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再現美國黑奴歷史：

福克納《下去吧，摩西》和摩里森《寵兒》中的

記憶與種族主義

Representing African American Slave History:

Memory and Racism in William Faulkner's

Go Down, Moses and Toni Morrison's *Beloved*

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摘要

本文旨在探討福克納《下去吧，摩西》與摩里森《寵兒》中美國黑奴歷史之再現。筆者將兩部作品並置閱讀，並檢視兩位作家「再現美國黑奴歷史」之異同。經由互文比較，兩本小說揭示了奴隸制度與種族主義下的殖民生活，遺留下美國南方的核心問題。為探索奴隸制度帶來的種族問題，筆者試圖以再現美國黑奴歷史、記憶及種族主義為主題，分三章討論。第一章探索兩位作家再現美國黑奴歷史的方式，並比較福克納與摩里森對歷史描述的關注，並以此為根源對十九世紀美國黑奴歷史文本再現之相異處。第二章著眼於記憶與論述之主題。筆者欲檢視遍及於兩部作品中的記憶所扮演之角色與作用，及兩位作家對記憶於「再現美國黑奴歷史」之題材與論述技巧上的運用。第三章討論種族關係與種族歧視。福克納對麥卡斯林家族史之再現，強調在白人父權文化下分歧的黑白種族關係。兩種文本皆反映出種族差異，白人至上和霸權的種族主義心態，作為一種普遍深植於南方的種族意識型態。然而，摩里森的人文關懷打破這些長久以來，歷史上對黑人剝削及壓迫合法化的種族主義思想和假設。

透過諸多主角的回憶做為一種特殊論述，兩部作品重溯在「中間航程」和美國南方殖民生活下被刻意遺忘的奴隸經驗，並藉此審視令人不安的種族議題。也就是說，這兩部小說同時作為南方歷史的記錄以及作為與奴隸制度和種族主義的邪惡和其後果對抗之歷史著作。

關鍵詞：《下去吧，摩西》，《寵兒》，美國黑奴歷史，記憶，種族主義

Abstract

This thesis aims at exploring the representation of African American slave history in William Faulkner's *Go Down, Moses* and Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. My comparative reading of these two texts seeks to examine the similarities and discrepancies between the two writers' representations of African American slave history. Through intertextual comparison, both novels dramatize the central problems of plantation life under slavery in the American South, including the legacy of racism. Here I try to compare and explore the themes of representing African American slave history, memory and racism in the three main chapters respectively. Chapter One centers on both writers' representations of African American slave history, and compares their preoccupation with the historical accounts as a crucial source for fictional representation of 19th-century African American slave history. Chapter Two focuses on the themes of memory and narrative. I would like to examine the pervasive influence of memory, the role memory plays and its effects, and also both writers' manipulations of memory as the subject matter and as a narrative aesthetic that wraps up the whole novel. In Chapter Three I try to discuss the racial relations and racism in both texts. Faulkner's representation of the McCaslin family history foregrounds the notion of race and racism with dichotomous white-black racial division in the white patriarchal society. Both texts reflect racial difference and white supremacy and domination over the black based on the white's racist mindset, a pervasive ideology imprinted in the South. Morrison out of human concern unflinchingly undermines the racial ideology and assumptions that have historically legitimated the exploitation and oppression of the black people. Through memory of fictional characters as a specific form of narration, both novels restore the disremembered slave experience during the Middle Passage and on the plantation in Southern culture, thereby interrogating the

disturbing racial subjects. That is, the two novels serve as a record of Southern history and a confrontation with the evils and consequences of slavery and racism in the Deep South.

Keywords: *Go Down*, *Moses*, *Beloved*, African American slave history, memory, racism

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Introduction

William Faulkner's *Go Down, Moses* (1942) and Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987) are strongly engaged with memory and the past of black slaves by locating the reader in the process of re-writing black American history from the Middle Passage¹ across the Civil War to the Postbellum era. Faulkner's *Go Down, Moses* introduces deep-Southern plantation history from the 1830s through to the early 1940s by situating it within a peculiar mixture of presentation of time and episodes of the inextricable relations and aftermath of the McCaslin family. The fictional present of Morrison's *Beloved*, set in postbellum America, delineates the experience of black slaves whose myriads of memories narrate what is remembered in order to reveal their life under slavery in the southern United States. Both novels share similarities as well as mark down discrepancies. These two novels are concerned with constructing monuments to the past and using a familial history as a trope for larger social and cultural trauma, slavery and racism. Moreover, both texts are deployed and unfolded through memory as a method for representation or re-construction of slave history. However, *Go Down, Moses* tends to represent the southern plantation life with relatively more historical records by a white southerner, yet the slave stories in *Beloved* appear to be so re-constructed that Morrison has come to undermine the narrative truth by revising a historical event.

Categorized by the conventional definition of southern literature, *Go Down, Moses* is often characterized in southern literature by a strong sense of place and

¹ The Middle Passage was the triangular route of slave trade, starting from the west coast of Africa, where the Africans were obtained as slaves, across the Atlantic. The slaves were sold or traded for goods such as molasses, which was used in the making of rum. The Middle Passage did not simply refer to the transportation and sale of slaves; it was rather the longest, hardest, darkest, and also most horrific journey of the slave ships. With extremely, tightly packed loads of human cargo that stank and carried both infectious disease and death, the slave ships traveled west across the Atlantic on an unbearable journey lasting at least five weeks, and sometimes as long as three months. The abominable and inhuman conditions which the Africans were faced with on the route clearly disclosed the evils of the slave trade.

history on the basis of memory, insularity and a history of defeat in the Civil War. Furthermore, Southern literature, shaped by oral traditions, expresses the values of honor and manhood and is often presented within the social, political, and economic contexts of the American South. When it is called Southern literature, the text would obviously involve the racialization of black and white, and is often presented with reference to race, gender and slavery. Synthesizing these characteristics, Faulkner's text grows out of southern elements with references to the categorical division of race as well as to slavery and its subsequent aftermath in the Deep South.

The figure of the mulatto demonstrates this racial force through generations in *Go Down, Moses*. Tomy's Turl is the son of the white McCaslin patriarch, Lucius Quintus Carothers McCaslin, and his mulatto daughter. He is a descendant of miscegenation. He embodies a genealogy that directly leads back to the beginning of American southern history to "illuminate the mutually constitutive nature of race and gender ideologies in the South and also to illuminate how that intersection generates the story of the South" (Ladd 1631). This racial force of black and mulatto figures are often presented in Southern texts, and are more apparent after the Emancipation Proclamation of the 1860s. Scholars of southern studies often maintain that Faulkner's texts illustrate a strong sense of place, making a case for the South as one part of "plantation-postplantation" cultural zone of the Americas. For example, Barbara Ladd asserts that "the new southern studies is in many ways a project of recovery and reinterpretation" (1634) and the southern literary studies and historical studies tend to be more complex through multi-faced discourses, such as folklore studies, anthropology, and postmodern reading practices, and so on. Morrison's *Beloved* echoes this recovery and reinterpretation as it deploys memory as discovery, invention and embodiment, and applies to the typical southern commitment to history and retrospection. More importantly, it seems to conceive of this tradition with more

authorial intentions and responses in her literary re-creation.

Memory in both novels plays a vital role. With a complex interweaving of the past and the present in *Beloved*, Morrison's writing back into history not only retrieves the past memories in an attempt to restore a denied past, but also suggests the necessity of active engagement with past experiences to recall attention to what has been oblivious in the present. Memory is employed by Morrison not only as content of the whole novel but as a way of narrative. The characters are forced to memorize as the progression of the novel corresponds to the return or recuperation of the characters' repressed memories which they have tried to keep at bay. Their recollections become denser when the embodiment of the past gradually induces them to repossess their memories and recount their stories. Memory of one's life is not a simple psychological capacity, but can be re-organized through rituals of storytelling as the slaves narrate and restore their life stories, by which Morrison's historical memory represents slave experience. In *Go Down, Moses*, Faulkner's management of the story line also corresponds to the character's memories, most of which center on his most history-haunted protagonist Ike McCaslin in order to represent a fuller picture of family genealogy. Memory shows a significant effect throughout both novels, as it is deployed both as a way of narration and as the inner working of the characters. Memory takes the reader to come across several individual stories and even survive several generations as they repeatedly recollect and narrate what is transmitted.

Some historians are critical of the use of fiction to understand history, since they hold the belief that the factual accounts shall be the foundation upon which history is built and read. For such historians as Deborah White, the fictional accounts and scenes referential to history in novels are relatively unreliable, because *Beloved*, for instance, rewrites factual records of slave experience and re-structures historical

events under slavery. Furthermore, “the historical record,” as Deborah White claims, “regarding female slavery is sparse,” and the “[p]lantation records offer little insight into the lives of slaves, and many slave narratives that exist today were authored by men” (qtd. in Fuston-White 469). She then suggests an alternative that turns out to “accept the absence of sources and, consequently, the historical absence of black women in the antebellum South” (469). However, this remark may be inappropriate if it is applied to *Go Down, Moses* and *Beloved*, since the plantation accounts in *Go Down, Moses* mainly center on a Leak Diary as a primary, historical source about southern slave history. The Diary provides relatively reliable, historical reference to southern history as well as insights into the South’s socio-economic situation under the institution of slavery. And *Beloved* reconfigures slave narrative with black slaves recounting the trauma of slave experiences from the Middle Passage to a Kentucky plantation and to freedom, loosely on the basis of a historical event concerning Margaret Garner, a female slave.

Morrison in interviews admitted her knowledge of the consequent fate of the run-away slaves, yet she revised the denouement of the Garner incident and further uses it as a trope for a larger social and cultural trauma, which sheds light on her attempt to uncover a lost, collective slave history. She once mentioned her reasons for being interested in and moved by Faulkner’s subjects are actually associated with her desire “to find out something about [America] and [about the] artistic articulation of its past that was not available in history, which is what art and fiction can do but sometimes history refuses to do” (Fowler and Abadie, *Faulkner and Women* 296). Morrison’s remark unveils her reason for unearthing the past in an artistic articulation of the country’s past as an access for her project to reclaim erased or lost African-American history. For Morrison, fiction offers her opportunities to reclaim a lost history; therefore, in *Beloved*, she seeks to expose a theme about the impossibility

of articulation, which deforms and disfigures slaves in the past. Through *Beloved*, her effort to represent a denied black past comes to the fore and the knowledge of slave history that is forgotten comes back and demands to be reckoned with and recounted. Morrison's approach to represent slave history transforms the content into the technique and the form as a method of narration. Although Morrison claims that her novel is only partly based on and inspired by the story of Margaret Garner, *Beloved* departs from the factual, historical account and, instead, deploys its route to a purposeful re-construction and representation of slave history. In reclaiming African-American history, Morrison invents Margaret Garner's life and rewrites the sad story through the technique and form of memory. She reveals in interviews the facts that Margaret Garner was actually not indicted for killing her child, but rather tried for the crime of running away, upon which the abolitionists meant to intrigue against the Fugitive Slave Law as a testing case through an intricacy from a run-away slave to a murder. Similar to "the legal maneuvers employed by the abolitionists in order to use Garner's infanticide as a test case for the Fugitive Slave Law" (Kodat 190), Morrison follows this ground and develops it to a larger scheme for recovering the country's past disallowed in history yet accepted in fiction. As her belief in the core of composition in her novel shows, "what makes in fiction is the nature of the imaginative act" (Morrison, "The Site of Memory" 71), Morrison adopts the historical remains as fabrics fueled with imagination as ingredients to re-structure a literary history. Acknowledging that her work comprises her exertion of memory and imagination, Morrison explains, "One of the things that's important to me is the powerful imaginative way in which we deconstructed and *reconstructed reality* in order to get through" (Darling 252; emphasis mine). Hence, for Morrison imagination accounts much for her representation and reconstruction of slave experience. Only through this reconstructed reality upon which slave history is built can the black

slaves remember it and negotiate with it in order to get through.

In comparison with Morrison's deployment of historical truth in fiction, Faulkner recounts the southern slave experiences with relatively more historical descriptions centered on factual record as a primary source. His reference to the old Leak Diary appears obvious in *Go Down, Moses*. Faulkner provides a model of the operation of the slave-based plantation society as the text accounts the plantation life with much of the related vocabulary. Such plantation vocabulary and everyday items associated with plantation life and farming are explicitly listed in the Leak Diary and then adopted by Faulkner in rendering the contours of the lives of the slaves in fiction. Yet *Go Down, Moses* is not simply a typical southern text adopting plantation vocabulary, it also records more emotional responses of the characters since Faulkner "weaves not only their names but many of the situations of their lives into his novels and stories" and this "suggests his deep empathy for their plight" (Wolff 31). Faulkner modifies a few details of the recorded incidents and intertwines the historical materials together into the novel by adding affective scenes to depict the slave's grief and despondency under slavery. From the characters' names, plots, to setting and theme, we may claim that *Go Down, Moses* marks the clearest delineation of the use of historical materials in representing the slave experience in the Deep South. From this respect, the plantation novel is historically grounded and regionally specific. With relatively more historical source, *Go Down, Moses* not only represents slave life realistically, but also demonstrates Faulkner's inquiry into the southern plantation with the representation of enormity under slavery in southern slave past. Faulkner puts into the centerstage the inextricable relations within a southern family and community, and specifies the propensity of incest and miscegenation, racial and gender transgression as well as intersection, as "a metaphor for the racial and class narcissism of the plantation elite" (Matthews 198). In contrast with Toni Morrison's artistic and imaginative

representation of African American history in *Beloved*, *Go Down, Moses* proves a relatively more realistic plantation novel that clearly exposes racism and miscegenation deeply imbedded in the southern history of slavery.

It is obvious that memory goes inextricably with narrative in both novels. In *Go Down, Moses*, Faulkner's narrative finds its illustration in the fact that the novel begins at the end when Uncle Ike is presented at his old age, and the narrative moves with the characters' memories, through Ike's, Cass's, Lucas's and Roth's flashbacks, and still recedes further in time until the reader is led toward the central part of the novel, "The Bear," and gathers all the historical debris of the McCaslin genealogy, to which Faulkner keeps returning to reveal the three main lines of descent in the family. Thus, Faulkner's novel intends to gather toward a center rather than diffuse to all directions. To be sure, time sequence is a significant element in understanding Faulkner's presentation of the family stories. Faulkner departs from the pattern of linear time and "scramble[s] chronology and sequence" (Kenney 49). Presumably, he complicates and obscures the actual causes and consequences of historical events. The retrospection is a confused, broken and layering retelling, without a specific opening and ending, that develops with fragmented, non-linear and multi-voiced narrative. This narrative technique suggests its postmodern characteristics. Susan V. Donaldson perceives Faulkner's narrative as "fragmented, multi-voiced, often unpunctuated, sometimes disoriented in its chronology" and it is a narrative that "recounts and critiques the making of sameness and otherness in the master narrative of southern history" (11). The individual memories of the various characters, including Native Americans, black slaves, and the whites, present the reader with alternative voices that resist the white dominant writing of American history.

In *Beloved*, the story line revolves mainly around Sethe and Paul D as two main narrative voices, who recount the slave story through memory, hearing and non-linear

time sequence. In this narrative, “the sequence of events is non-chronological and it takes the reader repeatedly from freedom to slavery and backwards” (Palladino 55). In presenting the scene of Sethe swinging her infant toward the wall, Morrison ushers the reader into varying perspectives, each preceded and represented by different witnesses. With her African style of artistic storytelling, Morrison further renders the female protagonists voicing their stories and desires. In the middle of the novel, the reader is given chapters of explicit, direct discourse in which Sethe, Denver and Beloved, through Sethe’s narration, Denver’s stream of consciousness to Beloved’s monologue, give voice to the horrors of their slave experiences and desires. Starting from Sethe’s recollections of her life under slavery and at Sweet Home to the murder of her daughter, the discourse develops progressively from a solo play and moves “more technically challenging and culminate[s] in a dense fugal interplay of all three voices that achieves its effects through liberal use of verbal compression, fragmentation, and juxtaposition” (Kodat 185). The discourse of the slave mother first addresses the reader directly. It later moves to the two daughters’ respective articulations, and further integrates into the mixed speeches of the three women as a “choral moment,” “comprising Beloved’s speech and the ensuing chorus with Sethe and Denver [as] the most technically dazzling and reader-resistant pages” in the novel for unveiling the hidden past during the Middle Passage (Kodat185).

