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[Home](#)

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[Meet the  
Editors](#)

[Issue 23-  
Spring  
2022](#)

[Previous  
Issues](#)

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Team](#)

## Literary Essay Contest

[Back](#)

### First Place

**Clare Hunter:**

Resistance Isn't Futile: An Argument for Hybridity, Not Assimilation

### Second Place

**Jacob Stephens:**

Parable of the Self

### Third Place

**Nathaniel Trent**

Kindred and 200-Year-Old Racism Today

### The Amrit. R. Chatterjee Memorial Writing Award

**Kennedy Edgar**

The Rememory of Beloved

### Honorable Mention

**Griffin Saunders**

The liminal from the Laguna Pueblo

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[Home](#)

[About Us](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[Submit](#)

[Meet the  
Editors](#)

[Issue 23-  
Spring  
2022](#)

[Previous  
Issues](#)

[Join Our  
Team](#)

## Resistance Isn't Futile: An Argument for Hybridity, Not Assimilation

By: Clare Hunter

[Back](#)

Louise Erdrich said that "The events in [The Round House] are loosely based on so many different cases, reports, and stories that the outcome is pure fiction." ("The Significance of Erdrich"). Her novel uses these stories to focus on the justice and lack thereof on reservations in the United States. Louise Erdrich's novel *The Round House* is also the bildungsroman of Joe, the protagonist, as he seeks justice for his mother and tries to find his place on the reservation. In this work of Native American literature, Erdrich explores life on an Ojibwe reservation during the 1950s and what it means socially, culturally, and legally through Joe's perspective and observations. Through the inclusion of incidents with justice or the lack of it paired with Joe's observations, Erdrich emphasizes the lack of hybridity between the Ojibwe's and America's cultures. *The Round House* by Louise Erdrich argues with the use of references to *Star Trek* the Next Generation that in multicultural interactions there should be hybridity in values rather than favoring one culture's values over another.

*Star Trek* the Next Generation is a science fiction television series set in the 2360s and early 2370s (Docketman). In the show, Earth is part of an interplanetary alliance which is overseen by the government referred to as The United Federation of Planets. In this alliance, there are many ships that have the mission of exploring and interacting with foreign cultures on newly discovered planets. The goal of these interactions is to learn about the discovered cultures and, if the civilization has developed space travel to invite them to join the alliance. The goal of the alliance is to promote peace and acceptance of different cultures and their values. In *The Next Generation*, Captain Picard on the ship *Enterprise* is sent on various missions where he interacts with other planets' cultures on behalf of the federation.

Erdrich references the *Star Trek* episode "Angel One" to suggest how two cultures should approach hybridity in their first interactions. In chapter 7 Joe had to make the choice of what information to share with his father and the FBI agent based on his values. Joe has a strong sense of loyalty yet he "ratted out [his] friends in order to hide the fact of the money" (Erdrich 146) which he wanted to save for his future. He made the choice to "ligvel up a lesser secret" (Erdrich 145) and betray his childhood value of loyalty to protect his value of self-preservation and future success from when he grew up overnight. In the *Star Trek* episode of the same name, Picard and his crew are interacting with a matriarchy that is starting to crumble due to the previous contact with the federation. In order to maintain peace, Picard and his crew come up with a compromise that saves the lives of their people and enables the matriarchy to slowly change into a different society. With these examples, Erdrich is arguing that hybridity should not be immediate or forced. Joe was forced to grow up quickly and take part in adult culture because his parents were too preoccupied to take care of him. The reference to *Star Trek* suggests that allowing hybridity to be limited and to slowly develop respects the separate identities and differences in values between cultures as they start to work together.

Erdrich builds on this argument in chapter eight of *The Round House* by emphasizing the need for natural rather than forced hybridity. In this chapter, Sonja's relationship with Ojibwe and American culture is emphasized. Sonja is a white woman who has a romantic partnership with Whitey, an Ojibwe man. When she was a young adult, she was a stripper "stuck in that life" (Erdrich 222) and managed to leave when "Whitey started protecting [her...and] asked [her] to quit" (Erdrich 222). When Sonja moved onto the reservation she abruptly adopted Ojibwe culture and values because of the relative safety it, through Whitey, offered her compared to her life as a stripper and its abuse. In chapter eight Joe brings her the money he found in a baby doll which she helps him save at first but then takes a majority of it. This could be seen as a second sudden culture shift prompted by her newfound wealth and freedom that results in her ability to return to a life-based in American culture and values without the harassment, she previously experienced. The episode "Hide and Q" also focuses on sudden wealth but with power rather than money. In this episode, Riker is suddenly given the power of a Q which puts him outside of his community. The resulting conflict is resolved when Riker gives up this new power and returns to his old self. These examples are used by Erdrich because both commanders Riker and Sonja use their newfound abundance as a means to change their behavior and interactions with everyone around them. Rather than living within their own culture, they start living in a vastly different one: Sonja lives on the reservation as one of the Ojibwe while Riker starts seeing himself as a powerful Q, believing he is superior to his crewmates. Erdrich uses both examples to argue for hybridity in the context of compromise and a combination of cultures and their values. Rather than just choosing one culture over another, both cultures and their values should be included in the hybrid space that results from multicultural interaction. Hybridity should be the combination of both cultures rather than rigid choices of which values to favor or choosing one culture over another. This shift should also not be sudden and instantaneous; it should happen over the course of interactions between both cultures.

