Vol. 22(1), 2022, pp.13-28, ISSN: 2072-0394(Print), ISSN: 2663-8886(Online)

# A Psychological Study Of Traumatic Effects Of White Beauty On Female Characters In Morrison's Novels

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## Abstract

The study is based on the psychoanalytical exploration of the female characters in Morrison's two celebrated novels Jazz and The Bluest Eye. The study focuses on exploring how the myth of white beauty is a traumatic experience for the black women and how do the issues of white beauty and gender discrimination contribute to the wretchedness of black women and cast depreciating effects on their psyche. The conceptual framework employed in the study is Freud's psychoanalytical theory of repressed unconscious which resultantly cultivates psychological problems in individuals. The theory has been applied on the texts to throw light on the effects of unconsciously suppressed memories and emotions on the psyche of Pecola and Dorcas. This study concludes by highlighting the anxious existence of the black women in the white community.

**Keywords:** Morrison, Psychic Trauma, Psychoanalysis, Black Women, Discrimination, Freud, Unconscious.

## تلخیص

یہ مطالعہ موریسن کے دو مشہور ناولوں Jazz(جاز) اور (نیلی آنکھ) The Bluest Eye میں خواتین کرداروں کی نفسیاتی تحقیق پر مبنی ہے۔ مطالعہ اس بات پر توجہ مرکوز کرتا ہے کہ سفید خوبصورتی کا افسانہ سیاہ فام خواتین کے لیے کس طرح ایک تکلیف دہ تجربہ ہے اور کس طرح سفید رنگ کی خوبصورتی اور صنفی امتیاز کے مسائل سیاہ فام خواتین کی بدحالی میں معاون ہیں اور ان کی نفسیات پر گراوٹ کے اثرات مرتب کرتے ہیں۔ مطالعہ میں استعمال شدہ تصوراتی ڈھانچہ فرائیڈ کا دبائے ہوئے لاشعور کا نفسیاتی نظریہ ہے جس کے نتیجے میں افراد میں نفسیاتی مسائل پیدا ہوتے ہیں۔ پیکولا اور ڈورکاس کی نفسیات پر لاشعوری طور پر دبی ہوئی یادوں اور جذبات کے اثرات پر روشنی ڈالنے کے لیے اس نظریے کا اطلاق متن پر کیا گیا ہے۔ یہ مطالعہ سفید فام طبقے میں سیاہ فام خواتین کے بے چین وجود کو اجاگر کرتے ہوئے اختتام پذیر ہوا۔

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**کلیدی الفاظ:** موریسن، نفسیاتی صدمہ، نفسیاتی تجزیہ، سیاہ فام خواتین، امتیازی سلوک، فرائیڈ،لاشعور

## Introduction

The study focuses on exploring how myth of white beauty is a traumatic experience for black women and how the issues of white beauty and gender discrimination contribute to the agony of black women and what are its consequent effects on the psyche of the black women. Ash (1995) asserts that African American had an anxious existence due to their traditional African features which never matched with the European white model of beauty. In comparison to the men, African women had been more touched by the prejudice due to skin complexion, hair, and facial features. They have been opting for different types of hair treatments as it has been an easy way to approximate the white female ideal of beauty. Their obsession about their skin complexion and facial features is rooted in their desire to develop a similarity with white ideal of beauty and become socially desirable.

Chasshot (2018) explains that haunting binds with the past, which is painful, it can be a source of revisioning a traumatic history and its impact on diaspora identity. Psychoanalytic theory suggests that the victim is overwhelmed by past trauma that haunts him in his adult life because in his past, he was shackled in this pain and his life was threatened. From the medical point of view, his traumatic experiences can be satisfied by asking the victims about their sufferings and observing their actions in response to the psychological distress they have in their minds. A constant trauma may result in neuro-biological brain damage.

