CHAPTER IV

STYLE

I. The Hallmarks of Morrison's Style

Morrison highlights the strength and shortcomings of her characters, both male and female without any reservation or bias. She recognises the tragedies and extreme hardships of the horror that was slavery, but also intersperses elements of joy, humour, and happiness experienced by the enslaved. An intimate and energetic narration, sympathetic yet sometimes troubled characters and the profound moral messages that underline the stories of African Americans are the hallmarks of Morrison's style.

(a) New Phrases and Words:

Morrison has introduced some rare phrases which are not in common usage. Gail Caldwell is of the view that Morrison, "knows how to find the sunlight in a field of darkness and turn the rain to song" (1). Morrison has introduced new usages like 'carsick' in Paradise. When a person becomes tired of travelling in a car, he is described as 'carsick'; and talking while crying is expressed as 'talk-crying': "Pallas went to (Connie) . . . , talk-crying" (173). Another usage that is employed in Beloved is "talk-think". It is a word that expresses the meaning 'soliloquy', "kneeling in the keeping room, Sethe usually went to talk-think" (48). Paul D tells Sethe that he is a "walking man" (57), because he does not have a permanent place for his living. He is forced to loiter and thus he calls himself a "walking man".

Usually women are compared to the soft elements. But Morrison brings out some rare comparisons like "sitting quiet as rock" (Paradise 190), "tight as wax" (Paradise 207). Morrison describes Lone's silence and her stubbornness as stone to
show how strong women are. The shape of the oven in Ruby is compared to the shape of the head of man and its capacity is equated to desire, which has no end. Because human beings' desires are too thick and too deep until they are fulfilled, the oven's shape is "round as a head, deep as desire" (Paradise 6). Morrison compares wax to the community. Wax melts itself but at the same time it provides light to others. Like wax, the community has to expand its hands to others.

In Jazz, Morrison uses some new phrases like "stream of confidence" (26). Usually critics demand that the writers should have 'stream of consciousness', that they have to write without interruption. There must be a flow in their thought. But Morrison suggests that flow of confidence is necessary for human beings to achieve their aims. And it is necessary and needed particularly for the Black women to overcome the odds.

Morrison adopts a refreshing technique of using nouns and adjectives as verbs, particularly in her novel Paradise. "Lines of car necklaced the entrance" (34), here the noun necklace is used as verb. The other nouns converted into verbs are knifed, instead of cut, inked for writing, toyed is used for played, and dogged, for followed. Instead of using the word seeing, Morrison uses eyes. Like nouns, adjectives are converted into verbs — silvered, quieted, and righted Righted is used instead of repair,

Morrison also uses three prepositions continuously in a sentence, which is a rare usage and Morrison adopts it in Paradise,"... as she stepped into her splayed shoes and on out to the yard" (41) and "... she crawled out from under T (76). Morrison uses string of words like "somebody - done - gone - and - left - me - times", "little - girl - gone - to - woman", "six - finger - dog - tooth - meringue - pie" in her novel The Bluest Eye (18, 22, 48). In Song of Solomon^ she uses, "I -
know - you - gonna - facie - up" (257). Morrison uses "y°u - black - bitch - what’s -
the - matter - with - you" (171) in Beloved and "ready - for - bed - in - the - street"
(71) in Jazz. She also repeats a single word several times in a sentence like
"between, between, between, between" (204), "are, are, are, are" (205), "la la la, la
la la" (205), in Tar Baby.

Morrison's use of the juxtaposition of opposites, for example, the opening
of The Bluest Eye gives the contrasting idea that "nuns go by lust as quiet as
and drunken man with sober eyes" (9). Usually nuns are free from lust, but here
Morrison shows them as lustful. She presents men with sober eyes even if they
intoxicated. In Tar Baby, Morrison describes that the whole island as "vomiting up
color"(161). The island appears in a Kaleidoscope of whirling colours and it is
described as vomiting its beauty. When Son asks Jadine what she wants out of
life, the narrator tells that it is "a tiresome question of monumental ordinariness"
(145).

Two contrasting ideas are combined in some passages. For example, the
night is filled with both noise and silence, ". . . night of noisy silence" in Jazz (39).
Another example is from The Bluest Eye, the young girls, Claudia and
Frieda are walking slowly to meet Pecola at Pauline's working place. Here the
walk of the girls is described as "calculated disorder"(82). The girls are moving
carefully but at the same time moving in confusion.

(b) Myth, Image and Symbol:

Morrison's novels are rich in descriptions associated with metaphors,
symbols, and images. Three types of symbols — conventional, accidental and
universal are used by Morrison. She handles these symbols elegantly and
meaningfully. Sethe's marks on her back in Beloved symbolize the evils of slavery
and sexual violation. But the White servant girl, Amy views those marks as an image of fertility, instead of oppression and sterility. While the pregnant Sethe lying on the banks of Ohio River, desperate to reunite with her children, Amy gives a different interpretation of the bloody marks on her back, as a tree, having a lot of branches, and "darn if these ain't blossoms" (79). These marks won't erase the cruelty of slavery, so Amy teaches Sethe a survival tactic, and gives Sethe her identity as a nurturing source, reinforcing her self-instead of as an object.

Morrison uses train as a symbol of independence. The railroads and rails indicate freedom because during slavery the Blacks escaped using trains from South to North in search of freedom and better life. In Beloved, Sethe escapes by train from her slave master and joins her children. In Jazz, Violet and Joe travel by train from South to North in search of better life. In Sulu, Net's train journey towards South with her mother motivates her to identify her 'self.

The watermelon in The Bluest Eye that Cholly Breedlove remembers for the rest of his life appeals not only to the sense of taste; it becomes, in fact, a metaphor for love, an emblem for female sexuality. The seedless, deep red slice of watermelon, as Cholly places it in his mouth, becomes "The nasty - sweet guts of the earth" (107).

Tar Baby is rich in metaphor and symbolism, especially there is a strong relationship between the garden metaphor and Christian symbolism. It is important to note that Son also brings the Sun to the green house. He "healed" the plant in a miraculous way just as he rid the green house of the pesty ants by putting mirrors outside the green house door (147). Son's healing power underscores his status as a Christ symbol as well as his being symbolic of the sun, which brings light and warmth to the plants. He does possess a kind of magic that saturates
his environment -- Son is "that certain kind of man" for whom "the mist lifted and the trees stepped back a bit" — as if to make it easier for him to pass (306).

In *The Bluest Eye*, Pauline finds her life miserable because her husband Cholly is incorrigible. She considers herself as a Christian woman. She would like to punish Cholly. She is not interested in Christ the Redeemer, but rather Christ the Judge. Thus Morrison symbolises Pauline as Christ who passes judgement on Cholly, the sinner.

The birthmarks carry both negative and positive connotations in Morrison's novels. For Sula, the birthmark, a scar over her eye is a symbol of evil. The inhabitants of the Bottom treat Sula's birthmark as an indication of other-worldliness. Because of this scar she is looked upon as a witch.

But in Dorcas' case, the birthmark, little half moons under her cheek bones are like faint hoof marks becoming a trace and Joe feels that without those tracks he would be lost. Joe is proud that he traced his mother and tracked Dorcas.

Morrison gives the image of a bird, a meaning that operates in two opposite directions. In *The Bluest Eye*, the image bird signifies the broken spirit of Pecola after her parental rape, and in *Sula* the bird image appears as an indication of the change in Sula's personality which makes the town upside down. The parental rape destroys Pecola's personality. And, in the madness, Pecola develops the involuntary motions of a bird: "Elbows bent, hands on shoulders, she flailed her arms like a bird in an eternal, grotesquely futile effort to fly"(162). The metaphor of the bird does not signal a new aggressive personality but a broken spirit, unable to get off the ground. The beginning of Part II of *Sula*, announces that Sula "Accompanied a plague of robins, Sula came back to Medallion. No body knew why or from where they had come."(89). Sula's return
is announced by the plague of robins and her behaviour is associated with the
plague. Sula becomes the agent of transformation in their lives.

Again, in *Sula*, Morrison uses the bird and spider as metaphors for the
inner lives and transformation of the characters. In one passage, the author draws
together the difference between the two main characters in the novel. The spider,
Nel, so scorned by Sula for her clinging to the conventions survives whole which
Sula the experimental bird of prey, dies at the end.

The Queen Bee image in *Sula* has folktastic connection, which provides
negation of destiny. The Queen Bee has the misfortune of falling in love with a
male bee and the male bee dies, shortly thereafter. The community believes that
her love is a fatal sting and finally the Queen Bee also commits suicide when
she falls in love last time. She sacrifices herself rather than unavoidably
threatening the life of her lover. She is thus an emblem of the condition of the
women who are like the Queen Bee. The repetition of this pattern reinforces the
structure of the novel, *Sula*, by showing such character as a victim. Sula is the
victim like the Queen Bee, which finally dies.

The image of the soldier ants is a part of Son's characterization. Son is
the agent of fertilizing. He Hicks the stems of the cyclamen hard to make them
bloom. This fertility in Son emphasizes the image of fruitfulness.

Morrison employs mere mythic allusions accommodating mythic archetypes
to modern realities. She uses myth as a fully accredited mode of ordering human
experience. It serves a cultural function meant to validate people and places that
have been devalued and to offer cultural affirmation of those people and places as
a prescription for healing and transforming American culture.
Morrison symbolizes the swamp women to teach Jadine about the values of femaleness and African culture; their heritage. Through the women in trees, Morrison seeks to affirm the mothers, grandmothers, and sisters to whom she dedicates the novel. The woman in yellow suggests the importance of the Black culture. The women in yellow, swamp woman, and night women at Eloé, remind Jadine of her alienation from female self and Black tradition. Women hanging in the tree tell Jadine the significance of surrendering to her man. The night women at Eloé symbolize motherhood and the importance of nurturance to Jadine. But Jadine tries to escape from Son, and also from her cultural heritage, historical tradition and familial past. By denying these women, she denies her own motherhood. The images of women haunt her to warn her that psychic wholeness will elude her until she returns to her Black and female self. These women are the 'tar woman' whom Morrison applauds and whose value, she believes, should not be minimized by attention to the wrong value system or by existential longings and separate self-defnitions. They provide the caring concern for home, family and community.

