

The Narrative Techniques of Disruption and defragmentation in Toni Morrison's Novels

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This study on Toni Morrison's fiction analysed the role played by the narrative technique of disruption in the transmission of message. It primarily focused on *Beloved*, *Song of Solomon*, *Sula* and *Love* which are largely representative with regard to the use of the technique of disruption. The analysis aimed at exploring the role that the narrative technique of disruption plays in the representation of the societal malaise rooted in racial marginalisation and cultural degeneration. Additionally, the paper examined Morrison's use of defragmentation as a narrative technique and the interspersions of the past and the present tenses in her narratives to understand profoundly the mechanism of the process of defragmentation with regard to the choice and construction of themes in her novels. Essentially, the analysis was guided by the Theory of Abjection propounded by Julia Kristeva (1981), Vladimir Propp's narratological functions (1968), and Freud's concept of "The Uncanny" (1953). The reading targeted principally the writer's selected novels and the related critical essays and articles. As a result, it has been found that the narrative technique of disruption significantly frames the conveyed message. First, it enables the writer to represent successfully the African American nightmare through a disjointed narration that translates the disintegration of the American society. Second, this technique has facilitated the writer to expose the decaying American society due to racial marginalization and subsequent social inequalities. Finally, Morrison deploys the narrative technique of defragmentation in her fiction to mend the shattered identities and reconcile the fragmented selves.

Keywords: narrative technique, defragmentation, disruption, racial marginalization, slavery, interspersions of past and present.

1 Introduction

1.1 Disruption and defragmentation in Morrison's fiction

In fiction, the narrative techniques and other literary devices used to narrate a story play an important function in the transmission of a message. They are part and parcel instruments useful for the construction of meaning. Morrison's novels display an excellent tapestry of narrative techniques that establish a good literary taste in form and in content. This paper examined how Toni Morrison deploys the narrative techniques of disruption and defragmentation in her novels *BeLoved*, *Song of Solomon*, *Sula* and *Love* to decry the evils of racism and other social inequalities that bring about the fragmentation and disintegration of the American society. Initially, the study explored how the writer utilizes the techniques to construct stories of

grand narratives. In this way, the analysis focused on the way utterances are arranged to construct narratives that reflect multiple points of view in past and in present tenses that mix haphazardly to obtain a story dominated by non-linear patterns with substantial flashbacks.

Furthermore, the study analysed the juxtaposition of characters' contrasting actions and reactions that feed the narrative line of the texts to project horror. In the end, the reading examined why and how Morrison deploys the narrative technique of defragmentation to depict how broken identities are fastened and insinuate the possibility to achieve African American self-discovery through cultural regeneration and self-reaffirmation. Since the study was rooted in a qualitative investigation to examine why the writer applies disruption and

defragmentation to construct her texts, Propp's narratological functions compiled in his essay *Morphology of the Folktale* (1968) assisted to understand profoundly the plurality of the facets of disruption and defragmentation upon which the novels are written. In some stages of analysis, Prop's narratological functions were supplemented by Kristeva's Theory of Abjection and Sigmund Freud's concept of "The Uncanny" to scrutinize the horrifying incidents that emanate from characters' actions.

1.2 Research problem

Morrison's horror fiction reflects a vast terrain of narrative techniques that are intertwined to depict the struggle of the African American individual in a community that seeks to put him apart. From the agony of slavery to the post-Reconstruction pain of racial discrimination and poverty, the writer creates a fiction that is unique in themes and in the utilisation of a variety of literary devices and narrative strategies to stigmatise the social immorality and the evil nature of humans. Disruption and defragmentation, represented through a complexity of tense construction and flashbacks, are four important narrative tools that Morrison applies essentially to construct her narratives. These tools render the plot too difficult to access the writer's aim. This paper interrogated the role that the narrative techniques of disruption and defragmentation play to represent the pain and the struggle of the African American community.

1.3 Research objectives

This study sought to achieve the following objectives:

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- To examine the significance of the narrative technique of disruption in representing African American grief in Toni Morrison's selected novels,
- To explore how the role of the narrative technique of defragmentation reveals characters' self-discovery in Toni Morrison's works,
- To analyse the importance of the interplay between the past and the present in establishing the meaning of time against an individual's existence in Toni Morrison's narrative.