Psychoanalysis in literature is based on Freud's psychological theories, which helps readers understand texts in depth. It brings forth hidden desires and memories to the surface. Terr (1990) explains that trauma is a sudden powerful blow that attacks a person regularly from the outside. The blow is so intense that it may cause disorder in behavior and feelings (Erickson 1991). Toni Morrison portrays the trauma that her characters undergo in their lives. One method of studying the portrayal of trauma could be through the characterization, actions and interaction and speech of the characters. Psychoanalytical study, on the other hand enables the researcher dig deeper in the thought and emotions of the characters and link the speech and actions of the characters with the deeper working of their mind. Toni Morrison portrays her characters suffering at physical, emotional, social, economic and psychological level. They have always been subject of discrimination throughout the American history. They have not been able to enjoy freedom even after they were legally emancipated as they could not become part of the mainstream of the society. They could never enjoy equal rights for education and employment. They have been constantly discriminated in different ways by being called as black or others. In Morrison's work, most black women are in search of true love and

want to get a place in society equal to white females. These black women want to enjoy the same rights and status in society as whites do. Toni Morrison's black women undergo psychological trauma because white people never let them feel comfortable with their identity and they had to endure violence and hardships of life even when they were staying at their homes (Mckay, 1983).

Some earlier studies have investigated the effects of white beauty on female characters in Morrison's novels from social and racial perspectives. This study, however, focuses on the psychological impact of discrimination on female African American characters which haunts them since their childhood induced by white beauty standards and marginalization and the resulting effects on the psyche of these black women as adults. The study employs psychoanalytical theory to decipher the secreted theme and design in the texts. The theory gives primary importance to childhood experience, unconscious, suppressed sexual and belligerent drives that shape the personality of individuals; and make them respond to the same situation in a variety of ways.

**Review of Literature**

Boon (2019) asserts that Toni Morrison portrays the persecution of the black woman maltreated at the hands of men, white and black alike. Her works have optimistic touch of love and hence promotes an end to violence through love. She portrays that Black men are striving for justice and freedom. Black women are aspiring for dignity and love. She profoundly explores the Black reality in her works predominantly in her novel, Song of Solomon

Thiyagarajan (2021) has explored two of Morrison's novels, Beloved and The Bluest Eye for the violence and harassment the black women folk face at the hands of upper class. The study finds that in the story of Beloved, self-coordinated ferocity is visible besides racial and intra racial violence. The protagonist, Set he, slays her own daughter as she understands clearly that to be a lady in the age of subordination is a fundamental sin. She herself had become victim of violence and underwent many sexual and physical episodes. Paul D in the Bluest Eye has seen his own sibling hanged and executed, another sold away, a friend going distraught, yet another consumed and shot. Likewise, during his walking, he has come cross more dead than alive Negroes. The Bluest Eye deals with the story of Pecola Breedlove, who develops longing for blue eyes as she thinks it is the only possible way to get love and security and become powerful (Zeki, 2019). Her whole family thinks that life is horrible for them. The Africans feel dissatisfied and defenseless and their own fellows remind them of their darkness, defenselessness, disappointment and prohibition which generate feelings of self-hatred in them.

The proponents of Black feminism propose that the Black women and the Black women writers in particular should expose cultural and racial discrimination besides gender discrimination against them (Chegeni & Chegeni, 2013, p.919). Morrison, being a founder of Black Feminist Movement and a proud member of the Afro-American community, has frequently been stimulating black women to love themselves, their culture and their race, and not to become victim of white beauty standards and white superiority (Kohzadi et al., 2011, p. 1307). Morrison believes that in a white racist society, the women of color should be resilient enough to challenge different forms of discrimination and should have awareness of their self-respect (Dillon, 2013).

Alwan & Kadir (2021) investigated the connection between nature and female characters in *The Bluest Eye* by employing the framework of Eco feminism. This study concentrates on the relationship between the wretchedness of black female characters and the destruction of nature at the hands of patriarchal authority and racial discrimination. The study explores the techniques; Morrison has used the link between nature and women. By portraying this association, she proposes concrete ways of saving environment and women. One of the solutions is of the degradation and oppression is to respect and care between nature and women. The study asserts that Morrison has used ethical principles and metaphorical language to vividly depict the complex association between nature and women.