In addition, Erdrich argues for the hybridity of cultures through the distribution of information. In chapter nine "The Big Goodbye" Joe is confronted with Sonja's reality and how his behavior made him "another gimmie-gimmie asshole" (Erdrich 225). Up until this point, Joe was always "sneaking a good look at [Sonja's] tits when [he] thought [she] didn't know" (Erdrich 222) and viewing Sonja as beautiful in a sexual context rather than viewing her as the loving aunt she was to him. In *Star Trek*, the Next Generation episode 12 of season 1 Captain Picard on the virtual reality holodeck reveals to a few holograms that the world is a simulation in a room of a starship. This information turned the world of one hologram upside down when he realized that his existence may not have been real or might have had no meaning. This episode and chapter both share the title of "The Big Goodbye" as part of Erdrich's argument for hybridity with cultures. Both these stories have a moment where new information from another culture drastically changes their own perspective. This shift in perspective accounts for the exposure to another culture and results in an environment that is more amicable to the new culture in future interactions. Erdrich portrays this through Joe's souvenir of the tassel which he kept as a "[reminde]r of the way [he] treated Sonja and... about how [he] threatened her and all that came of it; how [he] was just another guy" (Erdrich 225). This reminder represents how Joe's exposure to Sonja's experience as a woman and her values impacted his perspective. His guilt about how his relationship with Sonja ended has prompted him to modify his behavior in future interactions with women. Similarly, the hologram's interactions with Captain Picard and members of his crew before the program closed changed due to the information he learned. Rather than seeing them as the colleagues, he was programmed to see he instead saw their differences and respected them for who they really were rather than who he assumed they were. These examples are used by Erdrich in her argument for hybridity because the shift in perspective enables these characters to modify their behavior in such a way that is inclusive and eases communications with the culture or similar people following the newly received information.

Erdrich references *The Next Generation* episode "Justice" to emphasize the results of multicultural interactions without hybridity of values. In this episode, Wesley breaks the law while visiting another planet. This situation is resolved by Captain Picard when he chooses to ignore his government's value of other cultures' laws. This value originates from the beginning of the federation when a few species from different planets and cultures decided to become allies. This value was created into a law called the Prime Directive which requires the federation to follow the laws of the culture(s) on other planets. In this situation, Picard refuses to follow the law that justifies the requested execution of Wesley which breaks the planet's value of justice and the federation's value of justice and respect for different values. He also fails to come up with a compromise that honors the planet's value of peace and strict punishment of crime in order to maintain peace. In *The Round House*'s chapter 3 titled "Justice", Joe and his father Basil pored over the old tribal cases to look at precedent and to try to find potential suspects. Yet even once they find the rapist, "they [the authorities] let him go" (Erdrich 226) due to jurisdiction issues stemming from conflict over cultural values. In both examples, the interactions between two cultures lack respect and acknowledgment of values belonging to each. In both circumstances, the two cultures value justice yet the disagreement over what justice should result in the lack of any sort of justice at all. Through these examples, Erdrich argues for hybridity in multicultural interactions rather than choosing which culture's values to respect depending on the place and circumstances or choosing to respect neither culture's values. These are examples of the lack of hybridity and why it is so important in multicultural interactions.

Hybridity in multicultural communication is vital for healthy relationships between any two cultures. Without hybridity, the values of each culture are disregarded which runs the risk of each culture losing what makes them distinct. This conflict often centers on the idea of assimilation which emphasizes one culture at the expense of the other. In order to avoid this, cultures involved in multicultural interactions should over time come to share some values while retaining their own beliefs. There have been some attempts to address the current lack of hybridity. One significant attempt is the 2010 tribal law and order act which enabled tribal courts to increase the length of sentences in criminal cases. Yet even with progress such as this, there is still a lack of hybridity due to a cultural clash between indigenous peoples and the United States. This conflict is visible in the countless stories, whether told or silenced, that when retold "loosely...[create an] outcome is pure fiction" ("The Significance of Erdrich") yet true.

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[Home](#)[About Us](#)[Contact Us](#)[Submit](#)[Meet the  
Editors](#)[Issue 23-  
Spring  
2022](#)[Previous  
Issues](#)[Join Our  
Team](#)[Back](#)

## Parable of the Self

By: Jacob Stephens

"From one, many; from many, one; Forever uniting, growing, dissolving— forever Changing. The universe is God's self-portrait."

The late-stage capitalist dystopia of Octavia Butler's 1993 science-fiction novel *Parable of the Sower* gives frightening warnings about our world marching towards a destructive path in which our future is catered to the rich and devouring the poor, with most giving up on saving it or being able to do so. The universe that Butler constructs is one in which nature is desiccated, individuals are disregarded, and constantly subject to mistreatment by both non-state and state actors, and people are left desperate. This leads the protagonist, Lauren, to formulate a religion to create a better world. It involves a return to naturalistic principles and a rejection of an über deterministic God characteristic of the Abrahamic religions; in doing so she re-establishes a homology between the ancient dichotomy of man and nature. With the rise of post-capitalist society, Butler creates the societal feeling of a Godless universe within an unjust society, something that is too familiar today. Hence, Butler creates a spiritual product more adjusted to *Parable of the Sower's* social and cultural progression named 'Earthseed'. With the idea that 'God' is 'Change', creating a religious philosophy that is all-encompassing, Butler argues that we can manifest ourselves individually and as a society, change it and ourselves for the greater good, that we are in control of our own destinies, and that the state of current society goes directly against the self and fulfilling nature of the universe.