1.4 Research Assumption

This study evolved on the premise that disruption and defragmentation in Morrison's novels are narrative tools that serve to patch up broken identities and recreate hope out of despair.

1.5 Research Methodology

This study was a qualitative analysis that consisted in a meticulous reading of Morrison's horror novels: *BeLoved*, *Song of Solomon*, *Sula* and *Love*. For a deep understanding of the thematic concern, the reading was extended to critical works on Morrison's oeuvre and some works on narratology and literary devices used in fiction. The analysis was thematic and was basically guided by Propp's essay on narratology *Morphology of the Folktale* (1968) and Kristeva's Theory of Abjection (1981).

These tools enabled the study to understand how the narrative technique of disruption—which predominates the narrative line of Morrison's novels—works to portray the agony of the African American experience, and how the narrative technique of defragmentation is deployed to portray characters' discovery of hope out of despair, or healing of the broken hearts or memories.

2. Data analysis and interpretation

2.1 Disrupting a narrative with the interspersions of the past and the present

The interspersions of the past and the present tenses is the most influential narrative device that Morrison applies to disrupt the chronological narrative line in her novels. The use of these contrasting tenses in terms of time creates present moments in the story and flashbacks that make the narrative lose chronology to result in a disassembled structure. The past and the present dislodge in many instances, and the flow of the story is broken. Meanwhile, the writer demonstrates an excellent genius which puts together the disjointed fragments of the narrative to unite and make a complete story. In many instances of her novels, this interspersions of the two tenses in the narration renders Morrison's fiction difficult to understand.

BeLoved, *Song of Solomon* and *Love* are profoundly constructed upon these irregular tense breakages. In these novels, the narrative line of the stories is dominated by a vivid rupture of the chronological succession of incidents. This becomes possible due to the alternations of the past and present events from

the flashbacks in form of testimonies and characters' live incidents and conversations.

For instance, *BeLoved* develops a lot of instances in past—particularly chronicling the pain that slaves endured—right from the Middle Passage ship to the unspeakable horrors in Sweet Home plantations, Kentucky. The narration in past continues with the novel's protagonist Sethe's evasion from Sweet Home where she was enslaved to 124 Blue Stone in Cincinnati, Ohio where life takes new tastes—sweet and bitter. In this novel, narrations in past appear in three ways that, however, relate one another to keep the narrative's unity. Initially, past narrations appear in flashbacks to paint the painful incidents that characters endured before; such narrations are also found in folktale passages that Morrison brings in the text just to reinforce the story's action. Past narration is also applied by the writer to mark the third person narration—the omniscient narration—of events.

In *Song of Solomon*, we learn the roots and experiences of the novel's protagonist's Milkman from the bits of folktales that he has collected from various people across his exploratory journeys to trace back his ancestry. These informative fragments about Milkman's roots appear in flashbacks and contribute significantly to the development of the narrative. They help Milkman to obtain the identity of his great-grandfather Solomon. Morrison writes:

Milkman...would just have to listen and memorize it. He closed his eyes and concentrated while the children, inexhaustible in their willingness to repeat a rhythmic, rhyming action game...And Milkman memorized all of what they sang:

Jake the only son of Solomon
.....
Whirled about and touched the son
.....
Left that baby in a white man's house

Twenty-one children, the last one Jake!
O Solomon don't leave me here
Cotton balls to choke me
O Solomon don't leave me here
Bukra's arms to yoke me
Solomon done fly, Solomon done gone
Solomon cut across the sky, Solomon gone
home (pp. 306-307).

Following Propp's narratological function of guidance, our protagonist Milkman "is transferred, delivered and led to" discover new important places and information that revolutionise and revitalise his weak personality into a stronger individual (1968, p.46). Thanks to the folklore, he achieves his goal that consisted in the search for his ancestry.