*Song of Solomon* draws heavily both from the world of folklore and the worlds of mysticism and magic. Morrison muddles the division between the real and the fantastic, and myth and history. The myth structure of *Song of Solomon*, is that of the hero's myth. The myth structure is responsible for the cohesiveness of the novel.

The classical myth of flight is seen in the beginning of *Song of Solomon* with the flight of Robert Smith. Through the tale of Solomon, the central metaphor -- flight is described — as an existential freedom. Milkman realizes the responsibility of Pilate at the moment of her death. Milkman believes that without
leaving the ground, she flies and he considers that Solomon's flight is true because if one could surrender to the air, one could ride it.

In *Tar Baby*, Son has accidentally killed his wife; he did not intend his wife's death, but he has not atoned for it in any way, expect to run from city to city, from country to country, jumping ship every time his life becomes difficult. He is thus a mythic figure, with no roots in any place, who appears and disappears when it suits him. So, he lives at the edge of society, changing his name, of which he has several, anytime he gets a new job.

Morrison signifies the popular tale of "Brier Rabbit" the Black trickster whose ability to survive "is tested and ultimately vindicated when the rabbit successfully escapes white farmer's trap, which takes the form of a female tar baby" (Andrews 90). Son and Jadine represent the tricksters. The trickster is concerned with the survival of the individual rather than the community. Like the African trickster figure, a shape-changer who assumes different names among the different tribes — the social security cards held by Son read William Green, Herbert Robinson, and Louis Stover, among others.

Morrison also exemplifies the potential danger that such a trickster can pose to the community, through the ghost of Beloved. The child-woman is a "shape shifter" who haunts 124, and the sons, Howard and Buglar had run away when they witnessed "two tiny hands appeared in the cake." (3). Later on, the ghost itself takes the shape of an eighteen-year-old girl and arrives at '124', Bluestone Road.

The community 'kitchen' symbolizes harmony of the Black community in *Paradise*. They build an oven, large in size, cook together and eat together. The oven symbolises their hard labour. Morrison suggests that the story of the oven
is the tradition of Black culture, which is central to the well-being and survival of the self and the community.

Morrison creates a supernatural figure, the water lady who saves the life of...
his reintegration into the community. It foreshadows his journey from ignorance to self-knowledge. When he leaves the cave, he is in excessive hunger, which prompts him to eat leaves. He has lost his watch and must tell time by looking at the sun. Finally, Milkman realizes that he has become wise.

Rituals of flight and return most often involve the journey from the country to the city and back. The rituals give continuity and coherence to a people and their way of life. The journey provides knowledge of the outside world. It also gives courage to reject one's world, if found unsuitable. Pilate affirms her own freedom and preserves human values; her ancestral history. She protects herself, her daughter, grand-daughter, and Milkman. She educates others with the wide experience gained through her journeys.

Jadine acquires a vast knowledge through her journeys, but she forgets her own people and culture. She gets freedom, but she forgets her cultural roots. Thus, Morrison's narrative in fiction serves that journey is a source of personal and shared history and it is a form of communal affirmation. The ultimate reward for the journey out is the opportunity for growth and fulfilment of desire; and the reward for journey back is the reservoir of remembrance, self-discovery, and renewed desire.

Mirror is used as a symbol to show one's personality and to tell one's past. But in the Blacks' life, the mirror is used to express their ugliness and their self-hatred. In *The Bluest Eye*, Pecola "sat looking in the mirror, trying to discover the secret of the ugliness" (34).

In *Song of Solomon*, when Milkman stands before his mirror, he is not enamoured of his reflection. He feels that he is not a whole man because one of his legs is shorter than the other. Both Hagar and Milkman love each other.
When their relationship brakes and Milkman finds a white girl, Hagar becomes mad. She looks into the mirror. The mirror reveals her the truth that she is ugly when compared to the White girl, with whom Milkman is infatuated.

(c) Animal Imagery:

The animal imagery highlights Morrison's theme that "when one human being treats another as an object or an animal both are dehumanised or become bestial" (Jothiprakash 164). The Black people are usually called by the names of animals like bitch, hog, mule, dog, workhorse, and so on. Usually the slaves were treated as animals and always compared to animals by the Whites. During the delivery of Pauline in *The Bluest Eye*, the White doctors compare Pauline to a horse. The doctors comment that the Blacks deliver their babies without any pain "just like horses"(99). The Blacks also compare their own people with animals when their characters resemble that of an animal. Cholly is called by the townspeople an "old dog"(11) and Geraldine, a mulatto calls Pecola a "nasty black bitch" because of her blackness and ugliness (72). Mrs. MacTeer engages in gossip with her neighbours. When they refer to Henry, one of them tells, "Henry ain't no chicken"(9). Here chicken stands for immaturity.

In *Suija*, Sula's awful act makes others call her a bitch, and roach. In *Song of Solomon*, Pilate's daughter, Reba says that Pilate could go for months without food like a lizard. Macon Jr. compares Pilate with a snake and warns Milkman not to have anything to do with her, because she is a snake and she could harm Milkman. Macon Jr. tells about his wife, Ruth that she is "naked as a yard dog" (73). In *Paradise*, the nine - man gang attacks the Convent. But the women in the Convent escape towards the yard, like scattering fowls. When the townspeople
are worried about their future, the future of Ruby is compared to a dog as "the future panted at the gate"(306).

In *Tar Baby*, Son identifies Jadine as a tar baby, created by foxy Valerian to catch Black men. Valerian has paid for Jadine's education, which has made her the most sought-after Black model in Paris. Son tells her that she indeed has caught him and he invents a story that "a White fanner had a farm . . . A rabbit came along and ate a couple of his . . . cabbages". So the White man had an idea to trap the rabbit and he "made a tar baby" (233). Jadine is tightly bound to the culture she has adopted and gradually realizes that she cannot end up her life with Son, and she rejects him at last.

In *Beloved*, Paul D reminds Sethe that she is not an animal but a human being. He comments that "you got two feet, Sethe not four"(165). During slavery, the slaves were badly treated. The Schoolteacher in *Beloved* treated the Black slaves as animals and he measured the limbs of his slaves and noted their 'animalistic' characters.

( d ) Colour Symbol:

Morrison's fascination with colour is expressed with symbolic power and it is a trait that is found in the Black people. Red and Yellow and their combination, orange are frequently used colours. There is a power of the woman in yellow in *Tar Baby*, who leaves gold tracks on the floor. There is the orange square in the quilt that Baby Suggs contemplates before dying. Red may sometimes be associated with passion, but it may also be associated with oppression. His "flame-red tongue" and "indigo" face mask him in the way the conjurers of tradition have had some distinguishing features (21). The red baby-blood in *Beloved* refers to the living baby, Beloved.
The slaves were restricted in choosing colours and they were prevented from enjoying the colour sensitivity. But the Black women usually have colour consciousness. During slavery, the Blacks were given dresses in black and blue colours but white and other colours were forbidden. So, after emancipation the Blacks started adopting their traditional colours, like, yellow and black. In Beloved, the floor in Baby Suggs' house is in earth-brown, her dresser in wooden, the curtain in white, the quilt over an iron cot in blue, and she has wool in black, brown, and grey. Her house is on BluesUme Road.

In The Bluest Eye, the protagonist Pecola's house and in Beloved, Baby Suggs' house are in grey colour. Whereas, the "green house" (9) in Tar Baby shows the prosperity of the White master. Through the colours black, white, blue, grey, green Morrison highlights the racial problem in America born out of colour prejudice.

Morrison uses the colour imagery to mark the race of people. She uses black and dark for African Americans, white for the White people and yellow, brown and chocolate colours for the mulattos. The blue eyes in The Bluest Eye indicate the beauty of the Whites. For the Whites, the colour white reveals purity, and celebration whereas for the Blacks the same white colour represents pain, death, and disease.

In Sula, Eva Peace's husband Boy Boy has deserted her and their three Children. When Boy Boy returns with a woman after several years, in a pea-green dressy the colour green reveals his immaturity and heartlessness. His psychic fragmentation is revealed in his bright orange shoes, bright nails, and city hat.
(e) Food Imagery:

Milk is the image most particularly associated with male impotence in Beloved, as Halle watches helplessly while Schoolteacher's nephews violate Sethe so brutally by taking her milk. Halle's response to his inability to protect his wife from such perversity makes him lose his manliness and sanity.

The round, unbearably bright orange that Pilate is eating when Milkman visits her for the first time signifies a very great deal more than Pilate's own navel - less stomach; Milkman is fascinated by how sensuously she peels the orange and separates the sections, holding each so precisely to her "berry - black" lips in Song of Solomon (39). Even the single act of peeling an orange is shown as having more meaning than it should be. Like orange, the perfect soft - boiled egg which Pilate offers Milkman: "The yolk I want soft, but not runny. Want it like wet velvet" (39) has an implied meaning that the removing of the shell of the boiled egg symbolizes Pilate's attempt to remove the ignorance of Milkman.

(f) Body Parts:

Morrison reinforces the idea 'black is beautiful' by giving importance to the black colour as well as the body parts of the Blacks. Morrison wants to express the idea that the complexion of a person itself is not enough to impress others, instead, each of her body part should impress others. Morrison describes how women's body parts like, foot, thigh, back attract men folk. Pauline's broken foot is attracted by Cholly in The Bluest Eye. When Son and Jadine in Tar Baby go for a picnic, Son wants to see and touch Jadine's feet because he likes them. In Suta, Hannah's thighs attract men. Her lover wants to see her thighs when she bends.
In *Song of Solomon*, Milkman is attracted by Hager's back and falls in love with her when he meets her for the first time. Here the narrator tells that there is no need to see her face because "he had already fallen in love with her back" (43). In *Beloved*, Sethe's back, marked with scars attracts Paul D and it also makes them recollect their past. Back tells all the truths and the pains of the Black people. In *Tar Baby*, Son stares at the back of the gardener, Gideon. Son knows backs. He has studied them because "backs told it all" (119).