Brad Hooper specifies the characteristic of Morrison’s narrative which shows a propensity for “the chorus method of storytelling, wherein a group of individuals who are involved in a single event or incident tell his or her versions of what happened, the individual voices maintaining their distinctiveness while their personal tales overlap each other with a layering effect” (5). And this layering effect resonates with the individual voices in Morrison’s narrative. Having pieced together the stories of the unbearable scene, each individual voice tells his or her own versions of the murder of

the baby. Morrisonian scholars and critics, such as Brad Hooper and Catherine Gunther Kodat as two among many, have identified Morrison's style of "choral" presentation, in which Morrison uses a fragmented and juxtaposed narrative method through her storytelling for a close and pressing effect as an effort to reconstruct a literary slave history. This kind of unconventional multi-voiced narration is so presented as to form a non-linear movement through the novel, in which several slaves' stories are intertwined, overlapped and eventually untwined. Thus Morrison's text is developed as a series of fragments of the past which is unearthed piece by piece throughout the novel. These historical debris are the pieces disremembered and submerged that would be brought up to the surface and integrated into the text through Morrison's historical rememory as well as imagination and literary integration.

As *Go Down, Moses* centers on the social and cultural trauma, slavery and racism in the Deep South, it manifests the relationship and tension between the dominant white and the "inferior" black by presenting the imbalanced relation of supremacy and oppression under racism in the South. In the Southern states, the black slaves under slavery are forced into a subordinate position on the plantation, but this can be read as a response to the social and economic forces at work in the Southern region. In the Southern society practicing enslavement, African Americans are treated as chattels while the whites those who obtain supremacy. As Michael Banton observes: "[u]nder the slavery regime, individual Whites had been allowed to exploit individual Negroes in any way they wished provided it did not threaten the social system"(138). However, after the Civil War, a different racial relation turns to illustrate "the ideology of social distance and racial difference" (Banton 138). As the walls between the two races become higher from the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century, there is more racial hatred of the white for the black than ever before. The racial

prejudice and hostility of the white are often shown in the exertion of violence: lynching. Michael Banton states that “[l]ynchings in the South increased rapidly from 1882 up to 1890, and showed a further sharp rise in the early nineties when the white South began to legislate the subordination of the Negro” (Banton 140). Lynching was not a way appropriate and effective for preventing the black from crimes, yet it was used by the white “as a sanction reinforcing all sorts of everyday exploitation and intimidation” (141). Rider’s case in *Go Down, Moses* illustrates this racial exploitation and power relations.

In commenting on the nature of racism and its relation to culture, Frantz Fanon writes in “Racism and Culture” that “[t]he vulgar, primitive, over-simple racism purported to find in biology [...] the material basis of the doctrine” (*Toward the African Revolution* 32). Robert Miles furthers this idea and explains that “the primitive racism grounded in biological claims corresponded to a past phase of colonialism” (62). To put it simply, Fanon suggests that racism is rather a consequence originated from colonialism, for the colonialists were racists who oppressed and gained power from the exploitation of other group out of biological referent, which makes those oppressed inferior. But it is important to note that biological difference indeed does not entirely explain racism; instead, social and political factors also affect the development and solidification of racism in the South. Lucius Outlaw similarly expounds the concept of race: “‘race’ is *not* wholly and completely determined by biology, but is only partially so. [...] the definition of ‘race’ is partly political, partly cultural. [...] The biological aspects of ‘race’ are conscripted into projects of cultural, political and social construction. ‘Race’ is a *social* formation” (Outlaw 68; italics original). Therefore, to understand the workings of racism, it is significant to incorporate cultural, political and social factors into the historical context in order to examine racism often presented and understood as the dichotomy

of white-black racial relation. The dichotomous demarcation clearly specifies the two categories of racial differences. The story “Was” explicitly demonstrates this sense of racial relations in that the card games are actually white men’s games.

Unlike Faulkner who mainly represents poignant racial relationships by exposing white oppression and exploitation under the brutality and appropriation of slavery, Morrison intends to show the possibility of mutual understanding and compassion through Amy Denver and Sethe, thereby reducing the racial demarcation and hostility illustrated in *Go Down, Moses*, in an attempt to bridge the gap between the white and the black. It is important to recognize, though, that in *Beloved*, Morrison presents the racist ideology of the white men, including that of the schoolteacher, as a sign of white racism, who view black slaves as property and equate them with inhumane animals, as they regard the slaves are those who “needed every care and guidance in the world to keep them from the cannibal life they preferred” (Morrison, *Beloved* 177). This animalization of the black demonstrates the racial prejudice of the white. Morrison refuses to present only the black slaves as chattels or sub-human animals without humanity, she also presents Amy Denver as “the evidence of white exploitation of white, class repression, and the marginalization of women within the white patriarchal culture” (Coonradt 182). As Nicole M. Coonradt puts it, Morrison “emphasizes the need to reach beyond the community and, at times, beyond self to either seek or render aid” (181-2). Sethe’s daughter Denver eventually sheds the shame she felt while living on the margins by reaching beyond the community, and establishes her presence in a world that has all but forgotten her before.

This thesis explores the representation of slave history in Faulkner’s *Go Down, Moses* and Morrison’s *Beloved*. Under this main scope of representing slave history, both *Go Down, Moses* and *Beloved* can be read in terms of memory, narrative and racism through comparative reading. This thesis then will be divided into three main

chapters and a conclusion. I would like to juxtapose these two texts to examine the similarities and discrepancies of the representations of slave history. Through intertextual comparison, both novels reveal central evils of plantation life under slavery, with consequences lasting until modern time.

Chapter One centers on both Faulkner's and Morrison's representation of slave history, and compares both authors' preoccupation with the historical accounts as a source for fictional representation of crucial 19th-century American slave history. I begin with Faulkner's representation of southern plantation life revealed through the McCaslin family ledger. Isaac McCaslin's reading of the familial ledger uncovers the economics as well as the social and cultural legacies of slavery on the southern plantation: racism and miscegenation. In *Ledgers of History*, Sally Wolff through interviews and fieldtrips to Faulkner's familial acquaintance, Dr. Francisco III, unfolds Faulkner's obvious drawing from a southerner's private diary as a source for several of his novels. According to Dr. Francisco's recollections, Faulkner made frequent trips to Holly Springs to visit his good friend Edgar Francisco Jr., Dr. Francisco's father, and asked to see the Leak Diary, an antebellum plantation diary, in which Dr. Francisco's forebear held and recorded southern plantation life. He reported that Faulkner actually "was aware of the Leak Diary as early as the 1920s" (Wolff 16), and was so preoccupied with it that "[he] appears to have turned to the Leak Diary as a source of information and ideas for his fiction" (17). Consequently, it is worthy to note that in *Go Down, Moses*, Faulkner adopts and manipulates the historical materials from the Leak Diary to recount slave transactions and to represent southern plantation society and slave history.

In *Beloved*, Morrison restructures the disremembered history on the basis of a real family "catastrophe" with the fuel of imagination in an attempt to re-address the powerful impact of slavery on the blacks and to re-discover and reconstruct black

history. In an interview with Marsha Darling, Morrison unfolds that “in fact Margret Garner escaped with her husband and two other men and was returned to slavery” (Darling 250); moreover, “she was not tried for killing her child. She was [tried] for a *real* crime, which was running away [...], [the abolitionists] did not want her tried on those grounds, so they tried to switch it to murder as a kind of success story” (251). Morrison follows this ground and develops it not only to invent her story further, but also to recover the country’s past disallowed in history yet accepted in fiction. Unlike *Go Down, Moses*, *Beloved* can be regarded as Morrison’s revision of a historical incident, which she has transformed into a family catastrophe for the sake of re-constructing and representing the slave experience. Claiming that her work does not take the private exertion of her imagination that only attends to her personal ends, Morrison expounds that “the work must be political” (“Rootedness” 64) and a work of art shall carry political attention and influence. If we apply this belief to her work, Morrison’s political attention imbedded in *Beloved* appears more apparent that her representation of slave life aims to reclaim and re-construct slave experience through individual, personal experience and make it a collective slave past disremembered by the white and the black in history.

Chapter Two focuses on the theme of memory and narrative in *Go Down, Moses* and *Beloved*. I would like to examine the pervasive influence of memory, the role memory plays and its effect, and also both writers’ manipulation of memory as the subject matter and as a narrative aesthetic that wraps up the whole novel. Both novels are structured by the memories of many characters, the white and the black. In “The Site of Memory,” Morrison explains her role as an writer is not to “drop a veil over [the] proceedings too terrible to relate,” yet to “rip that veil drawn over proceedings too terrible to relate” (Morrison, 70). To this purpose, while restoring the past of her black characters, Morrison depends heavily on her own recollections and imagination.

She asserts that “memory weighs heavily in what I write, in how I begin and in what I find to be significant” (71); moreover, she adds that “[the] ‘memories’ within are the subsoil of my work. But memories and recollections won’t give me total access to the unwritten interior life of these people. Only the act of imagination can help me” (71). Morrison’s remarks suggest that memory is deployed in *Beloved* as a foundation for the novel’s core, while her use of imagination provides its substance. In accordance with this idea, Morrison must create a form through memories and her imaginations so as to unfold the slave experience as well as to create Sethe and invent Beloved’s life. As she explains, “I just imagined the life of a dead girl which was the girl that Margret Garner killed. [...] I just imagined her remembering what happened to her, being someplace else and returning, knowing what happened to her. And I call her Beloved” (“Interview with Gloria Naylor” 208).

The subject of memory in both novels becomes a project of narrative that emanates from various voices of the protagonists. In its most striking characteristic of narrative voice—the recursive use of fragmented, multi-vocal narrative, *Beloved* illustrates Morrison’s imaginative manipulation of an artistic, creative link between the spirit of Beloved and the African Americans silenced in the Middle Passage. The horrible slave experience is manifestly voiced through Beloved and the “Sixty Million and more” nameless slaves who suffered and died under slavery. While Morrison’s typical presentation of history is often called the “‘chorus’ method of storytelling” (Hooper 5), Faulkner’s novel also grows out of memories of different characters. In *Beloved* Morrison pieces together the female slaves’ voices to reveal their stories, fear and desire as a layering and resonant effect of narrative, yet in *Go Down, Moses* the voice of the white patriarch seems more obvious and embedded at the heart of the narrative than the voice of the black slaves. This can be seen first from the master-slave relationship. The playfulness of the “chasing rituals” in the prelude story

“Was” is established from the white patriarch’s perspective through the chase of Tomy’s Turl, a slave of the southern white McCaslins. The reader is brought into the white McCaslin’s mind as memory recedes through Isaac McCaslin who narrates the story told to him by Cass McCaslin who actually provides the story with an elusive tone in the narrative. The white dominant voice then can be read throughout the novel. This is made particularly clear and complex in the story, “Pantaloon in Black.” This story has none of the playfulness of the previous stories as in “Was” and “The Fire and the Hearth.” Faulkner first reveals Rider’s story through Rider’s memory of his dead wife Mannie, then through the indifferent, unaffectionate voice of the white, having a white sheriff’s deputy retell, in a twisted version, Rider’s grief and his subsequent murder of a white man. Through a white Southerner’s point of view, Faulkner casts a light on a racial tragedy, illustrating the way the whites deny a black’s grief and refuse to step into the black’s heart until they find a racial outlet in his murder. This reveals the racial wounding in the South’s racial history, as Adam Long makes clear that “history, here, becomes the history of blacks and women at the hands of white Southern men” (70).

In *Go Down, Moses*, both white patriarchs and black slaves transcend the present with stream of consciousness and recollections to their pasts. Throughout the novel Ike McCaslin’s flashbacks bring to the fore the familial anecdotes of hunting as well as the pieces of the McCaslin family history neglected and unacknowledged by its members. And Lucas Beauchamp’s stream of consciousness restores part of the family history in that his recollection extends far back to his childhood and to his relationships with members of the Edmonds family, exposing the inextricable relationship that ties the white patriarch and the slave together on the plantation. Faulkner’s management of flashback along with his fragmented, multi-voiced and alternative representation of history is comparable to Morrison’s method of

multi-vocal presentation as a choral performance in *Beloved*. Both writers unsettle the concept of time as a straight line in time span; rather, they treat it as fluid and psychologically grounded. They also break down the notion of memory as a linear process and represent historical experience with layered memory and multiple points of view.

Memory's effect serves not only as a narrative form transcending several individual life stories and generations for representation, but also as a formal concern for Faulkner to explore the unresolved racial problems for black slaves themselves and to reflect what slave history has left to them. For history is never simply in the past, as Faulkner expounds, "no man is himself, he is the sum of his past. There is no such thing really as was because the past is. It is part of every man, every woman, and every moment. All of his or her ancestry, background, is all a part of himself and herself at any moment." (*Faulkner in the University* 84). The significance of the representation of slave history lies in the process, since the proceedings from slavery to freedom force black slaves to recall from memories their past experiences again and again as a long-deferred confrontation with the cruelty of slavery.

Both Faulkner and Morrison restore the historical context through memory as a specific form of narrative. This subversive narrative method illustrates the relation of history to the slave and interrogates the traditional accounts of slave experience and conventional slave narrative. Their texts often suggest self-reflexive meditation on and authorial response to the inhumanity of slavery.

In Chapter Three I try to explore how Faulkner represents the Deep South as a land that undergoes white racism. Among the racialized characters, those of which are African, Indian, and mixed-raced descendant, Faulkner's representation of McCaslin family history foregrounds the notion of race and racism with the dichotomous white-black racial division in the white patriarchal society. Faulkner's text magnifies

racial difference and demarcation in the systematic imbalance of power relations. In particular, it demonstrates that white supremacy and domination within the historical and economic condition in the Southern region is impervious to any attempted constraints on the desire of the white. The imbalanced relation between supremacy and subordination under racism finds its poignant expression in many stories of *Go Down, Moses*. In “Was” Faulkner’s characters in the tableau of the card games become the racial subjects. Either Uncle Buck and Hubert Beauchamp in the first or Uncle Buddy and Hubert in the second poker game, these three white men, as plantation owners and slaveholders, are active and dominant in the white social, political and economic world of the antebellum South. As they stand in a relatively higher social position, the winning of the land and the slave is ultimately the white men’s game. The subordinate situation of the slaves in poker game can also be illustrated in Rider’s suppression as a victim in gambling.

In “Pantaloon in Black,” Rider was borne down, lynched, and described as subhuman without normal human feelings and sentiments by the sheriff’s deputy. The white deputy’s biased reading of the murder reflects not only his own twisted “theory” of black sub-humanity, but also a cultural and social interpretation of the black as Other through “biological heterogeneity.” As Lucius Outlaw defines that race is a social formation, the racial tension is associated with the cultural, political and economic factors in framing the conception of race. And *Go Down, Moses*, given its social, economic and historical contexts, provides a window for observing and examining this formation of race and racism through the repetitive representation of interactions between the white master and the black slave. Thadious M. Davis notes that Faulkner’s representation in *Go Down, Moses* suggests a “racial ideology” that echoes James Baldwin’s remark: “America became white... because of the necessity of denying the Black presence and justifying Black subjugation.... It is the Black

condition, and only that, which forms the consciousness of white people” (qtd. in Davis 209).

Accordingly, in Faulkner’s text, the white patriarch maintains an absolute domination, literally and figuratively, over the black slave by denying the black presence, since the South is a region where “‘subordination’ and paternalism typify relations between white and black” (Godden 120). The South is a labor market place that carries repressive labor relations, in which black slaves such as Tomey’s Turl and Tennie, who “retain the status of property” and also remain “the objects of the [white men’s] game and of the social bargaining” (Davis 71) made explicitly on southern economic underdevelopment and racism.

In comparison with Faulkner’s representation of racial relations and tensions, Morrison in *Beloved* highlights the extent to which the white men regard the black slaves as Other in a patriarchal society by exposing the racist mindset through schoolteacher, a scientific racist. The white man is represented as a caricature with rationalistic and scientific thinking, and his physical scrutiny of Sethe’s body reflects the white man’s animalization of the black slave. Schoolteacher’s racism covered by scientism and rationalism specifies the domination and surveillance of the white through language and knowledge. However, *Beloved* also tends to explore and through Amy Denver, a compassionate poor white girl among the white characters, to bridge the gulf between the black and the white. As racism often makes clear division and pits the white and the black against one another, Amy and Sethe manifest the possibility of racial reconciliation through compassion and love, since Amy ignores racial differences and prejudice to give a hand to Sethe. Throughout the text, Morrison not simply represents racial oppression and exploitation of the slaves. More importantly, she gives hope and manifests humanity to undermine the racial dichotomy for those African Americans like Sethe who survived slavery.

Chapter One

Representing Slave History

William Faulkner's *Go Down, Moses* formulates American South in the 20th century as a region undergoing changes and portrays the lingering effects of the Civil War and the violent legacy the protagonists encounter under the paternalism of the South's entrenched white families. While tracing the roots and branches of the family tree, the novel not only restores a genealogy of the interracial McCaslin clan, which is a microcosm of the history of American South itself, but also represents the role of the black slaves in the making of the Southern plantation through the exploitation of the slaves in the antebellum era. With a series of related short stories, Faulkner tends to create the disturbing effects unfolded by these stories, in which many of his protagonists not only witness the misery marked by the plantation system but also get caught up in the destructive legacy caused by slavery. Faulkner in *Go Down, Moses* implicitly seeks to delineate the history of the white family and the slave life in the South. He "unflinchingly" restores what it means to have been forgotten and left in slavery, and confronts what it needs to restructure the past for the South, since the legacy of slavery and racism lingers and haunts the southern descendants as ripples have made to the surface of a lake.

