator, talks about the

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achievement gap, and the educational system which keeps blacks poor. She resonates that since white kids are provided with better teaching/learning materials, the performance of whites would always be better than blacks leading to the income gap. The income gap is the result of blacks having less job opportunities based on their educational achievement and the quality of education that they do receive. ("How America's Public Schools Keep Kids in Poverty").

Concerning accommodation, even though the separate but equal laws were outlawed, after the civil rights movements, mostly blacks were living in ghettos and they were isolated socially. The African American economist, academic, author, and social psychologist Professor Glenn Cartman Loury writes in 1998 that "black ghetto dwellers are a people apart, susceptible to stereotyping, stigmatized for their cultural styles, isolated socially, experiencing an internalized sense of hopelessness and despair, with limited access to communal networks of communal assistance" (Loury). Therefore, the situation of African Americans concerning segregation based on race did not significantly improve after the CRM; however, the way race mattered changed according to the new economic system of the American society.

The relationships between whites and blacks, when it comes to social connections/ interactions, are not that bright since blacks are still considered as an inferior race. Eduardo Bonilla-Silva expresses his disappointment about whites' attitude when they are asked about white-black intermarriage. He claims that approximately 40 percent of whites do easily express their refusal of blacks' intermarriage. He also adds that, based on surveys, African Americans remain the least American race which is engaged in intermarriage (98). Moreover, Loury does further illustrate upon the legacy of slavery and

the hardship of accepting the Other as a non-inferior race. He gives an example of adopting children by white parents who prefer to go to China to bring children in order to take care of while black children who lost their parents remain out of their circle of interest (Loury).

Bonilla-Silva believes that what keeps the race-based economic system today, unlike the old agrarian America, is the American authority itself. He thinks that the state, the FBI, as well as the police do all collaborate to control the African American community. One point of strength that white officials rely on is the significant small number of blacks employed at the level of security agencies (104). In fact, the recent manifestations held by African Americans following the killing of a black citizen, George Floyd (2020), confirms Bonilla-Silva assumptions (History.com Editors).

However, it is also worth minding the point of how technology is also equally giving agency to minorities. For example, the case of George Floyd enjoyed an international empathy because he was filmed other than being a typical heard of case. For that, even though the situation of African Americans is still pessimistically looked at; nevertheless, the objective tools of agency, meaning technology, in support of minorities would probably at least spare African Americans stereotyping unlike subjective and human-based organizations.

1.7 Historicizing Toni Morrison

Toni Morrison was an African American writer and an educator who contributed to enriching the African American culture. She was born during the very end of the Harlem Renaissance Movement and the beginnings of the Great Depression on February 18, 1931

in Lorain, Ohio. She was born under the name Chloe Ardelia Wofford which indicates that after a half century since the abolishment of slavery, some blacks did willingly name their children after an English name. Chloe was called by the nickname Toni Morrison since her early adulthood with an ambiguity imputed to the name's origins. Morrison's family was of a southern descent. Her maternal grandparents as well as her father escaped to the north during the Great Migration (Gillespie 3).

Morrison's father was a hard worker especially during the Great Depression. He, nonetheless, never complained for he used to love what he was doing. Barbara Kramer says that:

> He took pride in his work. He once told Chloe that whenever he welded a perfect seam on a ship, he signed his name to it. 'No one else saw it, or really even cared... But he cared, and that is all that mattered'. (16)

Morrison's memories of her father were not always positive even if she managed to make them look as such. According to her, her father's encounter with whites did always derive the same conclusion for him. George Wofford had a radical judgment of whites as he considered them as inferior, untrustworthy and aggressive. His view stemmed out of the way he was treated by them, or of what he observed. For example, he once could not afford to pay the rent of the house as he did not also have another place to move to. The landlord burned the house as a result, but no one was harmed. George's family also moved north because they were partly influenced by lynching three African Americans. Morrison's comment on the house incident was funny in a sad way as she could not find a better way to express her feelings without using humour (Gillespie 4). Morrison grew up

while surrounded by inspiring women as well: her mother, maternal grandmother and great-grandmother.

Unlike her husband George, Ramah Wofford was more tolerate. Ramah did not believe in race differences for she used to treat people on the basis of their behaviour. Morrison agreed much with her mother's attitudes towards race issues more than her father's who was an extremist. Ramah was also a social activist trying to be an example to other blacks to pursuit equality with whites (Gillespie 4). Morrison recalls during one of her interviews that her mother was a gifted singer who used to sing anything all the time (Kramer 17).

Dreams for the Willis and Wofford families were part of the supernatural which was not an alien cultural element. They praised and believed in the supernatural. For instance, Morrison's grandmother had a dream interpretation book. The grandmother used to interpret Chloe's dreams. She was a strong woman who forced her husband, who used to play violin for living, to move north with the least amount of money one could have to move from one place to another (Kramer 20-21).

Morrison's great-grandmother was of a native American origin. Chloe adds that her great-grandmother was a very bold woman to conclude that the women she knew in her family and life were "Women who would run toward the situation rather than putting someone up in front of them, or retreating" (Wagner-Martin 3). The family atmosphere that Morrison grew up in was very inspiring, supportive and culturally bound.

Wofford had an admired life outside home. She was the only student in her class who could read and write at first grade. She was smart and talented since her childhood.

Concerning race matters, Chloe did not suffer discrimination as she had a white friend whom she used to go with to school. She also was the only black child in her first-grade class, but she was not identified as being inferior. It was not until she was more than five years old that she started to experience racially-based treatment (Wagner-Martin 157). For example, when she was working as a house servant for whites, she used to complain to her father about their behaviours towards her. The father, in return, convinced Morrison to not mind them because they were not her family, nor did they have a close relationship to admonish them; "His words made a lasting impression on Chloe, who learned that how she felt about herself was not determined by other people" (Kramer 21-22).

Morrison was a mother of two sons, Harold and Slade. She married Harold Morrison who was an architect in 1958. They lived in Washington where they welcomed their first born, Harold, in 1961, Morrison's husband decided to stay in Jamaica when she was pregnant with her second child, Slade who was born in 1964. She returned to live with her family in Ohio. In 1965, she left her family's house with her two children to live in New York. Morrison's son, Slade, died aged 46 years old because of cancer (Biography.com Editors).

Morrison, as an educator, had an impressive academic life. During her high school studies and even before, she was fascinated by Latin and European literature. She emphasized once again her interest in literature which she studied at Howard University when she excelled in English. She graduated from Howard University in 1953 to pursue her Master's Degree at Cornell University. She graduated from the later in 1955 upon writing a thesis about the works of Virginia Wolf and William Faulkner (Biography.com Editors).

Morrison's first teaching experience was in Lone Star State at Texas Southern University. She soon returned to Howard University where she taught English. In 1961, she started scratching her first novel when she joined a writers' workshop. In 1964, she became a Random House editor working on works by writers like Gayl Jones and Toni Cade Bambara. She joined the Princeton University as a professor in 1989. Right before that, she taught writing at the State University of New York at Albany beginning in 1984. In 2006, she retired (Britannica).

Morrison published many works of fiction and nonfiction. During the course of her life, she has written eleven novels published chronologically as follows; *The Bluest Eye* 1970, *Sula* 1973, *Song of Solomon* 1977, *Tar baby* 1981, *Beloved* 1987, *Jazz* 1992, *Paradise* 1998, *Love* 2003, *A Mercy* 2008, *Home* 2012, *God Help the Child* 2015. She has further written five books for children, two plays and two short stories. The nine nonfiction books included; *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* 1992, *What Moves at the Margin: Selected Nonfiction* 2008 in addition to her recent book *The Source of Self-regard, Selected Essays, Speeches, and Meditations* 2019. She was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for the novel *Beloved* and the Nobel Prize for Literature six years later. Morrison was supposed to publish her last novel before her death. She assumed that the novel would have been the best of her works ("Rencontre Exceptionnelle"). Morrison died in August 5, 2019 aged 88 years old.

1.8 Conclusion

To conclude, southern and northern states' conflict over slavery, blacks' escape to the north and President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation marked a serious step in the

history of America to abandon slavery and slave trade. The initiative to abolish slavery, however, remained theoretical as the Black Codes and the Jim Crow laws intimidated blacks. African Americans' strife towards equity has been gradual. While Booker Washington's Atlanta Compromise secured education for black children, the NAACP accomplished legal victories through recourse to court. Moreover, the Harlem Renaissance contextualized African Americans' struggle through offering a cultural background which fostered their black identity. African Americans needed also to challenge the Jim Crow laws through the CRM. The CRM adopted various ideologies, for example, the nonviolent Civil Disobedience and the power advocate BPP. The movement ended segregation in different life aspects such as, education, public accommodation, voting, and housing. However, the actual integration of African Americans seems to be hindered by the new economic system which intends to keep blacks less educated and poor to exploit them. Acts on intimidation, on the other hand, could be condemned publicly thanks to the use of technology. The first chapter displayed the historical background of the study. The following chapter provides a theoretical framework of important concepts in the light of a social psychological methodology. It will analyse concepts related to the study's main themes such as collective trauma, Magical Realism, and collective healing.

Chapter 2

Making Sense of Social Psychology, Collective Trauma, and Magical Realism

2.1 Introduction

The use of social and psychological theories in approaching works of arts and literary texts has a significant role in analysing and understanding them. In other words, advance in those two disciplines entails a better understanding of works of art. Recently, the emergence of social psychology provided an interdisciplinary analysis through theories that consider social and psychological knowledge as inseparable. The nature of African American literature which considers the social framework as crucial in developing or criticizing blacks' art necessitates the use of an approach that integrates both individual and social knowledge. The chapter is divided into three sections. It will first define social psychology and useful theories related to it before tackling collective trauma and Magical Realism.

2.2 Social Psychology

The emergence of social psychology dates back to the dawn of the twentieth century. William McDougall's book of *An Introduction to Social Psychology* (1908) contributed to the popularisation of such a term despite the book's eccentricity regarding modern social psychology principles. The following books in the field asserted the scientific nature of social psychology. Significant contributions that set the first foundations of social psychology are attributed to Floyd Allport and Carl Murchison (1924-1935) (Stroebe and Kruglanski 5).

Social psychology is a sub-field of both sociology and psychology. Its central principle revolves around the idea of the circular nature of human relationships. It is equally believed that society influences individuals as much as individuals influence society at the same time. Kenneth S. Bordens and Irwin A. Horowitz define social psychology as "The scientific study of how individuals think and feel about, interact with, and influence one another, individually and in groups" (3). It is essentially characterized by the application of the scientific method, its reliability, replicability and consistency of results. According to social psychologists, human behaviours are necessarily measurable including thoughts, feelings and to what extent they interact and influence each other in different contexts whether individually or collectively.

Social psychology is based on dualism; the individual and the collective, the psychological and the social, fantasies and reality...etc. The dualism is not only a manifestation of a passive objectification, but it is also an active process that is always engaged in subjectification. That is, neither the individual nor the society are considered as objects which are passively affected by external actions. Daniel T. Gilbert believes that "people behave differently at different times by positing two inner processes that are activated by different stimuli" (5). Society and the individual as subjects and objects do equally influence and are influenced by each other respectively. The social context or the stimuli every time negates one mental process by activating the other reflecting the dualism of the human mind as well. For example, the stimulus that activates happiness negates sadness and so on. The mind, therefore, is a combination of endless dual processes as a response to the duality of society and the individual; the social context always offers two possibilities and the individual acts upon them.

The relationship between what the society provides and individual behaviours raises serious questions in social psychology about the binary opposition automaticity/control. Power and control represent a conflict between two seemingly opposites, meaning actions and reactions. In other words, social psychology tries to figure out whether individuals have the ability to evaluate and choose, or they are just subjects to environmental factors (Baumeister and Bargh 35). Studies as such allow for a better understanding of humans' behaviours and the possibility of their predictability. The ability to measure human's behaviours questions how the unconscious is perceived in social psychology.

There is a relationship between automaticity and the unconscious that are interpreted into two different ways. Before the emergence of social psychology, the unconscious has been believed to be people's unaware influence by stimuli. That definition illustrates the passivity of individual intervention at least in case of the internalization of unaware stimuli. It acknowledges the unlikelihood of predicting the why and precisely when individuals become unaware of surrounding stimuli. The development of social psychology altered the definition of the unconscious. The unconscious then is the mental processes that individuals are not aware of, yet they do influence individuals' behaviours and judgments. The definition does not separate the unconscious from the observed behaviours. Put differently, it is always legitimate to ask the question: to what extent does the unconscious influence and reflect the overall behaviour of individuals? Revealing the reasons underlying the lack of consciousness, leads to the adjustment of social performance (Bargh 1-9).

What has been mentioned before demonstrates that social psychological principles revolve around two equally influencing and influenced forces which are the Self and the Other. The Other represents social processes. That is, any existing entity other than the self being it abstract or concrete is ineluctably socially contextualized. The Self represents cognitive processes. It deals with why and how people do the things they do in reference to the mental construct. Cognitive processes may include perception, recognition, feelings, thoughts… etc. (Smith et al. 22).

2.3 Theories in Social Psychology

The present title provides theories generated from social psychological principles. The theories are thought to be useful in discussing the second and third sections of the chapter as well as the analyses of the selected novels in the subsequent chapters.

2.3.1 Cognitive Dissonance

It is highly convenient to consider an axiom as a simple point of departure to explain the theory. Human behaviours are fairly observable, and their variance and multitude refer to a single entity which is the Self. How the Other and the Self perceive the "I" certainly differs. One simple reason behind that refers to the influence of time interval. The realm of the mind is timeless unlike the social context. In a particular social situation, individuals cannot react, for example, to an event in two contrasted behaviours at the same time; either walk or run, smile or grin… etc. They may change their mind later, but they absolutely cannot reveal contrasted behaviours at the same time. On the other hand, individuals may hold two contrasted ideas; for example, someone knows that the movie's

antagonist is evil, but he still likes him. Inconsistencies as such are believed to create psychological discomfort.

The psychological discomfort stems from the fact that "the individual strives toward consistency within himself. His opinions and attitudes, for example, tend to exist in clusters that are internally consistent" (Festinger 1). Inconsistency reflects a dramatic impact on one's psychology. The effect being it dramatic more than logical or didactic makes it legitimate to substitute the word inconsistency with the word dissonance. Cognitive Dissonance theory (CDT) sheds light on how and why dissonance may exist, how it provokes motivation to reduce it, and how consistency can ever be achieved (Cooper 377).

Dissonance is an everyday condition. It is unavoidable because of exposure to different social contexts. Individuals each day receive new information and experience different events. The new received knowledge is always compared to another relevant knowledge that has been acquired earlier. Most of the time new information is not evaluated and judged immediately. So, if the conflict between two relevant elements does not reach consonance, dissonance persists (Festinger 5-6).

For example, someone does not like coffee, but it has been hosted to him by people who consider it as a disrespect to reject it once offered according to their culture. The situation would raise temporal dissonance as to whether he chooses to ignore his feelings and drink it, or just does not care about those people's culture. That was an example of a temporal dissonance that can by no means persist because the social reality forces him to choose quickly. However, dissonance may persist in other cases. For example, a double nationality football fan watches a football match; both teams represent the countries that he

belongs to. It is not easy for the fan to choose the country that he should support. The situation may persist throughout the match. Even imagining those teams playing again in the future would cause him a persistent dissonance.

There are different frameworks within which the new information, without having any control over its receipt, forces itself to be evaluated. For instance, the new information may be inconvenient with the person's logic or logic in general, cultural mores, a general opinion or a past experience (Festinger 14). Those frameworks are going to be more explained using relevant examples.

Logical inconsistency occurs when logic is ignored because it is not given much importance in relation to the person's opinion. As an example, a researcher expects to finish his thesis in a month because he feels he is able to do so, but time and circumstances do not serve his expectation. The researcher knows that facts contradict his opinion, and he has no intention to change his mind despite the psychological discomfort that the situation causes.

Cultural mores can be a source of dissonance, especially, when they are juxtaposed with scientific facts, or in case of a cultural clash. For example, when a large number of scientists started to reject the idea of flat earth, the society found it hard to give up on their cultural beliefs, but the pressure of scientific facts on them was as hard as the pressure of what they have used to think it was true. That kind of dissonance persisted for a long term for its failure to reach consonance by just simply stating facts.

There are umbrella opinions that govern sub-opinions. If it happens that a sub-opinion can easily be formed by new information, sometimes a greater dissonance occurs

because of the new information's contradiction with the general opinion. For example, traditional parents praise their relative's success abroad; however, they do not let their children to study afar. In fact, their general principle of hyper-caring contradicts their attitude which they do not even try to hide.

Past experiences may also affect the occurrence of dissonance. People form an integrated and strong opinion about a situation that is experienced using senses. Therefore, it is significantly demanding to substitute that opinion. For example, it would be hard for anyone to believe that the yesterday's angry man is in fact a calm person, and what was witnessed was only one of his rarely states of angriness.

After presenting some of the cases in which dissonance may occur, it is appropriate to interrogate whether or not dissonance vary from one situation to another. Leon Festinger rationalizes that there are factors that determine the degree of dissonance. He assumes that the magnitude of dissonance between two relevant elements increases according to their significance and importance for the person. The importance of elements is, normally, determined by the person's own opinion. However, the influence of the dissonant elements on a sum of other knowledge and behaviours changes the degree and magnitude of dissonance. The more dissonance influences a different range of behaviours, the more it increases (18).

The pressure, that dissonance causes, provokes the need to reduce it. As soon as dissonance occurs, its first aim is to motivate the person to reach consonance. The ways that Festinger proposes are three, namely, changing the person's behaviour, changing the environment, or reconciling the two dissonant elements by adding a third element (18-24). From the examples presented before, the change in parents' behaviour by allowing their

children to study abroad reduces dissonance. In the same vein, when the person who met the angry man tries to incite him to get angry, he is reducing his dissonance by changing the environment. Finally, the researcher who thinks that he is able to finish his thesis in a short time, he tries to read about successful researchers who accomplished what he wished for. That way, the researcher was adding new elements which were consonant with both dissonant elements to reach consonance.

It is not easy to simply choose between the aforementioned ways to resolve the problem of inconsistency. Sometimes there is a failure to reach consonance. The failure is a consequence of the degree of dissonance's resistance to change. The first most important factor that fosters resistance is the degree to which the two dissonant elements are responsive to reality. Thinking of the psychological suffering the person experiences after change increases resistance as well. Resistance also increases when the consonance of two elements causes the dissonance of a couple of other consonant elements. Sometimes change simply cannot be realized. It is worth pointing out that if the change is hard to be realized, there will be an increased sense to avoid situations where dissonance may occur (Festinger 30).

The fact that all of the assumed angry man's friends ensure that he is a calm man is hard to change because it responses to reality. In the same vein, if the researcher does not finish his thesis in due time, he is going to lose his future career. The sense of loss and pain, that the idea causes, prevents the researcher from resolving the dissonance. For the example of the traditional parents, their change in behaviour may lead to raising dissonance between several consonant elements. If they allow their child to study abroad, that would cause dissonance between the idea and their culture, the society's judgment and

their increased sense of caring. Finally, in the past, it was simply impossible, promptly, to change the belief of the society that the earth is round and not flat.

2.3.2 Construal Level Theory

The Construal Level Theory (CLT) was first introduced by Nira Liberman and Yaacov Trope in 2010. They were interested in the human capacity to alter the present by means of psychological distance. In other words, they were seeking to answer questions similar to the following: how much are people able to engage fully in the present without being distorted or distanced from it? Why does distancing ever take place? And what are the different kinds and implications of psychological distance? (Trope and Liberman 118-119).

Human beings abstract knowledge from experience. The abstracted knowledge is collected and stored in a complicated and intricate way to form what is known as memory. It is important to note that memory does not act as a negation to the here-and-now or the future. It instead helps in making sense and interpreting the actual perceived object or environmental stimuli. Reciprocally, Trope and Liberman believe that people may transcend the present to reach an object from the past, the future or from another dimension. From their experiments they deduced that human species have developed a special ability which featured them from other species. Human beings are not trapped in the present for they can travel through space and time in addition to their ability to broaden their social horizon (119). They also identify different indications of psychological distance.

Psychological distance implies going beyond place and time to construct or reconstruct previously acquired knowledge in other non-present dimensions. Psychological distance enables humans to "recollect themselves in the past, plan the future, take other's perspective, cognize spatially remote places, and contemplate counterfactual alternatives to reality" (Trope and Liberman 119). People who experience psychological distance are always in pursuit of an object in one of the mentioned dimensions. The relationship between psychological distance and the CLT is that the later studies how the former influences the perception of people when it comes to remote objects (Trope and Liberman 122-123).

Levels of interpretation change according to the change in psychological distance. There are two different levels of interpretation; high-level construal and low-level construal. The first experiments which discovered those two construal levels were addressing temporal distance then they were generalized to incorporate other dimensions. The experiments revealed that the high-level construal deals with why people ever mentally distance themselves unlike the low-level construal that deals with the how of it (Trope and Liberman 120-121).

To simplify the comprehension of the function of both levels, i.e., how high-level and low-level construal operate in accordance to human perception, an example is to be considered. Impression formation and its persistence in different forms clarify how the two levels differ from each other. For instance, two friends fight, and they do not see each other since then. After a quite long time, they meet again. They happily greet each other, but they feel that there is something that makes that meeting uncomfortable. When they are asked about the reason behind that, they reply that something happened in the past that

they do not exactly know what it is, but they still remember the feeling or the impression about that past experience.

Trope and Liberman reasoned that there are experiences which are deemed as essential by the mind and others as less important (121). The experience of the fight and its causes are less fundamental than the experience of the feeling generated from it. The events that are labelled as central represent the high-level construal whereas the events that are classified as peripheral represent the low-level construal. The relationship between psychological distance and CLT does not just go backward (past) when it comes to temporal distance, yet it can also go forward (future).

Evidence shows that planning for the near future differs from planning for the distant future. For the far future, people tend to disregard details to focus on the outcomes unlike the near future when they have to focus on both or even more on the details (Trope and Liberman 121-122). For example, someone thinking of how the birthday party is going to be; thinking about the form of the cake, the dress, people who are present...etc. If the birthday party is to take place in the far future, the person disregards details and materials available to reach the desired result as if he/she could have everything as well as enough time before the birthday. In contrast, if the birthday party is to take place in the near future, the person considers the materials available for the party even if they do not match what he imagined concerning how the party would look like because he feels and cognizes the constraints of the details more than before.

Desirability and feasibility are two terms that describe the behaviour of human beings when it comes to planning. Trope and Liberman explain that:

Desirability concerns, which involve the action's end-state (i.e. the 'why' aspect of the action) are superordinate aspects of actions, whereas feasibility concerns, which involve the means used to reach the end-state (i.e. the 'how' aspects of the activity, the specific aspects of its enactment and its contextual constraints), are subordinate aspects of activities. (121)

People disregard how to reach the desired outcomes of a plan in favour of its end-state. The following scheme clarifies the relationship between CLT and psychological distance:

Desirability   LLC   LLC   *Desirability*

Past/ HLC   ←—— - - - - - - — **Present** · - - - - - —→   **Future/ HLC**

                     Feasibility   *Feasibility*

Fig. 1. An illustration of how CLT could be affected by time perception. *Own Work*. According to the scheme, people reach the past relying on memory while they reach the future relying on planning, predictions and expectations. The right arrow is striped because low-level construal becomes more important only when it comes nearer to the action's end-state. The left arrow is striped because memory is not perfect, and as seen before, the mind keeps central events and ignores or forgets peripheral ones as psychological distance increases.