In *BeLoved*, flashbacks dominate the narrative. They bring additional details to the story to understand efficiently several incidents that are not relayed in the real time of their occurrences. Examining *BeLoved*'s structure, Bashirahishize (2018) observes that [...] flashbacks add important information to the reader's knowledge and create necessary awareness to situate him within the context of the story. Much about the revelations of Morrison's fiction unveils from the secrecy hidden in the flashbacks. It is from these narrative analepses, for instance, that we come to know the supernatural identity of *BeLoved* and the reason why she returns back as a ghost in the family to torment her mother. (p.110)

BeLoved's story starts in medias res. From the onset, the reader feels that part of the narrative has been left out. The story starts in

the middle. While moving in reading, the reader observes that the writer deploys a variety of flashbacks that reveal significant background and context to the story.

In Morrison's works, the past and the present work together to reveal the sociocultural challenges that are hardening living conditions in America. In *BeLoved* for instance, the two tenses are used to portray incidents that are remote in time extending to decades in some situations. The past is particularly used to relate the event when Sethe was sold into slavery at the age of 13 to become the Garners' slave. The reader learns through the narrative in past that Sethe was sold in a situation of orphan because her mother had been unjustly hanged years ago. She was bought by the white slave-owner family, the Garners, to work in their plantations known as "Sweet Home plantations," in Kentucky, where she joined other five men slaves (104ff.).

Meanwhile, along the past tense used to relate flashbacks which disrupt the narrative, the present time is basically used to report actions and incidents that occur in 124 Blue Stone, Cincinnati; this starts with the opening stage of the novel. It is also used to connect actions and incidents within the story. The present time though grammatically presented in past plays the role of bridge: it bridges the narrative's significant facts, incidents and actions that constitute the plot. The inception of *BeLoved*'s is indicative to this point,

"124 WAS SPITEFUL. Full of a baby's venom. The women in the house knew it and so did the children. For years each put up with the spite in his own way, but by 1873 Sethe and her daughter Denver were its only victims. The

grandmother, Baby Suggs, was dead, and the sons, Howard and Buglar, had run away by the time they were thirteen years old--as soon as merely looking in a mirror shattered it (that was the signal for Buglar); as soon as two tiny hand prints appeared in the cake" (p. 1).

In her texts, a lot of incidents are relayed in past time. It is a past that evolves dynamically due to the presence of various recurrences of flashbacks and regular narrative connection in the different stages of the story. The plot is broken in many ways moving backwards and frontwards in some instances to create complexity in meaning.

In *Love*, for instance, old Bill Cosey—dead many years ago—comes back to life just in the beginning of the story. Through the unending disputes of the women left by Bill Colley, the reader feels an imaginary return of parent and husband Bill Cosey. Upon the women's tensions over the will left by Bill Cosey, late Bill is put at the centre of the narration, each woman trying to convince the listener and reader her legitimacy to inherit Bill's left possessions.

BeLoved shows similar scenarios. Several incidents occur in the present time: Sethe's home is haunted by a revenant ghost; after his escape from Alfred Prison, Georgia, Paul D arrives in Sethe's home at Cincinnati, Ohio (North). She feels relaxed when she perceives the man. Paul D contributes significantly to the chasing of the ghost. However, by the time he learns that the ghost is a reincarnation of a child that Sethe killed when Schoolteacher came to take them back to Sweet Home, he gets furious and leaves 124 immediately. But after some days he returns to help Sethe again chase the ghost. Cincinnati community also backs her with intensive

prayers to exorcise the ghost. Toward the end of the novel, the ghost finally runs away forever and Sethe's home is liberated. All the events surrounding Sethe's attempt to kill all her children unfold in the present. Though the narration is organised in past tense, the events being narrated project the current challenges the protagonist Sethe is facing.

The narration, in past and in present, recalls the painful memories of Sethe and her daughter Denver. This double narration initiates a state of ambiguities in Sethe's life. The unrelated and disassembled flashbacks that are built in a dislocated way suggest Sethe's agony and the cavalry experienced by her fellow slaves. Such irregular and fragmented narrations found in Morrison's novels particularly in *BeLoved* and *Song of Solomon* reflect the fragmented identities of the black community in a society threatened by white racism.