In *Jazz*, Morrison describes the entrance of the city as the "lip of the city" (44). It shows that the entrance of the city is so charming and attractive like a lip.

( g) Call - and - Response:

In traditional Black church services, the preacher depends on the expressed reaction of the congregation to judge the direction and success of his sermon. He is not a solo performer in isolation from his audience, but one part of a communal experience (Byerman 7). Likewise, the dozens, a ritual, requires a crowd to inform the two combatants of the quality of their exchanges. Within these forms, cooperative, creative, changeable expression is encouraged. The call to order by those who dominate receives a response from the folk realm, in the form of a voice, which refuses to forget or to be silenced.

Morrison highlights the quality of the blues through the simple call - and - response device. For example, there is a little girl in *Jazz*, who taking out her baby brother in a wicker - carriage, suddenly remembers to pick up a record to be played for a friend, runs inside the apartment, asking Violet to take care of the baby in the mean while. The childless Violet picks up the baby and walks off. There is a commotion when the baby's sister screams on seeing the empty
carriage: "She took Philly!"(32). A crowd gathers around the girl and the anxious crowd asks, "'who took him?' . . . "You left a whole live baby with a stranger to go get a record?" . . . "I hope your mama tears you up and down"'(32~33). These question - and - answer pattern is like the voices in a chorus based on the call - and —response pattern.

The Black folk forms generally have a call - and - response structure that relates the performer and the audience. It corresponds to the individual and community, oppression and freedom, the Black and White, silence and voice, trickster and tricked, order and chaos.

(h) Sermons:

In Paradise, the proceedings of the marriage ceremony of K.D. and Amett is given in a Sermonic style. All the townspeople are gathered in the church. The ceremony is based on the pattern of call - and - response. Rev. Pulliam is the preacher who is conducting the ceremony. He preaches the definition of love, Love of God and Love of Human being.

How do you know you have graduated? You don't. What you do know is that you are human and therefore educable, and therefore capable of learning how to learn, and therefore interesting to God, who is interested only in Himself which is to say He is interested only in love. Do you understand me? God is interested in you. He is interested in love and the bliss it brings to those who understand and share that interest.... Some of the aniens that accompanied and followed Reverend Senior Pulliam's words were loud, withholding; some people did not open their mouths at all (141- 42).
The Black preacher conducts sermons and he expects the flock, "to speak, to join in the sermon, to behave in a certain way, to stand up and to weep and to cry and to accede or to change and to modify to expand on the sermon that is being delivered" (Morrison. 1984 344). In African American folk religion, preachers get some sign from God that He needs their energies; and they become workers in His vineyard.

A few Black characters adopt the styles of Black preachers. They depend on shouted responses from the audience as a Black preacher does. Morrison uses a woman character performing the role of a priest and such a female priestess talks about bodily parts and earthly existence. In *Beloved*, Baby Suggs becomes a holy woman and uses the form of religious rituals to impart regular advice. She gathers a crowd at the clearing which serves the community centre. Suggs draws upon the call-and-response tradition. The other slaves in the clearing expand heartfelt emotions at Sugg's direction, they cry, dance, and laugh in celebration of the humanity they have bestowed upon themselves.

After situating herself on a huge rock, Suggs bowed her head and prayed silently. When she shouted, "Let the children come!" and told them "Let your mother hear your laugh", the children came towards her and laughed. Then she asked men, "Let your wives and your children see you dance", they followed her. Finally, she called women to "Cry", the women started crying (107).

Suggs wanted the Black people to know about their body parts and to love them. She said, "O my people they do not love your hands .... Love your hands! Love them. Raise them up and kiss them" (108). Then she asked them to love their mouth, their neck, and their heart and the people started to do what Suggs said.
(i) Singing:

Through singing, the Blacks express their emotions — sorrows and joys. They sing about their poverty, hunger and hard work. On hearing the song sung by Beloved, Sethe remembers her past experience at Mr. Garner's plantation. She also sings only for her children. Beloved later on asks Sethe to sing for her too. Music is a pain-reliever for the Blacks. They protest through music and also express their hope and ideas. Music becomes everything for the Blacks -- death, violence, and hope.

In *The Bluest Eye*, Claudia's mother, Mrs. MacTeer's blues shine through in the discourse of the adult Claudia as memories of her childhood and the seductiveness of her mother's voice makes Claudia for the pains of adulthood. She feels that pain was not only endurable, it was sweet.

The presence of music is strongly felt by the whores, China, Poland, and Marie. Poland is the blues singer and she carries on the old tradition of blending the sweet and the sad memories:

\[
\begin{align*}
& I \text{ got blues in my mealbarrel} \\
& \text{Blues up on the shelf} \\
& I \text{ got blues in my mealbarrel} \\
& \text{Blues up on (he shelf} \\
& \text{Blues in my bedroom} \\
& \text{Cause I'm sleepin' by myself} (38).
\end{align*}
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The presence of music signifies the authenticity of the whore's life. In women's blues, "the lyrics are rich with a mixture of joy and sorrow. The voice rendering the lyrics is always sensual, authoritative, and in control of the emotion described"(Byerman 179).

The most important story that Pilate tells is the one embedded in the song she sings so often, sometimes alone, sometimes in chorus with Reba and Hagar.
"The song exemplifies Morrison's folk aesthetic through its 'blues beat' and it signifies her mythic impulse through its "choral note." The song conveys the story of Pilate's grand-father as well as the story of an entire race. Pilate sings: "0 Sugarman done fly a way... Sugarman gone home...."(6). The original song that Milkman hears at Shalimar contains his family history and the history of the ancestors. Milkman is proud to hear the glorious song about his great-grand-father: "Jack the only son of Solomon... Solomon gone home"(303). Pilate knows and guards the family history; her blues song about 'Sugarman' is not a lamentation but a celebration of Solomon, the ancestor who escaped slavery by taking flight.

Music nourishes personal wholeness and group togetherness. Jazz represents the repressed voices of African Americans without narrowly relying on authoritative and conventional rules of classical written composition. Jazz accommodates a collective African American identity, which is essential for the survival of African Americans because the music functions as a communal repository, preserving and conveying identity-shaping truths.

(k) Folklore:

African American folklore is the basis for most African American Literature. During slavery, the laws prohibited the teaching of the slaves, so it was necessary for them to impart their values to their children through folk tales and songs. Transmission by word of mouth took the place of pamphlets, poems, and novels. The powerful against powerless became a popular theme in African American Literature. The thematic folk expressions and folk beliefs had their parallels in the structural patterns that later shaped the literature. Writers adopted these patterns into their works from the earliest days of literary creativity among
African Americans, and they have continued those trends into contemporary writings.

Morrison consciously follows the tradition and adopts folkloristic material into her novels. The familiar literary history of tales, legends, beliefs, and structure of folk traditions are incorporated into her fiction. Morrison transforms historical folk material into literary folklore, which are recorded and collected without violating their authenticity, and incorporated into literary texts without compromising their original quality. In an interview, Morrison commented that she tries to incorporate into her fiction, the major characteristics of the Black- art, "the ability to be both print and oral literature: to combine those two aspects so that the stories can be read .... Because it is the affective and participatory relationship between the artist or the speaker and the audience that it is of primary importance .... (Morrison, 1984 344). Morrison has gone beyond the mere drafting of traditional items in her fiction. In her literary use of folklore, she may begin with a joke or superstition in its recognizable, traditional form, but at the same time she also takes fictional license in making the folklore into something that has never been circulated in any folk community. She takes the forms of traditions within African American folk community and gives them fictional substance, so the outline of a story, a joke, or a belief is recognised by the readers.

(1) Story Telling:

As an essential element of the African American oral tradition, story telling is a vehicle for passing the history from one generation to the next. Story telling promotes healing, helps change to occur and creates catharsis. It also relieves their mental pain. The older and elderly Black women engage in tale telling process. Morrison uses a number of ancestor figures in story telling process.
Morrison also believes that "we don't live in places where we can hear those stories any more; parents don't sit around and tell their children those classical, mythological, archetypal stories that we heard years ago" (Mobley 1). The traditional oral forms — specifically the blues and the trickster tales — provide the basis for theorizing about African American literature in its construction and its intertextuality. There are certain forms, conditions and ideas, entangled in the African American psyche and culture that they are instinctively recognizable when they appear in literary and their appearance evokes in readers a 'depth' and 'quality' of experience.

In *The Bluest Eye*, Blue Jack, the old man becomes a nurturer, who reinforces the communal folktales to Cholly. Blue Jack tells his old-times stories, his escape from lynching and the life he has led — carefree and without responsibilities.

In *Song of Solomon*, Macon Dead Jr., Ruth, Guitar, and Pilate, give Milkman a sense of his community. Macon Dead Jr., tells Milkman three stories — the story of his father, Macon Dead Sr., how he was cheated by his neighbours and murdered by them, the second story is about his marriage to Ruth, and how their relationship broke down and the third story is about the gold, he believes that Pilate has stolen from him.

Ruth tells Milkman another version of the story about her relationship with her father and her life with Macon Jr., the death of her father and her love for Milkman. She also tells him how she prayed for Milkman, on her knees to protect him from Macon Jr.. Guitar attempts to teach Milkman, how to survive in their community, and how to get knowledge about the world as a whole by telling stories of the Seven Days.
Pilate is able to teach Milkman about the rural world of tradition and communal values. Milkman also understands the importance of human life from Pilate and her interest in possessing human beings rather than possessing properties. Circe tells the ancestral story to Milkman, which enables Milkman to know about himself.