In many of his novels, including *Go Down, Moses*, Faulkner historicizes racism and miscegenation through factual historical source. Traceable and inferable from the stories is Faulkner's attempt to seriously research into the historical development, problems and transformation of the southern plantation society. His fictions actually provide recognizable references, upon which southern history is recorded and depicted. Sally Wolff's interviews with Dr. Edgar Francisco III reveal that many of Faulkner's novels are clearly based on a private farm diary: the Dairy of Francis Terry Leak, which is an antebellum plantation diary of Dr. Francisco's forebear. Francisco

rememorized his childhood as Faulkner made frequent trips to Holly Springs to visit his father, Edgar Francisco Jr. and reported that Faulkner actually “was aware of the Leak Diary as early as the 1920s” (Wolff 16), and was so preoccupied with it that “[he] appears to have turned to the Leak Diary as a source of information and ideas for his fiction” (17), since the similarities of the details between the real farm ledgers and his fictional ledgers are highly inferable and recognizable. As Francisco recollected and observed, Faulkner studied the farm ledgers in the 1930s and “was always scribbling” and “did a lot of note taking” (16). Comparably, the real farm ledgers from the Leak Diary record the “meticulous details of plantation life from 1839 to 1862” (16), and *Go Down, Moses* covers a longer time span, which was about to be situated far from the antebellum period in 1830s across to the early 1940s to portray southern plantation life in American history.

Faulkner’s reference to the old Leak Diary appears obvious in *Go Down, Moses*. The ledgers in the novel are described similarly to the Leak Diary as large volumes of old ledgers “clumsy and archaic in size and shape” (Faulkner 245) with the binding of “yellowed pages scrawled in fading ink” (250). As a wealthy plantation owner, Francis Leak needed considerable quantity of necessities and foods for the support of his black slaves and carefully recorded every item of purchase for the management of his plantation. Running a plantation and farm requires the expenditure of “farm implements and machinery such as plows, hames, harrow teeth, and trace chains” (38) as well as food and clothing, such as “meat, bread, flour, sugar and coffee,” and “shoes, coats, pantaloons, blankets” (38). The plantation vocabulary and everyday items associated with plantation life and farming are explicitly listed in the Leak Diary and adopted by Faulkner in rendering the contours of the lives of the black slaves in fiction. In *Go Down, Moses*, Faulkner provides a model of the operation of the slave-based plantation society and the text accounts the plantation life with the

items of “the barrels and kegs of flour and meal and molasses and nails, the wall pegs dependant with plowlines and plow-collars and hames and trace-trains” (Faulkner 245). And these words about plantation life in the Leak Diary cover even longer lists of the materials along with quantities and prices on it than the vocabulary Faulkner extracted for the same details in his fiction.

In the historical accounts of the diary, Leak not only records the materials bought for the plantation use, but also inscribes the transactions and transportations of slaves in his dairy. He goes into details and “carefully notes the ages, gender, health of his slaves and the price he would pay or receive as they are bought and sold” (Wolff 42). From Leak’s correspondences with his neighbors and acquaintances in the ledgers, his acquisition of slaves in each transaction is written down as entry goes like: “the price of ‘negroes’ had changed ‘from \$100. to \$200. &...the number for sale was large” or “...sell to me a lot of ‘negroes’ consisting of a man 28 to 30 years of age, a boy about 16, a woman about 27 with a son about 9, & a girl about 16 with her first child about 4 months” (42). The black slaves are called “negro” by Leak in the antebellum time and appear to be acquired easily. These entries exemplify how a plantation owner and slaveholder marked down the purchases and conditions of his slaves. Faulkner’s fictional ledgers of the McCaslin family echo such entries which account for the transactions of slaves, for instance,

Eunice Bought by Father in New Orleans 1807 \$650. dollars. (255).

Apparently, Leak regards the black slaves as pieces of property and commodity being purchased and sold through the transformation of human beings into monetary value for plantation economy. The transaction of slaves written in the ledgers thus illustrates that “equivalency is at the heart of the slave system and the violence perpetrated by that system against its victims” (Dussere 333). In this way, the ledgers testify to the violent, contentious legacy of slavery.

Faulkner's representation of slave transaction in the South is so disclosed as entries in the Leak Diary through Isaac McCaslin's reading of his family history recorded in the farm ledgers. The family ledgers Isaac read charges the expenses for the slaves carefully:

... the slow, day-by-day accrument of the wages allowed him and the food and clothing—the molasses and meat and meal, the cheap durable shirts and jeans and shoes and now and then a coat against rain and cold—charged against the slowly yet steadily mounting sum of balance. (*Go Down, Moses* 255)

In addition to the slave expenses and slave transactions, many of characters' names in the novel are traceable and recognizable from the Leak Diary, such as: "Caruthers, Moses, Isaac, Sam, Tomey, Mollie, Edmund, and Worsham" (Wolff 31). These are the crucial characters, many of which are slaves, whose names are drawn in *Go Down, Moses*. In crafting his fictional characters and deploying their stories, Faulkner seems to incorporate his personal emotions so as to represent southern slave life as well as to suggest his own reaction towards it. In order to illustrate how the whites and the slaves lead their lives on the Mississippi plantation, Faulkner gives the names of the Leak slaves Sam, Isaac, and Tomey, for instance, to his protagonists with personality and identity, describing slaves' daily lives and works on the plantation—"making bricks, working the land, plowing the fields" (31), celebrating holidays, and raising their children, and so on. It seems that by detailing the slaves' daily lives and activities, Faulkner bears witness to their plantation lives and memorializes these forgotten, unnoticed black people.

In *Go Down, Moses*, Faulkner actually not only puts emphasis on slave life and history, but also portrays Native American life in the wilderness. In the novel, Sam Fathers is presented as a slave with the ethnicity of African American, Native

American and Caucasian heritage, who shares the similar physical feature and slave heritage with the slave Sam working on the farm of Francis Leak, and, more importantly, Sam Fathers becomes Isaac's mentor by ushering the boy into a spiritual relation to the wilderness. Faulkner's Sam Fathers represents American dispossession of Native American land and heritage the same as black people undergoing the transaction into slavery in white plantation society. Faulkner's most history-haunted protagonist, Isaac McCaslin, mirrors the "southern biblical naming tradition" (Wolff 32), and through Isaac as an evocative figure of the southern past, Faulkner's efforts intend to "bestow [his] powerful vision to understand the sins of the past" (32) in order to restore and represent southern slave experience.

Faulkner's personal response and commentary on slavery can also be seen through his management of the plots in the novel. In foregrounding the repression and circumstances of female slave life, Faulkner brings the enormity of slavery to the fore by crafting incest and miscegenation into the stories of the white McCaslin family as the effect and legacy of slavery in the Deep South. He "fuels the complexity of the owner/slave relationship with incest and miscegenation" (Wolff 35) to draw on both the white patriarchal power, which takes absolute domination over his slaves on the plantation, and the interracial force of black and mulatto figures often presented in the Southern texts. For instance, Faulkner's fictional slave Thomasina, nicknamed Tomey, led a tragic life of racial and sexual exploitation and died in childbirth. As a counterpoint to the factual female slave Toney, Tomey embodies the racial transgression and sexual appropriation made by the white, patriarchal progenitor. And Tomey's Turl, the son of the white patriarch Carothers McCaslin and his own daughter Tomey, illuminates the effect of racial intersection which characterizes the Southern text.

Yet not simply as a typical Southern text, Faulkner's *Go Down, Moses* is added

with more emotional response to the characters. Seeing the names of the slaves in the Leak Diary, Faulkner “weaves not only their names but many of the situations of their lives into his novels and stories suggests his deep empathy for their plight” (Wolff 31). Faulkner charges affective scenes to depict slave’s grief and despondency under slavery. He slightly modifies the historical accounts and intertwines the details together to represent the lives of slaves. Taking the female slave Eunice for instance, by mixing a story up together with the fragments of a factual ice pond in the plantation and a drowned slave, Faulkner with affection edits Eunice’s life through a suicide with a devastated body and mind in reflection to the cruelty of slavery as a slave and a mother exploited by her white master. While a slave-owning planter obtains absolute control over his land and slaves, Faulkner gives voices and personalities to his characters, both the whites and the plantation slaves, as Lucas Beauchamp claimed himself of being the founder’s descendant, if only through the unrecognized black line. Lucas dwelled on a parcel of land set aside for him at the center of the plantation, and regarded it as his own land. Living on the private property, Lucas farmed the land intermittently, and failed to meet Roth Edmonds’ agricultural demand for cotton on his plantation, since he stole Roth’s mule to purchase a metal detector and even risked his marriage of forty-five years for his gold-hunting dream. Lucas’s gold-hunting scheme characterizes his personality as a black McCaslin with resilient and courageous determination. Not only the whites but also the blacks on the plantation are shaped by Faulkner into lifelike people in contrast to Leak’s lifeless and emotionless accounts of his slaves.

As a slave-owning plantation elite, Francis Leak usually “efficiently and without apparent emotion maintained the accounts for the buying and selling of slaves to work his plantation” (42); however, Faulkner’s representation of slave life with alterations departs from this factual, lifeless records on the real ledgers by providing his

protagonists with personalities and spirits. Buck and Buddy McCaslin are the two among the main characters with their own spirits and thoughts. As opponents of slavery in the South, the white twins Buck and Buddy refused to face a slave suicide under the paternalism of the South's entrenched white family, neither did they openly discuss the patrimony bequeathed by their father to a "slave" Tomey's Turl on the ledger. They allowed the slaves to pay for their freedom and only pretended to "play" the chasing game to seize the runaway slaves as fugitive slaves like Turl who escaped to meet his lover each time. In the chasing scene of the prelude story "Was," Tomey's Turl outwitted his white owners by "successfully influencing a hand of poker" (44). In characterizing slave's personality, Faulkner again gives the slave courage, wisdom and endurance to outwit his masters, which is unseen through the runaway slaves recorded in the Leak Diary. The abolitionist twins, unlike their father, did not attempt to take control over the slaves on their plantation as to depart from their roles as plantation heirs and slave owners.

In the pages of the familial ledgers, the twins carried on conversations with each other while accounting the slaves. This is similar to the Leak plantation ledger, in which "Leak wrote some of his entries to someone in particular, or so that someone else (not named), would read them. He [used] the word 'you' on numerous occasions" (44). In *Go Down, Moses*, Faulkner keeps this form of conversations between the ledger-writers, Buck and Buddy. Their communicative style identifies the way they record and what happens on the plantation yet with disfiguration or abbreviation so as to be ignored and unnoticed. The entries below illustrate their communications with different handwritings recognizable by Isaac. Buddy wrote:

29th of Oct 1856 Renamed him

Curiously, Buck asked two days later:

31 Oct 1856 Renamed him what

Buddy later responded, simply by asserting his naming:

Chrstm 1856 Spintrius (Faulkner 254)

The cryptic style of accounting can be seen through the twins' evasive yet defensive attitude towards the unacknowledged "crime" of their father. Buck wrote:

23 Jun 1833 Who in hell ever heard of a niger drowning him self (256)

No explanation of the thousand-dollar patrimony to the son of a slave girl with simply the old Carothers' will:

Turl Son of Thucydus @ Eunice Tomy born Jun 1833 yr stars fell Fathers will
(257)

They did not question the unexplained suicide that puzzles Isaac, yet instead their evasive engagement with it presumably recognized incest and miscegenation in the past. In addition to their communicative form, one thing noteworthy is the spelling errors carried in the twins' handwritings. As a slave owner and planter elite, Francis Leak "nonetheless spells some words incorrectly, such as 'burried'" (42). Faulkner imitates this orthographical error as "burid" and "burd" in drawing the entries from the Leak ledgers. This demonstrates Faulkner's careful delineation close to a real, historical model.

For Isaac, the twins' records of the ledgers help him reconstruct the circumstances of his remote family history. And Faulkner's representation of southern slave history is based on these pieces of historical accounts and fragments of slave-master relationship to restore the unexposed knowledge of plantation reality. The contour of southern plantation society becomes clearer not only through the entries but also via the debate concerning southern slaves in the Leak ledgers. In the fourth section of "The Bear," a discussion between Isaac and his cousin Cass McCaslin for his relinquishment of the birthright carries many pages in the novel. A resemblant debate about the settlement and displacement on the "Arkansas

bottomlands” was marked down between Francis Leak and his brother. Faulkner, however, changes the subject of the debate in the novel to a related topic of dispute over a cursed land upon which lies God’s purpose for human beings. Moreover, the debate also reveals Faulkner’s personal contemplation on whether God intends human beings to obtain private land. In the fictional dispute, Isaac’s explanation for his repudiation of birthright approaches to God’s Creation itself. He expounds his vision of purification of the land cursed by slavery and exploitation due to plantation economy. Faulkner does not provide answer or implication to Ike’s argument, but he seems to accept the truth of owning the land as private property by human beings. With alterations Faulkner presumably seems to “have taken inspiration for the fictional debate” (45) between Ike and Cass from the conversation in the Leak Diary and there exists so many resemblances, as discussed above, between the novel and the real ledgers.

It is recognizable that the Leak plantation ledgers, providing much historical information, serve as a foundation upon which Faulkner searches for both ideas and details for many of his novels. As Faulkner had actually read the Leak Diary many years before *Go Down, Moses* was published, he must have scrutinized the ledgers and conceived of the scope for the representation of southern slave life and plantation society for a long time. More importantly, he must have pondered over the extent to which the black slaves account for the force of race, gender and class in the making of the history of the Deep South. By drawing the historical sources explicitly from the diary, Faulkner represents the discrediting of antebellum plantation society marked by slavery about how a planter elite manages farms and plantation, and dominates over his slaves. He also portrays the subsequent social changes triggered by the Civil War over generations. For instance, the novel demonstrates that racial prejudice and oppression still exist in the fictional present of the 1940s. The situation illustrates his

strong belief that the past lingers on and saturates the present. Presumably, Faulkner's purpose is to "create a vibrant fictional place and time closely aligned with both personal and regional history" of the South (Wolff 63).

Although the Leak Diary records the mastering of southern slaves and the management of plantation owners, Faulkner's story turns out as a poignant exposition of plantation history, during which the legitimate inheritor Isaac McCaslin appears to have no heart in it but only tends to retreat from it. The ledgers not simply serve as a constellation of figures in *Go Down, Moses* but as an alternative account of the events. They are the chronological, historical texts of slavery for Faulkner, just as slave life and plantation society in the South recorded in the Leak Diary provide the historical contexts for the account of his native region. With the ideas and details generating from the real diary, one can see Faulkner's attempts to represent the fullness and details of plantation life in southern history and his efforts to force the violence and enormity of slave experience off the entries in the ledgers so as to bring them into the foreground. The slave's predicament in the fiction thus vividly scores the human sufferance, and the reader is initiated by Faulkner into the legacy and consequences entailed in slavery.

The characters' names, plots, setting and theme mark *Go Down, Moses* as a plantation novel which clearly delineates the use of historical materials in representing slave experience in the Deep South. From this respect, it is historically grounded and regionally specific, as the novel historicizes racism and miscegenation in order to uncover not only the unearthed individual history of the white McCaslin family, but to render a larger historical context of the South primarily through the mediations and intrusions of unnoticed knowledge and voice that the reader is propelled into rethinking about the act and reason for representing a history marked and thus influenced by slavery and the Civil War. Since Faulkner laments on this

southern history tainted by slave system and still understands that the burden of history has its oppressive and overwhelming force to ripple through the contemporary reader as the past always lingers to the present. In the interviews Dr. Francisco gave, he recollected that Faulkner sometimes expressed his indignation and grumble to the diary he read as his response to the diary keeper. Faulkner's repugnance and repulsion to the ledgers suggest that he seemed to "[argue] with a time and a place in American history that is almost inaccessible now" and is likely to "engage in heated debate with the long-dead diarist because of the diarist's proslavery stance, his readiness to secede from the Union, and his willingness to offer substantial financial support to the Confederate State of America at the advent of the Civil War" (17). It can be inferred, then, that Faulkner's strong disapproval of slavery kindles his inquiry into the questions of racism and miscegenation entailed in slavery in the southern past.

However, the details of the past might not always be easily accessible. In order to initiate the reader into the seeming "inaccessible" history, Faulkner brings the reader to come into possession of such historical truth with the enormity of the past and to "confront" with it. *Go Down, Moses* demonstrates Faulkner's inquiry into the southern plantation with the enormity of slavery in southern slave past. In exposing the inextricable relations within a Southern family and community, Faulkner specifies the propensity of incest and miscegenation with racial and gender transgression and intersection, as "a metaphor for the racial and class narcissism of the plantation elite" (Matthews 198). Following this point, Faulkner represents the interlocking relations of gender, race and class in a vast interracial family as model for larger historical context, and further forces the contemporary reader to encounter the origin of these entangled relations in plantation history. As John T. Matthews observes, "both incest and miscegenation are secondary manifestations of a more fundamental social deformity" (198).