Laura, the main protagonist in the novel, undergoes an important spiritual awakening by abandoning faith in the religion for which her father preaches, Christianity; in the name for her self-discovered religion 'Earthseed', founded on the idea that "God is Change". Earthseed states that 'God' shapes us as we change but that we also shape God, therefore ourselves, and in turn the universe. As well as asserting the idea that God exists to shape the universe, and that the universe exists to shape God, Laura explains Earthseed this way, and why she pushes her Father's religion of Christianity away is not exactly explained in the novel, but can be traced to her thoughts of inequality she believed to be apparent within the Abrahamic philosophies. "In the book of Job, God says he made everything and he knows everything so no one has any right to question what he does with any of it. Okay. That works. That Old Testament God doesn't violate the way things are now. But that God sounds a lot like Zeus – a super-powerful man, playing with his toys the way my youngest brothers play with toy soldiers. If they're yours, you make the rules. Who cares what the toys think. Wipeout a toy's family, then give it a brand-new family" (Butler 16). Laura commonly ponders the suffering in the world - and in this quote, the Book of Job (which is the section of the Bible that deals with the suffering of a man named Job), Job is righteous, yet is stricken down by God with misery, material destruction, and suffering. When Job questions God's actions, God tells Job he cannot question an omnipotent entity. Lauren is very critical of this material and personified version of God. She is also critical and dismissive that undesired suffering is ultimately, the will of God. So, Laura creates Earthseed in her belief that one is able to take charge in one's life rather than simply accept needless suffering. She is still influenced by her father's ministry, and she has learned Christianity well, which is further backing for her own rejection of the religion. Lauren commonly questioned the Bible and the idea of a personified all-knowing entity with her father, "Is there a God? If there is, does he (she? it?) care about us? Deists like Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson believed God was something that made us, then left us on our own. 'Misguided.' Dad said when I asked him about Deists. 'They should have had more faith in what their Bibles told them.'" (Butler 15). A similar idea to deism plays a large role in *Earthseed*, that the divine does not interfere, that you are still the worker, creator, and master of your destiny in the universe [4].

One consistent theme that runs throughout the entirety of the book is that of nature and how it is viewed. In the conditions of this future America that the Butler sculpts, there exists a serious ecological crisis. Anthropogenic climate change has reaped a heavy toll on the landscapes and political climate of the United States. California, Lauren's home state, experiences terrible droughts that only further destabilize the already tenuous situation.

In this atmosphere of constant environmental crisis, Lauren conceptualizes a new religious worldview. In doing so, she intentionally makes constant reference to natural phenomena. Butler writes in a crucial part of her personal growth and transition away from her Father's religion and towards her newly conceived worldview that "[a] tree cannot grow in its parents' shadows" (Butler 82). The very name of her new religion, "Earthseed" reduces humans to seeds before the grandeur of God, and those seeds must be spread across the universe to truly grow and realize themselves. She is inspired by voyages to Mars and the valiant journeys of astronauts into the stars and thus sees the destiny of the human race, and there with God in her religion lies in those distant regions of the cosmos. In a rupture with established western doctrine (both religious and philosophical) regarding nature, Earthseed preaches a unifying belief in the oneness of all things. Christianity, starting with the Old Testament in which God granted the first men beasts for their own use, and enlightenment philosophy share in common the creed that nature exists for human beings and implies the separation of the two: In Lauren's theology, man is the seed. He is inextricably linked with the destiny of all other men and subsequently nature. Humanity is the raw material for God and themselves to carry out their work, to improve their lot, and to perpetuate beyond hitherto established limits. In the wake of ecological desiccation, this naturalistic-oriented philosophy attracts people who, after years of environmental crisis, are seeking a future and worldview to believe in. In a world in which you and your own physical environment seem to be in constant conflict, and where every single object you own and the person you care for is subject to be lost in an instant, hearing "All that you touch You Change. All that you Change Changes you. The only lasting truth Is Change" (Butler 195) would provide you with a sense of solace in knowing your power through contingency. If all you see is change, hearing "God is Change" is not a simple revelation; rather it is merely a statement of reality. To those living in this world that seems to have abandoned them, the only force they bow down to is change.