Each story links the past with the present. It is also a ritual that links the old to the young. As a ritual, story telling unites the teller, tale, and listener, creating a collective memory that connects the self to a community of others. In a small neighbourhood, all the people know each other's stories and experiences by heart.

According to Mobley, the village story telling symbolizes "how all human ancestry goes back to some place, some time where there was no writing. Then, the memories and the mouths of ancient elders were the only way that early history of mankind got passed along" (16). It affirms the value of shared narratives for giving coherence to a community. So, the story telling develops a communal bond, the bond that holds them together.

Morrison contends that one of the distinctive elements of African American writing is that "there is always an elder there. And these ancestors are not just parents, they are sort of timeless people whose relationships to the character are benevolent, instinctive, and protective and they provide certain kind of wisdom" (Morrison. 1984 343).

In Beloved, Sethe tells her story first to Paul D then to Denver and to Beloved. She tells about the abuses that were perpetrated on her by the Schoolteacher's nephews and her escape from them, and the delivery of Denver and the murder of Beloved. Baby Suggs also tells the story of her past life to
Denver, how she was used by men as a 'sex-dolt'. She had eight children from seven different men and she was separated from her children when they were sold to different plantations. These stories enable Denver to realise the horrible history of slavery.

In *Paradise*, the stories of the founders of the Haven describe the life of the Blacks during the period immediately after emancipation.

Son tells stories of his own people at Deep South to Jadine in *Tar Baby* to educate her and make her realize her culture and her own people.

The oral tradition, in the form of story telling provides a journey for both the teller and listener, and the reader is a part of this journey. Story telling inspires them to recall, recite, and interpret. The story telling aspects in Morrison's works, present a new opportunity for the country people to expand their own consciousness. Sarah Orne Jewett in her *The Country of the Pointed Firs* tells that "the best thing we can do for the people of a state is to make them acquainted with each other" (137) through story telling.

( m ) Humour and Laughter:

Humour can be used as a tool to take control, maintain power, or overthrow those who have claimed authority. "Humour is a serious and often subversive political tool that African Americans have employed for centuries to ensure their survival. Humour can bind individuals within a community despite the threat of racial oppression" (Andrews 88). Morrison considers how some African American women take humour into their own hands; by telling their own tales, by finding strength in shared laughter, and in some cases, by becoming tricksters themselves. The trickster connects the African American population to African
narrative traditions and offers a way to cope with and laugh at the strictures of White American culture.

The Black humour is a form used to laugh at others and to laugh at oneself. It provides a relief from pains and it embodies the survival of Blacks in the hostile world. Humour is used as a metaphorical description of Black life. Sixo in Beloved, at Garner's Sweet Home, always entertained other slaves by his anecdotes about his adventurous deeds in a mysterious way. Laughter becomes medicine to their pain. Sixo becomes a pain reliever to the other slaves. Whenever he is punished by the master, he never worries about it, instead, he laughs. Through his laughter he also takes revenge on the masters.

Sula, opens with a "nigger joke", associated with the origin of the Black community in Bottom, when a Black stave performed a particular task the White master presented the rocky hill country to him and convinced the Black man that it was the bottom land, since it was the "bottom of heaven."(6).

Morrison brings another dimension of the African American humour tradition through the shared laughter; the legacy of the Black women's humour. It becomes a survival tool. Violet's friendship with Alice is cultivated through shared laughter. It illustrates the positive potential of laughter. At first Alice wants nothing to do with "the women people called violent" but later on both the women share their feelings (79). Through the memory of Violet's grandmother and her interactions with Alice, she learns that humour is more serious than tears.

Laughter is universal and ambivalent and it is free from dogmatism and pedantry. It represents a sphere of freedom - a loop - hole from the severity of every day life. Laughter is nothing but ridicule that every one can laugh at
anything. China, Poland, and Marie represent the centre of carnival in The Bluest Eye, filled with liberating force of laughter.

In Song of Solomon, Macon Dead Sr.'s name is registered wrongly in the Freedmen's Bureau. The place where he belongs is his first name, Macon and the detail about his father becomes his last name, Dead. Milkman and Ms mother, Ruth have joked about their family name, Dead. She comments that if Milkman becomes a doctor and if a sick person wants to meet him, she said that "if you were sick, would you go see a man called Dr. Dead" (69). While talking about their names with Milkman, Pilate said that "Somebody should have shot" her father. On hearing this Milkman commented that "What for? He was already Dead" (89).

The men gathered in Tommy's barbershop begin to tell about the atrocities, they had heard, and they had witnessed and the things that had happened to themselves. Their personal "humiliation, outrage, and anger turned back to themselves as humour" (82). They laughed at themselves and humour becomes a survival tool for them.

(n ) Folk Belief and Folk Medicine:

The Black people have faith in folk medicine. They respect their folk beliefs. This faith is manifested in the multifaceted quality of their lives. In The Bluest Eye, the opening chapter tells about the burial of the Marigold seeds. The sisters Claudia and Frieda have belief that Pecola's baby will survive according to the growth of the Marigold seeds. The fact that the Black people relate their life with nature is shown by Morrison through the belief of the sisters.

The Black people have faith in miracles. The little girl Pecola longs for blue eyes and she believes that until a miracle happens in her life she will not be
free from her ugliness. The Blacks always say "Whoa Jesus, and a number", instead of cursing anyone and in *The Bluest Eye* one of the prostitutes, Marie expresses this idea to Pecola(41).

Knowing the strange behaviour of Sula after her return to Medallion, the townspeople started to guard themselves. "So they laid broomsticks across their doors at night and sprinkled salt on porch steps."(113). Her unpredictable life creates a scare in the minds of the community and they try to protect themselves.

The Black people were not allowed to have marriage ceremony during slavery. The White masters never encouraged the Blacks to get married. So, the Blacks chose their partners and started living together after performing certain rituals. In *Beloved*, Halle takes over Sethe as his wife by hanging ropes in her house.

In *Paradise*, at the wedding of K.D. and Arnette the buzzards have been flying over the town. The people in the Ruby believe that it is a harmful sign because the birds circle the town. But they also believe that there is less harm because none of them land. People believe that the presence of the birds during marriage time is an ill-omen.

Winter is dreadful to the Blacks because they do not have proper protective things with them. To control the cold of winter they put pepper in their stockings. And if a person is affected by fever they put Vaseline on the person's face. Castor oil and warm water are used as purgatives. When Plum in *Sula*, is affected by stomach-ache, Eva gives castor oil to him to stool him out, but it does not work. Finally, Eva massages Plum's stomach by giving him warm water to relieve him at last. Salt water itself provides a medicinal effect. In *Beloved*, when Beloved becomes a young girl, and arrives at Sethe's home, she is jealous
about the relationship between Sethe and Paul D. So, she pulls her tooth to show her anger. At that time Denver puts salt water in the wounded place to heal Beloved's bleeding gums.

(o) Biblical Allusions:

Morrison uses Biblical allusions to imply an action contrary to the meaning of Biblical context. For example, in *Song of Solomon*, when Milkman and Guitar are arrested for the theft of the green sack from Pilate's house, Pilate goes to the police station to release both the boys. Pilate is not an educated person, but she is well versed in the Bible, so that, she could handle it for her convenience in front of the police. Pilate introduces verbal irony that she is keeping her dead husband's bone because she does not have enough money to bury. She declares, "Bible say what so e'er the lord hath brought together, let no man put asunder - Mathew Twenty - one: Two"(207). So she keeps her husband's bone with her and when she dies both can raise up to Judgement Day together, hand in hand. Pilate employs Biblical quotations to terrify the police and to assert her own righteousness.

In *Sula*, when Eva advises Sula to have a man in her life, Sula's provocative behaviour makes Eva quote from the Bible - "Bible says honor thy father, and thy mother that thy days may be long upon the land thy God giveth thee" (93).

In *The Bluest Eye*, when Pecola is adopted by the MacTeers, Pecola wants to drink milk in the Shirley Temple cup, Mrs. MacTeer says that "... Bible say feed the hungry" (19) and it is a nice thing to follow, but it is very difficult to feed a girl who is greedy for milk. Morrison also quotes from the Bible, "Bible say watch as welt as pray" (17). In *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison uses "I Yam What 1 Yam?" (143). This is a modification of T am what I am' from the Bible.
In *Paradise*, during the marriage ceremony of K.D. and Arnette, Rev. Richard Misner cites a passage from Mathew 19:6, "wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh", to seal the couple's fidelity (144). The idea about love between human beings is described as "God loved the way humans love other; loved the way humans loved themselves; loved the genius on the cross who managed to do both and die knowing it" (146).

The horror of slavery has come back in the shape of a ghost in *Beloved*. Beloved's name is taken from the Bible, Romans 9:25, "T will call 'my people', /and her who was not beloved/ T will call 'my beloved'".

( p) Proverbs:

The use of proverbs in novels indicates the folk tradition and life of the Black people. Their culture is revealed and sometimes their pains are also expressed in proverbs. In *Beloved*, the statement "If a Negro got legs he ought to use them" (12) explains that the Black people have to use their legs if they want to run away from brutalities of slavery. "The sold one never returned, the lost one never found" (154), this proverb brings the brutality of slavery, where the Black could not enjoy stability in their family life. In *Paradise*, Rev. Misner says during the burial of the baby, Save Marie, "what is sown is not alive until it dies" (307). He says that life in life is changeable and life after life is everlasting, so the baby is blessed because the baby has received the love, which is wide and deep.

