CONCLUSION

An attempt has been made to analyse the tropes of migration and counter migration and to examine how these tropes were employed by Ann Petry in *The Street* (TS), Gloria Naylor in *The Women of Brewster Place* (TWOBP) and Toni Morrison in *Song of Solomon* (SOS). Chapters II, III and IV show how each writer explores and handles differently the tropes of migration. It has been observed that the handling of tropes becomes more sophisticated and complex with each writer and with the passing decades. This becomes very clear when each novel is analysed in detail. Chapter I was an attempt to trace the history of African American migration narratives in literature and various other genres. Various reasons leading to the migration of Blacks from the South to the North are also examined. Chapter I was an interdisciplinary study in which various sociological, economical and historical reasons for migration are enumerated to show how they are reflected in the African American narratives of the time.

America has always been a nation of migrants. Africans have always been on a move right from the 15th century but in most of the cases black migration was caused by force. The Blacks were brought to America as servants or slaves in the 16th century. However, the most important change in the distribution of the American population (both black and white) since 1850 is the result of a shift from rural to urban areas. This was primarily a consequence of industrialisation. Though this migration included both Blacks and poor Whites, the black
population suffered both in terms of oppression and in having fewer options than the Whites. There were mainly two reasons for migration: economic and social.

Upon arrival, in the North, Blacks found that the “promised land” was greatly marred. They were faced with a new social and economic pattern, the creation of a black ghetto, brought on by residential segregation. In other words, these migrants they did not benefit from the Great Migration. They could not assimilate because of their perceived differences from the dominant society. This experience has been captured in the migration narratives in the portrayal of their characters’ inability to cope with the environment in the North.

Ann Petry’s TS, Gloria Naylor’s TWOBP and Morrison’s SOS best exemplify the handling of the tropes of migration and counter migration. TS focusses on the possibilities of ancestor and safe space and also projects a protagonist-Lutie, who rejects their value. Petry is fully aware of the subtlety and sophistication of modern power, of its ability to construct subjects through the creation of discourse and desire. The novel does not provide successful models of resistance though Petry does make a few safe spaces available to her protagonist Lutie viz. community, family, and the voice of her grandmother. However Lutie dismisses all of them. In the novel, Petry privileges the Grandmother’s voice over the written words of Benjamin Franklin. Lutie’s memory of her grandmother engages in a tug
of war with her retention of Benjamin Franklin's autobiography. Her failure to make the connection between Junto, the white owner of the building in which she lives and of the night club in which she seeks employment and the factors that serve to oppress her is an outgrowth of her blindness in relation to Franklin. The safe space provided by Lutie's grandmother exists as an ongoing oral dialogue in Lutie's memory. In the urban North, the South – the ancestor – must live in the psyche of the migrant because sophisticated, fragmented Northern power most effectively oppresses the urban dweller on this plane. The grandmother always makes her voice heard when Lutie's well being is threatened. Lutie's grandmother lives in her psyche and warns her whenever necessary; whereas Pilate is the living ancestor in SOS. Pilate's liberating songs pulse through Macon's life and the lives of the entire community. Petry of course hasn't exploited this trope the way Morrison does in Song of Solomon. The American Dream plays an important role in the lives of both Macon Dead I and Lutie. The primary goal of Macon Dead, in Morrison's Song of Solomon is to amass a fortune and a business he can bequeath to his only son. His obsessive desire for ownership of property, reduces land and people to mere commodities. Just as he becomes insensitive to any relationship, Lutie, too is blinded by the American Dream in her attempt to improve her lifestyle. She too loses her husband, rejects the ancestral voice of "grandmother" and befriends Boots who will eventually be responsible for her tragic failure. However, the difference between Macon and Lutie becomes obvious as the former acquires wealth
and becomes materialistically successful whereas the latter struggles but fails.