The ideas of God and nature play strong roles hand in hand in *Parable of the Sower*, and in the context of Butler's society, it is all the more present. Friedrich Nietzsche's famous quote of, "God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him. How shall we comfort ourselves, the murderers of all murderers?" - this quote is important when relating to Butler's world, as Nietzsche meant not that a physical God had died, but the idea of God has died in our modern world of detachment [1] - detachment that is apparent in the novel. Besides Lauren's hyper-empathy, which goes against this idea, the majority of society feels this way. A hyper-capitalistic society that shifts all weight to material desperation creates no room for the idea of a community, no support for a God, because of this detachment. But Lauren's sense of community changes the mindsets of many. "We have God and we have each other. We have our island community, fragile, and yet a fortress. Sometimes it seems too small and too weak to survive. And like the widow in Christ's parable, its enemies fear neither God nor man. But also like the widow, it persists. We persist. This is our place, no matter what" (Butler 135). Truly, Lauren takes on a strong leadership role in the spread of Earthseed and cares about the well-being of her community and group through this purpose, a common purpose. Lauren gives a sense of purpose to her group with the ideas she presents as spiritual theology in a seemingly damned world.

Octavia Butler creates a not-so-far-off world full of hate, despair, and resource wars. A detachment occurs within society, so a spiritual product is created from its suffering. Self-deterministic, self-fulfilling, and encompassing ideas that brings community together for this purpose. Butler reconnects the characters through these ideas, and a harmony is created through the now meaningful suffering of Lauren's group. A truly meaningful idea when taken into even today's reality and context, with the ever so growing trend of nihilism and despair resulting from our spiritual detachment, material anguish, and global warming catastrophes. What we are to do with Butler's philosophy of the novel is to realize it for our own, and manifest the idea of, "All that you touch, You Change. All that you Change, Changes you. The only lasting truth Is Change God Is Change" (Butler 1).

What do you think of Parable of the Self? Why not tell Jacob yourself! Be sure to put their name, your email, the title of their essay in the subject, and your message so they can see your comment!

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Spring  
2022](#)[Previous  
Issues](#)[Join Our  
Team](#)

### Nathaniel Trent

#### *Kindred* and 200-Year-Old Racism Today

[Back](#)

America has a history rooted deeply within slavery and racism. Throughout Octavia Butler's *Kindred*, we see how the old institutions of racism in the 19th century still affect the narrator, Dana, as a black woman in the 70s; even in the 2020s we still see these racist systems affect black people disproportionately. Even the institution of slavery still exists in America, unknown to many, in a system that unequally targets people of color (particularly black Americans). Octavia Butler's science fiction novel examines, through the time travel trope, the characteristics of America's murky past that persist today. Individual prejudices, systemic oppression, lack of worker's rights, and policing, are all things that create modern methods of slavery and enforce old systems of racism.

*Kindred* is a time travel novel by black American science fiction author Octavia Butler; the novel, narrated in first-person by the main character, Dana, follows her story as she is taken back in time (against her will) to routinely save the life of a young slave master in the 19th century. Through her travels back in time, Dana encounters the horrors of slavery; she witnesses slave patrols beat and carry away runaway slaves multiple times, she herself experiences the dehumanization of being forced into slavery (as she is black with no proof of freedom) and learns the stories of slaves at the plantation. Throughout the story, Dana recounts her relationship with her white husband, Kevin, and through their relationship, we see the modern institutions of racism at play.

While writing *Kindred*, Butler juxtaposes old slavery institutions of racism against new ones. One of the ways Butler illustrates modern racism in *Kindred* comes from these stories about Dana and Kevin in their present day. One of the most relatable ways slavery has been modernized would be through what Dana refers to as the "slave market"; a temp agency she works at, which can be related to as just a dead-end job. The temp agency, Dana says, paid minimum wage, worked by "winos trying to work themselves into a few more bottles, poor women with children trying to supplement their welfare checks, kids trying to get a first job, older people who lost one job too many..." (*Kindred*, The Fall). This sort of cheap labor takes advantage of people even today. At the time of narration, the story is placed in 1972, when the minimum wage was \$2.00 an hour. In today's money, this would be the equivalent of \$10.75 an hour if one were just to account for inflation (although inflation is not the only influencing factor on minimum wage; many economic factors affect minimum wage). This sort of dead-end, low-pay work relies on worker exploitation and is the most common way in which a modern way of slavery and worker exploitation occurs.

Comparing this work to today's minimum wage of \$7.25 cents, one could reach the conclusion that the nature of these dead-end jobs that Dana works in *Kindred* has gotten even worse. When examining the state of black wealth versus white wealth in the United States, one can see that people of color (particularly black and Hispanic folks) are more likely to be paid poverty wages (or wages classified to put a family at the poverty line for their family size). The data shows that in 1986, only 7 years after Butler published *Kindred*, 23.5% of black workers and 28.5% of Hispanic workers were paid poverty wages, compared to only 15.4% of white workers. (Cooper, Economic Policy Institute). Today, these numbers are better, but non-white races remain disproportionately taken advantage of by the poverty wage system. This data shows that low pay is a form of worker exploitation that affect all races, there is clearly a racist disparity between who is working these jobs. It is apparent that Butler was painfully aware of this economic disparity while describing Dana's work-life before the events of the novel.

Although not an example of slavery, the story Butler wrote about Dana and Kevin's marriage was a very real example of individual racism and prejudice in the 1970s. While vague, Kevin remarks after announcing his engagement with Dana to his sister, "I thought I knew her...I mean, I did know her. But I guess we've lost touch more than I thought." Then, "...she didn't want to meet you, wouldn't have you in her house—or me either if I married you...And she said a lot of other things. You don't want to hear them." (Butler, *The Fight*).