What is common between the influence of psychological distance on levels of construal in the past and the future is related to perception. In matters of perception, the mind in both cases tries to catch the big picture (Trope and Liberman 123). The latter, in the example about a past experience, is the feeling generated from the fight. It is, however, in the example about a future experience the party itself regardless of the way the party is

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going to be organized. It is worth to note, at this point, that how the mind categorizes what is important and less important about a certain experience is relative from one person to another.

To generalize the conclusions of the theory, Trope and Liberman believe that all the dimensions are interrelated so that if psychological distance influences one dimension there is quite a possibility that it would influence other dimensions equally (125). For example, taking one's perspective about the aforementioned example of a past experience, even if both friends try to take the perspective of each other to evaluate what happened, they cannot think out of the big picture that they have generated from the experience because that is what remained for them.

2.3.3 Social Dominion Theory and Henri Lefebvre

Before diving deep into the Social Dominion theory (SDT), it is worth acknowledging the contribution of Henri Lefebvre to social psychology, as well as his theorizing of the role of power and dominion in the society. It is true that the terminology of social phenomena by both theories differs significantly; nevertheless, SDT validates Lefebvre's production of space theory. Henri Lefebvre is a social theorist unlike Jim Sidanius and Felicia Pratto, the developers of SDT, who are social psychological scientists. Thus, the core difference between the two theories is the empirical nature of SDT as opposed to the abstract, philosophical nature of the production of space theory. In the following paragraphs the two theories are going to be illustrated in comparison to each other.

According to Henri Lefebvre's theory, in his book *The Production of Space* (1991)*,* the social space is "both a field of action … and a basis of action" (191). That is to say, society members are at once influencing society, meaning producing space, and influenced by it, in this case space is considered as a product. He identifies space that is dominated by power, like the space resulting from capitalism, using three terms which are not separate but overlapping. Those terms are spatial practice, the space of representation and representational space. The space of representation is the theory that is generated from practice or precedes it whereas representational space is the practice that precedes theory or applies it, and spatial practice is the space of pure materialism (33). In other words, society as a basis of action helps in generating theories using scientific methods and tools like data collection methods, or else; society as a field of action can be used to apply created theories by specialists. Both cases indicate that the space of representation or the conceived space is the space of total abstraction. In contrast, the spatial practice or the perceived space is the physical real world, as it is, including nature, institutions and members of society. Lefebvre assumes that the perceived space is purely materialistic. It deals with the body and the sensory system which perceive the outside world. Finally, the representational space or the lived space incorporates the individual's actions and experiences while making use of social symbols which are the meanings that individuals subjectively construct from the real perceived space while influenced by the space of representation.

Sidanius and Pratto believe that all societies that experience power share common characteristics represented in the common grammatical nature of social power and its underlying deep structure (Social Dominance 299). SDT is, then, interested in the surface

or the political interrelations of a certain society and the pragmatic conclusions resulting from that specific grammatical arrangement. In general, the theory is descriptive and analytical in nature using empirical methods.

The rational kernel of the theory derives from the idea that economic surplus dictates the way societies are organized as group-based social hierarchies (Sidanius and Pratto, Social Dominance 299). SDT takes the responsibility of describing social inequality as a result of economic inequality. It does not only describe objects, yet it engages in describing methodical processes that hold and at the same time fuel society. SDT suggests that the influence of those processes occurs on different levels. It mainly highlights that hierarchy in society necessitates the exercise of certain kinds of power to preserve that social organization such as oppression, discrimination and prejudice (Sidanius and Pratto, Social Dominance Theory 418). The following modified taxonomy by Sidanius and Pratto illustrates the different levels that social power operates upon:
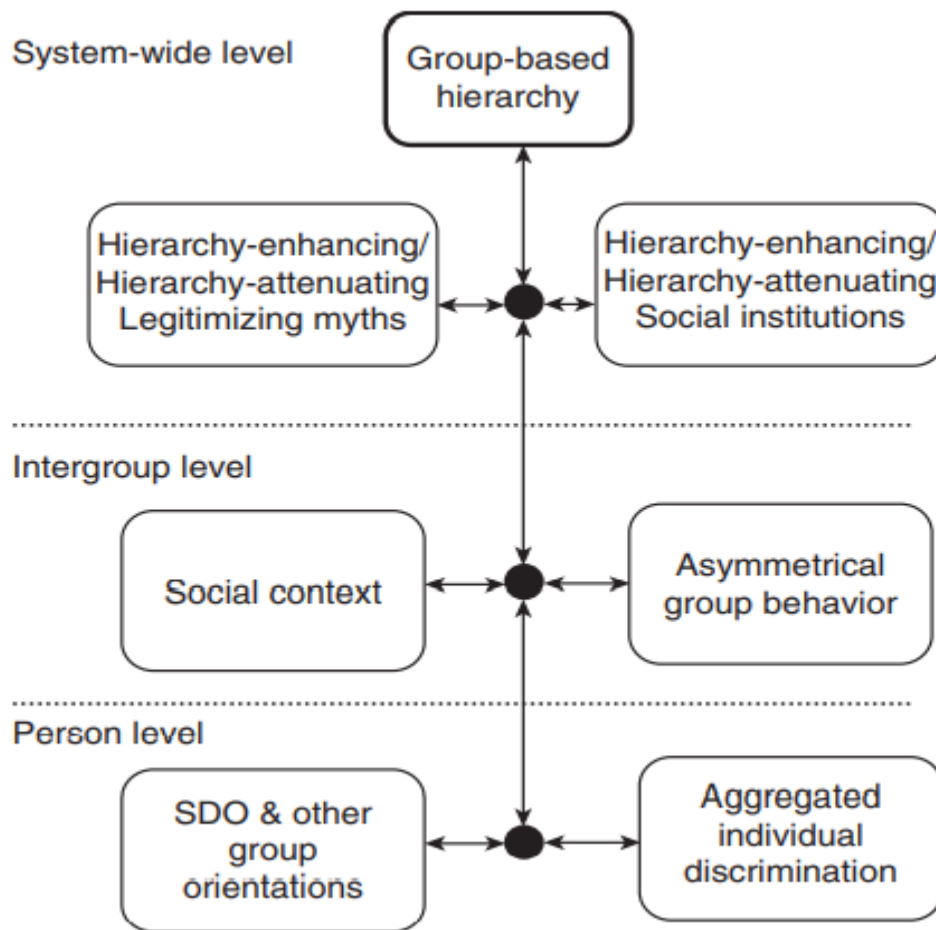
Fig. 2. An illustration of SDT. Source: Sidanius, Jim, and Pratto, Felicia. "Social Dominance Theory." *Handbook of Theories of Social Psychology* vol. 2, edited by Paul A. M. Van Lange, et al., SAGE Publications Ltd, 2012, p 419.

Social processes are hierarchically executed on three different levels. On the top, or the macro level, there is the system-wide level which represents the political framework underpinnings of social relations. The second level is about intergroup correlations where the social background of a community is central for their social attitudes and behaviours. The last level, or the micro level, examines the very personal and individual behaviours in

relation to the two other levels. According to the taxonomy, all levels do equally influence each other.

On the system-wide level, hierarchy-enhancing and hierarchy-attenuating legitimizing myths are the ideologies and representations that validate the use of power while hierarchy-enhancing and hierarchy-attenuating social institutions are the means by which power is executed (Sidanius and Pratto, Social Dominance Theory 419). The myths and ideologies are about the abstract, psychological aspects of power while social institutions are the physical manifestations of ideas driven from that former level of theorizing.

Concerning the intergroup level, there are two basic manifestations of the nature of intergroup relations according to the position of a certain group of individuals in the social hierarchy. Those two manifestations are referred to in social psychology as the "social context" and the "asymmetrical group behaviour". The latter term, in fact, acts as the practice that emphasizes the theoretical nature of the former one.

Sidanius and Pratto believe that economic inequality creates different social contexts that can be an appropriate environment to foster discrimination, stereotypes and prejudices (Social Dominance 38). Individuals socialize hierarchy-enhancing and hierarchy-attenuating ideologies or representations and institutions by their daily practice of the adopted and adapted beliefs. The daily practice leads to the pursuit of activities that encourage the enhancement or attenuation of discrimination and stereotyping. The social context, then, plays a pivotal role in considering the attitudes and directions of intergroup relations.

The asymmetrical group behaviour addresses to what extent individuals of a certain social context fit into it. In other words, it studies and predicts how individuals should act in respect to their social background and stereotyping history. The results obtained from the study, according to Sidanius and Pratto, are sometimes anisotropic with the social context individuals belong to. They have inferred that individuals who belong to subordinate groups tend to give agency to hierarchy-enhancing myths and ideologies of the dominant groups. For example, they do intentionally perform self-debilitating activities like dropping out of schools, or rebelling on their social tradition by praising the practices and even the stereotypes of dominant groups. In contrast, individuals belonging to a dominant group tend to fit perfectly with their social context. They care to have a better education, to practice sport and to eat healthy food as an example (Social Dominance Theory 419).

The person level examines how the individual influences and is influenced by other levels. Individual beliefs take two different directions upon which the degree of a person's desire to maintain a special group-based hierarchy can be identified. The social dominion orientation (SDO) dictates whether the individual supports or hinders the dominion of a specific group over another. Such beliefs affect in the same direction the individual's behaviour as to adopt or disregard aggregated individual discrimination (Sidanius and Pratto, Social Dominance Theory 419-420).

Sidanius and Pratto's taxonomy defines and describes the unavoidable group-based hierarchy. The definitions communicate the abstract motives behind individual and intergroup behaviours while the descriptions illustrate the concrete realizations of ideas, myths and ideologies deriving from that level of abstractness. Definitions and descriptions

go from general to specific; from system-wide theories to shared and individual beliefs. On the other hand, they go from system-wide institutions to collective behaviours within a specific social context, and ending up with individual practices that emphasize the individual's orientation concerning social hierarchy.

As a comparison with Henri Lefebvre's theory, SDT provides more details about the conceived space by distinguishing three levels of abstractness; the available political ideologies and social and individual orientations emerging from them. It also distinguishes two levels of the lived space which are the social and individual behaviours. However, Lefebvre's theory explains more the pragmatics underlying the grammar of group-based hierarchy which helps in understanding collective trauma in the coming section.

2.3.4 Loss and Grief in Social Psychology

Death and meaning, throughout history, have provoked priests, myth tellers, writers, and scientists to split enough ink to understand how people cope with loss and grief across cultures. In this regard, the contribution of Peter Marris (2009) is significant following his logic of case studies interpretations. He believes that:

> We can account for many of the essential and fundamental characteristics of grieving by connecting three processes together. The first is the process whereby our experience of attachment relationships in childhood shapes our ideas of security and trust, establishing the basic principles we use to interpret the world and our place in it. The second is the process whereby the child's attachment to mother and father develops into the capacity for, and need for, adult attachments. And the third is the process by which these adult

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attachments (which may include idealised and abstracted attachments) become so embedded in our sense of the meaning of our lives that their loss provokes grief. Grieving itself, then, is a fourth process by which this traumatic loss of meaning is remedied. (18)

Death, then, is meaning-centred for Marris. He claims that grieving cannot take place if there is not a coherent meaning of what to grief for. For example, children construct their meaning of security depending on their parents' presence as the primary providers of that feeling; therefore, if the child loses one of their parents, they would feel insecure for the rest of their life because they could not form a coherent idea about what security is unless another factor intervenes for recovery (Marris 19).

It can thereafter be concluded that attachment is the generator of meaning for children. Marris thinks that if the child builds coherent life meanings that would grant them a decent living condition, they would trust themselves and the culture that provided them with that knowledge (Marris 19). It is also true that those early attachments with parents should prepare for a later self-dependence. This by no way means that attachment and meaning generating would come to an end, but rather, adult relationships are more mature through healthy emotional bonds and interactions which secure a coherent meaning for grieving without a childish attachment that is based on demanding and providing love (Marris 19).

Another essential process that precedes grief is the ability to preserve and sustain meaning in the absence of meaning-provoking symbols such as the mother's figure. This state of self-consciousness of absolute meanings, belittles the fear of abandonment for mature attachments (Marris 18).

For collective losses, it is important that abstracted meanings of childhood do not receive damage. It is equally important that the concrete symbols of culture such as the land, institutions, and memorials persist to exist to support recovery through enhancing culture's absolute meanings (Marris 20-21).

Peter Marris, as a social psychologist, streamlines fundamental factors that help in grieving and healing whether for individuals or group of people. The principal factor is childhood attachments and how they should provide a coherent understanding of the world that would grant a safe living. Moreover, grieving over what is lost is strongly related to how it has been received in the first place. If the meaning is unclear or incomplete, the process of grieving is going to be hindered. It follows from the first factor that the sudden, early, and unpredicted loss, like the loss of the mother's figure would question all of the generated meanings thereafter and threatens one's security. Finally, circumstances are important for recovery by playing the role of meaning re-constructors.

2.4 Collective Trauma

The present study makes a distinction between collective trauma and any other type of traumas. If the section is going to deal with cultural and intergenerational trauma, it would be for the sake of grasping what collective trauma really is. The study is more of a didactic nature for it considers causation and the how and why of individual and collective behaviours. It does not deal with any sort of ambiguity because it departs from very basic simple assumptions as a means of interpretation in contrast to the interpretation of dreams or psychoanalysis as an example.

The present study considers collective trauma as an umbrella term. The reason behind that categorization is that the term collective trauma tries to convey the structural and grammatical nature of social relationships after a traumatic event. Collective trauma, then, addresses the effects of traumatic events on the society's surface which can be interpreted through examining the physical apparent relationships of a certain, country, society or community. The pragmatics or the interpretation of that surface reflects what is known as cultural trauma which accepts abstraction.

When attempting to describe what collective trauma is, it would always be erroneous also to consider it as the collective projection of individual traumas. It is a matter of fact that, in some cases, some individuals or all of the community members, in the case of intergenerational trauma, do not directly experience trauma, yet they are still influenced by the inherited collective trauma. Therefore, collective trauma does not reflect the effects of a directly experienced traumatic event, but its legacy at the level of social and political relationships.

In a comparison between individual and collective traumas, Kai Erikson clarifies that the difference between them lies in the interiority or exteriority of damage. He explains that individual trauma is a sudden collapse of the psyche caused by an exterior violence or force that the one cannot react to safely and appropriately. Collective trauma, however, is a blow that weakens the social fabric and all attachments associated with it leading to the evanescence of the sense of shared social background (154). Collective trauma is about the breaking and rearrangement of social relationships as a result of the use of power. Cultural trauma, then, is a term that addresses the extent a culture is affected by such a change at the surface level of the society. In this section, collective trauma is

introduced and explained in reference to African Americans' experience using the above mentioned social psychological theories.

2.4.1 Theorizing the African American Collective Trauma

The African American collective trauma has not made any sense until the formation of an African American community. However, its roots date back to Africans' enslavement or captivity in Africa before shipping them to the New World. It is important to mind that there has been a huge difference between slaves as individual subjects inside plantations, and slaves who have started to produce their own space through forming families before ending up with sharing an African American society. During that development, blacks' space has been always colonized by whites' dominion. As a result, power and violence have caused socio-psychological disorders including collective trauma.

According to SDT, before the American Civil War, hierarchy-enhancing legitimizing myths were the only valid ideologies because they were institutionalized. The representation of Africans was in the hands of whites. Their miss-representation, which legitimized the use of power, reduced the freedom of Africans who could not even enjoy the right of forming an African American community. The architecture of society at that time was dominated by whites. The relationships between whites and blacks were limited down to servitude while there was not any recognized political and, therefore, social activism or relationships among blacks.

Lefebvre, in his writings, argues the power of state and its dominion over spaces of representation. He affirms that formalism and structuralism are giving an approval and a space for the government to manipulate and impose specific knowledge on the masses.

This knowledge, however, is flagged as mere illusion (106). For De Saussure, knowledge is of two different natures, the concrete which is referred to as the signified, and the abstract which is mentally constructed and referred to as the signifier. He assumes that there is a single signified which can be represented by multiple signifiers. The reason for that, he infers, is the subjectivity and the individuality of human beings' thinking. That is why the terms signified/signifier are used interchangeably with the terms object/subject respectively (Saussure 67).

Lefebvre, actually, disagrees with the idea for he asserts that it is lacking in theory and practice. He explains that human beings are trapped in illusions since they are distanced from reality through representations. After layers of representations, which are given more importance than the real object, people end up referring to literally nothing (301-302). It is not the matter of subjectivity that he objects, yet taking advantage of the misinterpretation of that subjectivity is what the state is doing. In simpler terms, trying to measure reality, in order to practice power and control, reduces the value of that reality and makes that measurement as something universal that should be accepted by all people. Lefebvre states that "Reductionists are unstinting in their praise for basic scientific method, but they transform this method first into a mere posture and then, in the name of 'science of science' (epistemology), into a supposed absolute knowledge" (106). For instance, in 1785, the German polygenist Christoph Meiners published his essay *The Outline of history of Mankind* where he justifies the existence of superior and inferior races as a fact, he confirms that there is a "beautiful white race [and an] ugly Black race" (qtd. in Peterson 409). Those claims, and alike, have been made universal and absolute to give

validity to the colonization of Africa and the enslavement of Africans without giving a space for blacks to negate those presuppositions.

As a signified, Africans have been presented as being black at first. In Christianity, blackness refers to evil while, scientifically, it refers to inferiority according to Charles Darwin. Charles Darwin in his book *The Origin of Species* (1859) observes that the colour of slave ant is black while the colour of the master ant is red. As a result, through inadequate associations, Africans have been distanced from their reality when whites have represented their black skin as being associated with evil and inferiority. Through time and repetition, the object is no longer directly seen yet conceived. Lefebvre stresses "As for 'the signified', it remained present – but hidden" (301-302). Because the signifier is made multiple and absolute and the signified is being hidden, Lefebvre adds a third space in which he mediates between what is conceived and what is perceived which is the space of subjectivity.

The above stated cultural and political viewpoints of the role of power in the American society helps in understanding the relationship between group-based hierarchy and the African American collective trauma. The following taxonomy explains that relationship while simplifying the process that leads to collective trauma:
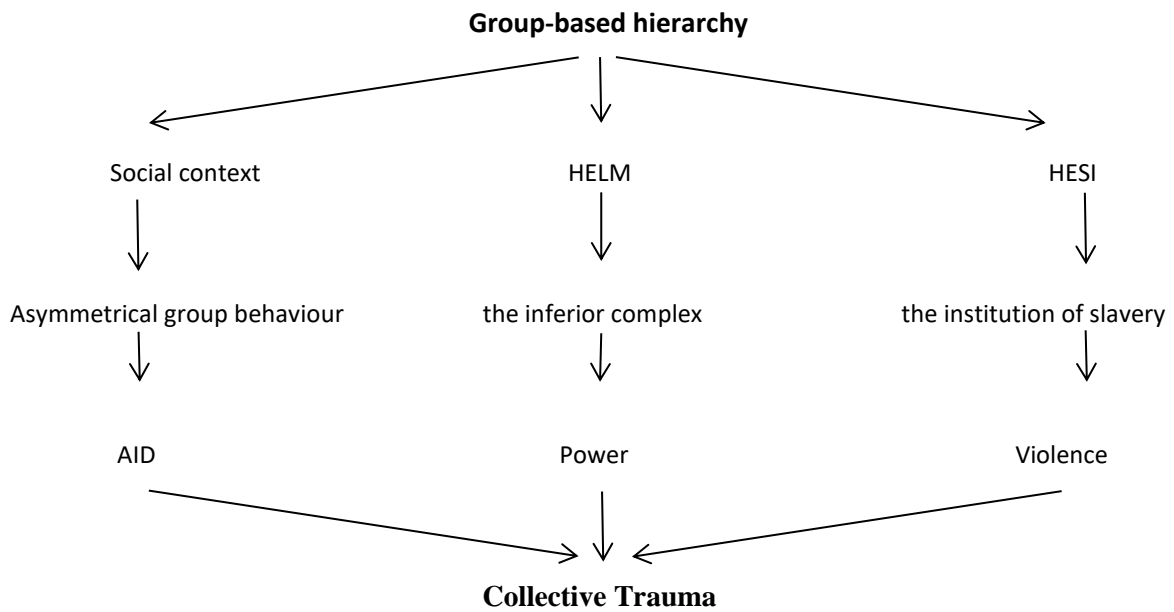
Group-based hierarchy

Social context	HELM	HESI
↓	↓	↓
Asymmetrical group behaviour	the inferior complex	the institution of slavery
↓	↓	↓
AID	Power	Violence

Collective Trauma

Fig. 3. The scheme illustrates how group-based hierarchy could promote collective trauma. *Own Work*.

Group-based hierarchy can be best represented through separating the processes leading to collective trauma into three categories. The first category works as the methodology or the theory governing the whole process which can be referred to as the signifier. The second category, as a signified, represents the non-dynamic realization of the theory through means that emphasise the use of power. The last category stands for the use of the previous categories in the society as a dynamic, online entity which is the space of subjectivity where the society and individuals construct their own knowledge while conceiving HEM and perceiving HEI. From the hierarchy-enhancing legitimizing myths that whites used to dominate blacks with was the inferior complex. The inferior complex as a way of identification and representation lies in the conceived space.

The realization of the idea demanded means or hierarchy-enhancing social institutions such as the institution of slavery. The social contextualization of hierarchy-enhancing myths and related institutions lead to asymmetrical group behaviour. The

asymmetrical group behaviour reflects the ineffectivity of the communal attitudes of African Americans towards slavery. There was only one direction that guided or controlled the American social context before the Civil War which was accepting whites' mastery and blacks' servitude. Even if blacks or some whites had had a different opinion, the opinion remained hidden because there were not any supporting hierarchy-attenuating social institutions; the idea will be illustrated later using examples from the first chapter.

The validation of the inferior complex reflects the powerful economic position of whites, and therefore, the political one. That power justified the use of violence to reduce blacks' freedom as well as to manipulate them through aggregated individual discrimination. Following the provided definition of collective trauma, the weakness of the social fabric and losing the feeling of a shared social background are the main features of collective trauma. Whites, through the use of power, violence, and aggregated individual discrimination, prevent blacks from establishing hierarchy-attenuating social institutions to foster their feelings of a shared identity and to step on a solid social ground. It is legitimate, at this point, to briefly reconsider the history of African Americans in the light of SDT.