2.2 The Narrative Technique of Defragmentation

In the previous section, we saw how the technique of disruption in Morrison's oeuvre entails the disintegration of the American society; the author puts greater emphasis on the damage of destruction caused by racism on the African American community. The uncontrolled usage of the past and the present in the narration of flashbacks and other unrelated events in her novels has demonstrated Morrison's affirmation of a society on the verge of collapse because of the lack of cultural union between whites and blacks.

Along with the fragmented style she deploys in her fiction, Morrison creates another technique that seeks to wrap the bleeding wounds to attempt social healing. The narration continues with another narrative strategy that announces the coming of social regeneration. The writer utilizes a sophisticated construction of metaphorical motifs, literary devices and symbols to initiate a sense of regeneration. This construction is described in this study as the narrative technique of defragmentation or the aesthetics of defragmentation due to its unifying effects. In his critical examination of the American black novelists' achievements, Bell (2004) argues that the "formal and thematic defragmentation in African American literature is a key-factor that seems to unite various tendencies that this literature raises" (p.49). The technique of defragmentation referred to as the aesthetics of defragmentation in this study occupies a vast terrain in Morrison's horror works. It works as an equalizer to lessen the gravity of the pain.

The largest narrative structure of *Sula* is dominated by a profound usage of this narrative technique of defragmentation. Its narrative line tries to "attempt to tie the loose cords" as Shadrack "...tried to tie the loose cords in his mind" (p.10). Examining *Sula*'s structure, it is a novel that offers a multiplicity of narrative structures. At first, the plot is organised into a chronological story in chapters whose titles match with the significant years of the history of the black community. In some stages, the chronology is lost when the story enters into complex events that intermingle. Death is a strong motif that

appears across the novel with both literal and metaphorical meaning. This motif of death is the most important theme that the plot elaborates.

From the beginning, the plot exposes important facts in relation with the years suggested as chapter titles. A global view indicates that the plot reflects the developments of the cycle of life moving from birth, growth up to death. Additionally, Morrison imagines an extra-stage to the three ordinary stages of life; it comes to complete the cycle of life. This extra-stage is rebirth. In the same way the mythological Egyptian phoenix proceeds to live longer, the motif of death which predominates the plot shows two layers—death and rebirth. These dynamics intermingle at different levels. Shadrack, one of the main characters in *Sula*, offers a touching example. By the time he announces the National Suicide Day dedicated to "order and focus experience" (p.10), various scenes of painful deaths occur to break peace with the objective to install chaos in the community.

In the novel, the black community of the Bottom receives the death of *Sula* with positive appreciations. This is because *Sula* was regarded as a threat to the community due to her immoral misconduct. In addition to the motif of death, other motifs are presented by Morrison to galvanize the plot of the story. These motifs include: water, fire, air and earth. Their presence hints at the four natural elements that call for life. Together with the motif of death, they portray the pain and the bleak living conditions in the Bottom using a disjointed representation.

For instance, in the second chapter under title “1920,” when Nel and her mother are traveling toward the South in a train boarding blacks and whites, they are shocked when they find that black passengers have no toilet where to release once the body claims as nature obliges. The only available toilets are reserved for whites—yet a paradoxical view in a train that receives both whites and blacks. As she misses where to go to “release” her body, Nel urinates in her stockings; this situation of racial exclusion frustrates her. As they reach a new station in total shame, Nel and her mother Helen leave the train to join a small bush where they can better release themselves. The narrator reveals

All relaxing spaces on the train were very-very free. Nobody was in. There was an inscription on each entry, “No colored, no black, no black.” Nel felt uneasy—finding nowhere to retreat. She went from place to place but couldn’t get one...Helen would keep her silence saying no word but under pain. Finally, the resistance weakened: the sad daughter covered with urine through and along her stockings felt ashamed and sat half dead...Quickly mother and daughter ran outside the coach as it got to a new station. A small bush assisted the woman and her daughter with some leaves of the poor trees (p.42).