The interesting thing about the juxtapositions of these leaps back in time to describe Dana and Kevin's past is that they're placed, structurally, at the beginning of chapters. For example, the first flashback—the one which describes Dana and Kevin meeting while Dana is working at the temp agency—takes place during "The Fall," the third chapter in the novel, before Dana is transported back in time for the third time. The second scenario, which details their family's reaction to their engagement, takes place at the beginning of "The Fight," the fourth chapter in the novel. This structural placement of these flashbacks allows for real-time comparisons of the modern racist attitudes versus the attitudes from the 19th century.

Something interesting about Dana's travels back is that Butler poses Dana as a prisoner to Rufus; she is tied to Rufus, he is the one bringing her back in time to the 1800s. While she is there, she cannot leave, or she could possibly end her own existence by preventing her ancestors from ever being born. Dana is a prisoner to Rufus, forced to work under his capture, and this is analogous to the treatment of prisoners in the modern-day. The thirteenth amendment still allows slavery under imprisonment, reading: "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction." When further evaluating this exception which still slows slavery under imprisonment, it is not astounding to find that 38.5% of prisoners are black, while only accounting for 13% of the US population. (Bureau of Prisons). Considering the comparisons Butler makes in *Kindred* to Dana as a prisoner, the novel was apparently written as an allegory to this loophole in the constitution.

Butler seems to also be actively placing Dana at odds with Booker T. Washington's strategy of "Accommodation"; in his speech to the Atlanta Exposition in 1895, Washington says, "As we have proved our loyalty to you in the past, in nursing your children, watching by the sick bed of your mothers and fathers, and often following them with tear-dimmed eyes to their graves, so in the future, in our humble way, we shall stand by you with a devotion that no foreigner can approach, ready to lay down our lives, if need be, in defense of yours, interlacing our industrial, commercial, civil, and religious life with yours in a way that shall make the interests of both races one. In all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress." He also goes on to state, "The wisest among my race understand that the agitation of questions of social equality is the extremest folly, and that progress in the enjoyment of all the privileges that will come to us must be the result of severe and constant struggle rather than of artificial forcing." (Norton, 717-718).

The struggles of Dana in *Kindred* seem to actively contradict this statement, both in Dana's travels back to the 1800s and to her modern-day. Dana, although providing all the care and work she possibly could for the Weylin family (she saves Rufus' life multiple times, nurses him back to health, tries to save his father, stays with his mother), she still earned nothing but abuse and disrespect from them—a direct contradiction of Washington's sentiment. Washington essentially said that, because black folk lived and cared for white folk, they should be respected and united with them, but Dana's experiences in *Kindred* are direct contradictions of this sentiment. Even in Dana's present day in the 1970s, we see that not everyone accepted the unity of black folk and white folk (see both of their family's reactions to her engagement with Kevin). This strategy of "Accommodation" from Washington does not work for Dana—the strategy of allowing racism and discrimination to gain equality, to be "as separate as the fingers yet one as the hand"—actively harms Dana's wellbeing, to a point in the novel where she must force herself into life-or-death situations through disobedience to escape back to her present day. This strife with Washington's ideas gives Dana real scars and injuries that symbolize the rippling effects of slavery into the modern-day, effects that shaped the character of Dana and black Americans like her.

*Kindred* expertly juxtaposes modern racism with antiquated racism, and intricately crafts a story, almost allegorical, of modern-day racial disparity. Through this story, Butler is able to express that America's roots within racism still persist in the modern day, and she shows this in a way that is accessible and digestible to the average reader.

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[Issue 23-  
Spring  
2022](#)

[Previous  
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# The Rememory of Beloved

[Back](#)

By: Kennedy Edgar

In order to survive, one must develop a quick instinct of fight or flight when faced with a traumatic event. Margaret Gardner, an enslaved African American woman, chooses to fight for her children by deliberately killing them rather than to have them return to slavery by slave catchers. Her story is the biggest inspiration for Toni Morrison writing of Beloved. Throughout her novel, Morrison paints the past of each character in hopes to explain why they are the people they are in the present. Morrison uses the term "rememory", defining it as recalling a memory or moment that had been forgotten. Using this method can have faults with these characters due to the setting being when the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, a law where Northerners were able to capture and return runaway slaves, was put into movement. That historical event transformed many lives physically, as in many slaves escaping North to their freedom but also, mentally and emotionally. Despite the dangers that exist in each character's consciousness due to the past, Toni Morrison uses the character Beloved to draw Sethe and Paul D through the process of rememory so they can move on from their hauntings and learn the ideals of Baby Suggs to potentially free themselves from their post-slavery life.

Baby Suggs is known to be a definitive character that helped the others in the novel free themselves after being and preach insights to her community to give them what she believed to be a great generosity. Baby Suggs was more concerned over Sethe than any of the rest. Suggs tried to reach Sethe, along with the rest of the community by her saying, "Love it. Love it hard. Yonder they do not love your flesh...Love your hands! Love them...You gotta love it, you...This is the flesh I'm talking about here. Flesh that needs to be loved...love it, and the beat and beating heart, love that too. More than your life-holding womb and your life giving private parts, hear me now, love your heart. For this is the prize"(Morrison 104). The last line of Suggs speech feels directed more towards Sethe because of her inability to love herself more than anything else, especially her children. Morrison begins this theme relating to Sethe with Baby Suggs to foreshadow what Beloved is going to push her through later in the novel through rememory. All in all, Suggs wanted every African American to realize their self value, whether it be internally or externally. No slave was every allowed to own themselves or rather love oneself because of their constant reminder of being told they're an object or a piece of property owned by the Whites. Suggs wants to change that feeling into something as beautiful as how their actual true selves are.