Faulkner's representation of slave history in fiction can be viewed as a long, deferred confrontation with the cruelty of slavery and also as his disavowal to the proslavery stance of such slave-owning planter as Francis Terry Leak. *Go Down, Moses* proves a southern plantation novel exposing the notion of property that is deeply imbedded in the southern history due to slavery, since in the South "any portion of nature—a human body or a piece of wilderness—might be brought under title, and become subject to rights of use, purchase, and sale, and even destruction" (Matthews 198). In a broader sense, the southern cultural and social trauma, racism and miscegenation become more of a transgressive possession of many kinds. Like many other Southern writers obsessively preoccupied with the past, Faulkner in *Go Down, Moses* reconstructs what has been forgotten in the past as a result of the lingering effects of the Civil War. Indeed, the novel confronts with the specters of slavery and racism that continue to haunt the modern southern descendants.

While Faulkner's representation of slave history from a Southern planter's diary as a historical source, Toni Morrison's representation of African-American history in *Beloved* appears more artistic and imaginative, since Morrison's text contains more hidden meanings than what it explicitly draws and says. Set in the postbellum years, *Beloved* deals with the disremembered history of African-American slaves on the basis of a real slave family "catastrophe." Morrison attempts to represent the legacy of slavery and its violent consequences as well as to "recover" slave experience in American history for both races so as to confront and get through it. Morrison's depiction of the slave escapees in *Beloved* creates meanings not only out of the anti-slavery sensationalism and consciousness across historical time and space but also portrays the inner worlds and values of the slaves by recreating the fictional ex-slaves and restructuring their terrible slave experiences during the Middle Passage and under slavery. Accordingly, as *Beloved* brings the slave "catastrophe" back into

memory and knowledge, a representation of the Garner incident brings the African-American slaves into presence in American literature and history. It “challenges previously conceived and simplified images about nineteenth-century African American mother-woman in slavery” (Reyes 56) and also underscores the significance of witness to slave experience for reclaiming a lost history.

Beloved is loosely based on a nineteenth-century real incident involving a fugitive slave woman named Margret Garner, who failed in her road to freedom, and consequently murdered her little daughter rather than allowed her to be returned to slavery. Margret Garner actually escaped with other fugitive slaves. In January of 1856, a group of seventeen slaves escaped from the border of Kentucky into Ohio, nine of whom continued to flee north to Canada. But the rest of the eight slaves, the Garner family, including four adults and four children, were later apprehended under the Fugitive Slave Act.² It was reported that with a butcher knife Margret Garner in desperation killed her three-year-old daughter and then attempted yet failed to kill her other children and herself. The critic and spotlight were at that time on Margret Garner, and her murder was described as a sensational horror of slavery. And the Abolitionists were working on this sensational case to demonstrate and bring the terrible conditions of the slaves to the international fore.

Morrison’s recreation of the slave escapees together with their excruciating journey to freedom in *Beloved* is initiated from this Garner case. Morrison in many interviews mentioned that her idea for the novel came from the Garner case, since she was “obsessed by two or three little fragment of [the Garner] stories” (Naylor 206). While assembling the Garner story for her representation of slave experience, Morrison tends to create her own characters and their lives leading a road from

² The Fugitive Slave Act was passed by the United States Congress on September 18, 1850. It declared that all runaway slaves were, upon capture, to be returned to their masters.

enslavement to freedom rather than setting them back into slavery. Although Morrison notes that the Garner incident is an inspiration of her novel, she seems to learn more than the fragments of the contemporary reports. In a 1988 interview, she unfolded that “in fact Margret Garner escaped with her husband and two other men and was returned to slavery” and, “she wasn’t tried for killing her child. She was tried for a real crime, which was running away” (Darling 250-1), because the slave owner would rather take his property back to Kentucky than letting them stay tried for murder in Ohio. Moreover, “the abolitionists were trying very hard to get [Garner] tried for murder because they wanted the Fugitive Slave law to be unconventional. [...] so they tried to switch it to murder as a kind of success story” (Darling 251). According to the contemporary reports,³ Margaret Garner escaped with her parents-in-law and while being shipped from Ohio back to Kentucky, she jumped (or fell) overboard with her child, and she was saved yet her little daughter drowned. She was later reported by local newspaper *Cincinnati Chronicle* that she and her husband worked in New Orleans and then on a southern plantation in Mississippi until she passed away in 1858. No matter what Garner’s fate is in reality, her story was so recreated to be endowed with a new life in Morrison’s writing.

Morrison in fiction finds a way out as her imaginative recreation for those fugitives. In *Beloved*, Morrison rewrites the Garner case by turning Margret Garner to Sethe and the murdered girl Mary to Beloved in order to represent their horrible experiences under slavery. Indeed, the fact of a past under particular historical conditions is important to the story, but Morrison tends to “invent” the characters’ own lives. As she expounds in an interview with Marsha Darling, “I wanted to invent [Beloved’s] life, which is a way of saying I wanted to be accessible to anything the

³ For more details of the descriptions of Margret Garner’s complexion, her court hearing reports and the legal proceeding of this Garner case, see Angelita Reyes’s essay “Taking Flight and Taking Foot: From Margaret Garner to *Beloved*.”

characters had to say about it” (248). This shows Morrison’s attempt in fiction not only to “invent” slaves’ lives but to reconstruct a new slave narrative as an authorial, personal response to the violence the slaves has undergone in slavery. For this purpose, Morrison takes the ground for representing the horror of slavery, developing the Garner case further with the alteration of its denouement for her fictional characters as a counterpart in historical recovery. Morrison explicates her way of and reason for her re-creation:

I just imagined the life of a dead girl which was the girl that Margret Garner killed. [...] I just imagined her remembering what happened to her, being someplace else and returning, knowing what happened to her. And I called her *Beloved* so that I can filter all these confrontations and questions that she has in that situation, [...], and then to extend her life.

(Naylor 208)

It is clear that Morrison tends to develop the single case of a slave family’s catastrophe to illustrate a larger group of the unnamed slaves as the novel itself is dedicated to the 60 million slaves who died as a result of slavery. Consequently, *Beloved* not only retrieves the Garner case as a reminder, but rather uses it as a metaphor to score a broader picture of millions of slaves and their erased or forgotten experiences. That is, it’s a novel that engages with the re-enactment of the painful and dissimilated slave experiences in order to understand and assimilate not only the suffering individual past of fictional Sethe or the real Garner family, but the particular historical conditions—the history of the Middle Passage and the antebellum era.

While claiming that the novel is dedicated to the disremembered people and a lost history, Morrison was “trying to make it a personal experience. The book was not about the institution [itself]—Slavery with a capital S. It was about these anonymous people called slaves. What they do to keep on, how they make a life, what they’re

willing to risk, however long it lasts in order to relate to one another” (Angelo 257). What Morrison tries to represent is their individual, painful experiences caused by slavery as something its victims do not want to remember, even “white people won’t want to remember” (Angelo 257). In addition to the representing slave experience in antebellum years, Morrison gives voice and personality to her characters, which is similar to Faulkner’s way of representing of southern slave life. *Beloved*, for instance, relates her own slave experience during the Middle Passage. With both physical manifestation and spiritual presence, *Beloved* also represents “a survivor from the true, factual slave ship. She speaks the language, a traumatized language, of her own experience” (Darling 247) about what it was like being on the ship and facing death during the Middle Passage. Endowed with flesh and mind, *Beloved* is able to articulate for the enslaved what they had undergone and how they had lived under slavery.

In comparison to Faulkner’s representation of slave history generally based on historical accounts, Morrison’s management for representation, to be sure, exerts her imaginative recreation with a revision of the historical case. She explores the inner lives of the enslaved before the Emancipation through memory and imagination. In “Memory, Creation and Writing,” Morrison clarifies that research is “an effort to find out the way it really was” (385). In writing *Beloved*, Morrison does research as part of her writing to learn the disremembered past it really was. But for her, research of the historical knowledge does not provide her a full account or total understanding of the past because too many details of the historical accounts or sources would become hinderers for her. As she says, “any more detail would have prevented (for me) the emergence of a fictional character at all” (386). Therefore, too many related facts might be helpless to her imaginative re-creation. This shows that the historical sources do not offer her a promising way to represent slave experience in historical recovery.

Instead, imagination accounts for her scheme more for recovering and representing slave experience as part of the country's forgotten past in American history.

In writing fictions, Morrison depends not only on historical, factual accounts and memory but also on imagination.⁴ Imagination helps her invent, represent and even reconstruct the psychic workings of the enslaved. According to Morrison's idea, "Fiction, by definition, is distinct from fact. Presumably it's the product of imagination—invention—and it claims the freedom to dispense with 'what really happened,' or where it really happened, or when it really happened, and nothing in it needs to be publicly verifiable, although much in it can be verified" ("The Site of Memory" 71-2). Unlike Faulkner's realistic representation of slave history, fiction provides Morrison freedom to manipulate historical materials and to connect the factual and the imaginative world for representing and reconstructing slave experience. To depend too heavily on historical accounts seem to rid her of the chance to explore the inner, imaginative world she attempts to reconstruct. Morrison suggests that historical facts are identifiable in her fictions but not fully explicable for the whole texts and that through imagination she, as a novelist, is allowed to be accessible to the slave past and to recount in fiction the disremembered people, "these unburied, or at least unceremoniously buried" (209).

Compared with *Go Down, Moses*, *Beloved* can be seen as Morrison's revision and expansion of a historical incident. Before *Beloved* was published, Morrison once clarified her view on work of art. She asserted that her work does not take the private exertion of her imagination for literary recreation that only attends to her personal ends in historical recovery. As she expounds, "I am not interested in indulging myself in some private, closed exercise of my imagination that fulfills only the obligation of my personal dreams—which is to say yes, the work must be political. It must have

⁴ Morrison's employment of memory in her writing will be further explored in Chapter 2.

that as its thrust” (“Rootedness” 64). Now it becomes clear that Morrison would draw overt, political attention in *Beloved* not only to represent slave experience, the physical and psychic horror of slavery, but to “reconstruct” slave history in fiction. Many of traditional slave narratives, of course, deal with slave experience, yet for Morrison, the genre of slave narrative is “shaped and constrained as it was by the Abolitionist cause” and is “unable to bear the fullest possible witness to the interior lives of the slave-narrators” (Matus 104). *Beloved* then can be read as a novel that shows Morrison’s concern with the lost past of African Americans, and that also “challenges its readers to recognize the unbearable poignancy of the claims of the past—the loss [of the past] suffered not just by those who survived, but by those who did not” (104) so as to learn her political suggestions of bearing full witness through her work. And Morrison’s attempts and efforts for bringing political attention into her novel only intensify her passionate reclamation of a disremembered history, when she makes clear that “My feeling is just the opposite: if [a work of art] has none of [any political influence in it], it’s tainted. [...] It seems to me that the best art is political and you ought to be able to make it unquestionably political and irrevocably beautiful at the same time” (“Rootedness” 64). This remark shows Morrison’s view about political nature in a work of art, which also emphasizes political implications through her work to make it “unquestionably political and irrevocably beautiful” as an ideal.

As an African-American novelist, Morrison in an interview with Marsha Darling explains her goal and reason for making the absence of historical knowledge available to both races: “[t]here is a necessity for remembering the horror, but of course, there’s a necessity for remembering it in a manner in which it can be digested, [...] The act of writing the book, in a way, is a way of confronting it and making it possible to remember” (247-8). As a way of confronting the horrible fact of slavery, Morrison represents slave experience through “the powerful imaginative way in which [African

Americans] deconstructed and reconstructed reality in order to get through” (252).

Both Faulkner and Morrison, through their representations of slave experience in historical recovery, restore and reclaim the lost, unknown past of African Americans under slavery and beyond. In so doing, Faulkner depends more on factual, historical accounts, while Morrison relies more on imaginative creation. The African American history in *Beloved* is more close to an imaginative, revisionary portrayal of fictional history. Although there remains negotiations and questions between truth and representation, fiction and history, “*Beloved*,” as Caroline Rody argues, “and most contemporary novels of slavery are not ‘historiographic metafiction’ denying the possibility of historical [truth]” (94). That is, *Beloved* remains a historical text and contains revision and intervention of historical truth that centers on the evils and aftermath of slavery. Both novels extend from the individual cases as metaphor to delineate a larger, collective slave past disremembered by the white and the black in history. They serve as a record of slave history as well as a confrontation with the specters of slavery and racism that continue to linger over the modern time.

Chapter Two

Memory and Narrative

In *Go Down, Moses*, Faulkner traces the McCaslin family past back to its origin to illustrate the racial intersection that generates the story of the South through the memory and stream of consciousness of the white and a few black members of the family. With its complex episodes of the huge McCaslin clan, the novel recounts and represents southern history marked by the institution of slavery and racism. As a long representation of a family history as well as a regional history, this complex narrative covers a long span of time from the 1830s through antebellum time to 1940 and thereabout. Time, as one of the central concerns, goes back, stops and begins at somewhere with memory in the novel. The narrative of the story line develops and culminates with Ike McCaslin's renunciation of his patrimony, and eventually runs down to what it was and to Genesis, attempting to unite all the family stories in a white man's lifetime. So the reader is brought into and went through many family members' recollections. These remembrances weave the stories together that the novel throughout is an exercise of employment of numerous memories and stream of consciousness as Faulkner's specific narrative.

Memory counts in *Go Down, Moses* since Faulkner's tie to southern regional history is always shown clearly through memory. Faulkner's employment of memory in the historical contexts in which he writes are seemingly complex in a ragbag of memories, yet tenuously and meticulously deployed. Admittedly, Faulkner's novel always associates with the past and engages in southern historical contexts cautiously and collaboratively. But it is important to note that while the novel contains much historical ground, Faulkner is "rarely sentimental or nostalgic about the past" (Minter 56). David Minter expounds the way southern history is ushered into Faulkner's novel in two distinctive ways and how it is entangled with Faulkner's narrative:

History enters Faulkner's fiction in at least two distinguishable modes and on at least four different levels, [...]. In one mode history comes as past experience, as lived time, as actual events and actual people; in another mode it comes as remembered experience, as recollected or recorded time, as shadows of events and shades of people (Minter 56).

The remembered experience does not remain in the past; it rather often lives a life of its own in Faulkner's novel. And through the deployment of memory, both two modes⁵ appear in *Go Down, Moses*, yet Faulkner seems to shed light on the remembered experience through memory both to tackle the issues of race, region and gender and to recapture the most serious problem, the racial dichotomy, in the Deep South. Thus, the significance and complexity of *Go Down, Moses* lie in the presence of history with memory, recalled as shadows or ripples of the events, as its force within a long continuance of reaction and mediation with the unearthed southern history.

Faulkner's management of the story line begins in the fictional present with his most history-haunted protagonist Ike McCaslin, and traces from the present back to history "out of the old time, the old days" (Faulkner 4), plunging right into memory. Faulkner presents the prelude story "Was" as memory from Isaac McCaslin, as the outlived family member on the plantation, who narrates the story told to him by Cass Edmonds from a child's point of view. Faulkner establishes a fictional present at the beginning, and then shifts fast to a tale Isaac recollects, since "this was not something participated in or even seen by [Isaac] himself, but by his elder cousin, McCaslin Edmonds, grandson of Isaac's father's sister and so descended by the distaff" (3). Faulkner's technical success changes from Cass's voice into Isaac's memory in the

⁵ David Minter suggests that the great complexity of *Go Down, Moses* derives in part from the dual presence of history. See Minter's "Truths More Intense than Knowledge: Notes on Faulkner and Creativity."

third-person narrative. The reader does not yet see clearly the relevance those familial events in the past have for Ike, but is rather given more information about him than he can be understood at this present point in the very first story, which conflates the past with the present and brings the familial relationship into the front. The importance and complexity of this fascinated juxtaposition of present and past cannot be fully grasped until Part Four of "The Bear." The fictional present of the novel in Part One of "Was" is established in 1941, which is the latest period in Uncle Ike's lifetime, as the past events through recollection are vividly reenacted in the rest of the stories that happened in and after 1859.