Later, this mistreatment impacts Nel and her mother psychologically. Nel ponders on the humiliation she endured. In her sorrow, she meditates on her body that she believes is disconnected as it has lost, in her pain, communication with her inner self. While alone in a secluded cell, she recollects the pain

that went through her body after she had seen the lifeless body of her great-grand mother, Cecile. This time of memory revitalizes Nel and introduces the four natural elements connected with the cycle of human life: air occurs with the smell that extends odour coming from the grandmother Rochelle (p.71); readers can sense fire from the burning fireplace installed in the house (p.62); the house where Nel and her mother Helen are and its surroundings are covered with dust: this state informs the presence of the earth; finally, readers identify water which is part of the four natural elements through Nel’s urine: As pressed by the law of nature, she has urinated in her stockings since she was denied to go to release in the closets of the train (p.42). The mother and her daughter have undertaken a tragic journey: all the white passengers among whom there are soldiers stare at Nel who loses temper to resist. She cannot speak as the environment rises difficult to get accommodated to it. The journey has been long and dreadful.

When she arrives home, she mulls over the horrific voyage she took with her mother through a threatening white jungle and feels invigorated. All the horrors she experienced upon human malice have fortified Nel’s body and soul. Bashirahishize (2018) concludes that Nel “has developed a new sense of self” (p. 142). To demonstrate this new state of life, she abruptly shouts, “I am me”; impulsively, she restates, “Me” (p.47). The moral and psychological reaffirmation of her self galvanizes the young girl who is now reborn. This rebirth transforms her into a complete woman different from the person she

incarnated before she started the journey. This time, she remarks that she loses nothing to become a complete girl with equal dignity with the white girls of her vicinity, Medallion. She is able to feel proud of her blackness. In her life, a new dawn appears: her distorted self that has been fragmented by racial discrimination has reunited. In his doctoral dissertation, Bashirahishize (2018) notes that

Her [Nel] fears of white domination, her fragmented memories and her distorted visions of lower status are gone. She has defied all the socio-cultural barriers imposed by the Other to depersonalise her humanity. Nel's tragic experiences have empowered her to detect the hidden evil side of the whites from the villainous wickedness they perpetrate over her mother and herself. (p.143)

Following Propp's narratological functions (1968), Nel's moral and psychological discovery proves the mediation function whose role serves to dig down the enemy's malice; it exposes the evil scheme of the antagonists with the objective to prepare the hero's path to success. In his essay, Propp (Ibid) reveals that "If a young girl or boy is seized or driven out, and the thread of the narrative is linked to his or her fate and not to those who remain behind, then the hero of the tale is the seized or banished boy or girl" (p.49). Upon her self-discovery, the "misfortune or lack is made known" (ibid p.49). Nel succeeds to defeat her enemy; from a downtrodden state, she rises to the stage of heroine. All the walls of suppression have been pulled down to give space to her social ascension.

So far, we have indicated that this section examines the narrative technique of

defragmentation that Morrison deploys in her novels particularly in *Sula* to recreate hope out of despair, to resurrect life out of death, to empower the weak and the dispossessed out of irrational cruelty. Defragmentation appears as a state of moral and psychological ataraxia to appease the bleeding soul of the African American in America. Examining Nel's behavior when she reiterates with much conviction, "I am me...Me," Morrison introduces the stage of peace recovery after a series of painful adversity that Nel and her mother Helen have gone through. This is the moment of defragmentation. Nel and her mother feel relaxed. The horror of persecution faced during the day while traveling toward the South is now gone. Dawn chases the dusk. Life returns back again. Nel examines now the world around her; she finds that she has a place in it; she is no longer an observer. She is a complete woman reborn after unspeakable moments of grief. She is herself; she has now power to decide what to do. Her hope that had split in parts is now unified. Body and soul reunite to recreate a complete individual—a victorious woman capable to stand and proclaim her independence. She has attained the time of self-liberation. This moment is what Morrison represents and that this study has coined as the esthetics of defragmentation. All the disunited parts of life are now together. She is what she longed to be. Her body that disintegrated under the heavy weight of white persecution has stabilized and strengthened forever. All her fragmented selves make one body. She is Nel—she is herself in every part of her existence, "I'm me. I'm not their

daughter. I'm not Nel. I'm me. Me" (*Sula*, p.49).