While reading the novel, the character Beloved is categorized similarly to Baby Suggs, both have reputations of being a force for others. Though Suggs force was used through her preachings in the clearing, Beloved was more mystical at the home of 124. Denver, Sethe's daughter, explains Beloved's presence as "an unusual event (even for a girl who had lived all her life in a house peopled by the living activity of the dead) was that a white dress knelt down...the dress helping out..." (Morrison 16). Until she was banished by Paul D from that form, then she became a physical being. When Beloved was first introduced as a human being to the characters, she was immediately directed to being the ghost of Sethe's dead baby, due to Sethe's water breaking when she recognized her new smooth lineless skin and wobble like form. Sethe later describes it as "[I'm] certain that Beloved was the white dress that had knelt with her in the keeping room, the true-to-life presence of the baby that had kept her company most of her life" (Morrison 141). This was all just the beginning of Sethe's process of rememory and the longer Beloved stayed, the more she asked Sethe questions about herself. For instance, Beloved once asks, "Where your diamonds?", looking at Sethe's ears to later say from Sethe's response, "Tell me. Tell me your diamonds" (Morrison 69). In doing so, Beloved is having Sethe tell a story about her past at Sweet Home, Sethe and Paul D's old plantation, essentially beginning to bring about old memories Sethe has been longing to suppress. With Beloved being greatly attached to Sethe from the start and Paul D having his hunch about her voodoo habits, Beloved disturbed Paul D. She uses this to her advantage by leading Paul into a shed and having him engage with her intimately. Then she begs him to speak of her name, which shoots Paul D into a spiral trance. Both of Beloved's forces towards the trapped souls hit close to home because of how delicate, personal and precise it feels for them.

Possessive ghosts from the past linger inside the mind until given full attention. In Beloved's playbook, Sethe and Paul D have to face their ghosts head on in order to let them go and if not, they won't ever be able to live truly free. Post slavery, Sethe put all her devotion into one thing, beating back the past in order to just focus on taking care of her children. Morrison goes into detail by writing, "To Sethe, the future was a matter of keeping the past at bay...The job Sethe had of keeping her from the past that was still waiting for her was all that mattered" (Morrison 51). When Beloved truly began to dig deep with her questions for Sethe, the effects were becoming more noticeable. Morrison shows this by saying, "It amazed Sethe (as much as it pleased Beloved) because every mention of her past life hurt. Everything in it was painful or lost...the hurt was always there - like a tender place in the corner of her mouth that the bit left" (Morrison 69). As for Paul D, Beloved burst his guarded heart he structured for himself post slavery in order to protect him from the White's overbearing power. Morrison describes the event such as, "He said it, but she did not go. She moved closer... he didn't hear and he didn't hear the whisper that the flakes of the rust made either as they fell away from the seams of his tobacco tin... 'Red heart, Red heart', he said over and over again... 'Red heart, Red heart, Red heart'" (Morrison 157). Both of these moments describe the breakthrough for Sethe and Paul D. Beloved, to reach her goal, had to put both characters at their most vulnerable in order for them to realize how traumatizing their past still is for them and that it's not safe for them to live with all these hauntings. Now, Sethe and Paul D have the opportunity themselves to open the door to the past, let the ghosts out and accept Baby Suggs ideology to lay down their armor.

Having to look back on traumatic events potentially creates even more problems because the process may not be done properly putting the individual in a panic response type mode. Beloved pushing both characters to their breaking point damaged them emotionally and turned everything upside down. At one point in the novel, after her brutal style of rememory, Beloved had made Paul D and Sethe turn on each other. While Sethe rambles about how Beloved came back to her after all that had happened, she mentions, "I would have known who you were right away...I would have known right off, but Paul D distracted me...And later on, when you asked me about the earrings I used to dangle for you to play with, I would have recognized you right off, except for Paul D. Seems to me he wanted you out from the beginning...And look how he ran, too rough for him. Too thick, he said. My love was too thick. What he know about it?" (Morrison 259). Having much history together for their time back at Sweet Home, it all becomes meaningless and goes to shreds because of Beloved. Pulling apart their relationship made Sethe focus more on her children, the opposite of what Baby Suggs told Sethe. As for Paul D, he ran off avoiding Beloved because as he explains, "that girl in the house scares me the most...First time I saw her I didn't want to be nowhere around her. Something funny about her...She reminds me of something. Something, look like. I'm supposed to remember" (Morrison 170). Both of them, after being pushed into their own deep end, converted back to their safety net, which ultimately holds them more captive in their heads. Opening the door to the past may lead to the success of letting it all go, but the possibility of developing new demons in the process is a risk someone should take from themselves, not by the ghost itself.