As Ike's memory recedes to the past for unearthing historical pieces of the family stories, part of which he actually learns from Cass, who provides the stories an elusive viewpoint, and much of the narrative in the opening story relies on Cass's voice. In "Was," Ike's flashback retells one piece of his McCaslin family history about Uncle Buddy and his father Uncle Buck, but in "The Fire and the Hearth," the voice of a black McCaslin member emerges. The reader is brought into Lucas Beauchamp's mind. Similar to old Ike's, Lucas's stream of consciousness restores part of the family history. His memory not only extends its scope far back to his childhood and his relationships with the Edmonds family members, but also to the marriage life with his wife Molly and the plantation life with the present owner Roth Edmonds. His entwined memories expose the inextricable relationship that ties the white patriarch and his southern slaves together on the land. Lucas's stream of consciousness keeps returning to his early childhood and his ancestry when Roth Edmonds was born. Putting his private past into the center of the family history, Lucas returns back and forth between his mental process and his treasure hunting in reality. As Joseph Reed observes, "Faulkner develops an almost invisible technique to render Lucas's thought-processes, continually transmitting significant but subtle shifts between one

train of thought and the next” (189). In “Fire and the Hearth,” past and present constantly interpenetrate and interrupt each other. Lucas’s remembrance of things that took place forty-three years ago parallels his present action as the plot proceeds further to reveal the past events.

By moving through the fictional present into the past, memory travels through time, gradually restoring southern plantation life, and sometimes breaks into the moments of insight to other character’s memory, such as Roth’s flashback. Similar to Lucas’s recollection, Roth’s memory also restores and re-constructs his family history. Hence another voice of the white McCaslin family comes to the fore. Roth remembered the history of the family’s Beauchamp Negroes, whose strain was “not only of white blood and not even Edmonds blood, but of old Carothers McCaslin himself, from whom Lucas was descended not only by a male line but in only two generations ”(Faulkner 101). Roth’s flashback goes to Lucas’s youth and his own childhood when he was raised by Molly as his substitute mother. The story line develops in “The Fire and the Hearth” from the present conversation between Roth and Molly, tracing the black line, male branch of family blood three generations back, and returns again to the presence of Lucas in face of Roth Edmonds. This kind of time traveling marks the characteristics of Faulkner’s fictional narrative.

It is obvious that the characters’ thought-process or memory sets in motion part of the narrative progression in *Go Down, Moses*. Indeed, the novel comprises numerous memories and streams of consciousness from different characters as distinctive narrative voices. In “Pantaloons in Black,” the narrative voices of the white and the black juxtapose through a black young man’s memory. Rider after Mannie’s funeral struggled and confronted with the memory of his wife. Returning to his house, he tracked his private past, preoccupied with the memory of his six-month marriage life and felt its overwhelming weight infiltrating the house: “the dusk-filled single

room where all those six months were now crammed and crowded into one instant time until there was no space left for air to breathe” (135). Rider’s memory is so heavy and choking that the ghost of Mannie returns and temporarily reunites the couple as time condenses and stops for them. Memory’s effect appears heavier and more forceful in this black man, since it not only links the past and the present, but also unites the living and the dead. However, as Lee Anne Fennell puts it, “if memory is a hedge against mortality and forgetting, it also exacts a price—the agonizing grief that the acknowledgement of loss entails” (47), Rider’s remembrance indeed holds his wife back from death yet he needs to recognize the high price of it, although he experiences the power of memory in transcending mortality and keeping the dead alive.

Through Rider’s memory of his wife, Faulkner reveals Rider’s story in detail by having a white sheriff’s deputy to retell Rider’s grief and his subsequent murder of a white man with an indifferent, unaffectionate voice. The word “Pantaloons” in the title suggests that the story is close to “drama,” presented by the black and re-narrated by the white. Rather than focusing on Rider’s loss of Mannie, which leaves him bereft, the white deputy reports the murder in a twisted version by erasing the very grief that drives Rider’s actions in the first place. It appears a bitter irony that his wife should be so inattentive to the story calling for sympathetic response and understanding of a man’s loss of wife. Faulkner casts a light on a racial tragedy, illustrating how the whites deny a black’s grief and refuse to step into the black’s heart until they find a racial outlet in the murder. The significance of memory becomes more obvious in that memory in “Pantaloons in Black” not only shapes the very expression of southern society in the 1930s, but brings out the distinction between the voices of a white Southerner and a local black man in reality. It sketches the strict racial dichotomy that resides in the white Southerner’s mind, a situation that is made clear in the deputy’s

distorted narrative. It also reveals the racial wounding rooted in the white South's racism.

The blacks in "Pantaloon in Black" have no blood relationship with the McCaslin clan, but this story serves as a "structural subversion of the family chronicle that could bring the stories together into a more cohesive novel" (Aboul-Ela 62). Carl E. Rollyson describes the effect of "Pantaloon in Black," a seemingly "tangential aspect of Rider's story," which, rather, stands out as a foreground of the tension between the two races continuously presented in the previous stories: "To complete the suspension of character development in the McCaslin story, so that the old times which Lucas remembers are not immediately juxtaposed to Isaac's memories of "The Old People"" (102). "Pantaloon in Black" involves a memory that brings out contemplation upon Southern racial problems rather than emphasizes a direct appeal to sympathy. Through Rider's memory, Faulkner represents a black man's bereavement and mirrors a white deputy's racial prejudice his narrative creates. Memory here distances the reader from Lucas's remembrance in "Fire and the Hearth" to Ike's childhood experience in "The Bear" as a structural deployment.

In "Fire and the Hearth," Lucas's memory reaches back to the old time when old Carothers got the land from the native Indians. But in "The Old People" Faulkner moves out of the character's viewpoint in the previous stories and into an omniscient narrative voice, a third-person narration. The historical pieces here extend far beyond the present moments to the prehistoric conditions of the American wilderness before it recedes under the economic development of the white settler: the family history traces back to the past of Sam Fathers and to American wilderness. The omniscient narrative presents Ike's childhood with Sam Fathers, which unfolds their hunting life in the woods and Sam's slave experience on the plantation. On the one hand, Ike's childhood experience together with Sam Fathers as a companion, helps Ike "continue

to live past [his] seventy years and then eighty years, long after the man himself had entered the earth as chiefs and kings entered it" (Faulkner 159). On the other hand, it takes the reader on the way to the central problem of the Deep South; that is, slavery. The omniscient voice in "The Old People" suggests that Ike will remember the hunting experience at eighty and also shows that his hunting life in the wilderness has an enormous effect on his relinquishment later. In the wilderness with Sam Fathers, an interracial character of black and Indian blood line, Ike learns not just the skill and code of hunting but sees his family line as a historical consequence by miscegenation and his patrimony as doomed and cursed by slavery and exploitation.

Ike's memory in "The Bear" has its special import, as Carl Rollyson explains:

[r]etrospection on the events related in "The Bear" has begun even before the events themselves can properly be said to have ended. Groups of men, very carefully chosen by Faulkner for the representativeness of their experiences in or beside the wilderness, gather around the old bear to remember the past. (106)

Faulkner tends to make Ike an observer of the historical processes on the Southern plantation. He also makes different racial characters of Native Americans, the blacks and the whites to assemble together in order to remember American past and its historical changes in the South. Ike's vision of history in "Delta Autumn" illustrates his obsession with the past and his attempt to redeem its evil, as he was aware that Roth's light-skinned mistress was a descendant of the Beauchamp line and thus gave cynical advice to her so as to end the result of miscegenation that history has repeated itself in the present. He refuses a black member of his own family, which unwittingly repeats the crime of the McCaslin past in a new context, for Ike cannot accept what history has made him or changed the blood line in the present. However, history is never simply in the past, as Faulkner expounds:

no man is himself, he is the sum of his past. There is no such thing really as was because the past is. It is part of every man, every woman, and every moment. All of his or her ancestry, background, is all a part of himself and herself at any moment. And so a man, a character in a story at any moment of action is not just himself as he is then, he is all that made him. (*Faulkner in the University* 84)

In fact, memory demonstrates the effect of excavation and accumulation as the reader gradually assembles the fragments of the family story into a composite whole from the antebellum past to the present time during World War II. Memory not only serves as a narrative form that transcends several individual life stories and generations for representation, but also as a formal concern of Faulkner to explore the consequences of slavery: miscegenation and racism, exposing what slave history has left to the Southerners.

From memory and recollection, the voices of the numerous protagonists, the white and the black members of the McCaslin family, together constitute a fuller picture of the family past. Throughout *Go Down, Moses*, these various voices, via memory and stream of consciousness, present southern slave experience and the historical changes in the South. There are the primary white voices of Ike McCaslin, Cass and Roth Edmonds, and Buck and Buddy McCaslin, presenting the complex relationship to or their more “dominant” situations over the slaves. There are also the scattered black voices of Lucas Beauchamp, Rider, unnamed Negro mistress of Roth, and Butch Beauchamp, exposing the strained tension under slavery and the individual relationship with the white after the Emancipation. Susan V. Donaldson specifies Faulkner’s unconventional, multi-voiced narrative as postmodern-like “revision/parody of the South’s master narrative”:

[I]t is a broken, murky, confused retelling, without a proper beginning

or ending, [...]. The very confusion of the narrative—fragmented, multi-voiced, often unpunctuated, sometimes disoriented in its chronology—suggests something of its postmodern character,⁶ [...]. It is a narrative that recounts and critiques the making of sameness and otherness in the master narrative of southern history. (11)

Faulkner's narrative strategy unsettles the master narrative of southern history, since it is presented as "fragmented and multi-voiced" through the characters' memories.

Within memory Faulkner's narrative leads the reader to move through different time spans, as William Rueckert comments on Faulkner's method in managing fictional time:

Faulkner has an extraordinary time-sense and seems to hold all the time of a given fiction simultaneously in his imagination and swim around through it as if it were the very element of his being-as-fiction-writer. This has the effect of altering our conception of linear time without ever destroying time. (166)

Rueckert's remark about time suggests that time is a significant element in understanding Faulkner's representation of southern history. Faulkner departs from the pattern of linear time and "scramble[s] chronology and sequence" (Kinney 49). Presumably, he complicates and obscures the causes and consequences of the familial events. The mixed sequence and the delayed revelation in the series of stories help to demonstrate the concept of time as flexible and fluid in the novel.

Faulkner's employment of memory not only exemplifies the historical scenes being close and convincing, since memory evokes emotional and psychological

⁶ Susan Donaldson suggests Jean Francois Lyotard's idea of postmodern character in narrative as a history that has eschewed the old rules and that is in the process of narration looking for new "rules and categories." See Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*.

changes of the characters, such as Rider, but it also carries fictional possibility of temporal movement. The presentation of temporal accounts in *Go Down, Moses* allows the reader to rechart the events in chronological order of their occurrence and, as Dara Llewellyn points out, “the reader must decipher lineage in this collection by examining how time flows. Faulkner helps effect this deciphering of the flow of time by turning the series of stories into a genealogical puzzle” (Llewellyn 497). While solving this puzzle, the reader is surrounded with several partial family histories moving back and forth between the tangled stories that refer to different time flows. In Faulkner’s representation, the Civil War memories as a pivot in the novel, then, manifest dual relationships to time. On the one hand, as demonstrated through Ike at his old age, memory maintains a tied relationship that it carries the past to the present. On the other hand, as in the case of Rider, whose memory pulls one relentlessly into the past that compels the reader to witness his tragic story. Therefore, *Go Down, Moses* contains a constellation of memories with layered revelations in the stories accounting for the temporal movements in the presence of history.

Through memory Faulkner’s stories, in a sense, move from the individual relationship to the familial past and further to the regional history of the Deep South. That is, the collections of memory and episodes are so tightly interlaced that it recalls and retells not only a family history, but the lost southern society as Faulkner’s effort and desire to evoke the fading South’s past. Faulkner’s obsession with memory and the Southern past illustrates memory’s significance, since memory may serve as an alternative agent for southerners. As Barbara Ladd maintains, memory serves to “interpret or reproduce orality and performance,” and to “attend to what writing erases or elides, and especially to attend to what United States historiography (plain and literary) has obscured” (1636). Seen from this respect, for a southerner like Faulkner, his use of memory tends to substitute what writing has obscured in southern

history. With memory he seems to evoke the South's past and to engage with southern history, his natal place, as to reflect its inability to articulate, comprehend or assimilate the exploitation of racism and slavery in his historical writing.

Compared with Faulkner's engagement with recollection, Morrison's employment of memory in *Beloved* functions in a different manner. Morrison's *Beloved* deals with memory and stream of consciousness of many black ex-slaves who survived slavery to the fictional present of postbellum America in 1873. Unlike the white men in *Go Down, Moses*, such as Ike and Cass, who are active in remembering or retelling their past stories, the black ex-slaves are forced to recollect the intolerable and traumatic past during the Middle Passage and under slavery. The memories of these ex-slaves are unbearable, repressed ones that have come to haunt them. For example, Denver often asked her mother Sethe to tell about her birth under the terrible conditions when Sethe escaped from slavery. Denver's inquiry into her birth story not only compels Sethe's bitter re-memory but also stirs her emotions. After recalling part of her story for Denver, Sethe ceased with "[t]he single slow blink of her eyes; the bottom lip sliding up slowly to cover the top; and then a nostril sign, [...]—signs that Sethe had reached the point beyond which she would not go" (Morrison, *Beloved* 45). The slave experience for Sethe is apparently hard to articulate, and difficult to confront and get through with. Its poisonous aftermath remains a specter that haunts the present and needs to be suppressed, as she told Denver that the painful memory would not fade, but instead it just lingers, when she tried to dispose of the terrible memory. Baby Suggs also bears the suppression of memory when she said: "All I can remember of [my first-born] is how she loved the burned bottom of bread. [...] Eight children and that's all I remember" (6). But Sethe answered: "That's all you let yourself remember" (6). The triviality of memory suggests that what Baby Suggs remembers is how she never saw her children who were sold off, and Sethe

considers Baby Suggs's "loss" of memory is due, not to her forgetting, but to her willed suppression of memory to prevent it from emerging.

Morrison in *Beloved* not simply recognizes the suppression of memory, the rupture and oblivion of memory, but tells the fusion and recuperation of the characters' repressed memory. Even the black slaves' attempt to reject the return of their traumatic experiences, the surge of memory cannot be restrained. For it often works through the unconscious mind. The characters are often forced to move from refusal to recognition of their past and to reconciliation and confrontation with the pain caused by recollection and retelling. For instance, Beloved's physical presence embodies the enormity of slave experience that returns and continuously haunts the ex-slaves. Her appearance reminds Sethe of Denver's birth and her baby: "for some reason she could not immediately account for, the moment she got close to see the face [of Beloved], Sethe's bladder filled to capacity. [...] she thought, [...]" (61), and when Sethe learned that she called herself Beloved, "the remembrance of glittering headstone made her feel especially kindly toward her" (63). Moreover, when Beloved asked her about her diamonds, Sethe was shocked by the pain of storytelling that

[i]t amazed [her] because every mention of her past life hurt. Everything in it was painful or lost. She and Baby Suggs had agreed without saying so that it was unspeakable; [...] Even with Paul D, who had shared some of it and to whom she could talk with at least a measure of calm, the hurt was always there" (69).

Beloved too evokes Paul D's memory in mind: "She reminds [him] of something. Something, look like, [he's] supposed to remember" (234). While the traumatic memory of slave experience relentlessly returns to and resonates in the fictional present, the characters are forced to resist and confront their unassimilated memory of past lives. This can be seen from the examples of Sethe and Paul D.

When Sethe and Paul D are left alone in 124, their memories are juxtaposed to share and resist their communal slave experiences under slavery: Sethe remembered how she suffered physical exploitation as “two boys with mossy teeth, one sucking on [her] breast the other holding [her] down” (83) and her husband Halle was there “watching, above [her] in the loft—hiding close by” (83). And Paul D recollected that he could not even save or comfort him because of his sexual and physical abuse by the white master with a bit in the mouth. While slavery remains so horrible, irreversible pain on body and in mind, its victims are brought to recognize this “unspeakable,” traumatic memory which they try to keep at bay. Therefore, they seek to dispose of their terrible memories that expose how they have lived and suffered under slavery.

Paul D has repressed his memory about his physical and emotional brutality at Sweet Home and Alfred, Georgia. With the help of Sethe, he was able to remember how Sixo and Paul A died during the aborted escape from the Sweet Home plantation. What was on his mind then was “Sixo’s laughter ... not the bit in his mouth, when [the white men] hitched him to the buckboard” (270). The painful memory has caused him to bury his feelings in his heart, which has become a “rusted tobacco tin.” He represses his memories and believes that the key to survival is to avoid becoming too attached to anything. However, Paul D not simply endures and represses the terrible memory like Sethe and Baby Suggs, but is willing to “put his story next to hers” to piece together his fragmented self and share his future with Sethe, who can leave his manhood and value intact under the shadow of past slave experience. In dealing with the repression of memory, Morrison is aware of the extent to which the slave experience can be best depicted in the fictional present for the ex-slaves, since *Beloved* is a novel not just about living with the pain of memory but, more importantly, about confronting and coming to terms with it.

As Claudine Raynaud puts it, “[w]hat makes *Beloved* stand out is the centrality of memory in the poetics of the text and as subject matter” (43), memory composes the text as the subject matter and as the aesthetic of the novel. Hence, the significance of memory in *Beloved* lies not only in the recovery of what is lost and the representation and reconstruction of the slave past, but also in the exploration of the slaves’ interior lives.