2.4.2 Illustrating the African American Collective Trauma

Africans have been brought to a physically different space from the one known in Africa. The setting, institutions, society members and even the weather were of a significant disparity between the two continents. As a result, the knowledge of/and about the old social context was either substituted or changed. Africans have been exposed to violence and indoctrinated by whites as a necessity to the establishment of the institution

of slavery. Actually, the basis of whites' deeds lies in the conceived space that includes hierarchy-enhancing legitimizing myths of black inferiority to serve economic plans. Accordingly, given that blacks' space has been colonized by whites, Africans did not have freedom to engage in the wanted lived space. In addition, hopelessness played a substantial role concerning resistance. Africans, who have been sold by their own people and conditioned to live under firm and unfamiliar circumstances, have been so desperate to see any hopes in resisting.

As it has been mentioned before, collective trauma as a social phenomenon in the emerging African American community was not recognized politically until the abolishment of slavery. The first causes of trauma, however, can be detected long before that political decision. When Africans have been brought to America, they have been living in a world of illusions. Their access to reality has been deterred by an image of identification created by whites. Slaves have been identified as savages with no culture in addition to being an inferior race which had been created to serve whites' needs. Those representations, albeit being far from reality, have influenced the construction of the African American identity because as Dino Franco Felluga claims "the representation precedes and determines the real. There is no longer any distinction between reality and its representation" (282). From the hierarchy-enhancing legitimizing myths that served to convince blacks of their inferiority has been religion.

Whites tried to convince blacks that they were inherently inferior using religion. As a result, blacks who converted to Christianity, the majority did, have themselves believed that they were inferior to the white race. In that case, slaves, by their own will, refused to rebel against their masters for "Black resistance to slavery was interpreted as sin: revolt

against the master was said to be revolt against God" (West and Glaude 777). Those convictions supported the unilateral social context and the favouritism of asymmetrical group behaviour.

Any social space, in fact, is subject to change due to the accumulation of knowledge being it practical or theoretical. From a socio-psychological point of view, it is always insufficient to justify the abolishment of slavery and slave trade as being the result of an only single factor. Group-based hierarchy's pillars HE/AL, HE/AI, and the social context influence one another at the same moment making it difficult to reduce the reasons leading to the production of a new space or social context to only a single factor. What have made Africans or African Americans resist largely, in due course, have been several factors, all featured by the revival of hope.

The Stono Rebellion in 1739 was encouraged by one of the earliest attempts at inserting hierarchy-attenuating social hierarchy. The Spanish at that time worked as a temporal institution to support blacks' attenuation of legitimizing myths against the British. The temporality was not the only reason that prevented African Americans from changing the American social and political arenas for blacks were still believing in the inferior complex. It was their participation in the American Revolution (1765-1791) that made them strive for an identity because they fought as Americans and not as others' property. The Declaration of Independence (1776), on the other hand, caused them some kind of disillusionment concerning the inferior complex.

The most challenging and promising hierarchy-attenuating legitimizing myth at that time was the Ordinance of 1787 which initiated the prohibition of slave trade. The ordinance led to the establishment of an economic institution in the north that did not rely

on the agrarian system. In that case, southern slaves were freeing themselves by escaping to the north which obliged southern white masters to foster their legitimizing myths by issuing the fugitive slave laws of 1793 and 1850. The real change for slaves all over America at that time was the election of the president Abraham Lincoln. The president's social dominion orientation encouraged southern slaves to join the Union in the north to fight for their people and community. That was a turning point concerning the African American collective trauma.

Collective trauma, as it has already been indicated, is the manifestation of force exercise that weakens the social fabric and empties the meaning of a shared social background. Before the Civil War, there was no representation of the African American community at the system-wide level. The early remarkable attempts at rebellion were not institutionalized by blacks just like the struggle between southern and northern states over slaves' freedom. It was a division and a disagreement among whites at the system-wide level, and blacks' escape to the north was for a fight of recognition. It was an important step because the end of the Civil War provided African Americans enough freedom to create their own hierarchy-attenuating social institutions. Unfortunately, collective trauma persisted because of problems related to memory and economic inequality.

Memory problems persistence entails persistence of cultural trauma at the intergroup and personal level. Whites' hierarchy-enhancing legitimizing myths were still valid and were still encouraging economic inequality. Blacks had to deal first with the political and social architecture that collective trauma was causing by establishing contesting hierarchy-attenuating institutions. For example, the Niagara Movement and the NAACP were a reaction against the Black Codes and the Jim Crow Laws.

At the intergroup level, African Americans needed to introduce their culture as a way of defending it against hierarchy-enhancing ideologies. Memory problems or cultural trauma affected social relationships between blacks and whites. African Americans needed first to claim their own identity to be able to make healthy relationships with whites. The Harlem Renaissance was a cultural movement that ascertained the Africanity of blacks. It is essential to examine collective trauma challenges against healing.

2.4.3 Collective Trauma and Collective Healing

There is n ambiguity surrounding the realization of collective healing, the most remarkable of which is, whether it evolved naturally by time, or there was an endeavour to achieve it. In other words, could collective healing be achieved through a conscious or an unconscious process? It goes without saying that trying to attain freedom and healing, as a conscious process, necessitates the use of power. African Americans used power to establish hierarchy-attenuating social institutions through political and social activism like the CRM. On the other hand, through celebrating and practising their culture, they were unconsciously devaluating hierarchy-enhancing ideologies and institutions. It should be pointed out that the healing of intergenerational trauma is an example of the natural process of collective healing. For example, the generations who witnessed the institution of slavery is not the same as the generation who fought to create hierarchy-attenuating social institutions. The later generations also differ in their turn from the generations who enjoyed some rights thanks to the CRM. Therefore, time is an important factor for collective healing.

Socially speaking, there are two levels of healing represented in the personal level which is reflected on the intergroup level. The frequency of asymmetrical group behaviour

weakens the hierarchy-attenuating ideologies. To examine the influence of collective trauma and healing on the former, the personal level is going to be inspected.

Cognitive dissonance is the reason behind the asymmetrical group behaviour. There are three scenarios related to cognitive dissonance that influence black individuals' attitudes towards their social group. First, blacks accepted their inferiority and refused to support hierarchy-attenuating ideologies. The second scenario is blacks' rejection of anything related to whites' ideologies, institutions or culture. The third scenario is about blacks who refused group-based hierarchy in the first place. In all cases dissonance persisted because it was not easy for African Americans to substitute their new perceived knowledge about themselves with what they were already familiar with.

The Declaration of Independence of 1776 emphasised the equality of all men and, therefore, their right of liberty (History.com Editors). On the contrary, Booker T. Washington introduced the accommodationist philosophy that embraced the idea of inferiority to reach a win-win compromise. Washington did indeed solve some problems related to collective trauma, or to the surface of society by securing a basic free education to all African Americans; however, cognitive dissonance concerning cultural trauma persisted.

The Black Power Movement (1960s-1970s) and civil disobedience (1963) were of a more radical nature. The nation of Islam dismissed whites' culture and related institutions emphasising the superiority of blacks over whites, and suggesting a return to Africa while Black Panthers asked for a land of their own. Martin Luther King refused group-based hierarchy in respect of race for he dreamed of a race free nation. Both movements represented a strife against collective trauma. They were two powerful hierarchy-

attenuating social organizations that challenged whites' supremacy, but despite their efforts, cultural trauma inconsistency did not reach consonance. There are several reasons, according to CDT, that created a stumbling block in the way of collective healing.

African Americans who were submissive to the myth of inferiority suffered from a dissonance caused by the existing cultural mores. The failure of the continuity of the accmmodationist philosophy is due to its failure to pave the way for consonance. The failure of consonance is possibly attributed to the psychological suffering that may have affected blacks in case they refused the idea, and it also might be due to the philosophy's irresponsiveness to reality.

It has been mentioned earlier that the fear of change to reach consonance occurs if, for example, the two dissonant elements cause a kind of suffering after change, or if reality is much influencing than the person's or the group's opinion. Thus, it seems that Booker T. Washington understood that his community would be prevented from their basic rights if they have challenged white institutions. In the same vein, it was difficult to easily change the reality of the cultural mores prevailing at that time. The Niagara Movement (1905), on the other hand, challenged the responsiveness of whites' ideology to reality by refusing the idea of inferiority resulting in the establishment of a powerful institution which was the NAACP.

Radical movements like the Nation of Islam, introduced by Elijah Muhammed, and Black Nationalism of the Black Power believed in a kind of reverse racism (Pitre, 19). The reverse racism is probably ascribed to African Americans' past experience of whites' treatment. It was demanding for them to change the predominant belief that not all whites were violent. Moreover, addressing the issue of Black Nationalism or power in favour of

their American nationality raised a persistent dissonance of two fondamental elements; blacks' Africanity and their Americanity.

The second scenario which represents an attempt at healing, and also leads to a kind of dissonance is black activists' refusal of group-based hierarchy in respect to race. What should be reminded of first is that Jim Sidanius and Felicia Pratto claim that group-based hierarchy in whatever society that is based on economic inequality is unavoidable (38). Blacks who received no or less education than whites for decades were offered a much-limited job opportunities which is also called the achievement gap. The latter derived them to be always the exploited group other than the exploiters. Thus, race and hierarchy were, and still are, interchangeable concepts.

Civil disobedience which called for an integrated American society by undermining a race-based hierarchy portrays a logical inconsistency. In the same way as the first scenario, the irresponsive-to-reality idea of an integrated American society causes psychological misery once it is realized. In the end, it is undeniable that the three scenarios integrate each other as a quest to reach consonance. They represented an evolutionary process towards collective healing because, according to circumstances, each attempt at healing was the right action to do. By the same token, cultural movements which developed in parallel with each scenario influenced and were affected by socio-political circumstances. While social movements help in analysing the process of healing collective trauma, cultural movements help in understanding cultural healing and its impact on collective healing.

2.4.4 Cultural Healing

In what follows, the reason behind blacks' endorsement of their African American identity in order to reach healing will be clarified. In addition, the way LCT proves that adopting either the black or white culture as a way of recovery instead of both would hinder the process of healing will be explained. To understand the problem and the proposed solution, Peter Marris suggested that the process of grieving should be considered.

The first process, which is about childhood attachments, seems to be missing for the first slaves offspring in America. The reason behind the later claim is that the new generations could not be provided a coherent meaning of the world relying on the African culture. One simple reason is the absence of that culture's symbols such as the land and institutions. Moreover, the black culture did not seem to provide a safe living due to its invalidity in America.

The process of grieving was interrupted because of meaning shortage. New generations, because of their inability to form a coherent meaning about their black culture and its role in providing safety, healing was paralysed since they neither could cope with the African culture, nor grieve over bereavement. When it comes to slaves who were shipped to America, their sudden and unpredicted loss of their culture which had been a centre of their life meaning, provoked and sustained trauma and lack of security for the subsequent generations.

Finally, white institutions did not support the process of recovery because they have instead supported and sustained trauma. However, later generations who fought for change and equity played the role of meaning re-constructors. Nevertheless, meaning

could not be build based on the African culture only due to, as it has been already mentioned, the absence of black culture concrete symbols in America. Therefore, the only solution which seemed to be appropriate at that time has been the hybridity of both the African and American cultures to reach healing.

Cultural trauma is the manifestation of cultural inconsistency resulting from collective trauma. Problems related to collective trauma, or the superficial level of society, has been defined earlier according to SDT. Understanding the way to cultural healing, however, requires also having an in-depth study of the reasons behind cultural inconsistency. One simple point of departure can be represented in the study of the evolution of the African American artistic identity.

The development of African Americans' consciousness towards artistic works implied their awareness of the position of "the Other". The two first stages of development were radical as they both imagined black fiction to be "the Other" or certainly not "the Other" during the Antebellum Era (1812-1861) and the Black Power Movement respectively. The natural embrace of "the Other", however, reduced its centrality of existence or non-existence. For African Americans, perceiving the struggle of "the Self" versus "the Other" represents a struggle of consistency according to CDT.

The CDT explains, as it has been indicated earlier, that believing in two antagonistic ideas simultaneously provokes a need for consistency by, for example, reducing the importance of one of the dissonant ideas, and of course not by nullifying any. This part of the chapter elaborates on the idea that blacks strive for a consistent identity which is reflected on how they imagined/imagine themselves in works of art. CDT helps in

understanding the psychology of black fiction, and why embracing "the Other" resolves the conflict of inconsistency.

By the end of the chapter, it will be clearer that blacks needed to rationalize what it means to be black and at the same time living in an American society. The investigation ponders on the fact that blacks do not need to adopt an artistic white identity and certainly not an African one. They just need to accept their African Americanity as a whole coherent identity by reducing the importance of white rules in favour of reconstructing them.

2.4.5 Reconciling with Oneself

Collective Trauma plays a substantial role in shaping black art and literature. It was the catalyst behind the different stages of consciousness that Negro, black and African American art and literature witnessed and still are witnessing. As Kenneth W. Warren does believe, each of the aforementioned terminologies did not randomly emerge. They represent a specific psychology and a mind-set that scholars and writers adopted while documenting or artistically imagining their experiences (3-4).

Therefore, collective trauma is central to the authenticity that black artists seek. It is argued to whether or not whites are capable to write and tackle blacks' experiences. What collective trauma clarifies is that whites can only write about traumatic experiences while blacks write them. It is that state of "aboutness" and "isness" that determines the authenticity of black literature. W. E. B. Du Bois believes that only the Negro artist is capable of communicating their own truth (Rena 15-16). On the other hand, not all black writers who experienced/ still are experiencing collective or intergenerational trauma could be considered as authentic writers.

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The identity of the black art and literature is necessarily characterized by collective trauma; however, there are critics that question black artists' authenticity. Du Bois (Rena 63) tackles part of the problem when he remarks, during his time, that Negro artists refrain themselves from portraying their reality as it was in an innate, natural way. Negro artists used to choose to remain cautious when it comes to portraying immoral behaviours by members of the Negro society. Du Bois attributes the reason behind abstentions as such to their fear of whites' racial interpretations. The latter reason and the meaning of an authentic black art can be understood through the analysis of the three concepts: Negro, black and African American consciousness.

The centrality or the position of "the Other" used to determine how black art should look like. Blacks used to conceive or imagine their art in the beginnings, especially works of fiction, to be exclusively "the Other" as a result of assimilation. For Melville Herskovits, some black writers of fiction, for example, have given more importance to writing itself other than what to write. It followed then that their writings looked like whites' patterns of writing because of their ignorance of their reality while focusing on solely the act of imagination (Warren 63).

The centrality of "the Other" as a positive motive is not just represented in the black art that tries to assimilate whites, but also in the black art that is for "the Other". The Niagara Movement, as a reaction to Booker T. Washington, tried to prove to whites that blacks were not an inferior race through introducing what they called a decent black art. For that, as it has been indicated earlier, Du Bois opposed jazz music because he thought that it was an obscene art. The members of the Niagara Movement also preferred to be

addressed as Negroes as well as their community other than being called Africans or blacks.

The later ways of expression by blacks were not consonant with their reality. First, early black art, especially works of fiction, seemed not to reflect the status quo of African Americans at that time. In the same vein, refusing to be called blacks and replacing it by a term that means black, but not in the English language shows that blacks, at that time, were avoiding situations where dissonance may occur. Consequently, dissonance or cultural trauma persisted because of the failure of reaching consonance.

The Harlem Renaissance, on the other hand, provided a good example of how cultural healing might look like even if it was lacking in shape. SDT proves that hierarchy-enhancing institutions' objective is to fulfil economic agendas. It has been already indicated that during the 1920s to the 1930s Americans enjoyed high standards of living which also influenced the African American society. Accordingly, when the wide system freed blacks from the pressure that economy imposes, they were given space to express themselves freely as a first step towards healing.

At that time, the centrality of "the Other" did not really matter for them. It was the age of experimentation and discovery before finding their own identity. Longston Hughes in *The Negro Artists and the Racial Mountain* (1926) explains how Negroes should overcome the mountain of assimilation before coming in terms with their authentic identity. He adds:

We younger Negro artists who create now intend to express our individual dark-skinned selves without fear or shame. If white people are pleased we are glad. If

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they are not, it doesn't matter. We know we are beautiful. And ugly too. The tom-tom cries and the tom-tom laughs. If colored people are pleased we are glad. If they are not their displeasure doesn't matter either. We will build our temples for tomorrow, strong as we know how, and we will stand on top of the mountain, free within ourselves. (qtd. In Creary 283)

Probably the only aspect of the Harlem renaissance that may have raised dissonance was the intention of some blacks to introduce themselves as a distinct community from the American society in addition to their persistence to use the term Negro. On the contrary, Hughes, for example, tries to convey that Americanity is not exclusive to white people (Thurston 103). Accordingly, it is undeniable that their road to consonance and healing would have been shorter if it was not interrupted by an economic crisis in the late 1930s proving once again the legitimacy of SDT.

The Great Depression of 1929 which significantly raised the rate of unemployment was the main reason behind the Harlem Riots of 1935. The collaboration between whites and blacks to produce a Negro art started to fade out. It was replaced by racial conflicts due to economic reasons. The reaction of African Americans at that time was radical. Many black intellectuals concluded that African Americans' lives were always at stake, so that when a crisis occurred, they were the scapegoat of the wide system and related economic institutions. Alain Locke in his essay *Harlem: Dark weather-vane* (1936) assumed that the Harlem Riots of 1935 were a test that assured the situation of African Americans as an oppressed group (qtd in Mendes 89). It was like blacks were predominantly oppressed until the intervention of an economic factor which as soon as it disappeared, blacks returned to their predominant state.

Artistic works, at that time, reflected the political and social situation of African Americans. Blacks adopted a relatively radical approach by trying to undermine other than reduce whites' hierarchy-enhancing ideologies and institutions. Therefore, they created an art which was necessarily not "the Other". The term black emerged and the Black Power Movement produced an art that encouraged celebrating the African heritage and the black skin as a superior race than whites, especially during the Nation of Islam's years of activity (1930s).

The Black Powerists' call for a land of their own conveys that they were avoiding situations where dissonance may occur. Moreover, their total refusal of their American identity and their belonging to America caused dissonance between two equally important elements of identity which were their "African" "Americanity".

The next step towards cultural healing was realized by neither assimilating nor rejecting whites, but by embracing the "Other". As it has been stressed earlier, the struggle of blacks to have a coherent identity is the result of a dissonance between two equally important elements. Blacks tried two ways to avoid dissonance which did not lead to healing according to CDT. Blacks ignored their own culture to assimilate whites, then they nullified their Americanity and tried to go back to their origins and live starting over again as if nothing happened. The two scenarios were not responsive to their reality; as a result, there occurred a failure to reach consonance.

It is worth pointing out that the term black was not changed by African Americans, yet both terms are used interchangeably. However, the focus of the present study is on the significance of the use of the term African Americans recently to reach cultural healing. One way of reaching consonance is by reconciling the two dissonant elements by adding a

third element. Morrison's dialect of house/home as well as her use of Magical Realism simplifies blacks' process of healing through embracing the "the Other".

2.5 Magical Realism

The present study deals with Magical Realism from a socio-psychological perspective. Therefore, any attempts to consider psychoanalytical explanations of the term serve in deepening the understanding of the social psychological approach to Magical Realism. Under this title, a brief history and definition of the term is going to be introduced.

The emergence of Magical Realism as an artistic style probably dates back to the beginnings of the twentieth century. Sigmund Freud's and Carl Jung's theories of psychoanalysis inspired surrealist painters to paint about the invisible, unconscious aspects of objects. Surrealist painters have given more importance to the interpretation of a certain object other than the object itself just like Freud's *the Interpretation of Dreams* (1913). Magical realist painters, however, preferred to portray the object as well as its hidden aspects. They tried to combine the real through the object itself and the magical through its marvellous interpretations. The most influential magical realist painter was Franz Roh (Bowers 7).

Magical Realism in Latin America was adapted in fiction other than painting in the mid-twentieth century. Gabriel García Marquez popularized the term through his novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude* published in 1967. Magical Realism as a literary genre was also adapted in India like the writings of Salman Rushdie and the United States like the

works of Toni Morrison. The Latin American Magical Realism enjoyed an international recognition (Bowers 32-33).

There was, and probably still is an ongoing debate between critics about the characteristics of Magical Realism and its use. The term appeared to be more fluid and flexible within different contexts. The establishment of an international manifesto of the term remained unattainable leading to another paradox suggested by the term itself. That is, while Magical Realism is supposed to represent different versions of reality including its marvellous meanings, the term itself appeared to have different versions according to different social and political circumstances.

The Cuban critic and novelist, Alejo Carpentier, refuses to be looked at his artistic works of Magical Realism from a European perspective. Lois Parkinson Zamora and Wendy Faris put in simple terms what Carpentier tries to communicate. They note that "improbable juxtaposition and marvellous mixture exist by virtue of Latin America's varied history, geography, demography, and politics—not by manifesto" (75). Otherwise stated, the European Magical Realism was a reaction to surrealism. It was more like a decision to deal with reality from a systematically new perspective. However, Magical Realism in the Americas should be understood as a discovery not as a manifesto for the marvellous real has already been existing naturally due to the nature of mixed cultures there.

In an attempt for Jean Weisgerber (1982) and Roberto González Echevarría (1974) to denominate the two modes of Magical Realism, they roughly follow the same method. They both consider the systematic or the cultural reconstruction of reality through Magical Realism (Penier 5). For that, Weisgerber calls the European mode of Magical Realism as

scholarly while Echevarría calls it epistemological. Accordingly, the first type deals with individuals and how they are able to combine different styles to express the reality they experience. On the other hand, Weisgerber considers the mythic or folkloric mode of Magical Realism to be exclusive to the Americas. Echevarría makes the same remark as he assumes that the ontological type of Magical Realism addresses what 'is' other than what 'is known' (Penier 5).

2.6 Making Sense of Magical Realism through Social Psychology

The study focuses on the analysis of literary Magical Realism within post-colonial spaces. The aim is to examine the process of healing in reference to Magical Realism from a social psychological perspective. There would be an integrated viewpoint of post-colonial trauma and healing in magical realist works of art at the end of the chapter by synthesizing the results of the tackled social psychological theories.

At the individual level, magical realist artists as Gabriel Garcia Marquez are aware of the dissonance that cultural clashes may cause. In other words, within post-colonial spaces, colonial subjects are exposed to equally two important cultures; the one that they already had and the culture of the colonized. The inability of integrating both cultures causes dissonance as to which culture should be best adopted. Therefore, the primary task of such individuals is to reorganize social relationships in a comprehensive and coherent way to prepare for healing. this study considers healing as a culturally constructed state of mind.

In the case of African Americans, those artists as Toni Morrison try to reconcile two dissonant, and equally important, elements which are the Africanity and the

Americanity of blacks in America. Magical Realism was the added third element for reconciliation. Magical Realism in this case reflects the systematic pairing of a seemingly two contradicted elements. The importance of individual awareness of dissonance and the strife for consistency can be traced in different social and cultural aspects.