( q) Black Vernacular English:

Black Vernacular English has an unique syntax and grammar. The Black writers, particularly women writers use Black vernacular English because the Blacks should not feel ashamed of their mother tongue. Morrison believes that the
nguage used by the Blacks is something different. She says that it is the way Words are put together, the metaphors, the rhythm, and the music - which is the part of the language that is distinctly Black to her when she hears it. So, when she writes, she has to write to that kind of audience who made up of people in the book. Through wrong usage and Black vernacular English the Blacks try to break the rules followed by the Whites. The Black people adopt wrong usage of the verbs. *Amy* Blacks use words in the wrong way with the wrong syntax or agreement.

Morrison applies such usages in all of her novels to make the readers experience the same feelings. The words such as, 'gimme', 'dis', 'wanna', 'gonna' way serve as examples. Eva uses "He was grewed" *(Sula 71)*, instead of using grown. In *Beloved*, Stamp Paid goes to the White master's house to meet his wife, Vashti. A servant maid tells him that his wife will meet him with eggs and Stamp Paid replies, "You know if she brutig em? (287). Morrison also uses some words with special spelling that others won't use in general, and one of such words is *pinnacle*. Instead of the original spelling, the word is spelt as "pea-knuckle" in *The Bluest Eye* (31). The Blacks use "ax" for "ask" and Morrison used this in *Jazz* (84). Dorcas' partner Martin purposely pronounces "ax" for "ask" in his elocution class.

(r) Narrative Technique:

Morrison uses the narrative to present disorder, violent, perverse worlds less overt but no less troubling. Morrison's first novel, *The Bluest Eye*, opens with a sample of the idyllic "Dick and Jane" primer (7). The primer acts as an ironic frame for the entire novel's narrative; its image pervades all of American society - from schoolbooks to print and electronic media — as the standard for family behaviour and beauty. The three passages portray a family's life in identical terms,
but they differ in punctuation, capitalization, and spacing. The first passage is normal in all of these aspects:

\begin{quote}
Here is the house. It is green and while. It has a red door. It is very pretty. Here is the family. Mother, father, Dick, Jane live in the green-and-white house. They are very happy. See Jane. She has a red dress. She wants to play. Who will play with Jane? (7)
\end{quote}

The second passage lacks punctuation and capitalization.

\begin{quote}
Here is the house it is green and while it has a red door it is very pretty here is the family mother father dick and jane live in the green-and-white house they are very happy see jane she has a red dress she wants to play who will play with jane (7).
\end{quote}

The third passage lacks all punctuation, capitalization, and spacing.

\begin{quote}
Here is the house it is green and while it has a red door it is very pretty here is the family mother father dick and jane live in the green-and-white house they are very happy see jane she has a red dress she wants to play who will play with jane (7).
\end{quote}

The structure describes the distance between order and disorder, between the expected and the unexpected. It describes the contrast between the poor Blacks and the pervasive White middle-class myth, which Pecola and her family are unable to attain. The first passage represents the average White family, the second passage represents the MacTeer household and the third, the Breedlove family respectively. While the Breedloves lead a chaotic life, the MacTeers are neither "ideal nor completely chaotic," just like the second passage (34).

Almost in all of Morrison's novels, the chapters counterpoint three moments in time: a past before the narrative present, the central present and the narrative present of the story. In *The Bluest Eye*, the central present is presented as the
primer, and the narrative present of Pecola's story is told by Claudia. *Beloved* describes the past by rememory and the central present of Beloved as a young girl and the narrative present of Beloved is by third person narration. The different narratives in each chapter provide variations on a specific theme. This technique demonstrates the interconnectedness of past and present in fiction.

In all of Morrison's novels the narrative of the story describes the beginning at the end or ends at the beginning. That is the story ends where it begins. In *The Bluest Eye*, Pecola's madness is described by Claudia in the beginning of the story and the novel ends with the soliloquy of Pecola in her madness. In *Sula*, the Golf Course replaces a Black town in the opening of the story is repeated once again in the last section of the novel and also speaks of the same change. The Robert Smith's flight in the opening chapter in *Song of Solomon* is ended with the flight of Milkman. *Tar Baby* tells about Son's escape from the ship and intrudes into the island, in the opening chapter and the final chapter also describes the escape of Son from the boat to the ancient blind horsemen with the help of Theresa. The opening of *Beloved* tells about the haunt of 124 Bluestone Road by the baby ghost and the same ghost at the end of the novel troubles as a young girl, but it is drifted out by the women in the society. *Jazz* tells about the cold relationship between Joe and Violet at their house after the death of Dorcas in the beginning of the novel and the story ends with a warm relationship between Joe and Violet. And *Paradise* opens with the murder of a White woman in the Convent. It ends with the same incident. Thus Morrison connects her novels from the beginning till the end.

In general, the narrator is both male and female in the novels. Female voice reveals an understanding about women and the heartache in their lives.
caused by men and other women, whereas the masculine voice speaks with great bravado about the life in the city. Voice also presents a dynamic tension between rural and urban life, past and present, and innocence and corruptions.

Morrison narrates the stories with the first person narration, authorial narration and omniscient narration. In the authorial narration, the author criticizes persons, their activities and events. The Omniscient narrator is a silent observer, who watches the events, everything outside of the scene. Morrison makes use of the narrator's voice to present the reader with information on the discourse that is taking place between herself, the creative, voyeuristic, omniscient narrator, and the text itself, consisting of the independent, vibrant, dynamic, multidimensional lives of the characters and their complex surroundings. For example, this method is used in *The Bluest Eye* and *Jazz*.

*Beloved* is narrated particularly from Sethe's point of view, and it includes the versions of her two daughters, Beloved and Denver, and also from Paul D's. In this novel, "time oscillates between past and the present", thereafter the progress is chronological (Adhikari 121). The ghost narrative is used by Beloved's monologue. It is marked by a total absence of punctuation, highlighting the fantasy of merging and oneness of her plaintive rambling. Her words reveal the psychic loss -- the denial of recognition — at the core of the fantasy: "there is no one to want me to say me my name . . . ." (212-13).

The concept of "rememory" is used in *Beloved*, which guides to understand the characters of the novel (44). Rememory is the continued presence of that which has disappeared or forgotten. Rememory has the potential to create a new perspective on the past that creates new possibility for the future. Reconnecting with the past makes one's experience of the past accessible to others. Rememory
now the basis for constructing relationship with others. Through rememory, sharing becomes healing to their pain. Rememory is the subject part of memory that is how people remember something. Rememory is a narrative technique used by the black writers as a tool for the ways of knowing and the ways of feeling. In *Beloved*, Morrison presents the lives of characters that are in the process of imagining and remembering their own individual pasts. The protagonist Sethe is troubled by the unpleasant rememories, which cannot be avoided. Being trapped into one's memories literally keeps most of the novel's characters outside of time, and Sethe is the emblematic victim of this existential condition. Suggs believes that there is no relief with any cherished memories. The novel is an attempt to redress memories, to accept their existence,

*Jazz* is not about the appearance of jazz on the American cultural landscape, it is as well as a book in which, "jazz is the structuring principle for the entire narrative." (Gates 63). The narrator speaks in a most human voice but has no human form. It is both a single entity and multiple voice. Stylistically, Morrison structures the narratives of *Jazz*, the way a jazz trio performs. The novel alternates between the 'solos' of the narrator Violet and Joe, Alice Manfred, Drocas, and Dorcas' friend Felice, and finally the narrator again. Moreover, the reader actually hears the jazz in reference to music that soars to the ceiling and through windows, music that bends, falls to its knees to embrace them all, encourage them all to live, since this is the one they have been looking for, dances and songs that used to start in the head and fill the heart. Thus, jazz gives form, texture, context, and meaning to the novel.

Like the music which the novel is named, the narrator improvises on the story she has to tell with fluid prose that connects the chapters. Morrison
consistently plays out one chapter and begins a new one with two related sentences. The last sentence of one chapter sets the tone for the first sentence of the next chapter, regardless of whether these two chapters are exploring the same theme or situation. Morrison accomplishes this link with little more than a common word or idea, much like a common note, key or rhythm would link different pieces or instruments within a jazz band. The first chapter ends with, "He is married to a woman who speaks mainly to her birds", and the following chapter begins with "when Violet threw out the birds, it left her not only without the canaries' company . . ." (37 - 39). By her use of conjoining linguistic structures to bridge chapters and sections, Morrison brings out a variety of themes while maintaining a musical, jazz.

Morrison attempts to achieve cultural transformation in three significant ways that connect her role as cultural archivist and redemptive scribe. First, she attempts to fill the culture that exists in the wake of historical transition. For Morrison, the void is in the lives of those Black Americans who seem to have lost the oral tradition of story telling that once sustained a sense of community, enriched their lives and enhanced their understanding of the world. Secondly, she attempts to endow common people, place, and stories with the mythic grandeur and significance of archetypal narrative and ritual to redeem or rescue neglected and forgotten literary material and the cultural values on which it is based. Morrison views myth as the 'shifting reality' and as a collection of stories or beliefs that orient audiences between their 'natural' world and the world of possibility. Thirdly, she attempts to make narrative a dynamic vehicle for preserving, transmitting and reshaping the culture in affirmative ways that
celebrates the past, that gives continuity with the present, and that offers faith in human potential.

2. Super-naturalism

African Americans have shaped the supernatural and the inanimate portions of this world in the image of human beings. They have wilfully drawn their imaginative conceptions from nature and seen themselves as a part of the natural world. These tendencies reflect an acceptance of humankind's place as one of many creatures on the planet, shared origins, and the absence of barriers between human beings, animals, and nature.

In *The Bluest Eye*, Pecola takes up a quest for blue eyes. Initially, she limits herself to drinking white milk from a cup with a "Shirley Temple" (12) and to buying and eating "Mary Jane"(37) candies. She hopes to be transubstantiated from common black clay into spiritual whiteness. At this stage, she achieves only the momentary happiness of seeing the white faces and wishing to have one. Later on, after the trauma of being raped by her father, she loses all sense of reality, visits a self-styled conjure man, and believes that she has actually undergone the change in eye colour that she so strongly and pathetically desired.