Unlike Faulkner’s restoration of southern slave experience through memory, in *Beloved*, Morrison’s employment of memory is more complex. *Beloved* features the relationship between slave history and memory, and transforms it from the historical, denied slave experience to the remembered experience represented throughout the novel. Marilyn Sanders Mobley specifies Morrison’s employment of memory when she writes: “Morrison uses the trope of memory to revise the genre of the slave narrative and thereby to make the slave experience it inscribes more accessible to contemporary readers” (191). Mobley further points out that “she uses memory as the metaphorical sign of the interior life to explore and represent dimensions of slave life that the classic slave narrative omitted” (191). Jennifer Heinert also addresses this point as she says that “Morrison uses memory as a trope to show how the characters’ experiences of repression, rememory, and remembering are analogous to the role of representing truth” in the novel (74). That is, rather than making slave history a forgotten historical fact to be repressed or neglected, what Morrison does is to transform the slave repressed memory into a literary metaphor that best conveys the position and experience of African Americans. Through memory and stream of consciousness, Morrison not simply delineates the physical sufferings as effects under slavery, but “moves into the psychic consequences of slavery for women” as legacy of slavery (Mobley 192). Caroline Rody explains this point further: “*Beloved* cannot recover the ‘interior life’ of slaves, but by dramatizing the psychological legacy of

slavery, it portrays that ‘interior’ place in the African American psyche where a slave’s face still haunts” (98). What makes *Beloved* distinguish itself from the conventional slave narrative is Morrison’s exploration of the unsaid psychic dimension that often left ignored and lies beneath the historical facts as an unspeakable aftermath of slavery. Accordingly, by exploring the slaves’ fear and desire within the horrors of slave experience, especially slave women’s mentality in monologues, *Beloved* becomes a text of historical revision and expansion as well as cultural, political and social intervention.⁷

Morrison’s exploration of the slaves’ mentality and psychic workings during the Middle Passage and in the institution of Slavery can be read from their storytelling in the form of monologue. As African American literary convention begins with an oral tradition, Morrison traces this tradition by opening with a female slave figure Baby Suggs,⁸ who, as Sally Keenan indicates, “represents the crisis of four hundred years of a history under slavery in which a cultural tradition, dependent for its transmission on oral history, could either not be remembered at all or else the memories had become too painful to transmit” (54). Morrison deals with this tension between the loss of slave history, and the necessity of remembrance and retelling by following the African oral tradition through the women’s interior monologues.

As the novel develops from the repression of memory to recognition and retelling, memory goes entwined with narrative in *Beloved*. The story line revolves mainly around Sethe and Paul D, as two main narrative voices, who gradually proceed to other stories and recall the “unspeakable” past through memory, hearing and

⁷ Marilyn Sanders Mobley suggests that Morrison’s text, compared with the classic slave narrative, through the exploration of psychic workings and consequences, carries its “intervention in the cultural, political and social order” of black slaves (192).

⁸ In traditional African society, female figure acts as the tribal memory in the absence of written records. See Joyce Ladner’s “Racism and Tradition: Black Womanhood in Historical Perspective,” in *The Black Woman Cross-Culturally*, and Sally Keenan’s “‘Four Hundred Years of Silence’: Myth, History, and Motherhood in Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*.”

storytelling. With her African style of artistic storytelling, Morrison further renders the female protagonists to express their fears and desires during the Middle Passage and under the horrors of slavery. In the novel, the reader is given chapters of explicit, direct discourse in which the three women, in the telling, narrate their slave experiences representative to those who lived through the Middle Passage or its aftermath: Sethe's remembrance recounts her sufferings from racism as a slave mother and a murderer in the past life; Denver's stream of consciousness tells her childhood life and her relationships with other family members; Beloved's monologue voices black slaves' bottomless venom of slave experience.

The discourse of the slave mother first addresses the reader and her baby directly. It later develops to the two daughters' respective articulations, and further integrates into the mixed speeches of the three women as a "choral performance." Brad Hooper specifies the characteristic of Morrison's narrative which often shows a propensity for "the chorus method of storytelling, wherein a group of individuals who are involved in a single event or incident tell his or her versions of what happened, the individual voices maintaining their distinctiveness while their personal tales overlap each other with a layering effect" (5). *Beloved* illustrates this "chorus performance" that Sethe's narrative progressively develops from a solo play to a fusion that moves "more technically challenging and culminate[s] in a dense fugal interplay of all three voices that achieves its effects through liberal use of verbal compression, fragmentation, and juxtaposition" (Kodat 185). As Faulkner's text shows the unconventional, multi-voiced narrative, Morrison's text, with its fragmented and multiple voices inherent in Faulkner's writing, further demonstrates the African American oral tradition in the interior monologues and interplay of voices. Therefore, the numerous voices not only achieve a layering effect that reflects the "dialogic characters of memory along with its imaginative capacity to construct and reconstruct the

significance of the past” (Mobley 192), but also reverberate into each other’s as a pieced-together story that shares the slave past. In this way, the text is, in a sense, fragmented, yet “ambivalently merged with individual acts of remembering” (112) and combined with “a network of allusions from which full meaning is withheld” (Ferguson 112).

Similar to the deployment of memory in *Go Down, Moses*, the characters’ memories in *Beloved* not only recede to recuperate the past events, but also forge the procession of the plot to reveal the slave experience. While the characters retell their individual stories, the numerous memories recurrently enter from the past into and reside the present. This creates an effect, and, as Rebecca Ferguson explains: “there is the growing, insistent sense that a larger memory is pressing itself upon our attention. This deeper memory is expressed above all in a constant emphasis on the recurrent and on synchrony” (112-3). Past and present constantly interpenetrate, interrupt each other and juxtapose in both novels, as memory traces back and forth, and dwells in the present. However, *Beloved* further presents a sense of “timelessness”— “the seamlessness of time” and “the inextricability of the past and present, of ancestors and their progeny” (Mobley 196) — in the interplay of all three narratives as *Beloved*’s omniscient presence. While a series of monologues and memories fuse into a dialogue, or a choral performance, among the three central female characters, the sense of time becomes “seamless” that the past, present and future are all blended into one omniscient voice. Faulkner’s *Go Down Moses* departs from the pattern of linear time sequence, Morrison’s text too “meanders through time, sometimes circling back, other times moving vertically, spirally out of time and down into space” (Mobley 192). Both writers unsettle the concept of time as a straight line in time span; rather, they treat it as fluid and psychologically grounded. In the monologue, dialogue or chorus, we hear the slaves’ deep fear and desire. Faulkner and Morrison break down the

Western notion of historical trajectory as a linear-time process and represent historical experience with layered memory and multiple perspectives.

In representing the event of Sethe who swings her “crawling-already? girl” toward the wall, Morrison artfully delineates the integration of numerous perspectives through voices. While recounting the murderous scene, she ushers the reader into varying perspectives, each preceded and represented by different witnesses. This incident is amplified and divided into many parts as the characters’ perspectives shift from that of Baby Suggs, the slave catcher, Stamp Paid to Sethe herself. In different chapters, each character retells a version of the story, which constitutes the multiple “truths.” Baby Suggs, as another slave mother in the shed, witnessed the death of the “crawling-already? girl” while Sethe still “reached up for the baby [Denver] without letting the dead one go. [...] So Denver took her mother’s milk right along with the blood of her sister” (*Beloved* 179). The slave catcher viewed “a nigger woman holding a blood-soaking child to her chest with one hand and an infant by the heels in the other. She did nit look at [the white men]; she simply swung the baby toward the wall planks, missed and tried to connect a second time, when out of nowhere....” (175). Another witness to Sethe’s horrible act against her children, Stamp Paid remembered “how [Sethe] flew, snatching up her children like a hawk on the wing; [...] how she collected them every which way: one on her shoulder, one under her arm, one by the hand, the other shouted forward into the woodshed” (185). Stamp Paid, unwilling to believe what he would call “the Misery,” wondered “if it had happened at all, eighteen years ago, that while he and Baby Suggs were looking the wrong way, a pretty little slavegirl had recognized a hat, and split to the woodshed to kill her children” (186). Sethe ultimately explained and justified her act: “It ain’t my job to know what’s worse. It’s my job to know what is and to keep [my children] away from what I know is terrible” (194). In restoring this infanticidal story, each

witness retells the same event from different strands of perspectives, none having precedence over the others.

In *Beloved*, slave experience becomes a series of historical fragments of the past unearthed and represented throughout the novel. These historical debris are the pieces disremembered and submerged that they would be brought up to the surface and integrated into the text through Morrison's own imagination and recollection as her historical rememory. Memory's effect not simply brings the past experience to the present as "it takes the reader repeatedly from freedom to slavery and backwards" (Palladino 55), but also reveals the interior lives, the psychic workings of the ex-slaves. As Morrison acknowledges her attempt to "fill in the blanks" that were left out of the slave narratives. In "The Site of Memory," Morrison manifests her responsibility and role as a modern African American writer, not to "drop a veil over [the] proceedings too terrible to relate," yet to "rip that veil drawn over proceedings too terrible to relate" (70). She insists on the necessity of unveiling the black slave experience, "for historically, we [African Americans] were seldom invited to participate in the discourse even when we were its topic" (70). In attempting to unveil and explore the interior life of the ex-slaves, Morrison depends much on her own recollections and imagination. She asserts that "memory weighs heavily in what I write, in how I begin and in what I find to be significant" (71); moreover, she explains how she views the role of memory in her historical recovery: "[the] 'memories' within are the subsoil of my work. But memories and recollections won't give me total access to the unwritten interior life of these people. Only the act of imagination can help me" (71). Morrison's remarks suggest that memory is employed in *Beloved* as a foundation for the novel's core, while her use of imagination provides its substance. Since imagination may penetrate the constraints lost or unspeakable in history.

In *Beloved* Morrison tries to expose, to a certain extent, parts of the facts and

knowledge about slave history. As she calls it, “[i]t’s a kind of literary archeology” (71). For her, memory serves as discovery and invention in this “literary archeology.” She foregrounds her reasons in another essay: “I depend heavily on the ruse of memory [...] for two reasons. One, because it ignites some process of invention, and two, because I cannot trust the literature and sociology of other people to help me know the truth of my own cultural sources” (“Memory, Creation and Writing” 386). Thus, every fragment of memory demands her attention and trust.⁹ It is obvious that Morrison aims to probe into the private and interior life of the ex-slaves, and to “see what remains were left behind and to *reconstruct* the world that these remains imply” in the Reconstruction era (71; italics mine). And, to represent or reconstruct slave history necessarily involves “the retrieval of felt experience from the mix and jumble of the past, the bulk of which certainly is not to be passed on” (Fabre 5). Seen from this respect, through the deployment of memory in restoring the past, both Faulkner and Morrison suggest the significance of slave history and the necessity of remembering this lost history in particular. For history is never simply in the past and has its meaning in representation.

Morrison’s text is not only an exercise of imagination and employment of memory in representing slave history. It is also a manifestation of her faculty to delineate and evoke the affective feelings that accompany memory so as to explore the interior life of the ex-slaves through the process of remembering. That is, *Beloved* is not simply an ideological representation of history, but is a novel of “extraordinary psychological reach” that concerns with “a reading of the inscribed psychological project of [remembering] an inherited past” (Rody 94, 95). The process and act of remembering is evidently elucidated in *Beloved*. Sethe explained “rememory” to Denver:

⁹ See Morrison’s “Memory, Creation and Writing,” 386.

Some things go. Pass on. Some things just stay. I used to think it was my rememory. You know. Some things you forget. Other things you never do. But it's not. [...] What I remember is a picture floating around out there outside my head. [...] It's when you bump into a *rememory* that belongs to somebody else. Where I was before I came here, that place is real. It's never going away. [...] The picture is still there and what's more, [...] if you go there and stand in the place where it was, it will happen again; it will be there for you, waiting for you. (*Beloved* 43-44; my emphasis)

What Sethe suggests is that rememory is a present thought of the past re-encountered and embodied in a picture. It is kept alive by its capacity to be evoked or re-enacted. It shows how memory becomes virtual “rememory” shared by the members of the community. That is, Morrison’s rememory is presumably a movement from personal experience to “interpersonal,” collective, “communal property” shared by the all members of slave experience. Ashraf Rushdy elaborates that

memory is neither as stable nor as intensely personal a thing as perception. For memory exists as a communal property of friends, of family, of a people. The magic of memory is that it is interpersonal, that it is the basis for constructing relationships with the other who also remembers. The reality of memory is that it must be experienced individually first, before it becomes communal property. (321-2)

The idea of rememory also implies Sethe’s preoccupation with the act and the process of remembering in mind out of place and event. She actually allows herself to plunge into the memory¹⁰—the deliberate act of remembering, the picture she would like to

¹⁰ Morrison asserts that “memory (the deliberate act of remembering) is a form of willed creation.”

forget. This process of remembering is a re-enactment of the painful and unassimilated experience. Morrison's representation functions in a similar way.

Morrison's project of historical rememory¹¹ is to recall and to dwell on a past that the African American would like to forget and the dominant culture has attempted to obscure in historical writing. This historical rememory is a willed act of resistance and confrontation, as Mobley concludes, "the process of consciously remembering [...] empowers us to make meaning of our individual and collective lives" (197). Through the act and process of consciously remembering, we see memory's function in historical representation as a site that deals with the negotiations of personal, regional and collective past.

Ultimately, the relation of slave history and memory to *Go Down, Moses* and *Beloved* is that through the employment of memory, both novels affirm the effect of memory in historical recovery in representing slave experience. In *Go Down, Moses* memory demonstrates the effect of excavation and restoration in order to assemble the debris of the family story that stands as an instance for the Southern past. As a specific narrative form, memory transcends generations and the individual stories to represent the familial past as well as the regional history of the Deep South. In *Beloved*, Morrison's employment of memory transforms the slave history from the repressed, denied slave experience to the recollected experience. Through memory and stream of consciousness, Morrison not only represents the physical sufferings in the unspeakable past, but also explores, emphasizes and dramatizes the untold psychic or psychological legacy of ex-slaves. Moreover, in fiction such as *Beloved*, it also acknowledges the role of imagination in excavating and reconstructing the very part of African American past that has long been veiled.

¹¹ Morrison's historical "rememory" is a word of coinage which refers to a deliberate act as her attempt to consciously remember and restore the disremembered African American past.

Chapter Three

Narratives of Racism

In *Go Down, Moses* Faulkner traces the root of a family past and a regional history. With the family ledgers, he aims not only to represent the slave experience and life in the South, but to expose the social, cultural trauma, racism and slavery as the legacy that has circulated within the tormented souls of his characters, including the white Southerners, the black and mulatto slaves. Faulkner's efforts to represent slave history manifests his willingness to confront the agonizing racial legacy caused by racism of the South, and his vision to lift the racial wounding out of the margin and move it into the center stage. *Go Down, Moses*, given its historical, social and cultural contexts, provides a window for viewing the issue of race and exploring the discourse on racism. For Faulkner's idea of racism in *Go Down, Moses* and the subsequent novels is associated with racial relationship, white supremacy and black subordination on the basis of racial difference. His text is a representation of the rigidly constructed Southern society, a society that is racially demarcated.

Racial demarcation out of biological differences often leads to the practice of racism that has long permeated in the South. In tracing the origin of the discourse on racism and race, Christian Delacampagne indicates the fact that the effect of racism has occurred in history prior to the coming of the word itself and that "[racism] begins when one makes (alleged) cultural superiority directly and mechanically dependent on (alleged) physiological superiority, that is, when one *derives* the cultural characteristics of a given group from its biological characteristics. Racism is the reduction of the cultural to the biological, the attempt to make the first dependent on the second" (85). According to Delacampagne, racism derives from the biological characteristics and differences, which are ascribed to the cultural superiority and thus contributes to the pernicious effects and legacy of slavery inscribed in Southern

history. The practice of racism characterizes the notions of biological superiority and inferiority, and formulates the notion of the black Other as naturally different in biological and cultural terms. The Southern black slaves are, in this way, forced and claimed by the white as “inferior” in social status due to the biological and racial differences.

Slavery actually is an imbalanced institution based on racism, which exists in a pseudo-scientific form and practice with a biological referent. The institution of slavery mirrors the white-black relation with a conception of racial hierarchy or inequality. Since such racism represents the human beings as divided biologically, the black as constructed by this racial demarcation are often faced with exclusionary violences and constrained by the labor market. This institutional racism in slavery not only marks hierarchy and exclusion, but also reflects the practice and relationship made to sustain the advantage of the dominant group and the disadvantage of the subordinate group. As *Go Down, Moses* demonstrates the racial difference marked by slavery, it centers on the racial relationship and tension between the dominant white and the subordinate black by presenting the imbalanced relationship of white supremacy and black subordination under the racist practice of slavery. Faulkner’s text magnifies this racial difference and tension in the systematic imbalance of power relations. In particular, it demonstrates that white domination within the historical and economic condition in the Southern region is impervious to any attempted constraints on the desire of the white. That is, in representing the McCaslin family history, Faulkner foregrounds the notion of racial difference with the dichotomous white-black division in the white culture, and also explores the discourse of racism and white supremacy as racial privilege and heritage. In the first story “Was,” Faulkner’s characters, among the white Southerners, black slaves and mulattos, in the tableau of games mark the racial subjects. Starting from the “hunting game” of

Tomey's Turl to the gambling of cards and dice, Faulkner deploys the games as the constructions of chance and strategy, yet he intends to mirror both racial difference and racist ideology within the games.