It is always important in Magical Realism works to include white ideologies and institutions, not for the sake of criticism, but as a reality that cannot be ignored. For example, it is impossible to avoid talking about the institution of slavery, or at least its outcomes when it comes to collective trauma. This acknowledgement is juxtaposed with opposing forces as hierarchy attenuating ideologies and institutions. For example, the use of myth as an African element challenges hierarchy-enhancing ideologies. Since in Western societies, in particular, there is no possibility of a hierarchy free society, the aim is to move any social struggle from a racial and economic estimation to a purely economic competition through raising blacks and whites' consciousness. Therefore, magical realist works shed light on job opportunities, achievement gap, and monopolization as in Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon* which will be discussed in the next chapter. Magical Realism suggests that race exists, and its absenting or ignorance does not solve the problem in contrast to facing it.

Considering psychological distance and CLT, human beings try to reach remote objects in the past or the future for different reasons. To attain an object, there are two levels of interpretations, a high and a low construal level. Due to the nature of human beings, low-level construal events that lead to an object in the past or the future tend to be undermined in favour of the object itself (Trope and Liberman 118-121). As a result, Magical Realism, as a narrative mode, helps in reaching objects in the past and the future

through a coherent context that makes use of past and present circumstances and their effects. To further simplify the function of Magical Realism in this regard, it is legitimate to inspect first the impact of grief and loss on remembrance and healing.

According to Marris theory of grief and loss, grieving does not take place if there is not a complete and coherent meaning of what is lost (18). It has been also indicated that new generations who were seeking equity served and still serve as meaning re-constructors. In this respect, the lost meaning of a substantial element in the past could be arrived at through constructing coherent narratives.

It is needless to say, based on the human nature, that African Americans imagined healing in the future. Considering CLT, imagining a remote object in the future, while disregarding the present and the available tools that lead to that object, makes it unreachable in reality. Therefore, it is important for writers to make use of the existing social realities to reach the lost object in the past and the wished one in the future.

2.7 Conclusion

Magical Realism as a narrative technique is a tool which systematically articulate the how that leads to a certain consequence in the past. The how represents the raw materials for re-construction that are abstracted from African Americans' reality as a hybrid identity. Likewise, the conscious use of current materials helps them to reach healing in the future rather than just imagining it. The following chapter makes sense of Magical Realism in Morrison's novel *Song of Solomon* using social psychological theories to trace its role in healing African Americans' collective trauma.

Chapter 3

Group Remembrance and Self-Discovery

3.1 Introduction

Song of Solomon (1977) is Toni Morrison's third novel following *The Bluest Eye* (1970) and *Sula* (1973). The novel was the winner of the National Books Critics Circle Award (1978) which gave her a national recognition for the first time. The novel also won the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters Award (1978). The novel was a kind of challenge for Toni Morrison since she has chosen her central character, for the first time, to be a black man other than a black woman. In what follows, Morrison's *Song of Solomon* is going to be described and analysed using the theoretical and historical backgrounds provided in the previous chapters. For that, this section will first describe the novel's setting and its significance in reference to the African American history. It will, then, describe collective trauma in the novel using SDT before making sense of it using the theory of loss and grief. Finally, CDT will explain the significance of using a culturally-based tool, Magical Realism, to heal collective trauma.

Toni Morrison had personal motives that inspired her to write the novel and to adopt a male voice as the protagonist of the story. Morrison, in fact, was influenced by her father's death; however, she has found refuge in writing. She expresses:

> For the first time I was writing a book in which the central stage was occupied by men, and that had something to do with my loss, or my perception of loss, of a man (my father) and the world that disappeared with him…it was about my memories and the need to invent. I had to do something. I was in such a rage because my father was dead. (Morrison, *The Source*, 381)

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The writing of the book, for Morrison, has been a process of grieving for her father's death; nevertheless, the novel was by no means biographical. It does not narrate the story of her father's life. She just tried to be in the shoes of a male black character to address, differently, the African American society.

The socio-political sphere, during and before which the novel was published, was promising concerning African American's identity coherence. As it has been mentioned in the first chapter, during the seventies, three life changing events happened for African Americans. First, the ratification of the fifteenth amendment (1970) gave the right for black males to vote. In addition, when the Vietnam War (1955-1975) was over, African Americans started to think about how American they were since they fought in the war as Americans. And most importantly, it was the time of the CRM (1955-70s). The novel, in fact, focuses on the political initiative that would pave the way for identity coherence. It was worth noting at this point that the setting of the novel differs from the time the novel was written and published in. The setting of the novel along with its relationship to collective trauma is going to be discussed later.

In Morrison's words, the novel's prevalence is about memory, myth and folklore because in the myth lies facts (Dunn and Morrison). Thus, the aim of the woman author is to divulge some facts about African Americans which are rooted deep down in their black culture. It goes without saying that what obscured those facts has been whites' practice of power such as the inferior complex which resulted in collective trauma. Brenkman believes that "Toni Morrison wrote her 1977 novel *Song of Solomon* on the cusp of historic uncertainties" (57). Historic uncertainties are an indication of cultural fragmentation.

Therefore, the aim of remembrance in the novel is to realize individual and collective identity coherence which have been fragmented because of forgetfulness and uncertainty.

The need of the African American community to overcome collective trauma is apparent when Toni Morrison writes in the forward of the novel that "mercy [is] the unspoken wish of the novel's population" (*Song of Solomon*, 15). The need for collective mercy stems from the fact that the existing African American culture and politics are not effective enough to overcome collective trauma. From a social psychological perspective, the unspoken wish could be detected in the way social and political relationships are organized in the novel. In fact, the novel is highly political and social since it deals with power, its outcomes, and healing through culture and myth.

As it has already been indicated in the second chapter, the way for African Americans to integrate their identity fragmentation could be possible just by accepting the duality of their identity by reconciling their black culture with the new knowledge that they have acquired as a result of power practice. For that, Morrison takes Magical Realism for granted as an important tool to heal collective trauma because of its ability to equally reflect reality and myth.

3.2 The Plot Structure and Milkman's Cognitive Dissonance

The story of *Song of Solomon* does mainly centre around the Macon Dead family. The parents Macon II and Ruth Foster Dead have two daughters, First Corinthians and Magdalene, and a younger son, Macon III. Macon III, the protagonist, is better known as Milkman in the community he lives in because Ruth nursed him more than it should be. Milkman lives in a family that lacks emotional support. He is distanced from his sisters.

His parents always quarrel, and he seems as if he does not ever care about those stressful relationships.

The only person that Milkman seems to have a steady relationship with, in the beginning of the story, is his childhood friend Guitar who is older than him. When the story progresses, it happens that Milkman develops a good and supportive relationship with his aunt Pilate in contrast to the toxic love relationship he engages in with her daughter Hagar. Pilate, Macon Dead II's sister, is represented as a magic, spiritual character since she does not have a navel. She is also known as someone who values human relationships unlike her brother Macon II who is materialistic and acts like a white man.

The position and attitude of Milkman inside his community in reference to collective trauma visualizes the motion of the novel from the beginning, or the novel's problematic, to the end, the story's denouement. Stated differently, looking at the novel's development from the perspective of Milkman, the protagonist, helps in comprehending the motives behind his journey from the unknown to the known. Before that, it is significant to make sense of the novel's setting.

The novel opens in 1931 and closes in 1963. The 1930s marked the emergence of the black ego and experimenting with oneself through their artistic practice during the Harlem Renaissance. Nevertheless, Morrison has chosen not to point out to that important event in her novel directly. She has, rather, chosen to begin her novel from a place of uncertainties and freedom since Michigan: Ohio represents "the possibility of a good life, the possibility of freedom, even though there were some terrible obstacles. Ohio also offers an escape from stereotyped black settings. It is neither plantation nor ghetto" (Taylor-

Guthrie and Morrison 158). In other words, Morrison has chosen to 'geographize' the main theme of the Harlem Renaissance which is freedom and uncertainty. It has been already clarified that the Harlem Renaissance was a movement that lacked coherence because of blacks' artistic diversity. For that, it is probably more appropriate for Morrison not to stereotype the movement in her novel by identifying it with the space of the novel. She has chosen not to give a definition for the movement by portraying it through a specific frame.

The uncertainties and freedom, as a matter of fact, gave meaning to the significance of laws, institutions, organization, and group coherence to secure freedom. That period, as the novel progresses, refers to the CRM (1954-1968) when the blacks started to be more active politically to save their interests. When the novel closes in 1963, the protagonist Milkman reaches the needed spiritually that heals his fragmented past as well as his fragmented self.

In 1963, Luther King delivered his speech *I have a dream* in which he expressed his wish to end race as a solution to integrate the black community into the white American society. Nevertheless, Morrison, in the novel *Song of Solomon*, as it will be clarified later, shows that the true dream that should be realized is accepting history and unmattering race other than dreaming of unrealistic utopic society. Moreover, in 1963 the president who was defending civil rights, John Kennedy, was assassinated. Despite his assassination, however, CRM did not stop, and Milkman could fly. Therefore, for Morrison success does not depend on individuals, yet on the communal spirit.

In order to understand the plot development of the novel *Song of Solomon*, it is important to shed light on the pillars that generate the story's sequence of events. The organization of the novel helps in understanding the overall structure of the story in respect

to its aim. It is agreed upon the fact that Morrison, as an African American artist, writes to encourage healing within her community. However, her approach to healing varies according to the problematic under question.

In *Song of Solomon*, for example, Morrison is interested in individual healing and how it can assist in healing collective trauma. In this regard, the plot's problematic lies in the mind of the traumatized population of the novel and how they could cope with their surroundings accordingly. For that, *Song of Solomon* is considered as a Bildungsroman novel in which the protagonist, Milkman, tries to find his true identity by searching for his origins. Plot development, therefore, is fuelled by the protagonists' cognitive dissonance. It can, then, be predicted that consonance represents the plot's denouement. It is also true that there are other characters who also would witness a kind of spiritual awakening such as Milkman's father, Macon II, at the end of the novel when he recalls some childhood memories.

Morrison introduces the problem right at the beginning of the novel through the character Robert Smith who intends to fly off Mercy hospital while choosing a connotative location. The woman writer is careful to geographize and to objectify black's cognitive struggle. To be specific, it has already been stated that some African American activists think that the way to live an adequate life can be only through choosing one culture over the other, either white or black, such as W. E. B. Du Bois or Malcolm X. Historically speaking, after the abolishment of slave trade, the north represented freedom for blacks while the south was still under slavery. The latter, instead, represented lost histories and oppression whereas the former suggested a new beginning and the possibility to practice

whites' lifestyle, or at least freedom. Nevertheless, blacks were still unsatisfied since they were facing problems related to their identity coherence.

Robert Smith, in fact, personifies the cognitive dissonance of the black ego. He is located in the north while he feels detached from it, and he flies towards the south the place that his grandfathers escaped from. Morrison stresses in the Forward that "the sentence 'North Carolina'", referring to newspapers' report about Mr Smith's suicide, "and closes with 'Lake Superior'–geographical locations that suggest a journey from north to south" (*Song of Solomon* 14). Therefore, Robert Smith who represents the black ego could not reconcile the two dissonant ideas; meaning north and south and their associated themes, yet his death or what might be a flight were still significant since he suggested a way of reconciliation.

Morrison continues to deal with blacks' immigration from north to south that it is "a direction common for black immigration and in the literature about it, but which is reversed here since the protagonist has to go south to mature" (*Song of Solomon* 14). As aforementioned, it is once again assured that the position of Milkman in the novel is important in respect to collective trauma. Another example could be the significance of the time during which his story was chosen to be placed which is the time that enabled Morrison to cover four different generations in her novel.

The importance of unveiling the plot structure lies not in the isolated elements that build the story, but in the meaning abstracted from the way those elements are organized and perceived by the protagonist. For example, in the story there is a representation of the behaviour of each of the four generations toward the black culture according to certain circumstances. Those different attitudes, because they remained unresolved, are

internalized by the protagonist in a form of intergenerational trauma while causing him cognitive dissonance.

If we are to take the behaviour and attitude of each generation as an idea that causes dissonance, those ideas fluctuate between experimenting with escape or confrontation. Put simply, the population that is looking for mercy do either escape personal and collective trauma or confront it. Morrison in the foreword contends that there are terms which are central in the novel such as "flight as escape or confrontation" (*Song of Solomon* 15). The existence and persistence of two ideas, that is to say what is escaped or repressed and the needed authenticity for African Americans, without reconciling them, however, hinders collective healing.

Song of Solomon covers four black generations. The first generation is represented by Solomon who flew away to Africa to "escape" slavery. Solomon symbolizes spiritual as well as physical escape. Solomon's son, unlike his father, cherished and embraced the land; however, he also embraced the new ascribed name to him as Macon Dead because according to his wife "...it was new and would wipe out the past. Wipe it all out" (Morrison, *Song of Solomon* 100). Macon Dead II tries to compensate his spiritual void by acting like a white man who is always indulged in materialistic priorities. Macon Dead II embodies physical attachment and spiritual escape. Milkman, Macon Dead III, experimented both attitudes confrontation and escape throughout the story so that to reach consonance at the end.

In fact, escape represents an attempt to avoid situations where dissonance may occur while confrontation offers the opportunity to cognize dissonance and the potential to find possible solutions to the problem. In the novel, there are other characters who either

support escape or confrontation. For example, the role of women is too much significant in the novel. Among the central characters who influence the protagonist are his aunt Pilate, her daughter Rebecca, and her granddaughter Hagar. On the other hand, the central male character for Milkman is his friend Guitar as well as his father Macon II. The role of each character in respect to collective trauma and collective healing is going to be further elaborated on in the subsequent sections.

3.3 Collective Trauma in *Song of Solomon*

At the surface level, it has been clarified in the first chapter that the African American community, politically speaking, had not been existent until the abolishment of slavery. In other words, there had been a social reality which has not been recognized politically. According to SDT, within each modern society there are two kinds of ideologies and institutions, i.e. those that enhance and those that attenuate social hierarchy (Sidanius and Pratto 419). Prior to that, the feudalism system allowed the existence of an only one ideology at the political level attributed to the powerful. Therefore, for African Americans, they had been prevented from establishing institutions to serve their ideologies before and right after the abolishment of slavery and slave trade. The status of African Americans is highly connoted and denoted in the novel *Song of Solomon*.

The status of African Americans is going to be analysed according to the degree of oppression practiced on the African American community. Jim Sidanius and Felicia Pratto claim that it is true that SDT can describe any modern society; nevertheless, the degree of oppression differs from one society to another (420). Since the more a group is oppressed, the more collective trauma is fostered, it is significant to trace the extent to which African

Americans are politically active in *Song of Solomon*. Their political activity is going to be assessed along the three levels: ideology, institutions and the personal level.

3.3.1 Orality vs. Written Tradition

The novel reflects a space within which a main struggle between orality and literacy takes place. Orality represents what Morrison refers to as myth and folklore (Dunn and Morrison) while literacy reflects the significance of literacy as a white means to communicate orality. The main struggle generates more concrete and individual struggles throughout the storyline. Collective trauma can be traced within those layers of conflict where social relationships are violated to serve some ideologies and to prove and reflect a certain reality.

It is known, as it has already been mentioned, Morrison's inspiration to write *Song of Solomon* was her father's death (Morrison, *The Source* 382). Considering Morrison's childhood memories about her father, she narrates an important event about her family that happened when she was two years of age. She was told about a white man who burned their house because her father could not afford to pay the house's rent and refused to get out of the house. What is worth concentrating on is how the event turned out to be a story told and retold to the children but in a humorous way (Kramer 10). Morrison instead of commemorating her father using a biographical novel, she just makes use of the themes of her childhood memories with him, such as humour.

In the same vein, what is interesting in *Song of Solomon* is how the tragedy of the protagonist's grandfather is sang in a fun way by children in streets reflecting on the main theme of the novel. In the novel, it is shown, just like Morrison's own life, how trauma and

intergenerational trauma is coped with by African Americans, and how negativity is reproduced and devalued using storytelling to sound positive. Therefore, *Song of Solomon* is about moving from collective trauma to healing using language appropriation as well as orality.

Middleton believes that Morrison, in the novel, "privileges oral memory and the oral culture of the African-American community and dramatizes the cultural conflicts between oral and literate traditions" (64). While orality seems more as a cultural healer, yet it can be considered as what fuels political conflicts due to the nature of the practised power within the American society. It can be deduced that whites' strife is institutionalized because of the literate traditions. Therefore, Morrison addresses the inability of the politically fresh African American community to defend their hierarchy-attenuating ideologies due to the lack of instruments.

The importance of literacy in preventing or reducing collective trauma and in having healthy political relationships is demonstrated through the careless attitude of Milkman's grandfather towards preserving his interests. When Macon Dead I talks about the land or how should African Americans live, his entire attention is focused on taking care of the land, in its concrete manifestation, while ignoring the required political procedures to preserve and protect it. He believes that:

> Never mind you can't tell one letter from another, never mind you born a slave, never mind you lose your name, never mind your daddy dead, never mind nothing… We live here. On this planet, in this nation, in this county right here. Nowhere else! We got a home in this rock, don't you see! Nobody starving in my home; nobody crying in my home, and if I got a home you got one too!… But they

shot the top of his head off and ate his fine Georgia peaches. (Morrison, *Song of Solomon* 83-84)

Morrison demonstrates that if the past is not documented, it can easily be stolen, and therefore, the present and next generation's political rights in the present can be lost because of the undocumented. Accordingly, she places the source of all problems in Macon I's first advice when he belittles literacy.

According to SDT, imposing hierarchy-attenuating ideologies and institution were from the tools that changed the status of African Americans as slaves, or as an inferior race, for example, the activities of the Niagara Movement (1905) and the CRM (1950s-1960s). So, it might be less important to be born as a slave, yet it is essential to admit and recognize what moved African Americans from slavery to freedom. One simple argument that proves the aforementioned claim is the ability of collective pride to influence collective and one's identity. For that, Macon Dead I owes his freedom to the activity of those institutions. In addition, those movements fought for equality and the preservation of African Americans' political interests.

Concerning Macon I's disregard of names and naming, hierarchy-attenuating ideologies cannot be powerful without the preservation of names or the recreation of adequate ones. Names are a reflection of culture and one's identity. If names do not have a meaningful past, or if they are a replica of the mainstream ideologies, hierarchy-attenuating institutions would either be useless, or they would further support hierarchy-enhancing ideologies just like the Dead family.

Moreover, it is fundamental to exactly address the idea that is causing dissonance. If the idea is not named properly, the problem cannot be brought into the conscious mind, and therefore, it cannot be resolved. On the other hand, Moraru claims that "Morrison's own genealogy sets out to uncover the politics belying the act of naming, the passions, struggles, and conflicts at stake in the invention of names" (198). That is why the novel opens with uncertainties and seemingly endless possibilities. It is because there are African American issues which are not properly defined. However, when the protagonist starts to figure out his past through naming, he could, thereafter, locate himself within a rigid space that he creates.

Finally, just like naming, Macon Dead I does not give importance to his fathers' death. Actually, to depreciate fathers' death leads to discarding keeping their memory alive or commemorating them. Nevertheless, the past cannot be written without a memory. Moreover, traditionally speaking, the father is the one who is responsible for securing a good legacy for his children. However, if he dies without fulfilling this social necessity, his children would suffer to have an adequate way of life.

Instead, Macon I's focus is entirely ontological. He stresses only on the here-and-now and the well-being of his family assuming that it would be always the case for them based on their situation in the present. He thinks that it is guaranteed that his children would continue to have home just because he does. However, the father's death and his name mattered because he was killed and his children were vagabonded and the killers wanted to kill the entire family including his children who were bearing his name. Their father being an ex-slave and his literacy also made a difference because he was targeted to be killed and he could not protect his land for his children.

Another example about the importance of literacy is apparent in the juxtaposition of the characters Pilate and Mrs. Michael-Mary Graham, the State Poet Laureate. In Pilate's daughter and granddaughter dramatic and rhythmic scene, they were all singing while Pilate was taking the lead and the others contributed to construct the lyrics in a spontaneous and authentic way. On the other hand, Mrs. Graham obliges herself to write her poems at a very specific and short time. She writes "Every morning between ten and noon, and every afternoon between three and four-fifteen" (Morrison, *Song of Solomon*, 315). She counts more on planning and rationality rather than feelings. That is, she is not spontaneous because she obliges herself to be inspired between three and four-fifteen which reflects the lack of authenticity of the art she provides. Despite the difference between the two different types of art that is provided by both women, Mrs. Graham is politically recognized unlike Pilate. The authenticity and spontaneity of Pilate or any other African American artist are useless without documentation and a supporting institution. A simple example about the later claim is when Tupac Shakur (1971-1995) was supported by white agencies, his art became international.

Morrison once again insists on the difference between what is genuine and what is challenging when she compares wilderness to civilization. She claims that "Here one lived knowing that at any time, anybody might do anything. Not wilderness where there was system, or the logic of lions, trees, toads, and birds, but wild wilderness where there was none" (*Song of Solomon* 235). She refers to the authenticity of nature and the mannerism of the city where there is a challenge of either over controlling or having no control at all over space.

Besides, the authenticity of nature stems from biology and the body while the mannerism of the city stems from language and the mind. Because of that, it is hard to change the logic of the body in nature. However, it is pretty much easy to change an idea, a belief or a myth in the city. For that, it is unpredictable why and how might anybody do anything.

For example, when Guitar talks about the way whites oppressed blacks, he questions Milkman, "Did they prove anything scientifically about us before they killed us? No. They killed us first and then tried to get some scientific proof about why we should die" (Morrison, *Song of Solomon* 64). He thinks that they are unnatural because they are challenging nature, its logic, and science. He assumes that they have first decided to kill blacks as an idea, and then they tried to support their ideologies with hierarchy-enhancing myths and institutions such as the inferiority complex and the institution of slavery. Surprisingly, in the city, unlike nature, the mind is able to prioritize myth over the body and nature.

All in all, in nature it is hard to break group relationships, and it is not important to mind whether they are kept or not because they are just the way they are. In the city, however, the mind, or language may abuse physical relationships causing individual or collective trauma which is the case of Africans who were taken from their community in Africa and brought to the New World where they were abused and culturally fragmented through language, literacy, and institutions.

Morrison communicated the development of the black struggle along their way to literacy across four generations. During slavery, the African American community was not recognized as a political entity. Therefore, even if there was the idea of hierarchy-

attenuating ideologies, there was no possibility of establishing assisting institutions. Individual acts of resistance remained inefficient. For that, physical escape seemed as the only solution for that generation. Solomon, the father of Macon Dead I, represented that kind of escape through his experience of flight.

After the abolishment of slavery, blacks had a better chance to establish institutions because freedom was not enough to enjoy the rights of an American citizen. However, Macon Dead I, as it has been already indicated, was negligent concerning the power of ideologies and literacy in protecting one's interests. The behaviour of Macon I served hierarchy-fostering ideologies.