Ferdousy (2019) establishes that Claudia, the nine years old narrator of the novel, The Bluest Eye, represents Morrison's vision of love of black personality and identity and freedom from the racist white domination. Morrison employed Claudia who narrates the story of black women's marginalization oppression and vulnerability as well as expresses her desire for freedom through her inner strength and resistance against class exploitation, gender bias and racial discrimination. The second character through which Morrison depicts black women's struggle and resistance towards oppression is Pauline. She is not subservient, docile or marginal. She does not confine herself to domestic chores rather she finds her own place in the outside world. She is not ready to accept herself in minor roles in patriarchal paradigm.

The Bluest Eye is set in Lorain, Ohio where black people and their white masters live in the same neighborhood. The racist values, white people have been promoting, become transmitted in the black community. They have started idealizing the white norms, being 'light skinned' is a symbol of superiority while the dark complexion is a symbol of disgrace and shame. They have developed feelings of inferiority for themselves and have longing to have white bodies which guarantee social prestige and power (Lakra, 2021).

Smith (2012) has found that Morrison portrays a complicated and ultimately profound picture of aftermaths of racism through focusing on how self-hatred poisons the life of

black characters. The narrator describes the Breedlove family as ugly and suggests they have accepted this socially imposed image of ugliness and lack of self-worth and do not question its source. This acceptance of self-hatred proves to be one of the major problems, the family has to face. Smith asserts that it is not only the Breedlove family that hates itself because of what it is told. Morrison tries to portray the position of whole community which is theoretically free but is bound by the society which makes it victim of self-hatred.

Jeeva ( 2019) found that the novel, Beloved portrays not only the effects of slavery at emotional level, but also depicts the psychological effects of enslavement on the life of the characters, particularly Se the who has been struggling through whole of her life. Initially she had to struggle against slaveholders, and later on, against the society. She was believed to be a vicious mother as she murdered her daughter because she did not want her live a life of enslavement. The most shattering form of struggle was that of with herself. Her psyche leads her to have the rumination of her dead child, even though she is conscious of the fact that she killed her because of her reasons. The internal mental pressure adds traits of instability in her personality. The external environment does not let her make peace with herself. She exists in her reminiscence, always comparing and associating her present with past.

Schreiber (2010) states that the historical, contextual and inherited trauma is always present in Morrison's novels. Morrison's informal language in her fiction is a clear indication that she has analyzed black culture completely. The kind of language which she uses helps her to state the story. Her intersexual references are based on references from history, nursery rhymes, and famous figures like Shirley Temple. She put her characters in a particular environment. Black women were surrounded by the people having same reputation so they could not get sympathy from them. Visser (2016) notes that from postcolonial literature, we can get many examples to support that trauma promotes the need for the narrative to meet colonial wounding.

Byreman (2005) explains that many characters from Toni Morrison's work represent dominant culture. Morrison declined the idea of writing about love which is pure and unstoppable in her novels. Morrison (1977) in *Song of Solomon* depicts many female characters that have been deprived of expressing their wishes and are forced to follow others. These women are not allowed to express their subjectivity. They are facing various types of oppressions. They appreciate themselves in the light of the governing culture. They remain unable to see their own real selves but opt to "reinvent themselves in the images of the existing popular culture" and carry out "roles found in romance narratives." In her novels, Morrison delineates how insubstantial their cultural and social self is. She has chosen to write "the stories of survivors unable to recover from the traumas of personal, gendered, and racial history" (76-77).

Qasim & Asmat (2012) assert that in Song of Solomon, Morrison has introduced a remarkable character, Ruth, whose love for her family is beyond bond. Her absolute love for them makes the family direct their anger towards her. She is always taken for granted and her presence is never acknowledged. Through Ruth she depicts that an individual can have meaningful existence only through self-love. Unquestioned conformity leads to dominant behaviors rob the individuals off their true identities. Hence by challenging the traditions and social laws an individual can achieve an authentic identity.

## Critical Framework and Research Method

The study has employed Freud's psychoanalytical theory to explore Toni Morrison's two texts, *Jazz* (1992) and *The Bluest Eye* (1970) to study the traumatic effects of white ideal of beauty on the Afro American characters as portrayed in the selected texts. The theory advocates exploring the repressed unconscious that results in cultivating psychological problems in human beings. By applying psychoanalytical theory, black characters' psyche has been analyzed in depth, which involves exploration of different incidents in the past and its impact on black women's minds. Freud's theory (1920) states that unpleasant childhood memories may become a source of trauma at the age of adulthood. He has examined the genetic and developmental aspects of the human beings as important characteristics of psychoanalytical theory.