This illusion is found by Soaphead Church in the town, who molests young Black girl children, attracting them by his fake miracles. At the end of the novel he writes a letter to God. He caused a miracle but nobody could witness the blue eyes of Pecola except her.

Morrison is of the view that the nature itself shares the feelings of the human beings. When Pecola gets pregnant by her father, and becomes pariah of the community, the sisters Claudia and Frieda pray to God by burying the
marigold seeds to save Pecola and her child. The girls believe that the growth of the seeds will describe Pecola's condition, but at the end the seeds never grow up so as the baby in Pecola's womb.

*Sula* probes the origins of victimization and social order. Sula's refusal of positive identity cannot be tolerated by the folks, and she is looked upon as a demon. The signs become the necessary evidence to fit Sula negatively into the social order. The "plague of robins" that accompanies her return is taken as an ill-omen (89). Accidents are said to be caused by certain dark practices in which she engages. The most important of the signs is the "rosemark over Sula's eye", and each one observes it in such a way to validate his or her own interpretation (96). The assignment of meaning to an accident of pigmentation makes it possible to bring Sula within the structure made up by the interpreter.

To recognize her as truly different and alien would be to accept discontinuity, disorder, and absence. She took on for them the evil they had previously done to each other. They become righteous as a way of defining themselves as different from her. The group banded together for good now that it had identified evil. A fantasy of power is thus created that enable them to be evasive about the existence of death and White society.

In the opening of *Song of Solomon*, the birth of Milkman Dead is associated with the suicide of Smith, who leaps from the roof of the hospital. As he grows up, he acquires the attitudes of his family and friends. Before his birth, when he is in Ruth's womb, he is saved by Pilate, his aunt, several times from the cruel hands of Macon Dead Jr. with a miracle performed by Pilate.

Pilate's mother dies while giving birth to her, she has given birth to herself, and Pilate creates a family of women. Having no navel makes her a child
of the devil. She literally carries her name with her in a small brass box fashioned into an earring. And her posthumous relationship with her father makes her sing the song which tells their family history, and she carries the bones of her father throughout her life with her in a green sack. Her relationship with the supernatural power makes her preserve her family history that helps Milkman in his search for his quest.

Circe, the old woman who has been living for several years reveals the truth of Milkman's ancestors to him. She has been living in a house of a White family with an ever-increasing pack of dogs, intentionally keeps them inside to destroy all the precious objects that were purchased by the White master through the exploitation of Black labour. She is presented as a supernatural woman to highlight the dehumanising concept of justice.

Morrison provides human dimension to nonhuman beings in *Tar Baby*. The trees, butterflies, and reptiles are used to communicate and to experience pain as it is for human beings. There is a harmonious and hormonal relationship between humankind and nature. Those people who created the rupture between humankind and nature have long gone, but their descendants - the Streets, Sydney and Ondine, Jadine, and Son — are in a position to rethink that rupture and try to repair it. The centre of personification in the tragedy of defilement, the river shares traits with human beings who have been violated in some way and discarded, or rendered useless, like a grand-mother, victimized by unyielding, unthinking forces intent upon their own conception of the world: "Poor insulted, broken-hearted river. Now it sat in one place like a grand-mother and became a swamp"(10).
Morrison gives Supernatural touch to ordinary human actions. The quality of suffering assigned to the river echoes that of humans who have suffered acute losses. This somewhat reduced state of being is what Son encounters when he arrives on the island and what Jadine encounters after her picnic with Son. The island has been good to Son before his discovery by Margaret. It is when he ventures into the artificial structure, the house, and overstay his sojourn there that he is discovered. Like Brer Rabbit in his briar patch, Son can manipulate the impressions of darkness, but he loses that ability in direct proportion to his willingness to identify with the inhabitants of L'Arbe de la Croix, to be transformed from a natural to an unnatural state.

By attributing the basic femaleness in the trees, and showing Jadine holding herself wilfully, angrily outside that knowledge, Morrison makes clear that there is disruption between the human and the natural worlds. As earlier with the woman in yellow in Paris and later with the women who haunt her by exposing their breasts in Eloe, Jadine's lacks are shown to be suppressed parts of her basic nature.

Son has the most potential human character for bridging the gap between humankind and nature. Having spent eight years at sea, essentially in the womb of the earth, he had known a kind of "Traternity" with his fellow sailors (168). Son has an appreciation for the beauty and the danger of nature, as he does on his swim from the ship at the beginning of the novel; the current, or water lady, can save him or kill him. Son with his magical power smells Jadine, immediately after she has taken a shower, and he has "brought luck to the greenhouse", and his success with the cyclamen and hydrangea is viewed as a kind of Black magic (187). These notions of luck and Black magic are the qualities associated with
healers and herb gatherers, who are traditionally viewed as having some special relationship to, or understanding of, nature.

Therese, the wise woman is a treasure of folk traditions and the intermediate between humankind and nature, to shed further light on Son's place in the novel and his potential for repairing the rupture between the two worlds. Therese assumes that Son is a 'horseman' with a special destiny on the island. She becomes Son's escort on his final journey, and Son too embraces the world Therese has offered.

The opening of the Beloved itself describes the connection between the supernatural worlds to the natural world. The 124 Bluestone Road is filled with the baby's venom. The things at Sethe's home are always in disorder, and the baby ghost disturbs everyone at home. Sethe's sons, Howard and Buglar are frightened by looking in a mirror shattered and notice two tiny hand in the cake. Denver also has noticed a white gown alone dancing near her mother, Sethe. It indicates the cruelty of slavery and the torture experienced by the ex.-slave woman after eighteen years.

In an interview, Morrison herself reiterated that: "for African Americans, at least until the recent past, the experience of spirits communicating with the living was a natural one rather than some kind of weird, unnatural event" (http://www.MorrisonA)elv99_01_03.htm). Hence her representation of the spirit character as a body. In African American tradition, ancestral spirits may come back to the realm of the living, sometimes in the form of an apparently newborn baby. Beloved is the one who has come back after several years to demand her share and often disturbs the members at home. At the end of the novel, even Sethe fulfils her demands. But with Denver's help, the women in the town gather
and drive the ghost out of the house. Beloved’s supernatural behaviour exhibits when she is with Sethe and Denver. Beloved explains to Denver the story of the dark place, which denotes the story of millions of slaves who were dead and gone.

In *Jazz* Morrison describes how Joe and Violet are related to the city when they have started from south to New York. The city itself is shown as talking to them when they stared out of the windows for the first sight of the City, it "danced with them" (45). They are enchanted by the life of the city where no one cares for the other, moving in the streets like strangers, soon they too become one of them.

When Violet starts petting a parrot and neglecting her husband, Joe, it indicates that she is parting mentally from him. Violet's interest towards nature and birds make a distance between her and Joe. Violet comes to know about Dorcas' relationship with Joe, and after the funeral of Dorcas, it is hard for her to hear and bear the words "I Love you" of the parrot (37). So, she does not want to keep them any more at home and sends them away from the cage. But the parrot finds trouble to fly away on wings that had not soared for six years. It also shows the cruel act of Violet, by freeing the birds in the winter.

Violet has dreamt something dangerous before Joe murders Dorcas. In her dream, her breasts were finally flat enough not to need the binders the young women wore to sport the chest of a soft boy, just when her nipples had lost their point, mother - hunger had hit her like a hammer, knocked her down and out. When she woke up, her husband had shot a girl young enough to be a daughter. Her dream foreshadows the danger, which she has to face.
Golden Gray, a young man born into wealth and privilege, who has travelled toward South to meet his Black father, on his way encounters a pregnant and injured Black woman, known as Wild. Gray takes Wild to his father’s cabin, where she gives birth to a baby boy, thought to be Joe Trace. Both Joe’s birth and the journey of Gray are shrouded in mystery.

In *Paradise*, there is a correspondence between nature and man and it helps the Black people to survive in the White society. When the freed Black slaves move from Oklahoma state in search of a place to settle permanently, they were directed by the light of God and they move towards that direction and finally find a place, Haven, and make it prosperous by working together.

When Mavis seeks security in the Convent she finds relief because she senses the presence of her dead children, Merle and Pearl in the room. Mavis continues to feel close to Merle and Pearl at the Convent, and that feeling is part of the attraction the place holds for her. That the house remains filled with these child spirits is the first supernatural occurrence mentioned in the text of *Paradise*.

Consolata, who takes care of the Convent after the death of Mother Superior, engages with the destitute women in the Convent and practices witchcraft. With the help of her magic, she also prolongs the life of the Mother Superior. She uses her magical power to intoxicate the women in the Convent to indulge in lesbian act and also helps the other women in the town. At the same time with her witchcraft, she also threatens the men in the town. Thus, Morrison’s writings are deeply human, even when the works revolve around an aspect as supernatural as a ghost.
3. Naming

The slaves were not permitted to have their own names. They inherited their slaveholder's names. So, the Black people acknowledge the necessity of naming themselves. The act of naming thus becomes an act of resistance - to undo established models and codes. Whether one identifies with such representational constructs as black, each represents the original misnaming and the simultaneous constant striving of the dispossessed for full representation. Women of colour as a representational construct have a complex history of misnaming.

Naming takes an important role among Blacks. Through naming they try to assert their selves. During slavery, the Blacks were denied their own names. The White masters gave them names as they wished. So naming was a problem for the Blacks throughout their life. Morrison gives importance to naming and nicknaming in her novels. Morrison herself has nick a name. When she was studying in Howard University her real name, Chloe Anthony Wofford was changed Toni. In Morrison's The Bluest Eye, the narrator Claudia is well aware of the power of naming, especially when that power hinders the group or individuals within it. Just as her narrative has the potential to shape an alternative reality for future generations of little Pecolas, the power of "nicknaming and name calling shapes the realities of those who allow themselves to be defined by factors antithetical to their culture"(Harris 20). Pauline Breedlove is pained that "why she alone of all children had no nickname" (86). To have been assigned a nickname, in the tradition that is old and venerated in the Black community, would have given Pauline a much more definite personality as a child.