Any time she reiterates the word me, Nel feels revitalized. To safeguard jealously the identity she acquired through pain, she denies her name, "I'm not Nel," because she suspects the name has been borrowed from the abusive white community that she seeks to subvert. This name alienates her as it does not reflect her real identity. She declares she is "not their daughter" a way to show that her life does not depend on her oppressor white man. Upon these convictions, carrying a name that has roots from the white community is an affront that Nel cannot accept to endure. In no way can such a corrupt name define her existence. For the young girl, the only name she accepts is Me, "I'm me. Me" because in it she experiences her holistic individuality as a complete creature. With this name, her honor and dignity worth for a human being are restored. Defragmentation occurs during these moments of peace in her mind.

In line with this process of rebirth, Bashirahishize (Ibid) states that the narrative technique of defragmentation found in Morrison's novels reincarnates a healing capability

Morrison's aesthetics of defragmentation functions like a process of healing. After she has endured a rude experience during the trip to the South, Nel is now a refined individual. She sleeps one evening and wakes up the next morning reborn. In this rebirth, Morrison creates a metaphor that touches both the oppressor and the oppressed. She provides a vital encouragement to the African American

people that the horrors of alienation are fleeting away and consequently subject to defeat. In the same way, the writer gives a message to the hegemonic white community that society is always dynamic through time; as a result one should nurture the seeds of love that would uplift society in its holistic grandeur. The process of defragmentation occurs after characters have experienced severe damages either physically, morally or psychologically. It therefore works as a response to soothe the broken hearts and heal the wounds caused by alienation (p.144).

Morrison's narrative technique of defragmentation significantly shapes the intended message. The writer encourages the African American people during their hard times but also gives a message to the hegemonic white community that society is always dynamic, and that one should nurture the seeds of love to elevate society holistically without leaving anyone behind. The process of defragmentation works as a response to soothe the broken hearts and heal the wounds caused by alienation because it unfolds after characters have experienced severe physical, moral and psychological damages.

Beside Nel's character that significantly reflects Morrison's representation of black revival, the writer brings in another character, Shadrack, whose life epitomizes the traumatic horrors of World War One. He participated in the war as a soldier and returned home shattered after war. He was severely wounded on battlefield; he saw many of his friends die bludgeoned by bombs and now has developed mental insanity caused by the traumatic evils he himself

experienced as a soldier. In the village of Medallion where he lives as a retired soldier, he has instituted a “National Suicide Day” celebrated on every 3rd January—an event that all the neighbours join. The institution and the celebration of the Day is an event that runs across the narrative line of *Sula*. While descending in the streets of Medallion to celebrate, Shadrack and the neighbors feel mentally relieved and forget temporarily the other social problems they are facing such as poverty and racial marginalization. Demonstrators will only remember the heat of discomfort they are fed every day when the celebration ends and they return back home. With the introduction of this event—National Suicide Day—Morrison brings in another stage of defragmentation. The deprived black community of Medallion feels the joys of life only when they descend into street. Through marching, Shadrack and his fellows achieve the stage of catharsis. They feel psychologically purified; peace returns in their mind. As they celebrate, the bleeding heart forgets the pain. Life revives itself and unity between the blacks of the community solidifies. They reach a psychological state where they feel ready to resist the enemy as a body rather than an isolated individual. At this stage, Morrison’s narrative device of defragmentation serves to cement the broken selves by bringing together a dislocated community of Medallion to meditate on her future to end racial alienation.

Still in *Sula*, Morrison provides another stage of defragmentation that is very touching. While *Sula* is alive, the community of Medallion is angry because of her social

misconduct. Her presence in the village has ruined the sociocultural values of the community. She sleeps with every man she meets. Her promiscuity infuriates the neighbors who long to see her go. *Sula* has slept with Jude Green, the husband of her friend Nel; she has ruined many families and the village considers her a devil (pp.113-117). By the time she dies, the community of Medallion jubilates. The traditional culture of mourning turns into joy; people celebrate her demise—a sign which reveals that the community was tired with her presence. People “began to cherish their husbands and wives, protect their children, repair their homes and in general band together against the devil in their midst” (pp.117-118).