The three white men, Uncle Buck, Buddy and Hubert Beauchamp as plantation owners and slaveholders, are active in determining the fate of the slaves Tennie and Tomey's Turl. They are dominant in the social, political and economic conditions of the antebellum South. They stand in a relatively higher social position of the presence of the card players as racially marked, since the winning of the land and black people is ultimately the white men's game. The Southerner Hubert Beauchamp in particular designates the black as animals, for he said while gambling: "[b]ring the first creature that answers, animal mule or human, that can deal ten cards" (Faulkner 25). Hubert's remark suggests his mindset of juxtaposing animals and slaves. Despite Tomey's Turl as the half-brother to the white McCaslin twins, Hubert regards him as a socially and culturally inferior "nigger" so as to divide himself from the legally defined slave. The card games therefore account a lot. They are "not only gendered masculine but racialized white, because they are a means of maintaining hegemony and of exerting social control" (Davis 66). The card games are utilized by the white men to sustain white supremacy and privilege in the economic and social domination over human beings for ownership.

The Southerner's racist mindset not only exists in Hubert Beauchamp, but also in Lucius Quintus Carothers McCaslin, the McCaslin plantation founder and slave owner. From the commissary ledgers, Ike has deciphered and discerned the link between the black slave Eunice's death and the birth of Tomasina's son later: old Carothers McCaslin's sexual domination and racial exploitation of his slave Eunice and their enslaved daughter Tomasina and his fathering of her son, Tomey's Turl. Eunice is physically and sexually exploited by her white master and married off to a black slave

Thucydus while pregnant. And such an act of miscegenation is enacted again and becomes incest when their daughter Tomasina is sexually abused by the white master. The ledgers record the family history and provoke the issues of ownership and property under white supremacy in a narrative of enslavement and racism. Tomey's Turl then becomes a reminder of the unacknowledged sins of old Carothers McCaslin in the slaveholding and patriarchal culture. However, Tomey's Turl is a silent rebel against his condition of enslavement and racism. As a descendant of miscegenation and incest, he is a constant referent of racial hybridity that calls into question the black-white racial binary and the racist ideology in the South. He is a game player who uses the chase games as a site of resistance to white supremacy while running away, and as an attempt to deregulate the white's claim of ownership. He too is an active and decisive participant as a card dealer in determining his autonomy. His mulatto identity is thus established between his precarious social condition ascribed to the political economy of slavery and his individual autonomy in struggle with the market value of slaves. In both the chase and card games, Tomey's Turl can be seen as a rebel and an agent, who has negotiated between and has been "constrained by two sets of circumstances: the racist ideology [that informs] the conceptions of 'nigger' and enslaved property, and the game strategy of silence" that disallows him to articulate his desire and love in a racialized society (Davis 44).

The relation between the white master and the black slave becomes more violent after the Civil War, and the tension between the white and black remains unresolved even after the Emancipation. The imbalanced relation between white supremacy and black subordination under slavery finds its poignant expression in stories of *Go Down, Moses*. The games in "Was" can be associated with the craps game in "Pantaloon in Black." In the Southern states, the black slaves during slavery and after were forced into a more subordinate position on the plantation. They were asked to spend

“practically all the time on the plantations of their owners, and had few contacts with the mass of the White population” (Banton 138). Albeit as a means to social and economic force at work in the Southern region, the black slaves were treated as chattels while the whites tried every possible means to maintain their supremacy. As Michael Banton observes, “[u]nder the slavery regime, individual Whites had been allowed to exploit individual Negroes in any way they wished provided it did not threaten the social system”(138). It was not until the early twentieth-century that “the ideology of social distance and racial difference” (138) stops haunting the modern Southern land. Yet the white continued to exploit and suppress the black laborers, including free blacks like Rider.

As a local laborer and occasional gambler, Rider violates not only the “rules” of the gambling but of the social and political contexts that govern the relationship between the white and the black. In other words, Rider’s attempt to trespass the boundary of social distance and racial difference prompts him to become a victim of the senseless violence against the black. In the dice game, he tried to disclose the white man’s cheating, yet was borne down and lynched. Rider’s case reflects that in the post-Reconstruction era, caste system has replaced slavery in the modern South, and that black people are “held in economic peonage and social subordination” (Davis 71), and “unprotected by law” (71). From the description of the gambling, we can see Faulkner’s emphasis on the racial difference and the racial identity of whiteness:

still smiling at the face of the *white man* opposite, then, still smiling, [...] as the *white man* covered the bets, watching the soiled and palm-worn money in front of the *white man* gradually and steadily increase, watching the *white man* cast and win two doubled bets in succession [...], [Rider] moved as the *white man* moved, catching the *white man*’s wrist before his hand reached the dice, [...]. (Faulkner 148; my

emphasis)

Within the narrative, this passage emphasizes the racial difference and identity as Birdsong is repetitively stressed as the “white man” and Rider is unmarked. This also suggests the imbalanced power relations between the black laborer and the white supervisor in the social and economic order.¹² As Rider acts aggressively against the cheating, he intends to break the racial and social codes that have long bounded the black in the South. And his response to the white player’s cheating is actually a reflection not only of the social and economic subjugation, but of the racial oppression and hatred that always excludes the black out of the centre. As an outsider, Rider has no choice but to hold the loss of his wife along with racial oppression under the exploitative economy.

As racism involves the problems about racial injustice, hostility and inequality, Rider’s case manifests the combination of these problems—racial prejudice, discrimination and institutional inequality. In fact, racial prejudice and hatred became worse from the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century. There were more discrimination and hostility of the white toward the black than ever before, so the black often became helpless and powerless victims. When the maddening Rider was borne down by the weight of his fellow prisoners, the sheriff’s deputy found him “lying there under the pile of [the other prisoners], laughing with tears big as glass marbles running across his face and down past his ears and making a kind of popping sound on the floor like somebody dropping bird eggs, laughing and laughing and saying ‘Hit look like Ah just cant quit thinking. Look lack Ah just cant quit’”

¹² Thadious M. Davis explains that “the hierarchy of power in the relations between the black workers and the white foreman remains intact in the dice game,” and “the societal rules governing race are not suspended because of the nature of the game, its false rules, the rigged, crooked play of the white supervisor.” Therefore, the black workers remain in a subordinate relation to the white men. “Exploited in their labor and victimized in their entertainment, the black workers accede to the hierarchy of power” (72-3).

(Faulkner 154). This bitter scene illustrates the black in a poignant and defenseless entrapment. But the more violent racial prejudice and hostility of the white are often shown in the exertion of outrage: lynching. Michael Banton states that “[l]ynchings in the South increased rapidly from 1882 up to 1890, and showed a further sharp rise in the early nineties when the white South began to legislate the subordination of the Negro” (140). Lynching was not a way appropriate and effective for preventing the black from crimes; rather it was used by the white “as a sanction reinforcing all sorts of everyday exploitation and intimidation” (141). It is obvious that the black under the unprotected political and social system becomes more defenseless and subjected to the ruthless outrage of the white men. Rider’s case makes clear this “legal sanction” for racial exploitation and intimidation in support for the white privilege.

However, racial antagonism exists not simply within the physical violence against the black, but also in the narrative and racist ideology that permeates the soul of the Southerner. The cases of Roth’s unnamed mistress and Rider illustrate racial ideology infiltrated in the whites. Roth’s treatment of the light-skinned woman suggests his aversion to miscegenation, an interracial marriage, for he told Ike to give the visitor an envelope and a message: “Tell her I said No” (Faulkner 339). Roth’s act of repudiation parallels old Carothers McCaslin’s strong denial of the mulatto descendant out of their deep-rooted racist ideology. Even when Ike learned her lineage, he cried out the realization that brings into relief his rigid and poignant racial prejudice, “in a voice of amazement, pity, and outrage: You’re a nigger!” (344). Seeing the old Carothers’s act had been re-enacted, Ike gave the woman his advice: “Go back North. Marry: a man in your own race. That’s the only salvation for you [...] you could find a black man who would see in you what it was you saw in him, who would ask nothing of you and expect less and get even still less than that, if it’s revenge you want” (346). Ike’s advice reflects his patronizing, racial discrimination

with white McCaslin privilege in strongly denying the woman's love and respect for Roth. She then responded to Ike, suggesting that in his old age, he is a man who has never known or felt or even heard about love.

The white McCaslins' racist narrative and ideology can be seen outside the family members. The white deputy reported to his wife Rider's killing and behavior as simply a "subhuman" act. He said that

Them damn nigger, [...] they aint human. They look like a man and they walk on their hind legs like a man, and they can talk and you can understand them and you think they are understanding you, at least now and then. But when it comes to the normal human feelings and sentiments of human beings, they might just as well be a damn herd of wild buffaloes" (149).

Insisting that Rider's refusal to grieve as a sign of his sub-humanness, the deputy ignores Rider's deep sentiment for the loss of his wife. He is incapable of recognizing a free black man's love and humanity that have come to affect his behavior; rather he denigrates Rider's body, mentality and dignity. Seen from the perspective of race, the incident indicates that there exists a wide gap of mutual understanding between the white and the black. The deputy's account of Rider implies that the racist mindset of the white has long infiltrated into the Southern context and discourse. It shows the white's racial prejudice in animalizing the black. What is perceivable here are two aspects of the Southern "legal inheritance" under slavery: the black people are the white man's property, not human beings, and thus are subhuman or inhuman, and the black ones are immoral and thus are not subject to the social mores of the white man. Rider's lynching eventually illustrates the modern South's lingering legacy of racism.

The white man's biased reading of the murder not only reflects his own twisted "theory" of black sub-humanity, but the cultural and social misunderstanding and

interpretation of the black as Other through “biological heterogeneity” (68). The exercise of denigration and exclusion on the basis of race is an enactment of white privilege. Lucius Outlaw explains the concept of race:

‘race’ is *not* wholly and completely determined by biology, but is only partially so. [...] the definition of ‘race’ is partly political, partly cultural. [...] The biological aspects of ‘race’ are conscripted into projects of cultural, political and social construction. ‘Race’ is a *social* formation.

(Outlaw 68; italics original)

Therefore, in understanding the workings of race, it is important to incorporate cultural, political and social factors into the historical context in order to examine the operation of racism that often involves the dichotomous white-black racial relations. As Outlaw defines race as a “social formation,” such effect of cultural, economic and political interactions ascribed simply to biological discrepancy as a referent oversimplifies the pernicious racial relations historically legitimized or often obscured, and this obscurity of multi-faceted formations gradually develops white supremacy and black deference and subjugation in view of skin color. This phenomenon can be discerned through Faulkner’s text. In “Fire and the Hearth,” Lucas Beauchamp’s subordination to the McCaslin family is an example of black-white racial tension. As a black laborer working on the McCaslin plantation, Lucas challenges Zack Edmonds’ power and privilege. For Zack claims Molly as a wet nurse to his new-born son Roth and presumably a surrogate wife as well. A plantation owner’s claiming of a black woman’s body implies a white man’s presumption of power and domination exerted out of the racial privilege of white supremacy and property right. Zack regards Molly as his property in appropriating her labor and body. This privilege and custom of exploiting a female black body account for what Banton has indicated in *Race Relations*. In the Deep South, where white control was most secure and intense, “the

superior power of the upper category is likely to be utilized by its males to obtain access to the women of the lower category” (Banton 156).¹³ The black male, treated as lower in class and “inferior” in race, is not only reminded of his subordinate situation, but also “emasculated by his powerlessness when Whites took his wife” (156). The exercise of white man’s supremacy in relation to black women not only constitutes the black man’s sense of inferiority, but represents a pervasive dictation of racial segment in the post-Emancipation era of Southern society. This prompts Lucas to lament aloud: “How to God [...] can a black man ask a white man to please not lay down with his black wife? And even if he could ask it, how to God can the white man promise he wont?” (Faulkner 58).

In a society in which racial roles and social distinctions are significant and obligatory, a whole etiquette of deference and subordination is imposed upon the black by the white and re-enacted to maintain such form of institutionalized inequality. Therefore, under this kind of social form, the black man Lucas is lost to the white control and superiority in face of the cultural, political, and economic subjugation, even his son Henry is forced to face exclusion by young Roth. The black’s resignation and exclusion due to skin color as an inherited shame is prevalent and explicit in Southern society. Frantz Fanon specifies a black man’s inferiority in relation to exclusion, animalization and delegation, all of which are uncovered as the facts under his “Blackness”: “I was responsible at the same time for my body, for my race, for my ancestors. I subjected myself to an objective examination, I discovered my blackness, my ethnic characteristics. I was batter down by tom-toms, cannibalism, intellectual deficiency, fetishism, racial defects, slave-ships” (110). Moreover, “[t]he white world,

¹³ Banton specifies the social form of the two-category system in the predominately and densely settled state in the Deep South. The racial relations exhibit a pattern of caste-like division between the white and the black. The relatively upper category/class refers to the white group who holds superordination, and the lower category/class is the black group.

the only honorable one, barred me from all participation” (111) and “I was hated, despised, detested, [...] by an entire race” (“The Fact of Blackness” 113). Such facts of blackness based on color prejudice demonstrate the black’s predicaments in the racial-binary climate of the South.

In reading the manifestation of racism as kernel to *Go Down, Moses*, it is worthy to take note of Faulkner’s representation of the tense racial relations as a significant motif. Thadious M. Davis maintains that Faulkner’s representation in *Go Down, Moses* suggests a “racial ideology” that echoes James Baldwin’s remark: “America became white... because of the necessity of denying the Black presence and justifying Black subjugation.... It is the Black condition, and only that, which forms the consciousness of white people” (qtd. in Davis 209). It is especially evident to focus on Faulkner’s white characters in a racialized society in exploration of what it means to be white in the antebellum era and what it has left to the black as Other through the enslavement to the postbellum period of the modern South.

While Faulkner’s text rests on deeply submerged racism about the predominant and coercive racial relations in the American South, Morrison’s text furthers the exploration of racism and racial tension with respect to slaves’ physical and “linguistic disempowerment” (Stein 124). Through the ex-slavers’ views, Morrison in *Beloved* exposes the white master’s brutality imposed upon slaves’ bodies and often re-enacted under slavery. Their physical and psychological scars derive from the white’s racist mindset of the black’s animalization, a pervasive ideology in the South. Morrison out of human concern unflinchingly undermines these racial ideology and assumption that have historically legitimated the exploitation and oppression of the black people. Thus, unlike Faulkner’s representation, Morrison’s exposition focuses more on the inner lives of the ex-slaves, who reflect, either individually or collaboratively, upon their subordination to and exploitation by the white men.

Similar to Lucas Beauchamp's emasculation by the white master's taking of his wife, the black slaves in *Beloved*, including Paul D, were brutalized and emasculated by white men. When Paul D was sold to Brandywine, he was forced into a chain gang in Alfred, Georgia as punishment for threatening to kill his master. Paul D and other forty-five prisoners in the prison camp suffered from the white guards' sexual abuse and physical, ferocious exploitation as labor in the fields and as animal locked and "[c]hained-up completely" (*Beloved* 127) in underground cages. Like an animal, he was put with a spiked collar around his neck, and was chained on his ankles. Paul D's experience of such a horribly dehumanizing treatment manifests the white men's supremacy and the black slave's oppression and humiliation, physically and mentally. The poignant racial relations of the white's oppression and animosity against the black are cruelly inflicted upon the slaves in the antebellum South.

Morrison's portrayal of the white men's superordination is illustrated through the representative of the white man, Schoolteacher. He is represented as a caricature of rationalistic and scientific thinking, carrying a "notebook" in his hands, in which he records his "experiment" and observation of Sethe, advising his nephew "to put her human characteristics on the left; her animal ones on the right" (*Beloved* 229). Sethe remembered: "Schoolteacher was teaching us things we couldn't learn. [...] Schoolteacher'd wrap that string all over my head, 'cross my nose, around my behind. Number my teeth" (226). Sethe could neither read nor learn the white man's science and rationalism but she understands humanity. Schoolteacher writes down Sethe's "animal characteristics" with the ink that she makes, and his physical measurement of her body reflects the white man's animalization of the black slave. The Schoolteacher's racism under the guise of scientism and rationalism specifies the domination and surveillance of the white through language as well as knowledge. For his "scientific experiments" in life not only seek to demonstrate the sub-humanity of

the black, but also to “fix others into inferiority and helplessness, [...] in order to preserve his privilege” (Khayati 320). Adbellatif Khayati explains the white superiority expressed through language: “[w]ords like *pickaninnies*, *cut*, *gone wild*, and *horse*, spoken in relation to Sethe, reveal Schoolteacher’s sense of superiority and arrogance” (321). Unlike Sethe’s, Schoolteacher’s concern is never for humanity. Even his language about Sethe and her children is simply full of a racist’s gaze upon the black body. His arrogant language demonstrates his epistemologically privileged position. Literarily and figuratively, the black slaves have undergone physical and linguistic disempowerment.