Writers have focused on the tremendous values of nick names in the Black communities, the special recognition they bestow upon an individual for a feat
accomplished, a trait emphasized, or a characteristic noticed. Without any of these, Pauline never seems to be claimed by her family in any special way, although they do seem to value the quiet place she holds as cleaning person and babysitter. This familial lack serves in part to explain Pauline's attachment to the rich white family for which she works in Ohio, when they assign her a nickname - Polly. By so doing, "they even gave her what she had never had" (99), and they thereby claim her attention and loyalty more than Cholly, Sammy, and Pecola are ever able to do. By calling herself Polly, Pauline has diminished herself through her obsequious dedication to whiteness.

When the boys circle Pecola in a ritual of insult and shout 'Black e mo', Pecola becomes the victim who invites further abuse because she suffers visibly. Pecola realizes that Maureen has given her shelter only to discover whether what the boys have shouted about her father is really true. It is because all the children have accepted the externally imposed belief that to be black is to be unworthy.

Elihue Micah Whitson is also called Soaphead Church by the community. His name is mysterious to him but nevertheless reflective of his perverted sexual preference for "clean" little girls. To know the person's name is to have power over that person, and this is the reason in Soaphead's mind that God refuses to name himself: in his letter to God Soaphead Church challenges: "'What is your name?' and said instead 'I am who I am'"(142).

In Song of Solomon, Milkman's nickname also has an extraordinary origin, it is also a misname, imposed by someone with no concern about the consequences. It is a name laden with embarrassment, and shame, which Milkman never fully understands. Milkman's name signifies his relationship with his mother. He satisfies his mother Ruth's indulgence until he was a grown-up boy. It was
discovered by Freddie, the janitor and neighbourhood gossip. Freddie spreads this news and people begin to call him Milkman.

In *Tar Baby*, Jadine gives a nickname to her aunt Ondine - Nanadine. The Streets and the "Philadelphia Negroes", Ondine and Sydney call Therese and Gideon Mary and Yardman the domestic servants respectively. And in *Paradise*, Pallas' nickname is Divine. In Morrison's novels, nicknames are often appropriate and also denoting truth about characters, revealing secrets, and determining how a person is viewed by a particular community.

Morrison has shown some names, which have contradictory meaning to the characters. In *The Bluest Eye*, Cholly Breedlove's last name is quite obviously ironic because love is not nor has it ever been what he breeds. Instead, his life is a compilation of abandonment, self-contempt, and despair. He never bothers about his family members when he burnt his house and put them outdoors and rapes his daughter, Pecola. On the whole, the Breedloves never breed love in their family; instead they show hatred towards each other.

The Peace family in *Sula*, has no peace, even though they desire peace. Eva Peace kills her son, Sula Peace watches her mother burning and sends her grand mother to old age home. In *Paradise*, Pallas True Love, one of the destitute women in the convent, is an isolated, lonely girl. Her parents Dee Dee True Love and Milton True Love do not have love on their own. They never show love to each other, instead they hurt others. Pallas is cheated by her own mother, Dee Dee. Pallas' lover, Carlos usurps Pallas' mother as his lady - love. Usually mothers support their daughters, and educate them to follow a perfect way. But here, the mother herself has committed sin and cheated her own daughter. The
mother turns rival to her daughter and no one at her home tries to comfort Pallas. Here, Morrison describes how the True Loves lack real or true love.

Morrison gives some Biblical names to the characters. In the Blacks' world their names are picked by their parents at random from the Bible. Pilate is described as one who literally wears her name; it was chosen from the Bible. Her father, who could not read or write, selected the name - his finger pointed to first. Even though the midwife tried to advise him against the "Christ - killing Pilate" (19), he persisted, partially out of confusion and melancholy over his wife's death at childbirth. The fact that she wears her name suggests the value she places on her identity over her possessions — a quality that distinguishes her from her brother Macon.

Macon Dead's two daughters, Magdalena and First Corinthians, whose names were selected by the family tradition of choosing names at random from the Bible, despite their names, are adult virgins who have never been permitted to experience love, either because all men in the community were socially beneath them or because these men lacked sufficient property. Pilate's grand-daughter Hagar's name has biblical connection. The biblical Hagar is concubine to patriarchal Abraham, mother to outcast Ishmael, and handmaiden to jealous Sara.

Solomon, a name used in the title is also from the Holy Bible. Solomon is the great - grand - father of Milkman. Like the Biblical Solomon, the great - grand - father is also a wise man, who has taken flight to his own African country, leaving his wife and children. The names Beloved and Sethe in Beloved and the name Joseph in Jazz and Eva in Sula are also the Biblical names. The names in Paradise, Seneca, Divine, Patricia, Consolata, and Grace are taken from the Bible.
Shakespeare says 'What is in a name, a rose will smell as sweet with any Other name', but for the Blacks naming is very important because it is equated to character. In *Beloved*, Suggs recalls her slave name as Jenny Whitlow, when Mr. Garner delivers her into freedom, she turns and asks him, "why you call myself nothing" (141). Suggs has no self because she has no frame of reference by which to establish one, no family, no children, and no context.

Baby Suggs is her real name. But, the white master, Mr. Garner calls her Jenny, because her sales ticket said Jenny Whitlow. She explains to Mr. Garner during her freedom that her husband calls her Baby and from her husband's name she includes Suggs. "Suggs is my name, sir. From my husband. He didn't call me Jenny"(175). A slave woman could not use her own name even after her attaining freedom. But, Baby Suggs prefers to hold on to her name, her identity.

Similarly, Paul D is one of a series of Pauls, identified alphabetically by some anonymous slaveholders, while Sixo is presumably the sixth of an analogous group. Stamp Paid, born Joshua under slavery, has, however, chosen and devised his own symbolic name, which represents a rejection of a tradition of White naming as well as a celebration of freedom. His name is also a symbol of freedom from debt; because he suffered under slavery and because he "handed over his wife to his master's son" (184), he has paid in misery any obligation to humanity, he believes, although his continued activity as a conductor on the *Underground Railroad* would indicate otherwise. All African Americans are, in essence, *Stamp paid*, Morrison implies.

Guitar Baines, is the real name of Guitar, but he refuses to have his White owner's name, because the master has given them sweets and money for his
father's death. His hatred is turned towards the White people and becomes a member of Seven Days gang.

In *Song of Solomon*, naming reveals that names form a historical and cultural index to the past. They also empower the community and the individuals to shape and affirm their own experiences. Naming is first introduced into the text in the rather elaborate explanation of how "Not Doctor Street" (4) got its name. Although the street is registered in the town as Mains Avenue, patients of the city's "coloured" doctor began calling it "Doctor Street" when he moved there . . . (4). The street receives its name suggests the possibility of the neighborhood. The renaming of the street illustrates the way in which African Americans make their own space intimate; they rename as a revolt against urban anonymity, against the colourless names whites have given their streets. Like Not Doctor Street, No Mercy Hospital, is also a counter negation of the white world that delimits the Blacks. No Mercy Hospital, where, until Ruth's son was born, the Black people were denied admittance.

Milkman's quest becomes an enactment of his father's dream, a hunt for an ancestral name and for his own 'real' name. The discovery of this name carries with it a sense of his humanity and also certain magical qualities connected with the Black folklore. Naming here has associations with African culture in which the name is the expression of the soul; because of this, the choosing and keeping of the name is a major ritual. To lose the name or, in African American terms, to be called out of one's name is an offence against the spirit. Milkman in his search for his family identity, finds the names of his grand-parents. Circe tells the names of his grand-parents to him, Jake and Sing. Names have a concrete history; they keep alive the complex, painful, disorderly, creative reality of human
experience. The Blacks are not allowed to name themselves, instead the White
masters named them according to the Blacks' talents or the names they choose
indiscriminately.

In Tar Baby, Son suffers a similar dispossession and also attempts to
protect the name that will provide the only coherence he is capable of achieving.
The primary significance of the name Son is, not to denote an individual self, but
to place that self in a context of relationship. Son is a son of Africa and his
name shows his connection with community and the Black tradition.

Some of the broken names that occur in Morrison's novels are, Charles as
Cholly, Pauline as Polly, Rebecca as Reba, Jadine as Jade, Joseph as Joe, Patricia
as Pat, Grace as Gigi, Consolata as Connie and Deacon as Deek.

Morrison also uses some funny, unusual names like, Guitar, Dead, Railroad
Tommy, Hospital Tommy, Stamp Paid, Baby, Child, Wild, Porter, Sing, Trace,
Lone, and Queen. Guitar's very name characterizes not latent musical ability, but
his role as instrumental in Milkman's development of character and cultural
awareness.

In Jazz Joe gives his name as Joe Trace when he goes to school. He tries
to establish his identity based on the fact that he is deserted by his mother, he
refuses to accept his step-parents' surname, and renames himself; "I'm Trace,
what they went off without" (124). His choice of the surname indicates both his
acceptance of the mother's absence as well as a desire to incorporate her
symbolically into his identity. Lone DuPres, is one of the stolen babies, in
Paradise, is found by Fairy DuPres, sitting quiet outside the door of a liquor
shop. Lone is named in the way she was found. After giving birth to seven male
children, Zechariah Morgan (Big papa) and his wife, Mindy Flood named their
girl - child, Queen, an administrative and authoritative sounding name. The act of naming reflects a desire to regulate and therefore to control.

Throughout Morrison's fictions, it is a major point of contention to be female, as to be Black, is most often to suffer the oppression of being named by another. Deweys in *Sula* have been named by Eva, through her assignment of the same name for all three: "They's alt deweys" (32). Finally, the name is not even capitalized, and "them deweys" become a 'trinity with a plural name" (33), indistinguishable in their appearance as in their childlike behaviour.