Taking the steps to free yourself from ghosts is a long rollercoaster of emotions that can be draining, but all the pain and suffering can be overlooked when light at the end of the tunnel becomes visible. At first intentions, Beloved was reborn to be a kind help to Sethe and Paul D, until she no longer was anymore. For Sethe, Beloved was getting too attached and while she tried her best to make it all up for the lost child, it became overwhelming. Knowing the only solution of any trouble is to get rid of the core problem itself, that's exactly what Morrison does for her characters. She writes it as, "It broke Sethe and she trembled...standing alone on the porch, Beloved is smiling... Now she is running into the faces of the people out there, joining them and leaving Beloved behind. Alone, again" (309). After Beloved vanished from Sethe, Paul feels free to come back to Sethe. As Paul D is searching around the home of 124 for Beloved, to make sure she is gone, he confronts himself, "with an effort that makes him sweat he forces a picture to himself lying there, and when he sees it, it fits his spirits...He can't put his finger on it, but it seems, for a moment, that just beyond his knowing is the glare of an outside thing that embraces while it accuses (Morrison 319). After these two monumental events, Sethe and Paul D end up reconnecting and having a moment that unifies their relationship. Morrison starts this with Paul D saying, "I'm a take care of you, you hear? Starting now", then she writes, "She opens her eyes, knowing the danger of looking at him. She looks at him... Because with him, in his presence, they could cry and tell him things they could only tell each other... He leans over and takes her hand. With the other he touches her face. 'You your best thing Sethe, you are'. His holding fingers are holding hers"(322). This sequence of events is the healing of Beloved's destruction. Paul's self reflection is his final breakthrough of his emotions. Whatever was captured in that picture finally let his heart glow more red than it ever had before Beloved and once he was able to feel, he could then be available for Sethe. Meanwhile for Sethe, Beloved's disappearance and Paul's reassurance is the cherry on top to the teachings Baby Suggs originally gave her. She is now able to consider herself as an individual who needs to be taken care of and loved by herself and others. For both of them, it took an exile of their physical ghost for them to be released from their mental ones.

From beginning to end and still to this day, millions of people suffer mentally from the effects of slavery. Though it happened many years ago, it's still a gruesome time in history that will never be forgotten. As much as people try, it's lessons are far too valuable to learn from. Doesn't matter what ethnicity, slavery haunts everyone to the soul. Toni Morrison writes her novel Beloved to retell the story of Margaret Garner to those people who have forgotten. Many lives were affected, but Margaret's story is merely an example of how life was for someone in slavery and how one moment can scar so deeply. Back then, people were forced consistently with these life-changing decisions, but truly it all came down to how you would survive to live to see the day you would become a freed slave.

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## Griffin Saunders

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Ceremony by Leslie Marmon Silko features a diverse cast of characters from a variety of backgrounds. The main character of the story is Tayo, a young man from the Laguna Pueblo who has lived his life in the liminal space between Native American and White American cultures. Through the development of his story, we see many times how his identity influences his decisions, and drives the conflict of the novel. At first, we see that Tayo struggles with accepting his Identity. He tries to be one culture or the other, not wanting those around him to acknowledge his other half. By the end of the novel and through his healing experiences he has learned to accept both halves of himself and recognizes the importance of both cultures in his life. Without the contribution both cultures made toward his healing, Tayo would not have been able to reconcile his past.

The trauma that Tayo overcame in the novel originates in his time spent in the Philippines during the Vietnam War. A stressful situation that was thoroughly worsened by the loss of his friend's life. He saw countless violent acts and experience the horrors of a death march through unending rain and miles of jungle. His one prayer during that time was that the rain would stop. Following the war and his return to the United States, he had undiagnosed PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder), yet each group he sought to find comfort in had turned him away. Other members of the Laguna pueblo turned him away for his mixed parents, service in a war the opposed, and service for the white man's endeavors. His fellow veterans saw him as an outsider in their group. The sought to relieve their "glory days" of the war, speaking fondly and proudly (and vulgarly) of their time spent in service. To the group of veterans, Tayo acted as a call that it was over, which was not something they wanted to think about. Tayo sought to remind them of what they were before the war, and what they have returned to being, which was news they did not like to receive.

Despite his liminal life, Tayo actively tries to fit into other groups, and have people understand him. At a bar near the pueblo, several Native American veterans are telling their stories of the war and glorifying the time when they were actually treated halfway decent, instead of like Native Americans. Emo and the others even try to let Tayo join in on their fun and ask him to tell a story of what it was like for him. Instead of going along with the others however,

Tayo chose to speak honestly. "I'm half-breed. I'll be the first to say it. I'll speak for both sides. First time you walked down the street in Gallup of Albuquerque, you knew. Don't lie. You knew right away. The war was over, the uniform was gone. All of a sudden that man at the store waits on you last, makes you wait until all the white people bought what they wanted. And the white lady at the bus depot, she's real careful now not to touch your hand when she counts out your change. You watch it slide across the counter at you, and you know. Goddamn it! You stupid sonofabitches! You know!" (50) Tayo knows that he is treated slightly better than other natives due to his lighter skin color, but even he is treated poorly by others. He wants the others to be honest with him, and actually speak on how horrible they are treated. The others still see Tayo as an outsider to their group due to this difference in cultural identity and Tayo knows this. He desperately wants to fit in with a group, for others to understand his pain, and for others to share theirs with him. Instead, this encounter only furthered the gap between himself, his fellow veterans, and the white people of the bar. He was given an opportunity to act like Emo, and had he chosen that side of his identity, the story could have ended.