The death of *Sula* liquidates the social unrest that was polarising blacks between themselves. With *Sula*’s death, some “misfortunes are resolved” as Propp indicates (p.55). The community regains solace progressively since suspicion between wives and husbands vanishes. *Sula*’s demise rises as a process of rebirth. Her death defragments the social parts that had gone loose. The lost love between husbands and wives, the broken brotherhood between neighbors and the profanation of cultural values that had frozen because of *Sula*’s misbehavior find expression as the sun rises again and dark vanishes. In her death, the society achieves rebirth.

In *BeLoved*, the same narratological device of defragmentation is deployed in the ending chapters of the novel. The largest part of the story describes the painful struggle that Sethe and her fellow slaves endure in Sweet Home Plantations, a vast area located in

Kentucky, the South of America. Life in the plantations becomes harsh by the time Mr. Garner, the owner, dies. Sethe, like other slaves, escapes to the North in Ohio. After Sethe has reached Cincinnati, Ohio to get solace with her children in her mother-in-law Baby Suggs's home, she feels relieved. Now she starts to be because, in her mind, she has never lived. Ohio is a free state. Though racial inequalities can be sensed in the North, Blacks experience a bit freedom comparative to the hellish slave-owning states of the South. However, life turns sour when schoolteacher appears in Baby Suggs's home to take back to the South Sethe and her children. While trying to protect the children against the cruel master schoolteacher, Sethe murders one of her children. She is taken to jail. When released, she returns home; the community of Cincinnati ostracizes her because of the infanticide she committed. She has become an outcast and a tale of the community. Eighteen years later, she will experience profoundly dreadful moments in life: the ghost of the baby she murdered returns home to haunt the house where Sethe and her daughter Denver live. The years that follow leave Sethe financially ruined and socially a pariah. The community of Cincinnati feels pity for her and organizes massive prayers to exorcise the ghost. After many sessions of prayers, the ghost of *BeLoved* is exorcised; it runs away forever.

From the time, Sethe and her daughter Denver feel relieved; life reappears in the house after years of social despair. Sethe meditates on the horrors she endured in the South as a slave and declares "no more running from nothing...on this earth." The "ticket" she

"paid" for the painful "journey" she "took" has made her cold. She decides "to sit down and...be". (p.15). Since she was born, Sethe feels complete. Her soul is now tranquil, rehabilitated. The heat of slavery and the threat of *BeLoved*'s ghost are gone. The inalienable identities of a black individual and of a woman-mother that had been shattered by the darkness of the past are now patched together. She is happy at last. Though overtaken by the weight of age, Paul D proposes Sethe to marry him, to start a new life that they lost while in Sweet Home. Such a kind of feeling would never have occurred once in the South or during her struggle against *BeLoved*'s ghost. Sethe and Paul D have regained the lost humanity. This is the phase of defragmentation. All the fragmented selves that had been destroyed by the evil power of slavery are now reunified. Sethe is now a complete woman and mother while Paul D's denied manhood resurrects to make him a complete man. This is the time of moral and spiritual transfiguration for the two characters whose bleeding hearts while in the South are now rehabilitated.

3. Conclusion

Narrative devices in Morrison's oeuvre play an important role in the framing and transmission of message to the audience. Deep and surface meanings pervade her art; these meanings always move hand in hand to complete one another. This paper examined Morrison's novels of horror literature. Overall, it was noted that these novels provide a significant literary landscape rich in tropes. These tropes have greater quality to make a

text reflect various literary forms which hook the reader to develop much interest in the story and in the meaning it carries. The aesthetic dimension she keeps while writing empowers the stories and completes the thematic choices that galvanise the construction of meaning. To achieve this style, the writer combines many narrative techniques such as the interspersion of the past and the present, a complex narrative voice and ambiguity to paint a horror world dominated by irrational cruelty, frustrations and anxieties. To appease the pain and recreate life out of death, love out of hate and hope out of despair, Morrison crowns her writing with the narrative device of defragmentation. This tool has the goal to heal the bleeding wounds and initiate rebirth in a desolate world.

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