Place names are given to persons. The whores, Poland, China and Maginot Line in *The Bluest Eye* are women who are out of place in their society. Even their names suggest larger - than - life character. Their names indicate that they are not normal human beings. They are individual persons. They never bother about others and assert themselves by their strong views. Their names indicate their individuality among other women in the society.

Misnaming occurred in *Song of Solomon*, because Macon's father "couldn't read, couldn't sign his name (53) when a drunken Yankee soldier at the Freedmen's Bureau inadvertently wrote his birthplace and the whereabouts of his father in the spaces for his first and last names. The misname itself was recorded as his official name. Ironically, he did not attempt to correct the error because his wife convinced him that the new name "would wipe out the past" (54).

Misnaming and misspelling is also seen in *Paradise*. K.D.'s real name is Coffee Smith. K.D. refers to the place Kentucky Derby, famous for chicken. Maybe he is interested in Chicken and named himself as K.D..

Some of the Black people assume that African names help them trace their roots and try to retain their identity, but some others take over European names
or Christian names to erase their history and in Morrison's novels both the aspects are clearly brought out.

Even the dead people need their names to be engraved on the tombstone like the Peace family in *Sula* and Beloved in *Beloved*. Morrison's novels have been describing the importance of naming the Black folks and how name itself establishes one's self. The Black people give names meaningfully. Each name signifies some meaning. Because of slavery, the Blacks could not have their own ancestral names. They have to accept the names, which their masters gave them. Or sometimes the Blacks do not have names at all. So naming is a problem for them. Name itself indicates their roots and Blacks always miss their original names. Every Black man and woman is trying to assert himself or herself by accepting his own folk's names. Whether they accept the white man's name or not, naming becomes a problem to the Blacks. Nicknaming, misnaming, and misspelling of the names are common among the Blacks. Through naming Morrison tries to establish the Black roots and their customs and culture to live with self-respect in the White dominated society.

4. Talking Back

The male dominated society silences and sidelines women, forces them into submission and dictates that women should be seen and not heard. But the Black woman knows that it is not so much how a woman looks rather it is how well she talks that is crucial to her survival. The act of 'talking back' is an instrument of empowerment for her. In his unpublished paper on *From Feminism to Womanism*, Dr. R.Jothiprakash is of the view that African American woman

> talks with a mouth that is packed with claws. She talks with authority and power, effectively manipulating words and various
speech patterns. Her verbal genius subtle and forceful at once, possesses an honesty, clarity and dynamic appeal, which bring forth truth, no matter whom it hurts, wards off oppression and dominance and outwits her adversaries. Her tongue is the weapon she has. Her creative verbal flourishes, her wizardry with words, set in ironic juxtaposition will bite and burn, strike and sting, sparkle and startle.

The Black woman writers have shown how the Black women assert their will, rebel against the rigid codes of behaviour demanded of them and avoid verbal traps which men lay for them and, establish the solidarity of female camaraderie as they finish one another's thoughts, by using 'woman's talk'. Through women's talk, they empower themselves to articulate what is on their mind and interpret and define their reality and build their image and credibility.

In order to assert their authority, men of letters and privileged citizens of African American descent began to exercise their power over words. But even their voices were continued to be silenced in both political arena and American's literary canon. Morrison has challenged this situation by claiming her own authority as an African American writer. Black women authors face a literary establishment which is full of racial and sexual prejudices: "One could write about them, but there was never the danger of their 'writing back'. Just as, one could speak to them without fear of their 'talking back'. One could even observe them, hold them in prolonged gaze, without encountering the risk of being observed, viewed, or judged in return" (Morrison. 1990 13). Morrison's reinterpretation of her novels is an act of 'talking back'. It is part of her project to create literature that is irrevocably, indisputably Black.
Both the Black women in the slave society, and Black men too were prohibited to talk in front of the White masters. Black men were directed but could not direct. The Black children were also restricted to talk in front of elders, even to their parents. The elders gave directions to the children and they had to obey them without asking questions. In Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, the opening page of the "Autumn" described by the narrator Claudia, shows how children are not allowed to speak to their elders: "Adults do not talk to us - they give us directions. They issue orders without providing information .... We cannot answer them" (6). When Pecola is taken care of by the MacTeers, when her family was put outdoors, Pecola is very much interested in drinking milk off the Shirley Temple cup just to handle and see the sweet Shirley's face. But Mrs. MacTeer fussing about the amount of the milk Pecola has drunk that she believes, Pecola has drunken it out of greediness. Both Frieda and Claudia know that Pecola is not interested in milk but she is fond of Shirley Temple, but they cannot explain it to their mother. "It was certainly not for us to "dispute" her. We didn't initiate talk with grown-ups; we answered their questions" (16). In *Sula* too, Nel's mother Helene always gives directions to her daughter, by following white culture. But Sula's mother Hannah and grand - mother Eva never scold or give directions to Sula.

The three prostitutes in *The Bluest Eye* use 'talking back' as a survival tactics. They make fan of themselves:

.... Folks started getin' horn old. "

"You mean that's when you got old," China said.

"I ain't never got old. Just fat. "

"You think 'cause you skinny, folks think you young?"
Blacks sometimes answer the question, which is not related to them for fun and also for entertainment.

Sula, in *Sula* can create herself an identity that exists beyond community and social expectations. An artist with no art form, Sula uses her life as her medium, exploring her own thoughts and emotions, feeling no obligation to please anybody unless their pleasure pleased her. She thus defies social restraints with a vengeance. She disavows gratuitous social flattery, refusing to compliment either the food placed before her or her old friends gone to seed, and using her conversation to experiment with her neighbours' responses. As the narrator remarks: "In the midst of pleasant conversation with someone, she might say, 'why do you chew with your mouth open?' not because the answer interested her but, because she wanted to see the person's face change rapidly" (119).

In *Song of Solomon*, when Milkman and Guitar visit Pilate, she teaches them the manner of greeting the elders. It is the elder's duty in the family to make the children behave properly. For Milkman and Guitar no one is there to educate them. Milkman and Guitar want to know about Pilate whether she has navel or not. When they enter the house they greet Pilate by uttering 'Hi'. But Pilate says that 'Hi' has to be said to pigs and sheep when they want to move and not to human beings. The things, the boys have not learnt from the school is taught by Pilate:

"Somebody said you ain't got no navel".

"That the question?"

"Yes".
"Don't sound like a question. Sound like an answer. Gimme the question" (37).

Milkman has learned about Pilate that she is an uneducated, dirty, poor and drunken woman. But her speech surprises them. Even as an uneducated woman, Pilate teaches the boys how to use words. The Black women never give their answers directly to the questions, instead, they too ask something else. Here Pilate uses 'back talk' to escape as well as to educate Milkman and Guitar.

On another occasion, Pilate uses 'back talk' as a survival instalment when Milkman and Guitar are arrested by the police for having stolen the green sack from Pilate's house. At the police station, she quotes verse and chapter from the Bible to suit the occasion. She talks back to evade and hide truth from the police. The Black people know how to use each and every word to suit their convenience.

Morrison argues that America's literary history and its history of slavery cannot be separated. The stance the White authors assumed toward African Americans is intimately related to that of slave owners such as Schoolteacher in Beloved. When the Sweet Home slaves try to "talk back", Schoolteacher emphasizes the fact "that definitions belonged to the definers - not the defined" (190). The process of literary canon formation in the relationship between Sethe and Schoolteacher stands as the quintessential figure of White male authority, wielding the power of the word as well as the whip.

Sixo exhibits a kinship to the natural world and respects the spirits of the dead. He chooses a silence over language and gifts of interaction over physical expression. He executes single-minded devotion to nearly superhuman figure, such as walking thirty miles in between his field obligations to see Patsy, who
becomes known as the thirty-mile woman. Schoolteacher may whip him, may burn him, may kill him, but Sixo still triumphs with his laughter. He triumphs physically in laughing back to his master rather than howling in pain when he is lynched.

Sethe chooses to take Beloved's life rather than have it be defiled by Whites such as Schoolteacher. Schoolteacher asserts his authority by controlling language: unlike Gamer, the first master of Sweet Home. He does not allow the slaves to speak their own opinions or to learn to read and write. Instead, he makes them the subjects of his own interpretation - measuring and dissecting them in his notebooks, silencing their voices -- with an iron bit. Schoolteacher takes on the role of definer to contain the multiplicity of African American voices. Sixo and Sethe use language to assert themselves.

Malvonne's use of word-play in Jazz is not to take revenge, but to have fun, and to get truth from Joe. Black women 'talk back' to entertain people. Here a friendship flourished between man and woman, Joe and Malvonne.

In Paradise, Mavis meets her daughter, Sally in a hotel after long years. She has escaped from her family responsibility and spent her life in the convent. When the nine men of Ruby tried to kill the convent women, a few women escaped from it and one of them was Mavis. Sally is looking after her brother and sister, because her father has married another woman and left her and her brother uncared for. When Sally enquires about Mavis' whereabouts, she tries to change the topic by talking about food: "'Mom! I don't want to talk about food". "Well, you never did have much of an appetite". / "Where've you been?""(313). Mavis handles the technique of talking back as a tool for hiding truth.
Morrison speaks for African Americans whose stories were censored or silenced. Her novels turn to the African American literary tradition of the slave narratives, which she borrows from, but rewrites. Morrison's novels force us to recognize the holes in canonical texts for the unspeakable things unspoken. In Morrison's novels, she describes how 'talking back' is used as a tool by the Black women to escape from their slave masters as well as to tease, entertain, assert, and educate. Black women are always talkative, but men try to control them. Women cannot be controlled for a long time because communication is essential for them. They cannot be silenced and putting them into silence is compared to death for the Black women. Black women always talk or back talk because it is the only survival tool they possess against all the evils.