We also see members of the pueblo resenting him. His mixed parenthood was already a hindrance, but with his mother leaving him, and having never met his father, it left room for gossip to grow. His Auntie tried her best to prevent the gossip from developing, and to protect Tayo from hearing what the others had to say. It was not enough however, and Tayo understood growing up that he was different from the members of the pueblo. Old Grama herself made sure that Tayo knew he was different. When She was alone with just him and Rocky, she would openly treat Rocky better, giving things to do and play with, while Tayo was left to sit alone on the other side of the room. "[S]he (Old Grandma) would not let Tayo go outside or play in another room alone. She wanted him close enough to feel excluded, to be aware of the distance between them (68)." It was not as simple as him being overlooked by the others of the pueblo, there were those Like old Grandma who sought to make it clear to Tayo that he wasn't wanted due to his difference.

Tayo experiences a ceremony that matches his own identity, it is not fully Native American, and incorporates therapy methods used by white doctors. Several times, Tayo has received treatment from white doctors trying to help him overcome his past. Additionally, traditional healers have tried tribal methods of healing him. In each of the situations, Tayo improved marginally, only to become far worse mentally only shortly after his treatment. In the case of white doctors, he often felt as though they did not actually care about his wellbeing as a person, though they had known details of what he went through. "They sent me to this place after the war. It was white. Everything in that place was white. Except for me. I was invisible. But I wasn't afraid there. I didn't feel things sneaking up behind me. I didn't cry for Rocky or Josiah. There was no voices and no dreams. Maybe I belong back in that place" (110) When Doctors tried to heal him, Tayo felt as if there was something missing from it, as if the treatment were detached from him as the patient. "[W]hile the white doctors were telling him he could get well and he was trying to believe them: medicine didn't work that way, because the world didn't work that way. His sickness was only part of something larger, and his cure would be found only in something great and inclusive of everything." (115) Believing himself as something greater than a pill could fix, his belief brought the answer on how to heal him.

The ceremony brought him through several circles, one to take him through each world. Each time he moved between worlds, an aspect of him was repaired, cleansing him, and purifying him of the witchery that caused his affliction. This ceremony was preceded and followed by standard therapeutic methods of asking Tayo to describe what he has gone through and how he feels and felt about it. He had explained during this therapy that neither doctors nor traditional healers had been able to help him, and he shows us that in his subconscious each time it failed because he had either been treated as a white man, or as an Indian, not as both. Betonie and Nightswan are able to understand that he does not want to be treated as either group, as he has lived his life belonging to neither. He is given what he believes is an opportunity to atone for what he has done through the ceremony, as this time he is addressed as having done something wrong. Each other time he has been told that there is no problem, and he is not responsible for anything, but through Betonie's ceremony he is given the chance to make things right in his own mind.

It is integral to Tayo as a character that he was mixed race of White and Native American. Having never fit into any group gave him the ability to adopt the perspective of an outsider regarding the interactions between both groups. He could see how the whites were mistreating the tribes, but held the belief that it was not their fault. Witchery was to blame in his mind, something far older than the White people, and a Native concept. It is his outside perspective that drives him as a character, as his desire is for both sides to understand one another. While in uniform, Indian soldiers were treated the same as white soldiers, which serves as proof for him that it is possible for everyone to get along. His status as a person of mixed race gives him the ability to choose which identity he would like to fit into, even if the others did not want him. Had he wanted to, he could have assimilated into the group of his choosing, and overtime he would have blended in. Yet it is because of his ability to choose that he refuses to. He recognizes the discrimination both groups have shown him is because of his ability to be either. Several times in the novel he came close to becoming one or the other, in the bar for example, yet each time he returned to his path of neither.

Tayo is neither White or Native American, he is both. Tayo's work throughout the novel shows that this is not merely a combination of the two, rather it is its own banner to be under. He displays to the reader multiple times that having the ability to choose does not represent a desire to choose. He could not have been saved from his past had either group tried to help, as he had learned that neither group really wanted to help him. Both groups would have helped an individual who fit in with them, et he never truly fit. Once he received attention from Nightswan and Betonie where they treated him like a real person instead of a "half-breed," he began to recover. The more they reinforced his individuality and the value he holds as a being separate from the pueblo, the veterans, and the whites. His mental condition greatly stabilized. In the finale of the book, he is presented with his final trial to determine what his Identity truly was. He could have gone to talk with those looking for him and fallen into the trap laid by Emo, or he could have confronted Emo. Following with his identity, Tayo made the decision to do neither and hid, preventing the witchery from claiming another and cementing in his own mind that to be an outsider is all right. Had Tayo not lived his life as an outsider who never fully belonged to either group, had he not faced endless discrimination and tribulations, it is clear that he would not have chosen his final path. Had he truly belonged to one of the groups, the story would have ended with Tayo dead, imprisoned, or worse. Tayo came to a conclusion that only someone who had lived on the edge between two could have.

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