3.3.2 The Barbershop and Institutionalized Political Organization

During the third and fourth generations, the struggle to obtain a recognized hierarchy-attenuating ideologies and institutions was not yet mature and organized. John Brenkman assumes that:

> The political discussions that enliven Tommy's Barbershop do not yet give rise to organized political activity; there is only the Seven Days, a secret organization of seven men who plot random revenge killings of whites to answer for unpunished acts of racial violence against blacks. (57)

The population in *Song of Solomon* is still not able to organize itself at the system-wide level, and even at the societal level emphasising the impact of collective trauma to build social and political relationships. As concerning denotation, sometimes the status of African Americans is directly referred to in the novel without the need of symbolism or other kinds of agency. For example, the dominant power in a capitalist society, Sidanius

and Pratto infer, validates the use of oppression to practice its power and to save its interests (*Social Dominance* 25). That is indicated in the novel. For example, when Guitar asks Milkman:

> Do we have a court? Is there one courthouse in one city in the country where a jury would convict them? There are places right now where a Negro still can't testify against a white man. Where the judge, the jury, the court, are legally bound to ignore anything a Negro has to say. What that means is that a black man is a victim of a crime only when a white man says he is. (Morrison, *Song of Solomon* 268)

The political exclusion that Guitar is concerned with and the denial of the right to speak and defend oneself foster collective trauma as there is no way to build healthy relationships that guarantee a decent life for African Americans.

At the societal level, Sidanius and Pratto insist that the group behaviour influences the behaviour of individuals according to their social context (*Social Dominance* 227-228). In other words, members in subordinate groups work as agents to dominant groups whose members behave in ways that fit their social context. In *Song of Solomon*, "Morrison illustrates that shame and pride are at once social emotions, which act as shaping forces in the construction of social and group identity, and intrapsychic phenomena" (Bouson 77). Shame and false pride enforce group asymmetry since they contribute to shape social and group identity. Simply stated, social bad traits such as shame and false pride lead to the illusion of separate identities since they hinder national integration.

The novel of *Song of Solomon* inspects the results and constant influence of a white supremacy on the African American community despite the fact that Morrison does rarely

include a white character in the novel. Therefore, it is already assumed that the strong impact of dominant groups on blacks' reality is fostered by white members without the need to prove such a reality. However, the way black members give agency to white supremacy is needed to be examined through the themes of shame and pride which act as "social emotions" (Bouson 77).

As a matter of example, there are levels of hierarchy inside the black community which does further fragment the African American community. Macon Dead I, just like whites' politics, does not allow any lateness concerning rents. He does not show any understanding to his people despite their shared background. For that reason, when he attempts to put Mrs. Bains and her children out of the rented house, Mrs. Bains comments "A nigger in business is a terrible thing to see. A terrible, terrible thing to see" (Morrison, *Song of Solomon* 48). It would feel, probably, less saddening if Macon Dead I were a white man, yet he had no mercy regardless of their shared history and experiences.

Behavioural asymmetry prevails at the beginning of the novel. The story, then, moves from providing agency to supporting a hierarchy-attenuating reality in order to reach equity. In this regard, social relationships, early in the novel, foster and manifest collective trauma due to shame and false pride. Moving towards equity and minimizing agency paves the way for collective healing.

3.3.3 Political Disengagement

Just like how the social context influences individuals' behaviour, it is thought that individuals do equally influence society and politics. In *Song of Solomon*, characters are well-shaped to both project the African American reality and to fulfil roles that benefit

oneself as well as the community. It is true that all of the characters bear the same value. However, Morrison chooses Milkman to be the protagonist. The reason behind that choice is probably related to the degree of agency he provides and how that is related to collective trauma. Milkman exemplifies the third generation of a free black man, Macon Dead I. The experience of each generation is internalized by Milkman and displayed in his behaviours. Milkman, for the most part, represents intergenerational trauma and its outcomes on the social and political spheres.

Among the characters of the novel, Milkman is the perfect representation of agency which secures the persistence of collective trauma. At the beginning of the story, Morrison, through Milkman, tries to focus on the outcomes of the 'I don't care about politics' attitude. Milkman is the character who does not have knowledge about the past, his own family, the reality of his community and their social life, and he does not care to know about. Milkman, therefore, does not participate in change, and despite the absence of the institution of slavery, he continues to be silent towards its legacy.

Macon Dead II and Guitar represent both extremes of identifying with the dominant power or having an antagonistic attitude against it. In fact, they both give agency to white ideologies. However, unlike Milkman, their social beliefs are to some extent beneficial to either serve their community or to weaken whites' performance through fear and anxiety. In other words, for Guitar, even if their acts of murder are not massive, they affected whites. On the contrary, Milkman's existence is blurred, and has no significance whatsoever for himself or for his community while contributing to whites' agency through his silence. Silence and political disengagement facilitate the application and persistence of white ideologies. It follows that the absence of any action to deal with the past strengthens

intergenerational trauma. Hagar and Corinthians also reinforce whites' fantasies and myths about blacks. While Hagar displays self-hate since she is not a light-skinned black woman, Corinthians emphasises superiority through acquiring white traits.

By the same token, Macon II's daughter, First Corinthians, displays an attitude of superiority when she is having a dialogue with Henry Porter. Porter is a man who tried to impress her by giving her a letter on the bus. When he attempts to compare her to the women on the bus, she felt intimidated because "she had been compared- unfavourably, she believed –with the only people she knew for certain she was superior to" (Morrison, *Song of Solomon* 323). Cori's family profile, her studying career, and literacy make her think that she is detached from the typical stereotyped black woman.

In fact, the reason behind Milkman's social orientation can be explained by Marris theory of loss and grief. It is known that building healthy social and political relationships requires trust and the feeling of security. Nevertheless, Milkman shows that he is unable to understand the two concepts which means the impossibility of dealing with them in his everyday life. Morrison further dramatizes Milkman's emotional disability in his scene with Hagar when she intends to kill him. Before that scene, Milkman has a conversation with Guitar about the seriousness of Hagar to kill him. However, Milkman's attitude had been unclear just like his political one.

It was not clear if Milkman trusts his rational thinking that Hagar cannot kill him, or he just does not know how to behave in such a situation. When Guitar warns him that she could have a pistol, he argues that black women cannot be offered one. Yet when Guitar gives him an example about a coloured woman who could afford a shotgun, his

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argument, that happened many years ago, had no logical interpretation that it would not happen again.

Moreover, Milkman displays a very calm attitude when Hagar approaches to kill him, Morrison describes the scene:

> … In her hand was a butcher knife, which she raised high over her head and brought down heavily toward the smooth neck flesh that showed above his shirt collar. The knife struck his collarbone and angled off to his shoulder. A small break in the skin began to bleed. Milkman jerked, but did not move his arm nor open his eyes. Hagar raised the knife again, this time with both hands, but found she could not get her arms down… Ten seconds passed. Fifteen. The paralyzed woman and the frozen man. (*Song of Solomon* 221)

Although Milkman's life is threatened, and he is injured by the knife, yet he does not show any defence. He is frozen, because his emotions as well as his senses are frozen too, and they do not alert him to take a defending position. Milkman, in reality, does not trust his knowledge about Hagar which should make him think that she could not kill him. Hagar who wants to kill him differs from Hagar he knows because she is going crazy and losing control over herself. Moreover, Morrison continues "At the thirtieth second Milkman knew he had won." (*Song of Solomon* 221). Milkman before the thirtieth second is not sure that Hagar would not kill him; however, he does nothing about it. That scene dramatizes Milkman's childhood lack of attachment which prevents him from conceptualizing security and trust in their abstract form. This absence of abstractness entails his thoughtlessness since he did not have a language of those concepts that allows him to think them over.

3.4 Moments of Magical Realism and Healing

As the story progresses, the African American society, at the surface level, reorganizes its relationships to move towards equity in a hierarchy-based space. To move towards equity implicates healing from collective trauma. It is worth mentioning that Magical Realism works as an agent to healing.

The reason behind considering the implementation of Magical Realism in the novel as 'momentary' is that it does not underlay the mythical structure of the story unlike in *Beloved*. In *Song of Solomon*, Magical Realism is a tool of remembrance when it is necessary to remember. Later on, it works as a motive for Milkman to meet his coherent self.

3.4.1 The Magic of Taking Risks

Milkman's damaged conceptualization about trust, besides his lack of childhood attachments, stems from his family's fragmented culture which do not provide him with an adequate way of living. However, when he makes sense of his culture by the end of the story, he frees himself from childhood constraints by trusting himself and his culture which fulfill his spiritual needs that would secure healthier social and political relationships.

Milkman is so detached from his reality, when the story opens, that even his questions do not make sense either for himself or for the others. For example, when Milkman is fed up with politics and the talk he hears from Guitar and at the barbershop,

He wondered what they would do if they did not have black and white problems to talk about. Who would they be if they couldn't describe the insults, violence, and

oppression that their lives (and the television news) were made up of?" (Morrison,

Song of Solomon 186)

In that scene, Milkman tries to imagine a reality that is not his. Moreover, he could neither engage in his reality, nor imagine how the reality he aspires for would look like. Morrison, in her essay *Home*, assumes that race and racing cannot be discarded because they do really exist, but their value could be undermined through hierarchy-attenuating ideologies and institutions. Milkman, in contrast, through his attitude, does not even recognize the existence of race to devalue it.

Magical Realism helps in reconstructing meaning and, therefore, in healing. Milkman's loss of meaning since he is a grown up could only be restored through an intervening factor. Pilate embodies Magical Realism mind and body since she does not have a navel as well as her representation of the black culture through her characters' traits. In effect, Pilate is the intervening factor which leads Milkman to build a coherent picture about his identity and his past.

Milkman, in fact, is unable to take risks before the intervening factor. Because of his incomplete sense of trust and safety, he does not know the value of engagement and taking risks. Morrison elaborates on his lack of engagement, "There was nothing he wanted bad enough to risk anything for" (*Song of Solomon* 185). Nevertheless, when an intervening factor appeared from the past, he wanted to do something for himself, "and he started to take risks" (Dunn and Morrison). Later on, taking that first step, enables him to take more risks to know about his past and to construct a coherent idea about himself as an action taker not just as an isolated entity from the society.

As equally important, Morrison also sheds light on the value of the ethics of risk taking through the devastating/devastated character, Guitar. It is proved throughout many scenes in the novel that Guitar takes a lot of risks with courage. However, his sense of security is as damaged as any other traumatized character. He, in fact, takes risks as if he does not know what safety is or why he should be safe at all.

For instance, when Milkman learns about his political activity, he thought that Guitar should be, at least, a bit worried about the possibility of being caught, but he instead replies, "But if I'm caught I'll just die earlier than I'm supposed to—not better than I'm supposed to. And how I die or when doesn't interest me. What I die for does. It's the same as what I live for" (Morrison, *Song of Solomon* 267). By this attitude, Guitar shows how egocentric he is. How and when he dies do not interest him; nevertheless, they interest other people, his relatives, and his community because the way he dies may cause trauma. Morrison elaborates more on the idea through the outcomes of first Macon Dead's murder in front of his children.

In addition to the position of Milkman between Macon Dead II and Guitar, Milkman also mediates between Pilate and Guitar as intervening factors that would lead him to identity coherence. Imbrie affirms that:

The protagonist, himself disturbingly uncommitted, stands between two characters, each intensely committed to different definitions of human relatedness, the one to open and general affection, the other to a frightening tit-for-tat justice: the murder of an "innocent" person for the death of any black person killed in racial conflict. The uncommitted character, in other words stands between the "humanist" in Pilate and the "politician" in Guitar. (482)

In the same vein, before Pilate's refined attitude, she faces identity problems because she is born without a navel the issue that makes her rejected by men and women. When Pilate tries to find her place in the world, moments of Magical Realism occurs in her life before having to completely reconcile with the damage caused by her biology. For example, Morrison names the ghost of her father that appears to her as the mentor to answer existential questions she feels the need to ask. Therefore, it was just through magic and spirituality that she could fill the gap that rationality and biology have caused.

3.4.2 Magical Realism and Self-Referential Narratives of Healing

Geographical displacement or flying towards the south is an important theme in *Song of Solomon* as it has already been indicated. On the other hand, according to CLT, human beings experience psychological distance in order to reach an object in the past or the future. As regarding the story's structure, the journey of the protagonist, Milkman, from north to south probably represents the manifestation of psychological distance in more concrete terms. For that, the object that Milkman is supposed to reach is the incomplete history of African Americans in the past and the wished-for healing in the future to improve the quality of his present life.

The preliminary plan of Milkman, on the contrary, is to reach a white-based tool in the past and to reach complete self-reliance in the future to improve the quality of his present life. The role of Magical Realism, in this context, is to provide appropriate materials for characters to realize an improved way of life even if those characters do not know, and they are not aware that the materials provided by Magical Realism are the most appropriate materials for their ultimate aim in the present. Therefore, Magical Realism

works as a self-referential tool to rationalize why and how the protagonist should follow a certain direction other than the other.

Accordingly, for Milkman, desirability concerns involve finding gold. To reach the object in the past, he relies on his father's, Macon Dead II, memory and remembrance that work as feasibility concerns despite being imperfect because Macon II does not know the whole truth about his sister's story. Upon such conditions, it is impossible to construct adequate narratives, or methodology to get the gold.

In the same vein, desirability concerns for the future of Milkman include self-reliance based on the economic well-being that gold would secure. As it has already been explained, Milkman's lack of childhood attachment prevents him from building healthy political and social relationships. Therefore, further detaching himself from his community through economic independence would not improve his present life condition without restoring social connections.

In contrast, Magical Realism, instead of gold, suggests reaching to the song of his grand-grandfather, Solomon, in the past to be the desirability concern for different reasons. First, the fragmented present of the protagonist stems from his materialistic and realistic thinking which stands as an assimilation to whites' way of life. His attitude, then, reflects only the American aspect of his life with a disregard of the African aspects of his identity. Magical Realism, through orality, provides the missing aspects that Milkman should be aware of to realize identity coherence.

3.4.3 Milkman's Cognitive Consonance

Once again, it is worth to refer back to the connotation of Robert Smith's flight. His flight from Mercy Hospital, in fact, allowed a black woman, who was watching the incident, to give birth to the first coloured baby inside that hospital. The death of Smith was soon followed by the birth of Milkman who bears the responsibility of reconciling the fragmented black self by traveling south. Cynthia Davis confirms that the character, Milkman, aims to resolve "the conflict between 'absolute' freedom and social responsibility" (qtd. in Ellis 38). It means that Milkman tries to mediate between detachment to find oneself and attachment to make sense of one's own identity in reference to group identity.

In addition to the incident of Robert Smith, Milkman was born out of Pilate's treatment inspired by the African culture. Pilate's magic was the only tool that motivated Macon Dead II to approach his wife. When he discovered her pregnancy, however, he did everything, even physical abuse, to make her abort. One again, it was Pilate who saved Milkman's life. Therefore, Pilate has always been a symbol of reconciliation after devastation and hopelessness.

It has already been stated that the problem in *Song of Solomon*, unlike *Beloved*, lies in the mind of the traumatized who is the protagonist, Milkman. Milkman internalizes the intergenerational conflict and shows a careless attitude early in the novel. When he tries to be aware of his surroundings, he finds himself trapped in cognitive dissonance. Morrison then paves the way for Milkman to resolve the seemingly endless conflicting pairs such as materialism/ spirituality, belonging/ exile, forgiveness/ revenge...etc. Even though the pairs seem endless, yet they are all related to specific themes which are memory, past conflicts

and remembrance. For that, Magical Realism, with it dualistic nature, is able to resolve Milkman's cognitive dissonance.

According to CDT, dissonance could be resolved if a third element is added to reconcile the both dissonant elements (Festinger 18-24). In the case of Milkman, the added third element is Magical Realism which coheres his way of thinking. It is first worth arguing why the other two methods suggested by Festinger, and mentioned in the previous chapter, cannot be adequate to resolve dissonance.

Milkman's change in his behaviour could not lead him to consonance. If we consider Macon Dead II as representing realism and its associated themes and Pilate embodying magic and its associated themes, following one of their ways of life may resolve dissonance. Milkman tried to mimic his father's rational, and he accepted to work for him, but at the same time, he was not satisfied. On the other hand, Milkman was interested in his aunt's spirituality, yet he betrayed her in favour of rationality and materialism. Therefore, Milkman could not choose which behaviour he should change to end dissonance.

The environment where the story takes place cannot be replaced or changed. First of all, to change the land like Milkman's grand grandfather is not a solution since it will result in further dissonance due to lack of remembrance and the unresolved past conflicts. In addition, it is impossible to change the community's behaviour because it is inappropriate and more complex than rearranging one's bedroom. It is inappropriate because the community is suffering from collective trauma due to a space that is full of conflicting epistemology which cannot be abrogated, yet appropriated.

Therefore, it can be deduced that the knowledge about magic and realism and their associated dichotomies are already there. However, they need to be accepted, organized, and re-conciliated. According to Festinger, information once received should be evaluated to be rejected or to substitute other knowledge of the same category in the mind (3). In fact, early blacks, due to collective trauma and their distance from their mother land which provides the corpus of their early knowledge, could not process the new received information. Accordingly, they could not evaluate some knowledge since they did not have an already existing knowledge of the same category because of forgetfulness. Nevertheless, the absence of this knowledge did not derive them to accept the new received information. Thus, the unresolved information continued to be unresolved for a considerable amount of time.

The aggregated unresolved dissonance by time started to be more complicated since the typical first knowledge was damaged. In this regard, what seems as a solution is the integration of the damaged and the damaging to build a coherent idea about what the African American personality has been through. Their past experiences are a part of their identity which needs to be accepted and reconciled. Magical Realism in *Song of Solomon* is what reconciles both elements magic and realism and their associated spatial themes.

Since the damaging and the damaged should be integrated, attention should be paid to the way African Americans make benefits of literacy. For example, the way Guitar was trying to realize justice for black men was deemed to failure because of their philosophy. Guitar when he talks about how they kill white men, he says, "…we do it without money, without support, without costumes, without newspapers, without senators, without lobbyists, and without illusions!" (Morrison, *Song of Solomon* 168-169). The philosophy

of the Seven Days held the seeds of its own destruction since they preferred ambiguity and secrecy in favour of political recognition. They have thought that adopting a belief that totally opposes white's ideology would make them perfect justice providers. However, they ignored the point that they are in a point of no return concerning literacy inside civilizations. Therefore, Morrison encourages the embrace of whites' tools to make their own ideologies and hierarchy-attenuating institutions since they should be inside the frame when they fight not outside of it because, at that time, their fight would make no sense for people who, in the first place, do not recognize and approve black tools.

3.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, Milkman's cognitive dissonance grants the motion of *Song of Solomon*'s plot structure. The cognitive dissonance is the outcome of the internalization of two contrasted ideas: confrontation and escape. Collective trauma, on the contrary, is apparent in the violation of nature in the city and the absence of hierarchy-attenuating institutions which support blacks' struggle through literacy such as keeping Macon I's land and popularizing Pilate's art. On the societal level, political activism was not mature as it was limited to the talk in the barbershop. Moreover, behavioural asymmetry due to assimilation, shame, and false pride as Macon II at the beginning of the novel gives more agency to hierarchy-enhancing ideologies. Whites' ideologies are further fostered because of Milkman's political disengagement and psychological fragmentation. Healing started to take place when moments of Magical Realism occurred in his life thanks to Pilate's guidance. In addition, the self-referential nature of Magical Realism leads Milkman to have his journey for identity coherence through hearing about his grandfather's song as the main desirability concern instead of finding gold. In the end, consonance happened when

Milkman learned to reconcile his African American identity through Magical Realism tools. The following chapter explains, from a social psychological perspective, the implementation of Magical Realism in the novel *Beloved* to heal individual trauma leading to group relationships restoration and collective recovery.

Chapter 4

Self-Remembrance and Group Acceptance

4.1 Introduction

Beloved (1987) is Toni Morrison's fifth novel following *The Bluest Eye* (1970), *Sula* (1973), *Song of Solomon* (1977), and *Tar Baby* (1981). The novel is the winner of the 1988 Pulitzer Prize for fiction. The novel enjoyed a great deal of national and international criticism concerning different aspects of the story such as style, politics, power, feminism, and Magical Realism. In addition, Morrison attained an unexpected recognition and esteem because of the novel while she thought that it was hard for an African American woman to be recognized in America, let alone the international level (Schappell and Morrison 71). For example, Timothy Aubry (2016), in his connotative article *Why Is Beloved So Universally Beloved?*, debates the novel's wide range of critics from different disciplines, schools, and parts of the world. For instance, he discusses the works of James Berger (1996), Madhu Dubey (1999), Slavoj Žižek (2000), Barbara Christian (1993), and Walter Brenn Michaels (2004).

The present study, however, undertakes a social psychological approach to the novel. Since social psychology takes into consideration both the influence of the individual on the society and the influence of society on the individual, it is essential to examine all of the circumstances surrounding the writing of the novel, or the circumstances that are chosen to be the setting of the story.

The time during which the novel was written witnessed a typical social and political life for African Americans in America. It is true that blacks had some remarkable achievements during the 1980s as it has already been noted in the first chapter.

Nevertheless, what motivated Morrison to write the novel was her own experience as an editor other than the status quo of African Americans at that time.

Morrison worked as an editor at Random House from 1967 to 1983. It happened that she came across a collection of documents about slavery when she was editing *The Black Book* (1974). She has read the story of Margaret Garner, the runaway slave who killed her own child. The story influenced her in an unprecedented why because she became more conscious that there were much undocumented stories about unknown slaves who suffered then died and their loss was documented as just mere random numbers. She explains that "The book [*Beloved*] was not about the institution – Slavery with a capital S. it was about these anonymous people called slaves… in order to relate to one another – that was incredible to me" (Morrison and Angelo 2). The story, therefore, was not about the Institution of Slavery. It was rather about the institution of slavery and other untold black stories.

Since the story of *Beloved* talks about a runaway slave, it traces back the time of slavery as well as the time of the American Civil War (1861-1865). It moves forward and backward between the 1830s and the 1870s. It goes without saying that the geographical direction of the story follows the escape of Sethe from the south, which still was legitimizing slavery, to the north were slavery was abolished according to the adopted economic system at that time.

In this chapter, the plot structure of the novel is going to be revealed to figure out what holds the characters of the story together and what leads them to disengage in any kind of social and political relationships. The next section would, then, provide an overview about collective trauma that the population of *Beloved* witnesses using the SDT.

Under the title of Magical Realism in *Beloved*, it will be clarified how Magical Realism helps in meaning construction after bereavement, and how it contributes to healing in the future through imagining the past using the CLT as an interpreting tool. In the end, social psychological theories will demonstrate the adequacy of Magical Realism as healing tool based on its authenticity in the novel *Beloved*.

4.2 The Plot Structure of *Beloved*

The story of *Beloved* captures the life of Sethe as a slave and after slavery. The time circularity of the plot implies narrating the experience of slavery in a form of flashbacks. When the story opens, Sethe and her daughter Denver live alone in 124 Bluestone House. The House is made dramatic through the existence of a ghost who is believed to be the ghost of Sethe's dead daughter, the one who underwent infanticide. Sethe, in fact, has two more children, Howard and Buglar, who leave the house because it makes them feel insecure. Sethe's husband, Halle, goes insane when he sees his wife getting oppressed by whites when she is escaping slavery. His mother, however, has been already free of slavery at that time thanks to her son's extra work. Baby Suggs, the wise mother, lives in 124 Bluestone House before the coming of Sethe.