Lutie eventually realises the consequences of her failure to create friends in her community and among her co-workers. Petry also highlights the core differences between Lutie and the novel's other black characters. Mrs. Hedges, granny, and Min are grounded in an African American ethos, which has historically served the Blacks well. This culture facilitates the development of improvisational techniques, such as the "subversive" acts of Mrs. Hedges, Boots and Min (Clark 501). However, as Lutie doesn't resort to subversion she has to abandon her son at the end of the novel. Lutie's departure to Chicago reinforces the indifference of the landscape in the street world, white people have made; yet her departure, though cruel, seems fated. The reader is left with Bub's disturbing isolation hovering in the background. The tropes, which in TS are used, to represent the Southern migrants' attempt to negotiate the urban landscape, undergo significant changes three decades later in Naylor's TWOBP. TS stands as a connecting link in the fictional tradition of migration narratives that looks back to Hurston's portraits of black community and folk lore and looks ahead to those novels by contemporary novelists like, Paule Marshall, Alice Walker, Gloria Naylor, Toni Morrison, etc.

Naylor's TWOBP, on the other hand, asserts the vital necessity of women-centred ritual and community for black women, specially female bonding.
More than Petry, Naylor explores the possibilities of safe spaces for her characters and her narrative strategies. In TWOBP, all the women characters help each other to survive the onslaught of both the sexist and the white urban capitalist power. Mattie Michael, holds together the lives of the other women through her strength of will. She becomes a mother to the inmates of Brewster. In the novel all visits to safe spaces are projected by a return to the mother which is quite evident in the laying-on-of-hands ritual in the text. Unlike Petry, Naylor fully explores the possibility of motherhood and sisterhood in the urban North. The South, however, becomes prominent in the rituals of nurturing and sisterhood. Naylor has emphasised how female values derived from mothering, nurturing, the community and concern with human feeling are central to the survival of the women of Brewster Place. The significant characteristic that her women share with each other, with the exception of Kiswana and “the two”, is that they must live in streets like Brewster Place, and that they are displaced persons. But at the same time Naylor also emphasises that these relationships between women do not substantively change their lives at the materialistic level. Another remarkable aspect is that, lesbians have no place in this world of female bonding. In a male dominated society the fact that Lorraine and Tee live together is considered to be a sin committed by them. TWOBP, therefore has two climaxes, one of healing (focussed on Mattie and Ciel) and one of destruction (focussed on Lorraine). TWOBP, therefore, departs from the other migration narratives preceding it in treatment of the tropes of migration. Naylor’s refiguration of
the tropes of migration - the brick wall, motherhood, and the fictional urban neighbourhoods - are directly related to the historical and political moment in which she wrote. Though the sense of resignation of the inhabitants of Brewster Place is like that of the urban dwellers of Ann Petry's TS, yet Mattie's existence on Brewster Place is significantly different from that of Lutie, because Mattie survives to act as a maternal source of nurturing for the other female inhabitants of Brewster Place.

Morrison further modifies the tropes of migration by showing an alternative movement in the form of Counter migration in Song of Solomon (SOS). Morrison completes the circle as if, the protagonist comes back to the South after a journey from the South to the North. Morrison's SOS can be positioned in the tradition of urban male narratives. The novel has at its centre Milkman's journey back to the South in search of his family roots and manhood and a sustained relationship with the ancestor. Pilate emerges as Milkman's pilot, guiding him, as it were, out of the death world of his parents towards his true destiny, i.e. the discovery of his African heritage. Significantly Pilate's role as genealogical guide also involves her final restoration to her origins through the aid of Milkman, who will be able to provide the rootless Pilate with original family roots. Storytelling is the primary folk tradition in Morrison's fictional world, and SOS contains many stories. Similarly, Black music is also an important feature, or trope of counter migration in Morrison's fiction. Both serve as "safe space" in migration narratives. In Morrison's novels the actions and dialogues are
accompanied by a sound track of gospel songs, folk tunes, and blues, and many of her characters sing, hum, or whistle their way through scenes of joy and trouble. She also surrounds these musical performances with images representing the values of the village that need to be preserved and rearranged to fit life in the city. Closely linked with the Blues song, is the myth of flying Africans in the novel. It is the very notion of flying as a return to one's roots which underlines the action in SOS. Milkman's journey to the South therefore is a journey of immersion par excellence. In Morrison's work the South becomes not only a "site" of racial redemption and identity but also the place where Africa is most present.