Through the portrayal of Schoolteacher, Morrison tends to “indirectly [voice] her critique of modernity and Enlightenment thinking” (320) in comparison to African American humanity denied by racism. Within his rationalistic and Enlightenment thinking, Schoolteacher turns out a representative of white scientific racism disguised under pseudo-scientism and rationalism in western history. However, Morrison, in her exposure of white racism also forces the reader to recognize the humanity of her black characters in American history in an attempt to unsettle Western “civilization and humanity” embodied by Schoolteacher.

If Faulkner through the white characters explores what it means to be white in a slaveholding, racialized society of the antebellum era, Morrison through the black ex-slaves tends to disclose what it means to be black and what has left to them under the cruelty of slavery and racism in the South. Not until when Paul D was taken to the prison camp and labor field in Alfred, Georgia did he learn the horrible reality of the slave institution outside Sweet Home. Paul D felt and was treated as an anomaly. In his attempt to escape from Sweet Home with Sixo and others, Paul D learned of his own “price” of nine hundred dollars as property for purchase, and Sixo was caught and burned alive with laughter: “He is through with his song. He laughs. A rippling

sound like Sethe's sons make when they tumble in hay or splash in raining water. His feet are cooking; the cloth of his trousers smokes. He laughs" (*Beloved* 266-7). The white men's atrocity here is shown in contrast to Sixo's resistance to the oppression and persecution until the very end of his life. Even Baby Suggs, after reassuring her freedom, points out the black's resentment and agony in their subjugated situation as facts central to the practice of slavery and racism: "Those white things have taken all I had or dreamed ... and broke my heartstrings too. There is no bad luck in the world, but whitefolks" (*Beloved* 104-5).

In comparison to Paul D's severe physical exploitation and abuse as labor force by the white master, Sethe's body also suffers from white surveillance and appropriation out of the epistemic violence. She was forcibly taken her milk and then whipped severely and brutalized by the white men, so she was burdened with a "chokecherry tree" on her back, when the schoolteacher marked it down as his "scientific experiment." On the one hand, white men's proprietary claim of the female body here is different from the means of the white master's sexual exploitation of his black slave. For Morrison "replaces the prototypical white master's crime against black slave women—rape—with a virtual rape of Sethe's motherhood" (Rody 107). On the other hand, Sethe finds herself measured through the glance of the white and is defined as Other after she learned schoolteacher's "scientific" scrutiny of her. Frantz Fanon calls the white man's eyes as an "unfamiliar weight [that] burdened" the black ("The Fact of Blackness" 109). He specifies the difficulties of developing the consciousness of the black body in relevance to the white people:

In the white world the man of color encounters difficulties in the development of [his/her] bodily schema. Consciousness of the body is solely a negating activity. [...] Below the corporeal schema I had sketched a historico-racial schema. The elements that I used had been

provided for me [...] by the white man, who had woven me out of a thousand details, anecdotes, stories”(109).

In other words, there is a “historico-racial schema,” imposed upon the “corporeal schema,” fabricated out of “a thousand details, anecdotes, stories.” The black is thus hard to develop the consciousness of his/her body under severe white cultural imposition and tries to dispose of the burden of bodily resentment. Under the painful white appropriation and surveillance, the black’s consciousness, as a result of racism, is identified with the interdependence on the white’s psyche and attitude.

The white people’s mindset of hostility, portrayed with Ryder’s lynching in *Go Down, Moses*, finds a further demonstration in *Beloved*. Through Stamp Paid’s perspective, the white’s suppression and brutality are re-enacted after the Emancipation:

Eighteen seventy-four and whitefolks were still on the loose. Whole towns wiped clean of Negroes; eighty-seven lynchings in one year alone in Kentucky; four colored schools burned to the ground; grown men whipped like children; children whipped like adults; black women raped by the crew; property taken, necks broken. (212)

The white’s persecutions makes Stamp Paid interrogate the inhumanity in the darkest era of American history: “[w]hat *are* these people? [...] What *are* they?” (213). Morrison in *Beloved* not only depicts the white’s brutality but also reflects the black slave’s aggrieved denouncement.

A white racist such as Schoolteacher obtains insidious form of oppression and supremacy over the black slaves, yet the black may be a “phobogenic object, a stimulus to anxiety” (Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* 151) to the white people. Stamp Paid’s analysis of the racial relation suggests this reciprocal relationship as “the interdependence of racism” (Raynaud 50):

White people believed that whatever the manners, under every dark skin was a jungle. [...] The more colored people spent their strength trying to convince [the white people] how gentle they were, how clever and loving, how human, the more they used themselves up to persuade whites of something Negroes believed could not be questioned, the deeper and more tangled the jungle grew inside. But it wasn't the jungle blacks brought with them to this place from the other (livable) place. It was the jungle whitefolks planted in them. And it grew. It spread. In, through and after life, it spread, until it invaded the whites who made it. [...] so scared were they of the jungle they had made. (*Beloved* 234)

In Stamp Paid's analysis of the racial subject and racial relations, the "jungle"—prejudice, anxiety and hostility—is imprinted in the white people's mind and arouses both fear and repulsion. According to Raynaud, the black-white racial relations are developed reciprocally, and the black appears to be an "internalized projection of white people's fears" (50).¹⁴ The black men are enslaved by the white's suppression and exploitation, and reversely the whites perceive and develop the anxious fear and discrimination for the blacks.

While *Go Down, Moses* focuses on racial relations and tensions—supremacy versus subordination, and suppression versus exploitation, *Beloved* tends to explore the innerness of human need and concern fueled with the promise of something better. Numerous characters demonstrate humanity and hopefulness in the text. Baby Suggs, after acquiring her freedom, goes to Cincinnati, where she becomes a source of emotional and spiritual inspiration for the members of black community. As an

¹⁴ Raynaud indicates that racism is established reciprocally between the black and the white, and the black reflects the white's inner fear. He explains: "the reciprocity of the construction (the whites are what they fear) and its deadly and devastating effects are produced by the change from the literal to the metaphoric use of the word 'jungle'" (50-1). The metaphor of jungle also represents the "white psyche," especially in Schoolteacher's animalization of Sethe.

advocate of humanity and love, she holds religious gatherings and teaches the black members to love their voices, bodies, and minds. The black community later learns to respond to Denver's requests for support. Stamp Paid, as a figure of redemption, helps Sethe to freedom and saves Denver's life. Stamp re-contemplates on love, forgiveness and endurance, the very elements comprising of immense humanity in the black than the white while on his way to revisit 124. A nurturing and compassionate white woman, Amy Denver helps Sethe when she was starved and in labor during her escape from Sweet Home.

Throughout the text, it is easy and obvious to view the poignant distinction between the black and white. But it is also hopeful to see Morrison who attempts to bridge the gulf of racism that exists since the Middle Passage to the postbellum era. Unlike Faulkner who mainly represents racial relation and tension of white suppression and exploitation under the brutality of slavery, Morrison intends to show, through the figure of Amy Denver, the possibility of healing and compassion, thereby reducing the racial hostility illustrated in *Go Down, Moses*. Amy Denver, as a runaway indentured servant, shares similar situation and experience with Sethe, since they both endure physical appropriation in enslavement and during escapement, and demonstrate desire to love others and to be loved.¹⁵ Amy Denver has undergone the repression and hard labor analogous to the slave experience of the black slaves. She puts her story next to Sethe's with care and companion. Their hardships and companionship to each other account for "how recklessly [Sethe] behaved with this whitegirl [sic]—a recklessness born of desperation and encouraged by Amy's fugitive eyes and her tenderhearted mouth" (*Beloved* 92). Amy in her flight to freedom gives assistance to another woman Sethe and her baby in need. She recognized Sethe's

¹⁵ Coonradt indicates that the word Amy "derives from the Latin *amatus* (loved), and literally means beloved" (170). Morrison presents Amy Denver with the human need to love and be loved.

wounds from being whipped, and said that: “[i]t’s a tree, Lu. A chokecherry tree. See, here’s the trunk [...] tiny little cherry blossoms, just as white. Your back got a whole tree on it. In blossom” (93). Amy’s reading of the “chokecherry tree” implies Sethe’s passing through suffering to eventual grace, which “transforms the pain and humiliation of slavery” (Coonradt 178) to an encouragement and affirmation that promises a blossoming future for Sethe.

Marginalized by the mainstream culture, Amy Denver nonetheless holds no racial discrimination. She and Sethe together demonstrate the possibility of dissolving the racial demarcation as racism often splits the black and white in American society. Evelyn Jaffe Schreiber notes the social and cultural background of racism in America: “In a culture where whiteness is the norm, black identity is marginalized, and the nuances of this marginalization suggest a range of trauma associated with black experience. Blacks in America are continually defined as “other” by mainstream culture” (Schreiber 1). Under this background of racial demarcation, Morrison presents Amy Denver as “the evidence of white exploitation of white, class repression, and the marginalization of women within the white patriarchal culture” (Coonradt 182). Juxtaposing Schoolteacher’s rigid racism, and Amy Denver’s affectiveness, Morrison attempts to represent that

[r]acism and oppression are not exclusive properties of white Americans, however, nor are blacks their only victims. [...] [Morrison’s] moral vision allows for few single-minded villains or heroes. She asks us to distinguish between an Amy and a schoolteacher and to feel some compassion for white victims. [...] The whiteness she castigates represents the dehumanizing cultural values of a society given over to profit, possession, and dominance. (Otten 96)

Through Amy, Morrison explicitly marks the exclusion of the black slaves from

dominant white culture as well as the internal marginalization of white woman.

However, Morrison also foregrounds racial reconciliation and hopefulness in that numerous characters in *Beloved* witness and affirm human value not as property but lie in humanity through love and compassion. As a victim yet a saver, Amy Denver crosses the racial demarcation to touch Sethe's story and life. And Sethe's daughter Denver seemingly takes over the loving nature that permeates her namesake, as she eventually reaches beyond the community and makes the link to society. Her life proceeds from a marginalized to a hopeful presence in a world that has all but forgotten her before. It is obvious that both *Go Down, Moses* and *Beloved* center on the exploration of the discourse on racism as well as on the representation of the racial gulf based on racism between the white and the black. As Faulkner represents the poignant racial relations and subsequent legacies rooted in racism in the Deep South, Morrison investigates the ordeal of slave history from the Middle Passage to the postbellum America. She not only represents the external racial problems in the white culture, but focuses more on the inner feelings of the ex-slaves in the face of racial oppression and exploitation to understand the workings of racism during and after Slavery. She gives hope to unsettle the unresolved racial relations for the African Americans who survived Slavery as a hint of optimism at the end of the novel.

Conclusion

Both Faulkner and Morrison bear witness to the significance and resistance of historical discourse in our rethinking about racism and slavery in American literature. They structure their novels under a particular circumstance of historical writing, unveiling this historical discourse with a sense of responsibility to “rip that veil drawn over proceedings too terrible to relate” (“The Site of Memory” 70), as Morrison explains. This also unveils that the American novel shall make efforts to articulate the institution and aftermath of slavery, even though it may not provide a total accounting for or reckoning with the legacy left. With *Go Down, Moses* and *Beloved*, Faulkner and Morrison seek to offer a range of written, fictional and formal narrative as their responses to oral history and southern tradition, all of which associate with the economy and society of slavery.

Southern writing is a painful yet necessary reminder for American history in national oblivion, since the historical writing exemplifies the economic and cultural rituals that often imply the white consciousness in relevance to the black slaves. There are a number of fruitful comparisons between the two novels, including the purposes and means for exposing slave stories. In representing slave history, Faulkner and Morrison both have explored slave experience and life in Southern culture. Faulkner’s representation of slave history originates in part from a Southern planter’s diary as a historical source, while Morrison’s representation of African-American history in *Beloved* is fueled with her imaginative recreation as a revision, expansion and intervention of the historical case that interrogates the evils and aftermath of slavery. She further explores the inner lives of the enslaved before the Emancipation through memory and imagination. Moreover, Morrison attempts to represent the slave experience from the subjective position of the slaves who survive slavery and its effects. She investigates the unspeakable truth of such potent sufferings inflicted upon

Sethe, Paul D and Beloved under the burden of slavery too painful to endure. *Beloved* poses a rewriting of this terrible slave experience in order to represent African American predicaments as an active presence, an essential factor in American history: to see “what should or does constitute a literary canon in order to suggest ways of addressing the Afro-American presence in American Literature” (Morrison, “Unspeakable Things Unspoken” 201) That is, Morrison wants to “[emphasize] the significance of the novel as a form of cultural expression for black Americans in the present, because of the need to reconstruct ‘those classical, mythological, archetypal stories’ of the [disremembered] past” (Khayati 315). By using *Beloved* as black American presence in the present, Morrison aims to show the question of race that has been obscured or erased from the critical treatments of American history.

While unearthing slave history, both Faulkner and Morrison employ memory as a narrative technique and content to expose and interrogate the disturbing racial subjects as a way of confrontation in their historical writings. In *Go Down, Moses* memory demonstrates the effect of excavation and accumulation to assemble the fragments of the family story as well as the Southern past. As a specific narrative form, memory moves from the individual stories to the familial past and further to the regional history of the Deep South. Faulkner’s employment of memory manifests memory’s significance and his effort and desire to evoke the fading South’s past, since memory may serve as an alternative agent for recovering the history of the South. In *Beloved*, Morrison’s employment of memory transforms the slave history from the repressed, denied slave experience to the remembered experience. As the content and narrative of the ex-slaves, memory restores and revises the unspeakable past to a literary metaphor that best conveys the position and experience of African Americans. Through memory and stream of consciousness, Morrison not simply delineates the physical sufferings, but also explores, emphasizes and dramatizes the untold

psychological legacy of the ex-slaves, thereby rendering *Beloved* as a new slave narrative.

Go Down, Moses, as Richard H. King notes, “begins in a comic spirit and gradually moves to the tragic” (193). The Southern past marked by slavery and racism “is founded upon the enslavement of blacks and the insatiable exploitation of the land” (193). This novel as a whole constructs a Southern family history with the tangled relationship of incest and miscegenation. By disclosing Southern life with “strong vernacular elements” (Dimino 37) such as plantation economy and slave labor, Faulkner chiefly demonstrates the white’s possession of the land and the black slaves as a sin that taints the Southern society and community. The racial relationship depicts the economic, political and cultural effects with the making of the white Southerners’ plantation through the exploitation of the land and the slaves. In addition to the poignant racial relations between the white and the black, Faulkner also “reveals the central place of blacks in the [white family and] [...] celebrates the endurance of the black family” (194) such as Lucas Beauchamp and Molly. He renders the black and mulatto individuals like Lucas and Rider personalities and spirits in order to exhibit the significant and indelible position of black life in the South; even if they appear invisible or unnoticed in the racialized society as Samuel Worsham Beauchamp is presented. Similarly, Morrison in *Beloved* exposes the racial relations concerning the white superordination and the black slaves’ oppression based on white scientific racism disguised under pseudo-scientism and rationalism. More importantly, she explores the racial scars, psychically and mentally, of the ex-slaves out of human concern, providing racial reconciliation and hope through numerous black figures such as Sethe, Paul D, Baby Suggs and Denver, and a compassionate white girl, Amy Denver.

The two novels explore the historical consciousness by unearthing such problems

as racism, incest, miscegenation, slave transportation and transaction, and so on. They serve as a record of Southern history and a confrontation with the evils and aftermath of slavery and racism. If Faulkner's novel represents slave life on southern plantation with relatively more historical source and typifies the imbalanced, poignant tension between races, classes and genders through the history of a white family, Morrison's novel not only brings up the psychic workings of the overburdened slaves to show how slaves lived and to know the devastating consequences of slavery, but also draws attention to the necessity of remembrance and retelling for the ex-slaves as a need for empathic witnesses to hear their traumatic stories. *Beloved* foregrounds the African presence in American literature, in which the loss of the knowledge of slave history is recovered so as to confront it, negotiate with it, and get through the shared past through the process of revising and reclaiming black American history.

Despite the fictional constitution of cultural rememory in historical recovery, we need to acknowledge that the two novels also "disclaim the possibility of entirely transforming painful, unassimilated history into satisfactorily integrated narrative" (Matus 36). Even this, both writers' representations of slave history serve as a testimony, a monument to those who lived and suffered during and after Slavery.

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