The ghost's activity starts to decrease with the appearance of Paul D. Paul D, just like Sethe, used to be a slave of Sweet Home that is administrated by an oppressing schoolteacher. Sethe invites him to the house and they start a relationship. Couple of days later, a girl, Beloved, who is the same age as Sethe's dead daughter if she were alive, appears next the house. Sethe, believing that she is her dead daughter, invites her to the house, and out of shame and guilt, she satisfies all of what Beloved demands.

The situation gets worse when Paul D learns that Sethe has killed her baby daughter and leaves the house. Denver worries about her mother's situation who gives herself up in favour of Beloved. She asks help from the community, and after exercising some sort of exorcism, Beloved disappears and Paul D returns back to the house promising to take care of Sethe and Denver. Despite the disappearance of Beloved, however, the story is open ended.

Toni Morrison, in her celebrated novel *Beloved* (1987), is much attentive to follow her story on a social and political basis through examining collective and cultural traumas to pave the way for collective healing. In other words, Beloved, at least for Sethe, is not after all a real character that represents an African American individual, but a character which helps in reconstructing the African American reality and in reorganizing the African American space. In *Song of Solomon*, however, she wants to reach collective healing through resolving identity crises at the micro level. Thus, in the later novel, as it has already been stated, the problematic lies in the mind of the traumatized. In contrast, in *Beloved* the problematic encapsulates the whole black space.

Morrison, in effect, structures the novel according to its main theme. She addresses shame and its role in fragmenting the African American collective identity. Arunakumari believes that "Toni Morrison introduces the notion of group acceptance in her novel '*Beloved*' to explore how mutual suffering strengthens human bonds" (770). Based on that quote, what sets the story in motion is the constant acknowledgment of the missing past, which is missing due to shame, through the character Beloved to prepare for group acceptance.

Morrison in *Beloved*, just like in *Song of Solomon*, sets the context of the story right from the beginning where she dedicates her work to "Sixty Million and more" referring to the dead slaves during the journey of the middle passage. More than that, she dedicates the work to every slave who died because of the industry of slavery. It is true that the novel deals with the unspoken about a mother killing her own child, yet it is also about every silenced and incomplete black story of the past.

Moreover, it is clear from the epigraph that Morrison places importance on equally the individual and the community to move past the traumatic experiences of slavery. She quotes from the Bible, "I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved" (*Bible hub*, Rom 9.25). She points out to group coherence through individual forgiveness. Moreover, Morrison intends to close historic and historical gaps through forgiveness and reconciliation as a kind of rebirth after destruction just like how God showed mercy on gentiles.

Morrison sorts the story of *Beloved* into three dominant phases; introducing the problem during the physical absence of Beloved, her physical appearance, then her physical as well as ghostly disappearance. Plot circularity is a famous technique to construct narratives of healing. In fact, time circularity is central when it comes to CDT. It is necessary that the mind returns back to memory to evaluate and compare new received ideas with old ones of the same category. Therefore, without memory, the mind is not able to evaluate or function in the present. Concerning *Song of Solomon*, there is a geographic circularity where the protagonist travels back to the source of the problem in the south. The plot structure of *Beloved* does, quite the reverse, while relying on time circularity.

Milkman, in order to visit the past, has to move from one place to another. It means that he is able to experience his journey through the human senses. In this case, the readers have an access to what the protagonist tries to communicate. In *Beloved*, however, revisiting the past through memory is too abstract, and it needs to be made concrete for the readers through the appearance of a magic character, Beloved, who embodies the past. Objectifying the past so that it would look like a physical experience by the mind, would help the later to evaluate the past and compare it to the present.

Accordingly, it is noticeable that location/placement to mature in *Beloved* is privileged over dislocation/displacement in *Song of Solomon*. Despite Sethe's escape from the south which represents the beginning of the problem, at least for the dead baby, the house at 124 Bluestone Road, where Beloved appears, inhabits, then leaves, is central for the psychological well-becoming of Sethe later in the novel, regardless of the flashbacks to Sweet Home. The importance of physical placement might be linked to two reasons.

First, the story of *Beloved* spans the time from 1830s to the 1870s. Sethe kills her baby in 1855. It means during the time when the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 was still enacted. Thus, she committed infanticide because she was afraid that her master would re-capture her. Therefore, placement in a Free State and house after escape is central for Sethe to juxtapose it with escape and placement as a slave in Sweet Home. Second, and most importantly, despite Sethe's freedom and placement, nevertheless, she experiences constant psychological distance. To highlight the psychology of displacement, Morrison locates the house which signifies placement, yet absents home which signifies psychological comfort.

Morrison, in her notable essay *Home*, explains the discourse of house/home and its significance in constructing African American narratives of healing (3-12). In fact, just like Jim Sidanius and Felicia Pratto theory of SDT, she normalizes the existence of racial hierarchy in the world assuming that any attempt to resist it is considered as illogical, and simply a waste of time. Instead, she believes in coexistence within racial bonds. That is to say, she claims that there is no absolute freedom except for the space of freedom that can be managed inside the enterprise of race.

Morrison does mastermindedly compare racing to house and meaning appropriation of self-identification to home. In the context of *Beloved*, the domestication of race is illustrated through the physical location/psychological dislocation of Sethe, and sometimes of Paul D. There is a juxtaposition of the currently lived house at 124 Bluestone Road and the memories of Sweet 'Home'. That kind of juxtaposition is the result of a cognitive dissonance that Sethe undergoes throughout the novel.

Sethe, despite the freedom that the house at 124 Bluestone Road offers her, she feels dislocated. At the same time, she could not go back to Sweet Home even when slavery is over because she is afraid of re-memory and confrontation. In fact, Sweet Home is considered as home in this case not because it feels like home, but because it first contains lost memories that would help Sethe in her self-identification. Second, Sweet Home is named after the nice treatment of Mr. Garner to his slaves, including Sethe and Paul D, in comparison to masters in other plantations before the coming of the schoolteacher.

Paul D, however, when he comes to Sethe's house, tells Denver that "It wasn't sweet and it sure wasn't home" (Morrison, *Beloved* 14). The status of Sweet Home started

to deviate from its signifier when the schoolteacher arrived, and when Paul D discovered that nothing could be compared to freedom. Sethe, on the other hand, objected the opinion of Paul D. What Toni Morrison tries to communicate is that stereotypes could even confuse the stereotyped who promotes agency. The confusion is the result of a couple of dissonant ideas such as home/house, freedom/ slavery, Mr. Garner/ schoolteacher. In fact, the later binary opposition is in reference to the changing status of Sweet Home without the change in its name.

The difference between Milkman's cognitive dissonance and the cognitive dissonance of Sethe is that Milkman represents the struggle of four generations to choose between having an African or an American identity. Sethe, however, symbolises her own experience of slavery and freedom. In other words, Milkman experiences the legacy of slavery through intergenerational trauma, whereas, Sethe undergoes by herself two distinctive periods which are slavery and freedom. Sethe's dissonance, then, is more powerful than Milkman's because it is fostered by human senses. Therefore, the story in Beloved needed more than moments of Magical Realism.

Thus, examining the plot structure helps in understanding the overall idea that Morrison wants to communicate through symbolism. The protagonist of Sethe, Beloved, who represents the past appears in the present because the past refuses to stay incomplete. The conduct of history appears to be non-linear as events can be lived repeatedly in the present as a consequence of trauma. The rhythm of the novel, then, changes according to how meaningful the present is according to the past. This state of constantly interrupted mindfulness is what drives the story. Thus, it is logical that the disappearance of Beloved marks healing and the story's denouement.

4.5 Collective Trauma in *Beloved*

It is important to clarify in the beginning that there is a great body of literature which criticizes *Beloved* on the personal level. That is, critics try to examine individual trauma since the novel is rich linguistically and psychologically because Morrison is known for the well moulding of her characters. The present study, as it has already been mentioned, focuses more on collective trauma and the influence of characters on the fabric of the society. Unlike *Song of Solomon*, *Beloved* follows the story of a juvenile community that has just sensed freedom from slavery. Therefore, the political practice is even further obscure than that of the previous novel. However, we can inspect the early seeds of the influence of collective trauma on the political and social scenes. In what follows, the early seeds of the African American collective trauma are going to be traced in the novel according to SDT.

4.5.1 Slavery and Freedom

At the social and political levels, the identification of collective trauma under slavery differs from its identification when freedom is attained. When there was not such a political entity as the African American community, at least in the regions where slavery was still enacted, black ideologies and myths did not matter even if they did exist. At the social level, blacks experienced oppression and violence which were not manifested on the political level. Therefore, the unspoken collective trauma did not make sense for African Americans concerning hierarchy and dominion. Following Sethe's story of her escape from slavery in *Beloved* helps in tracking the early political performance of African Americans in the presence of collective trauma, and how trauma hinders blacks' development into political and social equity with whites.

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Under slavery, blacks did not own their own bodies. Their bodies were used as an instrument to realize hierarchy-enhancing myths and ideologies. The body is considered as the first and the most important institution to execute one's and groups' political ideologies. For blacks, they were oppressed through their bodies which they did not own. The later stand point prevented them from even manifesting the existence of collective trauma because they were not considered as a distinguished political community that expresses itself through language. They were silent and silenced, and even sometimes did not know the value of freedom.

For example, Baby Suggs does somehow know that language means the performance of politics. She did not see any benefits from talking. She was an example of a "perfect" slave. Morrison comments: "Baby Suggs talked as little as she could get away with because what was there to say that the roots of her tongue could manage? So the whitewoman, finding her new slave excellent if silent help…" (*Beloved* 141). She clarifies that the issues that should be spelled out could not be managed by an owned body. Baby Suggs does not find talking as helpful because the problem is far greater than being resolved through language. Blacks needed first their bodies to prove their existence and be able to express themselves freely.

Moreover, Baby Suggs does not understand the efforts of her son, Halle, to offer her freedom. She does not value the freedom of a consumed body after she is old. Then, the unexpected happens. Baby Suggs thinks to herself while wondering about the value of freedom:

What for? What does a sixty-odd-year-old slave woman who walks like a

three-legged dog need freedom for? And when she stepped foot on free

ground she could not believe that Halle knew what she didn't; that Halle, who had never drawn one free breath, knew that there was nothing like it in this world. It scared her…What's the matter? She asked herself. She didn't know what she looked like and was not curious. But suddenly she saw her hands and thought with a clarity as simple as it was dazzling, "These hands belong to me. These my hands." Next she felt a knocking in her chest and discovered something else new: her own heartbeat. Had it been there all along?...She felt like a fool and began to laugh out loud. (Morrison, *Beloved* 141).

Baby Suggs represents slaves who identified with whites' ideologies during slavery. The ones who could not feel their existence until their body was given back to them damaged and injured. They could not even imagine what freedom was like because they were denied the first instrument that gives them the right to language and imagination which is their own body. It is logical then that they have just started to feel trauma after having their freedom and their bodies back. Therefore, cognizing trauma and projecting it, meaning behaving in inadequate ways, are from the early stages of collective healing.

On the other hand, there were slaves who could think of themselves outside their identification with their masters. Those slaves like Sethe and her husband Halle, in fact, were encouraged by the policies of the north where slavery started to be abolished. It is worth to acknowledge that at some point in the American history the wide system was divided following the economic system in the American north or south. The political ideologies where slavery was abolished weakened the institution of slavery in the south.

Accordingly, those ideologies served as hierarchy-attenuating social ideologies that encouraged slaves to find refuge in the north.

The slaves who succeeded to escape and to join free black communities in the north sought political recognition despite the fact that their presence was new on the social dominion hierarchy. The black community, as a matter of fact, strives for political competency because as Baby Suggs believes according to her experience as a slave and as a free black individual that "there was no bad luck in the world but white people. 'They don't know when to stop,' she said…" (Morrison, *Beloved* 104). Whites do not know when to stop and they need to be stopped. Those were the last words of Baby Suggs before her death. She was aware that whites' political greediness is a reality that whites could not and would not give up. However, this bad luck should be confronted even if blacks do, at least, like Baby Suggs and say that white people were/are a bad luck in the world. Moreover, from the signs of collective trauma, based on SDT, is the presence of a dominant institution that controls the political and social scenes. Newly freed blacks, in *Beloved*, did not have the right to literacy for power balance.

For example, the way Paul D learned about Sethe's infanticide shows what qualifies African American stories to be worth documenting on newspapers and how comes whites talk about the life of blacks because they refuse any kind of recognition of the African American community. Morrison comments: "The print meant nothing to him so he didn't even glance at it. He simply looks at the face, shaking his head no. No. At the mouth, you see. And no at whatever it was those black scratches said" (*Beloved* 155). Paul D knows that the picture of Sethe on the newspaper could by no way mean reporting good news about her because news about blacks "would have to be something out of the

ordinary--something whitepeople would find interesting, truly different, worth a few minutes of teeth sucking if not gasps" (Morrison, *Beloved* 156). Morrison, through this passage, demonstrates the control of white people over literacy and over institutions that practice power. She clarifies that white people write for the white audience about black stories they find exotic. Blacks should not be politically addressed as human beings who need an approved way of life which is supposed to be the duty of the media. In contrast, they just report their tough experiences as a kind of entertainment for the white community.

It is a tradition and a legacy of slavery that only white authorities are legitimized to 'put things into words'. They were naming new born slaves using random names and portraying them using whites' own definitions causing them identity fragmentation. Even after having their freedom, they were still denied their right to express themselves in an appropriate way because according to whites' fantasies "definitions belonged to the definers--not the defined" (Morrison, *Beloved* 191).

Morrison once again emphasises the importance of names for political recognition. She says about Beloved that "Everybody knew what she was called, but nobody anywhere knew her name. Disremembered and unaccounted for, she cannot be lost because no one is looking for her…" (*Beloved* 274). The black community need to be politically active and defend themselves, but how could they fight without knowing for whom do they fight? What they are called is also discredited according to Morrison because they are considered as stereotypes that enhance the hierarchical system. For that reason, names are important to create hierarchy-attenuating myths and ideologies.

It is needless to say, thereafter, that the new community's resistance requires first adequate hierarchy-attenuating ideologies and myths to empower their position in account of whites' dominance. Free black communities needed narratives of healing and adequate ideologies and myths abstracted from those narratives. The basis of any narrative of healing is group remembrance and the value of shared beliefs, experiences and the strengthening of social relationships.

The importance of group acceptance and remembrance to overcome collective trauma is displayed through the attitudes of Baby Suggs and Sethe towards their community. For example, Baby Suggs is more open to socializing than Sethe does. Sethe, however, believes that "Whatever is going on outside my door ain't for me. The world is in this room. This here's all there is and all there needs to be" (*Beloved* 183). This self-exclusion from the black community means also political exclusion. Moreover, despite the positive attitude of Baby Suggs towards the community, it was not enough to create a meaningful and coherent past with the absence of Sethe's experience.

4.5.2 The Dissonant System of the North

As regarding the social context under slavery, there had been stereotypes resulting from power practice which sometimes did not match black subjects' social dominion orientation. Stated differently, slaves were expected to be, just like Baby Suggs, obedient and submissive to help in executing whites' ideologies and myths despite their dissatisfaction. However, because of those same white fantasies in the American South, some slaves, like Sethe and her husband Halle, rebel and distance themselves from maintaining whites' social and political hierarchy.

In the case of Sethe, she knows that there is a typical fate that awaits slave men, and especially, women such as rape. Because of such stereotypes, she tries to escape slavery. Furthermore, when she is about to be captured by her master, she kills her baby daughter since she thinks that her death is better than slavery. In fact, she also tries to kill her other children but she was stopped by Baby Suggs and the schoolteacher. Unfortunately, while Sethe intends to save her children from the trauma she experienced, her deed exacerbated intergenerational trauma. The reason behind the later claim is that Sethe, because of her deed, is not able to be coherent with the society she lives in. In addition, her deed also affects the way she raises her children. For example, her sons, Howard and Buglar, are prevented from motherhood relationships when they ran out of the house while they are still young. Denver, on the other hand, suffers from psychological problems because of Sethe's treatment and the ghost of her mother's past. Therefore, Sethe is a reason for curbing the development of meaningful relationships that would secure a healthy political and social engagement.

In fact, the system in the north was sometimes as devastating as providing agency for slaves. In simple terms, while the north promised African Americans freedom, they were disappointed by the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 which empowered the south's ideologies. There was a kind of cognitive dissonance between freedom and re-enslavement that was experienced by escaped slaves who were about to be captured such as Sethe. Moreover, Sethe had a relatively small time to resolve the dissonance she experienced. It was impossible for her to change the environment because she has failed to escape. She also rejected the idea of surrounding and reconciling with the previously lived way of life. Therefore, she decides to change her behaviour and she intends to kill all of her children.

The system of the north along with the Fugitive Slave Act, hence, promoted collective trauma. They were even worse than slavery.

From the perspective of the whites, Sethe proves and empowers whites' political ideologies about blacks' savagery. Sethe's asymmetrical group behaviour does, therefore, enhance social stereotypes from the part of the white audience. Moreover, Sethe's self and social exclusion by her own community hinders the healthy formation of hierarchy-attenuating ideologies and institutions. As a matter of fact, Sethe's brutal action is not the authentic reason behind the community's judgement. However, it was their fear of facing the horrors of slavery and what it can drive a man to do which lead them to avoid her (4, 79). Actually, the community is avoiding situations that promote cognitive dissonance for them. This act of avoiding confrontation and declining remembrance prevents them from constructing a meaningful past after trauma.

The novel *Beloved* displays how family, as a component of community, internalizes and produces space. Because of Sethe's trauma and her offspring's intergenerational trauma, there is no healthy family living in house 124 at Bluestone Road at the opening pages of the novel. Sethe's two sons run away from the house, Denver is identified with her mother's experience even if she does not know the story of Beloved. There is an inability of the family to have ties with the black community leading to the fragmentation of the social fabric.

Generally speaking, the family, as an excluded member from society, internalizes the bad treatment of the community, and their relationships are further stressed. Moreover, excluding them affects the African American community to rebuild their identity since a part of their identity, Sethe's family, is chosen to be repressed and forgotten. By the same

token, Sethe as well gives agency to whites' ideologies since she prefers to remain silent and refuses to socialize.

4.5.3 Individual Silence and Social Fragmentation

Childhood attachments are important because what derived Sethe to kill her child could also be associated with her feelings when she saw her mother hanged on a tree. Sethe knows that the schoolteacher, unlike Mr. Garner, has the tradition of lynching disobedient slaves, and it would probably be her who would be hanged since she escaped. Therefore, she might have committed infanticide because she was afraid that her children would experience the same feelings she had when she saw her mother dead.

From the perspective of Peter Marris, Sethe could not build a coherent idea about what trust and security are, and this incoherent idea was also inherited to her children. The novel of *Beloved* demonstrates lack of childhood attachment and its outcomes. Sethe, whose mother was killed when she was young in addition to her father's absence, could not form a mature distinguished idea about trust because it is always associated for her with fear and misunderstanding. Sethe could not narrate her story because she is afraid of facing the past. She also apprehends misunderstanding since what they have experienced is beyond words. For example, Sethe refuses to tell Baby Suggs about the killing of her granddaughter even if she feels obliged to do. It was not until Paul D learns about the story that the emotions of love overcome the emotions of fear and misunderstanding. He, nevertheless, does not show any understanding and leaves the house. Those ill relationships keep the family from socializing, and from projecting the source of their collective trauma on the political level to empower blacks' ideologies.

Sethe's silence, just like Milkman's political disengagement, provides agency to whites' ideologies. The difference between those two attitudes is that Milkman's source of carelessness stems from the undiscovered part of his identity whilst Sethe's silence is the result of the unspoken due to shame and guilt. That is how healing for Milkman is the outcome of group remembrance and individual discovery. In contrast, healing for Sethe is the outcome of individual remembrance and group acceptance and understanding.

There are different depictions of adopting and disregarding aggregated group discrimination in the novel *Beloved*. For example, in the beginning of the novel, the black community that Sethe lives in adopts an aggregated individual discrimination to intimidate her. As a matter of example, the reaction of Paul D when Sethe tells him about the story of her dead child is an indication of judgment and misunderstanding. Morrison comments about the way he blamed her: "How fast he had moved from his shame to hers, from his cold-house secret straight to her too-thick love" (*Beloved* 165). The reaction of Paul D, Morrison clarifies, is the legacy of the institution of slavery which dictates what should a black man does. Sethe's and Paul D's shame and guilt are portrayed according to white stereotypes, not according to each black individual's experience that is worth listening to and understanding. Another example is Ella who used to be a friend with Sethe, and then she abandons her, just like Paul D, when she hears about the killing of her child.

On the other hand, Amy Denver, the white woman who helped Sethe to give birth and to escape the south, disregarded aggregated group discrimination that is based on race and ethnicity. For that Sethe believes "That for every schoolteacher there would be an Amy" (Morrison, *Beloved* 189) because Amy contributed to weakening whites' stereotypes concerning slavery and hierarchy maintenance.

Collective trauma is then apparent in the way the population of *Beloved* is unable to be coherent and to build healthy relationships with one another. It is also revealed in their fear of remembrance which would give them the right to literacy and too defend themselves. It is true, as it has been illustrated in the previous chapter, that literacy is important to achieve equity. Yet, before literacy, the African American community needs to build a coherent oral narrative for self-healing.

4.6 Magical Realism and Healing

Unlike narrative agency in *Song of Solomon*, Magical Realism in *Beloved* generates narratives and helps in building the mythical structure of the story. That is to say, the reappearance of the character Beloved, organizes and gives meaning to characters' actions and reactions. Thus, in *Song of Solomon*, remembrance is, first, important for identity coherence. In this novel, on the other hand, remembrance is fundamental for group coherence.

It is worth noting that *Song of Solomon* is not limited to personal trauma, and likewise, *Beloved* is not just about collective trauma. In the former novel, personal healing is essential to heal collective trauma by restoring social and political relationships to build resisting institutions for agency. On the contrary, the later novel stresses on group healing to recreate shared beliefs and to express past conflicts. Simply stated, *Song of Solomon* is written to concretize and to realize hierarchy-attenuating ideologies and myths through literacy. Nevertheless, those myths and ideologies need first to be made coherent through orality and group remembrance which is the theme of *Beloved*.

Song of Solomon is about the abstract that should be made concrete through institutions, and *Beloved* is about finding out first what is abstract. That is why Morrison says about the character Beloved, "she cannot be lost because no one is looking for her, and even if they were, how can they call her if they don't know her name?" (*Beloved* 274) Beloved, who represents the past, needs to be defined and addressed by the black community to better know about themselves and about their past.

Accordingly, the function of Magical Realism in *Beloved* is to provide a spatial coherence. In *Song of Solomon*, however, the function of Magical Realism is to provide a personal coherence. From the perspective of ontology and epistemology, Magical Realism either ontologizes the struggle through epistemology, or epistemologizes the struggle through ontology. If institutions and literacy were to be considered as ontology, epistemology is the knowledge appropriated by the African American community before being able to build resisting institutions.