One of the things that Morrison clearly wants to revise, to infuse with new information, and to transmit to new generations is the notion of black manhood which she inherits from writers like Wright, Ellison and Baraka. It is quite significant that her revision of manhood goes hand in hand with her revision of the tropes of the migration narrative. Morrison is the first novelist whose text not only tells the story of the ancestor in the South, but also embodies the ancestor. This shows a tremendous change and revision in the handling of tropes from Petry to Naylor and then to Morrison. In fact Morrison and Naylor complete the literary movement which began from the individual and led to the collective community and from the power struggle between black and white men to the black family itself as a "site of violence". Unlike Morrison, Naylor and Petry experiment with the urban female experience. Petry, however, concentrates on the
experiences of a single woman and Naylor experiments with the experiences of many women. Petry, refuses to romanticise the South, whereas for Morrison the South is a site of redemption. Inspite of these differences in the handling of the tropes of migration, the three writers are similar in their portrayal of the bitter experiences of the Blacks in the North and a need for a "safe space" which represents the South in the North. These safe spaces as mentioned in the preceding chapters, could be, ancestor's voice, ancestor, black community, female bonding, black music, Blues, Story telling, myths, etc. They become important tropes of migration. If the Blacks do not fall upon the sustaining elements of their culture, is their survival threatened in the urban North? Is it necessary for every black to go back to the South in search of his/her identity or roots? Is it a feasible option? One is troubled by such questions. Perhaps Toni Morrison's *Jazz* (1992) is an answer to all these questions. *Jazz* is Morrison's most explicit migration narrative to date. It revisits the theme of black mobility and modernity. In so doing it explicitly modifies some of the most important tropes of the migration narrative. In *Jazz*, Morrison still considers the major moments of the migration narrative: the catalyst to migration, the initial confrontation with the urban landscape, the navigation of that landscape, and the construction of the urban subject. Nevertheless, she challenges her own notions of the possibility of the city for the migrant and introduces a new notion of the ancestor. It is not the Southern ancestor. The voice of the omniscient narrator is the voice of the book itself. Henry Louis Gates is of the view that the narrator, like the
ancestor, is indeterminate: it is neither male nor female; neither young nor old; neither rich nor poor. It is both and neither. It is a voice that is playful, unreliable, appearing to be all knowing yet constantly undermining itself. It is a voice that embodies oral culture, instrumental jazz arrangements, paintings, photographs, and history. The final vision of the narrative is one where the migrants have been transformed and have transformed American culture and society. There is no looking back, no return to a mythical South. Instead they continue to exist in the urban landscape and they even manage to survive in order to live and love. Jazz is a portrait of a people in the midst of self-creation, a document of what they created and what they lost along the way.

The sense of the South as "home" is certainly a dominant sentiment in the most recent literary treatments of migration. However, while Southern sojourns have come to dominate literary migration narratives, there is a significant departure from this tendency in the cultural production of most African American filmmakers and rap musicians. This difference might be attributed to the difference of generation. The Black male bildungsroman that culminated in the sixties is now finding expression in these newer art forms. Both film and rap are currently dominated by young black men. Such filmmakers and rap groups are based in Atlanta, Georgia and provide a vision that values black history, culture and women. Atlanta has garnered an image as the new Mecca of black culture, politics, and achievement and is a home to a new black cultural
renaissance. It is therefore to these arenas also that one must keep one’s eyes and ears attuned for the next developments in the African American migration narratives – developments that will be shaped by their historical and political moment of production, and their intended audience as were their predecessors.