In the novel that was discussed in the previous chapter entitled: Group Remembrance and Self-Discovery, Magical Realism emphasizes the need to move from orality to literacy without ignoring any of which to build hierarchy-attenuating institutions. The function of Magical Realism in this case is to move from epistemology, which is represented by deciphering the song of Solomon to ontology which is the ability to make resisting institutions when Milkman reaches political maturity. In *Beloved*, Magical Realism stresses on the need to construct coherent narratives by objectifying history through the character Beloved in order to produce hierarchy-attenuating ideologies and myths. It moves from ontology which is the embodiment of history by Beloved to

epistemology which is remembrance and the ability to form correspondent resisting narratives and myths.

4.6.1 Constructing Meaning through Ghosts

Magical Realism, due to its dual nature, helps in constructing meaning through reconciliation. In what follows, it will be clarified why Magical Realism is an appropriate tool for building narratives of healing.

While Morrison constructs meaning for the African American society she de-familiarizes the common Western meaning of the social and political practice. In other words, she dramatizes the city/wilderness discourse undertaken in *Song of Solomon* with the existence of a ghost. In its existence, in fact, she ridicules "The scientific and materialist assumptions of Western modernity, namely, that reality is knowable, predictable, and controllable" (Zamore 77). In the novel, she connotes that in the city, which is governed by the human mind unlike wilderness which has its own logic, it is sometimes impossible to predict what and why someone would do anything to another one. However, Westerners always try to prove the opposite by claiming that they follow rationality. Guitar commented on that by intelligently declaring that whites first judged blacks then they have tried to find a scientific proof about their assumptions.

In this regard, the socialist Henri Lefebvre believes that "Reductionists are unstinting in their praise for basic scientific method, but they transform this method first into a mere posture and then, in the name of 'science of science' (epistemology), into a supposed absolute knowledge" (106). Through Magical Realism, Morrison wanted to implement the unpredictable for the Western tradition on the basis of the black culture.

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Therefore, she dramatizes the conflict between rationality/irrationality through the ghost Beloved to construct meaning that rationality was unable to construct

In this sense, the protagonist, Sethe, as it has already been indicated, is not able to make sense of the present because of trauma and lack of childhood attachments. Morrison defines the influence of meaning deficiency on Sethe's daily life:

> Daily life took as much as she had. The future was sunset; the past something to leave behind. And if it didn't stay behind, well. You might have to stomp it out. Slave life; freed life—every day was a test and trial. Nothing could be counted on in a world where even when you were a solution you were a problem. (*Beloved* 256)

Sethe's future is a sunset even though slavery is over. For her, every day is a test and trial whether as a slave or as a free woman. She cannot make sense of her present because she cannot form a meaningful idea about her past. She, rather, chooses to escape it or repress it. Sethe, in fact, is both the problem and the solution. She has experienced slavery, yet she is now a free woman. She is free, but she cannot address properly the past or understand it. Therefore, Magical Realism with its duality reconciles the problem with the solution.

The use of Magical Realism is multi-layered. For example, Robinson and Fulkerson believe that Beloved may represent different characters such as Sethe's mother (71). In this context, the return of Paul D as an intervening factor triggered Sethe's childhood memories about her mother. Morrison claims that "Paul D dug it up, gave her [Sethe] back her body, kissed her divided back, stirred her rememory and brought her more news;" (*Beloved* 189). It is probably the return of Paul D that encouraged Sethe to

move from repressing the act of killing her own child to visualising it which explains the disappearance of the ghost and the appearance of Beloved after the coming of Paul D. Beloved's return as the mother helps in fulfilling Sethe's childhood attachment through constructing meaningful narratives about the past.

When attachments are abstracted through narratives, they become rooted in human senses, and they help in forming a coherent idea about some concepts. This process gives a clearer idea about what to grief for (Marris 18). For that, it is logical that when Sethe becomes integrated at the end of the novel, Beloved disappears due to the community's magic. It is worth noting at this point that grieving is a socially constructed practice. In other words, people make sense of attachments and objects using their own culture, and that is why culture is central in grieving. Magical Realism, therefore, legitimizes the use of magic, as a part of the black culture, for mourning and healing.

In broader terms, according to loss and grief theory, Sethe and her family restore trust in themselves and their community by means of culture when the community performs black magic to save Sethe. Trust is believed to be the outcome of one's coherent culture which provides an adequate life style. In this context, through the power of community and culture Sethe and her family do, finally, move from childhood to healthy adult attachments.

4.6.2 Beloved: A Construal Level Agent

According to Construal Level Theory, Toni Morrison tries to reach an object in the past through making use of actual cues to reach healing in the future. Therefore, In contrast to *Song of Solomon* that is considered as a Bildungsroman novel, *Beloved* counts heavily

on time circularity. Plot development displays a self-referential narrative to check the re-construction of a lost object in the past.

In accordance with psychological distance theory, sometimes people feel the need to reach an object that is not in the present to construct or reconstruct knowledge that has been acquired in the past (Trope and Liberman 119). This kind of transcending the present is central in Beloved. Morrison intends to distance her character Sethe from the present while still physically located in house 124 at Bluestone Road to reach the problem in the past and to imagine the solution in the future. This psychological distance could be interpreted along the two levels, the high-level and the low-level construal.

What is central in psychological distance is why does Sethe distance herself in the first place? This question, actually, represents the high-level construal. Sethe wants to reach a trauma-based object in the past while she is unconsciously looking for healing in the future. In fact, the object has been always there that is when she said "Nothing could be counted on in a world where even when you were a solution you were a problem" (Morrison, *Beloved* 256). However, she does not have the appropriate tools for attaining that object. How Sethe could reach the past and imagine the future represent low-level construal.

Morrison uses Magical Realism to attain the object in the past while she plans for the future. Since people classify their experiences as the most and the least important, peripheral events or low-level construal tend to be forgotten in favour of the central event or the high-level construal. For that reason, as long as Sethe could manage a coherent narrative to reach the object in the past by filling the forgotten gaps, it is not necessary for

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her to remember the same exact events that happened, yet just the emotions generated from them.

The used instruments to meet the source of the problem in the past could be less important than the problem itself. Yet, it is significant to choose a tool that would provide a coherent narrative. Accordingly, choosing an identity-centred tool like magic which is rooted in Sethe's black culture, and realism which reflects her denied white culture is able to close historical gaps.

The text itself, for equally Sethe and Morrison, is metacognitive. Magical Realism's self-referentiality helps both of Sethe and her community as well as Morrison and her community to construct narratives of healing through imagining low-level construal events. Those metanarratives with the help of literary Magical Realism fulfils the missing gaps in the lives of African Americans. *Beloved*, in reality, is a self-reflective novel which helps in rewriting history in a way that weakens mainstream fantasies and politics.

4.6.3 Authenticity

As it has been previously noted in the second chapter, Magical Realism is more about authenticity. Whether for personal coherence, social activity, or political engagement, Magical Realism with its dual nature focuses more on what it really is other than what or how it should be. For instance, Sethe does perfectly communicate the inadequacy of Paul D's argument when he blames her for the infanticide. He puts forward the possibility that the dead child might have lived better than killing her, or Sethe's situation might have been better in the presence of her daughter. However, she answers, "It

ain't my job to know what's worse. It's my job to know what is and to keep them away from what I know is terrible, I did that" (Morrison, *Beloved* 165). Blaming her for what it should be or what might have been better is useless. In contrast, embracing her mistakes and trying to understand them just as they are could promise her a better future which is exactly the function of Magical Realism. Morrison tries to personalize the story of Margaret Garner as it is just to understand and accept her as a member of the African American community and identity without repressing her because of her deed.

The narratives of healing could imagine the low-level construal of an event, yet at least Magical Realism makes use of materials that could be imagined. The later standpoint is referred to in Magical Realism works since they are self-referential narratives. For example, Baby Suggs summarizes the theme of the novel and its approach to healing. When women gather to listen to her wisdom, Morrison says that:

> She did not tell them to clean up their lives or to go and sin no more. She did not tell them they were the blessed of the earth, its inheriting meek or its glory bound pure. She told them that the only grace they could have was the grace they could imagine. That if they could not see it, they would not have it. (*Beloved* 88)

First of all, Morrison connotes to the white vs. black political discourse. To have an adequate way of life, Baby Suggs tells them that they do not need to ask for purity, idealism, and perfectness just like how whites wanted them to be when they claimed that blacks do not have a civilization. Furthermore, she also ascertains that they do not need to feel superior as a race chosen by God to be the blessed of the earth. Those two extreme ideas were adopted by black political movements to prove their existence and resistance. Du Bois has always wanted the New Negro to behave as a civilized human being. He was

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even against some kind of black music, the Ragtime, since he believed that it was a degraded art. So, he always was focusing on how a black individual should be by repressing what he/she really is. On the other hand, the movement of Malcolm X was with the idea that blacks constitute the superior race over whites. For that, this idea would have always provoked a tone of antagonism other than reconciliation.

The other point that Morrison refers to through Baby Suggs is the importance of freedom and responsibility. When Baby Suggs had her freedom, she started to look at herself and 'see' her body for the first time. She felt like she owned that body. She was free and responsible of it. Likewise, she advises the women that if they ever want to have a political activity, the very first thing that they need to do is to see and claim their bodies back. Baby Suggs continues:

> …they do not love your flesh. They despise it. They don't love your eyes; they'd just as soon pick em out. No more do they love the skin on your back. Yonder they flay it. And O my people they do not love your hands. Those they only use, tie, bind, chop off and leave empty. Love your hands! Love them. Raise them up and kiss them. Touch others with them. Pat them together. Stroke them on your face 'cause they don't love that either. You got to love it, you! (Morrison, *Beloved* 88)

Morrison clarifies that the black community could by no means ask for political recognition from whites. Instead, they need to love themselves and own their bodies to serve their political activities. As it has been indicated earlier, bodies are the first instruments for resistance. Therefore, even if blacks, using their own bodies, would make mistakes, stroke their faces, and harm themselves, they need to experiment in life because whites do not like blacks to have freedom even if they would harm themselves with it.

Baby Suggs advises the women that they need to recognize what they see first so that they would be able to imagine it even in its absence. At that time, they would be able to own that object in their imagination. What Baby Suggs tries to communicate is that, during slavery, blacks did not see, use their hands, or hear. Masters were seeing through their eyes, working through their hands, and hearing through their ears. They did not have the right to own things and imagine them. Psychological distance had no meaning for them because they were objects other than subjects.

Having freedom means that they are able to see objects in the present and imagine how they have been in the past and how they would look like in the future. Therefore, they are able to construct coherent narratives about their missing past using imagination. However, it is crucial for them in the process to stay authentic; the authenticity that Magical Realism represents. In other words, realism, in this case, is about mindfulness, seeing, and cognizing the reality that they are living in inside the American society. Magic, on the other hand, is the ability to have a psychological distance to reach past and future objects using their black culture.

Authenticity is also important for political engagement. For example, when Morrison uses Magical Realism to write counter narratives, she does not try to tell her readers that they are superior, or slavery is God's word and affliction. In the case of *Beloved*, she uses elements of her culture to make the story of Margaret Garner personal. She does not blame her and represent her as a sinner. Morrison, just like observation, she has seen the story of Margaret, then imagined how events could have been felt by her. In *Song of Solomon*, she represented the incoherence of African American individuals as it is and she proposed narratives of healing through the black culture.

In both novels, Morrison unmatters the white presence and its influence on the social dominion hierarchy. She prefers to address blacks' group and individual coherence because she thinks that healing and building healthy relationships would strengthen their hierarchy-attenuating ideologies and weakens hierarchy-enhancing ideologies. Morrison comments when she is asked whether she had read slave narratives before writing *Beloved*:

> I wouldn't read them for information because I knew that they have been authenticated by white patrons, that they couldn't say everything they wanted to say because they couldn't alienate their audience; they had to be quite about certain things. (Schappell and Morrison 75-67)

Morrison believes that slave narratives give agency to white people since they hide some of the truth that should be revealed. In addition, she proves that authenticity can be created through imagination. It can help in healing more than incomplete narratives about past experiences.

The success of Morrison's novel stems from "The subversive power of Magical Realism [which] comes from this juxtaposition of objective and subjective realities in ways that call the objective into question, allowing authors to challenge official readings of social, political, and historical events" (Hawley 283). Therefore, the dual nature of Magical Realism that is able to put the objective into a subjective question. Morrison does not try to avoid the objective and just focus on the subjective black culture. She does not identify or assimilate with the objective. She rather creates a dialogue of power between the objective and the subjective to offer a different perspective on social and political matters through language.

In *Beloved*, she puts into subjective question the story of Margaret Garner which is documented in a newspaper by an objective dominant power. Through Magical Realism, she was able to imagine low-level construal events that lead to the source of the problem in the past. In the process, she expresses the outcomes of bereavement and stereotypes on the healthy formation of social and political relationships that would help in being a strong part of the social dominion hierarchy.

4.7 Conclusion

To conclude, the sequence of circular events in *Beloved*, unlike *Song of Solomon*, is generated by the actions of the ghost Beloved and the reaction or the cognitive dissonance of Sethe. According to SDT, collective trauma in the novel is displayed through the absence of hierarchy-attenuating ideologies due to forgetfulness and social exclusion of Sethe from the community. Moreover, the north gave hope for slaves to escape the south. However, the Fugitive Slave Act marked a dramatic ending for slaves who behaved in a violent way to protect their freedom such as Sethe's deed. After escaping, silence because of shame prevented the population of *Beloved* from remembering to create hierarchy-attenuating myths and ideologies. The function of Magical Realism, therefore, was to help in the organization of blacks' space through the ghost and the concrete character Beloved to prepare for group remembrance. Magical Realism was able to construct low-level construal events to form coherent and authentic narratives of healing.

General Conclusion

It is probably easier to consider the apparent causes of the African American collective trauma as attributed to the institution of slavery and power per se. However, it is more intricate to inspect the impediment of the mind's psychological flow which affects the performance of individuals and society. The emergence, persistence and healing of collective trauma is from the subjects that puzzle equally scientists and philosophers. The agreed upon idea in so far is that collective trauma is not the formation of a single factor, yet the unhealthy connection between the individual, his society, and politics while keeping an eye on the significance of time in such a context. Accordingly, Morrison's novels were analysed using social psychological theories which examine human problems on the micro as well as the macro levels.

On the other hand, Magical Realism gained a special attention during the 20th century. Postcolonial writers as Salman Rushdie and Assia Djebar counted on the ability of magic to proximize the shared experience of suffering and to heal fragmented societies through the magical unseen aspects of the native culture. Although the African American experience differs somehow from any other postcolonial society as India or Algeria, Morrison uses Magical Realism for the same reasons.

Morrison is an African American woman writer who challenged the perception of her race and gender in the American society to write a book that she had wanted to read. She succeeded as her works are regarded canonical since she has created a culture of criticism that voiced different silenced aspects of the African American community. This doctoral thesis has put into question two of Morrison's most celebrated works, *Song of Solomon* and *Beloved* to examine how Magical Realism helps in overcoming collective

trauma. Morrison in her works approaches the same communal and individual themes. She, however, reconstructs them from different perspectives in an attempt to introduce a rigorous representation of African Americans by an authentic black writer. Both novels, in fact, address personal and collective hurt, memory and healing.

Before elaborating on the aforementioned themes, it could be useful to compare the way Morrison organizes space in both novels. In *Song of Solomon*, Milkman who is a victim of intergenerational trauma tries to find out about the story of his grand-grandfather by traveling to the American South. The Bildungsroman novel progresses on the cusp of Milkman's cognitive dissonance which is the result of identity incoherence. In contrast, the appearance of Beloved is the catalyst behind organizing the novel's space and behind the construction of dialogues of healing between characters. Beloved who represents the past secures the time circularity of the novel unlike Milkman's geographic circularity in *Song of Solomon*. Time and geographic circularity overcome the dissonance of the past's presence in the present to reconcile Sethe's and Milkman's fragmented reality. They help in visualizing the dissonant ideas in the protagonists' mind such as past/present, slavery/freedom and isolation/affection through elements of magic. The second chapter confirmed that, at the personal level, blacks' dissonance evoked due to two inconsistent ideas. On the one hand, their desire to repress or return to their African black culture or their desire to disregard or adopt white's culture because of long exposure time, on the other.

For contextual necessity, the first chapter followed the political maturity of the African American community after slavery to examine the role of political absence/ activism in enhancing/ healing collective suffering in the selected novels. It stressed the

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importance of social and cultural movements such as the CRM in gaining recognition and in saving blacks' social and economic interests. Therefore, *Beloved* demonstrated the shared experience of hurt due to a dominating system in contrast to *Song of Solomon* which was about an initiative on civil activism. Both novels uncovered African Americans' political and social experimentation within different boundaries of freedom imposed by a dominant white power. The first chapter explored, as well, African Americans' strife from extremist political movements due to past conflict and cognitive dissonance such as Sethe's infanticide and Guitar's secret organization to more moderate mind-set that would prepare for reconciliation such as Milkman's end state.

The second chapter discussed the notion of collective trauma from a social psychological perspective. It first clarified that this study regarded collective trauma as the outcome of power practice on human social and political interactions. It emphasised the testability of the violation or restoration of relationships as such. Accordingly, collective trauma in both novels was analysed based on the situation and actions of their population. It was revealed that the need to foster hierarchy-enhancing legitimizing myths and ideologies implied the use of power through stereotypes, social institutions, and individual discrimination. The later transgressions destroyed black's community relationships leading to collective trauma.

The struggle due to collective trauma in both novels is abridged in four main points, namely orality vs. literacy, political disintegration, meaning loss and levels of discrimination between individuals of the same community. Concerning the wide system level, it has been clarified that the indication of collective trauma under slavery differs significantly within a new economic system that is based on industrialization. Under

slavery, as the case of *Beloved*, most of the slaves were identified with their masters such as Baby Suggs. Therefore, the relationship among black individuals as a distinct group did not make any sense because the African American community was not recognized as a political entity. The abolishment, nevertheless, paved the way for a power discourse between the marginalizing and the marginalized.

In *Beloved*, blacks' space was still somehow rigid since it spots the time from the 1830s to 1870s when African Americans' have just entered the social hierarchy of the American society. On the other hand, *Song of Solomon* spans the time from 1931 to 1963 where they started to try different tools to redeem their past through social and political activism. Thus, *Beloved* was more about describing the concrete sources of collective trauma such as the institution of slavery and the infanticide and how they were embraced psychologically through orality. *Song of Solomon* portrayed intergenerational trauma and how concrete defending tools as literacy and social movements could save blacks' interests.

It has been pointed out that orality in the novel is an African tradition which helps in undermining stereotypes to prepare for cultural coherence. However, literacy is crucial in practicing or hindering the force of any power which is apparent in the experience of Milkman's grandfather Macon I who disregards the importance of legal documents to save one's interests as well as the experience of the popularity of Mrs. Michael-Mary Graham because of her poetic writings. From a social psychological perspective, there is a yielding impossibility for marginalized groups to defend themselves without hierarchy-attenuating myths and institutions through orality and literacy respectively.

In other words, both novels communicate that political disintegration stems from the absence of orality or its presence without an agent. That is, just like how the mainstream power needed hierarchy-enhancing legitimizing myths, the new African American community needed hierarchy-attenuating myths. However, the political space was dominated by stereotypes and forgetfulness; the space that would be made coherent through the orality that the character Beloved generates. It happens that Sethe's infanticide does in a way strengthen whites' stereotypes about blacks' savagery and inferiority. She also gives them agency through her silence about the motives behind her deed. Moreover, her silence is the cause of the inheritance of a missing past which fosters intergenerational trauma. As a result, silence or the absence of a coherent orality encourages the persistence of whites' stereotypes and brings a vague idea about what to fight for at the system wide level.

The presence of orality should be accompanied by institutions that concretize the ideological power of such myths. In *Song of Solomon*, the African American political activity lacked coherency which is portrayed in the novel through the political 'talk' that the barbershop witnessed and in the lack of political organization. In addition, political deficiency is also represented through the extremism of Guitar's movement, the Seven Days, which emphasized asymmetrical group behaviour and through the political disengagement of Milkman.

Meaning loss and psychological distance because of power practice prevented grieving, and therefore, the ability to reconstruct and restore social relationships. At the personal level, in *Beloved*, Sethe suffers from lack of childhood attachment due to the institution of slavery. Ironically, Sethe's children also suffer from unhealthy childhood

attachment because the mother wanted to get rid of the institution of slavery. It was not until the appearance of Paul D as an intervening factor that Sethe started to remember the past to make sense of the present. Similarly, it has been analysed how Milkman is unable to take risks or engage in any political activity because of his failure to take risks due to the lack of childhood attachments.

Collective trauma is also apparent in further dividing the black community into distinguished classes. Sethe is believed to be inferior to her own people because of the infanticide. The repression of the family by society members hinders the formation of healthy social connections which would lead to collective healing. By the same token, the behaviour of Macon Dead II and his daughter First Corinthians foster aggregated group behaviour which affects the formation and restoration of social relationships since they feel and act as superior in comparison to other members of the community due to their acquisition of white tools such as wealth and well-education.

Addressing the problem gave meaning to how Magical Realism could be an adequate tool to embrace the African American collective trauma in both novels. It has been deduced that Magical Realism connotes the dualism of equally two important realities, that is to say, blacks' African and American reality. Magical Realism, in fact, tries to create a fair dialogue between two conflicting cultures to realize reconciliation and identity coherence. From a social psychological point of view, the second chapter clarified, that through reconciling what is magic which refers to blacks' culture with the real which indicates whites' culture, cognitive consonance could be attained. Furthermore, the implementation of magic helps in imagining past conflicts and low-level construal to construct coherent narrative of healing after meaning loss. Finally, the chapter

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demonstrated how Magical Realism masters space by framing hegemony then creating counter narratives to weaken mainstream power. Magical Realism gives the opportunity to appropriate stereotypes and to create valid hierarchy-attenuating legitimizing myths and ideologies which would pave the way for adequate hierarchy-attenuating social institutions.

Unlike *Beloved* which is based on Magical Realism as its mythical structure, *Song of Solomon* enjoys moments of Magical Realism. Morrison prepares specific circumstances for Milkman's first step towards healing which is taking risks. Taking risks is essential because of his political disengagement at the beginning of the novel. Pilate works as an intervening factor for Milkman to restore meaning and trust in taking risks. She is, in fact, a perfect representation of Magical Realism since she is spiritual and because of the magic that lies in her body. The CLT illustrated how, instead of psychological distance, Milkman does literally reach an object in the past by traveling to the American South. Accordingly, Magical Realism, as a self-referential tool, provides an adequate narrative to reach objects in the past and to imagine healing in the future. Finally, it has been indicated how Magical Realism with its dualistic nature helps in reconciling antagonistic political forces such as materialism/spirituality, and social forces like belonging/exile, or personal forces as acceptance/denial. It helped Milkman, the protagonist, to mature spiritually, to engage socially and politically, and to reconcile his incoherent identity.

In *Beloved*, it is revealed how the coming of Paul D leads to the concretization of the ghost Beloved signifying the time for confrontation. It debates how Beloved helps in grieving and constructing meaning through provoking Sethe's memory. For example, she provokes Sethe to express her childhood memories about her mother. Magical Realism, as

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a self-referential tool in this context, helps in imagining the past through low-level construal to reach an object in the past and to construct healing in the future.

Finally, Morrison in the novel emphasised the importance of authenticity which qualified her works to be canonical. Magical Realism is probably an authentic tool because it just tries to capture the reality of African Americans as it is without proposing how it should be or how it should behave. Magical Realism allows a space for the presence of the African imagination inside a Western society because that is who they are. They are Africans who have no option but to continue living inside the American society.

Magical Realism, in fact, with its dual nature reflects both realities. For example, in the novel Baby Suggs makes the point that African Americans as a community do not need to pretend that they are a superior race or they are the chosen people by God, but they just need to be mindful of their present and their past. For *Beloved*, Morrison, uses African aesthetics, magic, to create counter-narratives that would weaken the mainstream myths and ideologies. For instance, she provided a new perspective for looking at the story of Margaret Garner whose story has been documented on whites' newspaper. The counter-narratives in its turn would mesh the African American society due to shared experiences, struggles, and beliefs leading to recovery.

Morrison's *Song of Solomon* and *Beloved* are novels which make use of Magical Realism to embrace the African American collective trauma. In *Song of Solomon*, Morrison moves from individual healing through the realization of identity coherence to collective healing. In *Beloved*, however, she focuses on remembrance and group acceptance and its influence on self-acceptance and individual healing.

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Accordingly, Magical Realism in *Song of Solomon* incites the protagonist to discover the lost past due to intergenerational trauma. Nevertheless, Magical Realism in *Beloved* helps the protagonist to remember the missing past due to personal trauma. From a social psychological perspective, identity coherence indicates cognitive consonance which secures healthy political engagement to build institutions that would save African Americans social and economic interests through literacy. On the other hand, group remembrance would provide the very first basis for power practice within the hierarchical system through orality to create adequate hierarchy-attenuating legitimizing myths and ideologies.

Although the present thesis did not adopt a feminist approach, it is worth acknowledging that it falls, as well, within the critic of women's writing. The latter is a field of study that questions the traditional perception of women inside patriarchal societies. For black female writers, the situation is more challenging since they reconsider both: their classification on the basis of sex and race. Morrison's works try to adhere and sound the experience of women in societies as such in addition to their identity quest. For example, in *Song of Solomon* and *Beloved,* she places magic in the female body, Pilate and Beloved respectively, and stresses on the role of women in realizing healing. For example, the role of women in Milkman's strife.

Furthermore, the selected novels address the development of the protagonists' postcolonial identity. The character Milkman, as he matures spiritually, becomes self-aware of his hybridity which he embraces after experiencing what Homi Bhabha refers to as in-betweenness which is the inability of adopting neither the culture of the oppressor nor that of the oppressed. On the other hand, Sethe's alienation, meaning the unconscious

rejection of one's culture, stems from her traumatic past. However, her consciousness evolves when she overcomes shame and becomes accepted by the women of the community.

Morrison relied on myth in both of her novels to restore social connections. In *Song of Solomon* and *Beloved*, she implemented magic as an effective cultural tool to refer to collective trauma. Thus, social psychological theories described the stressful relationships among the novels' population as well as the characters' political and social engagement when they recover. Therefore, the thesis' hypotheses are confirmed. However, as no research work is complete, it would be interesting to undertake further avenues of research related to this Doctoral theme, including the use of Magical Realism in Latino-American literature, art and painting.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Introducing Toni Morrison

https://femmedinfluence.fr/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/toni-morrison-profile-c-timothy-greenfield-sanders-0581c397304250ffc4a37d592a260c0129762d4e-1.jpg

Toni Morrison (1931-2019) is an African American writer and educator. Her contribution to the African American culture as well to black women's studies represents mainly in providing coherent counter-narratives to mainstream myths and ideologies. Her political activism and genuine writing styles made her recognized nationally and internationally. She inspired many senior writers and leaders, and she was rewarded many titles throughout her life. She is most known of her implementation of Magical Realism such as *Song of Solomon* (1977), and *Beloved* (1987).

Appendix 2: On *Song of Solomon*
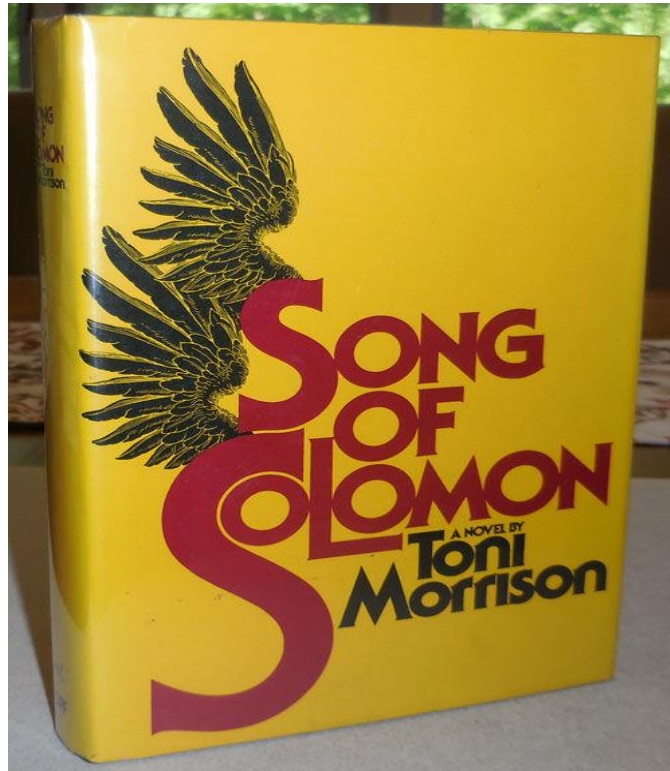
Synopsis

Morrison, in *Song of Solomon*, dramatizes the black and white conflict by highlighting the role of language in rearranging traumatic spaces. The burden of language in the novel is to help the protagonist in realizing spiritual awakening through flying back to his origins. Milkman listens to a children's folk song in the street and when he deciphers it, he finds out that the song glorifies his grandfather's escape to Africa. The front cover of the novel illustrates the centrality of language in communicating spiritual and physical flying by creating wings to the words that constitute the title while emphasizing once again the self-preferentiality of this artistic narrative.
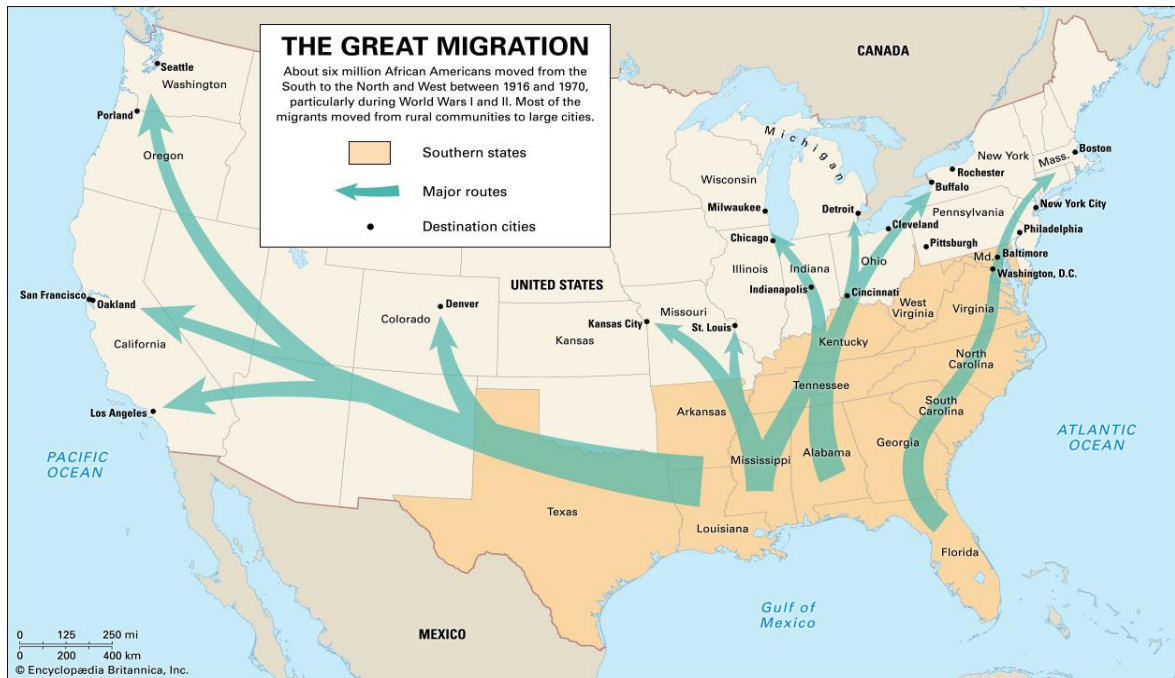
Appendix 3: On *Beloved*
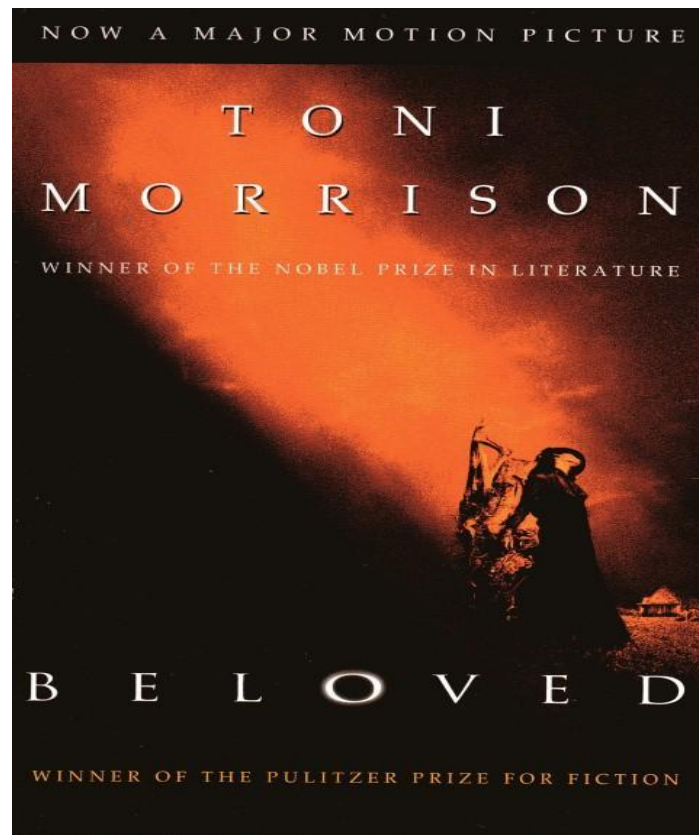
Synopsis

The novel *Beloved* is about infanticide as a slave objection and the generated themes of guilt and shame out of that act. Sethe, the freed mother, encounters Beloved, the killed child, after many years. The confrontation helps Sethe to close historical gaps that hinder her psychological recovery. The front cover presents Beloved as if she lies in the dark abyss of memory. There is also the use of the red colour of fire as an indication of inflamed debates inside Sethe's mind which probably try to detect the presence of Beloved by psychic energies.

Appendix 4: The African American Great and Second Migration 1915-1970

THE GREAT MIGRATION

About six million African Americans moved from the South to the North and West between 1916 and 1970, particularly during World Wars I and II. Most of the migrants moved from rural communities to large cities.

Southern states
Major routes
Destination cities

https://cdn.britannica.com/72/205172-050-9415210B.jpg

The map shows how the geography of America changed dramatically after the great and second migration of African Americans. They have even moved north during the great migration. Then, during the second migration (1940-1970), they have even moved westwards. Immigration is a major theme in Morrison's *Song of Solomon* where she relies on geography to highlight the importance of dislocation/location in reconstructing the African American collective and individual identity.

Appendix 5: The Documentation of Margaret Garner's Story

Arrest of Fugitive Slaves.

A Slave Mother Murders her Child rather than see it Returned to Slavery.

Great excitement existed throughout the city the whole of yesterday, in consequence of the arrest of a party of slaves, and the murder of her child by a slave mother, while the officers were in the act of making the arrest. A party of seventeen slaves escaped from Boone and Kenton counties, in Kentucky, (about sixteen miles from the Ohio,) on Sunday night last, and taking with them two horses and a sled, drove that night to the Ohio river, opposite to Western Row, in this city. Leaving the horses and sled standing there, they crossed the river on foot on the ice.

Five of them were the slaves of Archibald K. Gaines, three of John Marshall, both living in Boone county, a short distance beyond Florence, and six of Levi F. Daugherty, of Kenton county. We have not learned who claims the other three.

About 7 o'clock this morning the masters and their agents arrived in pursuit of their property. They swore out a warrant before J. L. Pend...

Synopsis

The document is an extract from a newspaper article which reported the deed of Margaret Garner who killed her own child. Morrison after reading about such historical facts, she decided to write the novel *Beloved*.

<h1 style="text-align:center">Glossary</h1>

- The following definitions are taken from the selected references.

Civil War

Civil War Civil War in the United States began in 1861, after decades of simmering tensions between northern and southern states over slavery, states' rights and westward expansion. The election of Abraham Lincoln in 1860 caused seven southern states to secede and form the Confederate States of America; four more states soon joined them. The War Between the States, as the Civil War was also known, ended in Confederate surrender in 1865. The conflict was the costliest and deadliest war ever fought on American soil, with some 620,000 of 2.4 million soldiers killed, millions more injured and much of the South left in ruin.

Collective Trauma

Collective trauma is the consequence of a traumatic event witnessed by a group of people. The trauma affects the behaviour of individuals and their social and political performance. For that, collective trauma does not only alter human behaviours, but also the physical apparent space i.e. the establishment of

institutions, the construction of memorials, and the reconstruction of destroyed locations. (Alexander, 2012; Kellermann, 2007)

Culture

Culture, as a preliminary definition, is about making sense of nature through language. The constructed knowledge could be passed on to subsequent generations. It is of accumulative nature, and it sometimes extends to embrace metaphysical and magical worlds such as religion. With the development of the field of cultural studies, researchers started to consider culture as a whole way of life. Chris Barker believes that the concept of culture "is a 'political' one that stresses the intersection of power and meaning with a view to promoting social change and improving the human condition as 'we' would define it" (67).

Dualism

Dualism is a term often associated with Descartes' Cartesian Dualism. It is the belief that there exists substance attributed to the nature of the mind, and matter attributed to the nature of the

physical world. One is public; the other is private and quasi observable. The two realms are separate, yet influence each other (Baker, & Morris, 1996). Cartesian Dualism was then criticized by Hegel's dialectic who reconciles both extremes. He is famous of his idea of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis.

Feminism

Feminism is a term commonly and quite indiscriminately used. Some of the currently used definitions are: a doctrine advocating social and political rights for women equal to those of men, an organized movement for the attainment of these rights, the assertion of the claims of women as a group and the body of theory women have created, belief in the necessity of large-scale social change in order to increase the power of women.

Feminist Writing

Feminist writing is to assert a feminine language particularly challenges men literary canon (criteria). Ecriture feminine is the focus in the so-called French school of feminist criticism on the existence of a distinctive woman's language.

Geographic circularity

Geographic circularity is the term that characterizes the movement of the Protagonist from the beginning to the end of the novel which opens and closes at the same location. Michael North believes that "Large-scale narrative repetitions are inevitable in a plot based on the double" (158).
Geographic circularity became more popular during the twentieth century such as the works of Samuel Beckett's *Molloy* (1955) and Edith Wharton's *Summer* (1917).

Grief

According to Merriam-Webster, grief is the state of being profoundly influenced by loss. With the development of cultural studies, however, the meaning of grief started to be more related to the culture within which it is practiced. In other words, grief is meaningless if there has not been a clear idea constructed culturally and through language about what to grief for. Therefore, grief as a socially constructed state of mind is strongly related to the value of the lost thing or significant other within a particular culture.

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Healing	**H**ealing is open to multiple meanings. There are many kinds of healing: of bodies, emotions and relationships; from grief, disruption and every form of brokenness. In many cultures, healing means restoring the social order when it has been broken by human disagreements.
House/ home discourse	**H**ouse/home dialectic is inspired by Morrison's essay *Home* (1997) in which she describes how the term fits postcolonial spaces that is dominated by hegemony. Through the combination house/home she tries to reconcile the thesis 'house' which is often associated with whiteness/ oppressor/ rigidity/ laws/ and materialism with the anti-thesis home which is often associated with blackness/ oppressed/ fluidity/ freedom/ and spirituality. She intends to inhabit the house through home to reconcile the past with the present.
Hybridity	**H**ybridity is a term from botany – referring to cross-breeding– hybridity in postcolonial studies refers to the mixing of races (miscegenation) and cultures so that new forms of culture are produced.

Identity

Identity is a complex term due to its fluid nature and due to the political space that allows or hinders the expression of one's identity. Stuart Hall (1990) believes that identity is a product in the making. It is both passive and active because of time interval. For Chris Weedon (2004), identity is both a belief and its physical manifestation in addition to biological characteristics such as gender/sex/dress which are able to be changed according to one's different experiences. Identity, then, is a process, accumulative, internalized 'within', or manifested 'without'.

Literary Authenticity

Literary authenticity in the past was considered as a contesting practice to express originality based on personal aesthetics such as the style of language and the overall folklore of a certain society such as choosing themes related to one's culture (Bendix, 1997). Within the African American context, authenticity is the ability to express blacks' reality as it is without the influence of an extern power that limits the possibilities of a text to communicate what is considered as truth for African

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Americans. An example of unauthentic African American literature is slave narratives.

Magical Realism

Magical Realism, in literature, is a mode a genre in prose fiction often associated with Postmodernism and characterized by a mixture of realistic and fantastic elements. Works of Magic Realism are set in the real world and treat the magical or supernatural as an inherent, even mundane part of reality requiring no explanation. They typically feature complex, tangled plots; abrupt chronological shifts and distortions of tone; and a wealth of images, symbols and emotional and sensory details, dreamlike sequences are common, as is incorporation of the carnivalesque, folklore, and myths.

Myth

Myth is a traditional anonymous story, originally religious in nature, told by a particular cultural group in order to explain a natural or cosmic phenomenon. Individual myths are typically part of an interconnected collection of such tales, known as a culture's mythology. Even when a culture no longer believes that its myths are true explanations, however, these stories often survive as receptacles of important cultural values.

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Self-referential narratives	Self-referential narratives are narratives that gained their popularity during the nineteenth century. Contemporary works are famous of referring to their self-awareness of the narratives they narrate such as contemporary British fiction. Self-referential narratives do relate and refer to the environment they are written in such as the socio-political context. They also rationalize the methodology as well as the instruments used in creating narratives like why and how characters do the things they do.
Slavery	Slavery describes the condition of a person or people in permanent servitude, dating back to practices of human bondage that began during ancient times. These practices have taken different forms in the evolutionary sprawl of societies from small kingdoms through the vast reach of European imperialism. Primarily due to geographic proximity, throughout most of world history, people have been enslaved by others who have been "racially" (in our modern sense) identical. It was not until the early modern history (sixteenth and seventeenth centuries) that slavery

assumed a racialized dimension, as the
expansion of European empires
accelerated with the Atlantic slave trade.
New constructions of national, ethnic,
and racial difference emerged as the concept
of "race" developed as a crucial
teleological justification for the
enslavement of millions of Africans and
their forced migration to the Americas.
This point stresses the need for a
substantive grasp of slavery and its
central relationship within African
American studies.

Third Space

Third space is a site that honors the
dynamic way that "lived space" connects
discourse with location. Third space,
according to Soja, functions as a
counterspace that can foreground a
writer's lived experience through the all-
encompassing "relations of dominance,
subordination, and resistance" that define
each and every writing situation (68).

Résumé

Le traumatisme collectif Afro-Américain ainsi que la manifestation d'un tissu social fracturé empêchent la lutte des noirs de réaliser l'équité raciale. En effet, la politique des sociétés modernes compte fortement sur l'inégalité sociale qui pousse les groupes opprimés d'expérimenter l'oubli collectif, deuil, dissonance cognitive, et la distance psychologique malsaine à cause de stéréotypes. Les récits de guérison dévoilent le traumatisme collectif aussi bien que les outils possibles qui aident au souvenir et à la récupération. Par conséquent, la présente thèse essaye de mener une étude socio psychologique par l'utilisation de quatre théories, dissonance cognitive, théorie de la domination sociale, théories de la perte et du changement, et théorie du niveau de compréhension. Elle a analysé les romans les plus célèbres de Toni Morrison, *Chant de Salomon* (1977) et *Beloved* (1987) comme récits de guérison. Dans *Chant de Salomon*, elle se concentre sur la cohérence identitaire et son rôle dans l'engagement politique tandis que dans *Beloved*, elle souligne une commémoration collective, ce qui est important dans la légitimation d'idéologies politiques Afro-Américaine. L'analyse a révélé que l'utilisation du Réalisme Magique, en raison de sa nature dualiste, pourrait réconcilier l'espace antagoniste par l'appartenance systématique de forces opposées telles que réalité/mythe, blanc/noir, et Africain/Américain. Toni Morrison, dans les deux romans utilise cette magie pour créer des mythes qui refléterait plutôt que répudierait la réalité.

Mots clés : Traumatisme collectif, Afro-américains, réalisme magique, guérison, socio psychologie

ملخص

الصدمة الجماعية الأفروأمريكية التي تتمثل في خلل النسيج الإجتماعي تعيق سعي السود لتحقيق التساوي العرقي. في الحقيقة, سياسة المجتمعات الحديثة تعول بشدة على اللاتساوي العرقي الذي يجعل الجماعات المضطهدة تعاني من النسيان الجماعي,الحرمان,التنافر المعرفي والبعد النفسي الغير صحي بسبب النمطية. حكايات الشفاء تخاطب الصدمة الجماعية و كذا الأدوات الممكنة التي تساعد على التذكر و التعافي .و منه فإن هذه الدراسة تسعى لإجراء دراسة نفسية اجتماعية بالاستعانة باربع نظريات, التنافر الادراكي, نظرية الهيمنة الاجتماعية, نظرية الخسارة و التغببر, ونظرية مستويات التاويل. الدراسة تدرس روايات توني موريسن الأكثر شهرة,أغنية سلمون (1977) ومحبوبة (1987) كحكايات علاج. في أغنية سلمون,ركزت موريسن على تماسك الهوية و دورها في المشاركة السياسية,أما في محبوبة فهي تخاطب أهمية التذكر الجماعي و دوره في شرعنة الأيديولوجيات السياسية الأفروأمريكية.التحليل كشف بأن إستعمال الواقعية السحرية بحكم إزدواجيته يساعد على إصلاح الفضاءات العدائية من خلال الإقتران الممنهج للقوى المتضادة مثل:الواقع/الخرافة,أسود/أبيض و إفريقي/أمريكي,موريسن في كلا الروايتين تتكل على الواقع السحري لخلق خرافات تمثل الواقع بدلاً من أن تتنصل منه.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الصدمة الجماعية, الافرو امريكيين, الواقعية السحرية, الشفاء, علم النفس الاجتماعي

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