The purpose of this theory is to explore the mind and its working which is categorized into the id, the ego and super ego. Id deals with the pleasure-seeking; ego provides a balance between the id and the super ego. On the other hand, super ego is the most extreme part of the human psyche. In our childhood days, id works while ego overcomes our personality in our maturity and after this super ego comes. Rest of our life is controlled by the ethical principles. As Freud propagated in the theory, these aspects influence our personality differently as we experience different phases of our age. Ego operates on the principle of reality, while superego is controlled the principles of morality. Led by ego and superego, an individual acts consciously according to his own understanding of wrong and right in the light of social and individual parameters. People keep their desires and emotions suppress when they are socially offensive or morally prohibited through their resistance.

Psychoanalytic theories are employed in literature to recognize human relationship by exploring unconscious, conscious and sub-conscious of the characters. In his Topographic theory, Freud introduced the "iceberg" model, which compares mind of an individual with an "iceberg". The conscious part to unconscious is only as much as a tip is to an iceberg which is visible and an individual is aware of, such as thoughts, emotions, feelings, fantasies, memories and dreams. Unconscious is secreted and unidentified, an

individual is not aware of makeup of this part of his mind. Pre-conscious does not deal with the present awareness; however, it could be accessed. Unconscious is buried which is beneficial for individuals as it can the benefit of an organism because it can prompt an fretfulness and leaves the individual unable to bear the pressure of emotions and memories associated with trauma

Freud (1920) asserted that the suppressed emotions and memories of a person which he has experienced in his childhood contribute a lot to his psyche in his adulthood. He believed that the pressure due to the repressed emotions and desires leads to depression in the personality of individuals. He says that unconscious libido controls human mind and it is also very difficult to repress it. By using Freud's psychoanalytical theory which involves exploring unconscious and repressed, emotions Toni Morrison's black women's trauma has been studied. The psychological trauma of these black women is revealed through the analysis of their thought, behavior and actions.

## Analysis

### The Bluest Eye

*The Bluest Eye* depicts the female characters of black community including Pecola and Pauline who embody the wrongs done to the black community by the white ideals. The dissociation of their self-identity begins with the Whites' beauty standards, which stems hatred. The presence of trauma in the lives of the black characters can be seen at the very outset of the novel. *The Bluest Eye* was written in the United States during the 1960s, a period that Morrison (1999, p. 208) herself describes as "a time of great social upheaval in the lives of black people" in the afterword added to the novel in 1993. Degruy (2005) states that African Americans' racist socialization started with slavery and continued throughout the history. Books referred to black people as dirty, immoral or stupid. In the 20th century movies became famous and African Americans hardly had a role of buffoons or servants only.

Morrison portrays the invisible wounds of her female characters who live in minorities. In Toni Morrison's work each female has some specific feature to discuss. Mostly the adolescent girls are protagonists of her novels. The author tries to discuss some major issues regarding the lives of these female characters. The texts portray realistic image of the miseries, the black women undergo and the way they are kept conscious of the fact that their blackness is a source of permanent shame for them. They are permanently judged and segregated based on their skin color.

*The Bluest Eye* opens with the story of Dick and Jane- the children of 1940s and 1950s were aware about them. "Here is the house. It is green and white. It has a red door. It is

very pretty. Here is the family mother, father, Dick and Jane" (Morrison, 1970, p. 6). There are two major reasons which lead to the trauma of white beauty in the lives of Pauline and Pecola. Pecola was unable to look at her beauty as she was trapped by the idea of white beauty. According to her, only a miracle could relieve her. "She will see only what there was to see: the eyes of other people" (Morrison, 1999, P. 46-47). Toni Morrison's female characters as well as their children suffer from this insecurity. They consider themselves to be inferior due to a long history and series of misfortunes and brutalities. The next subsection analyses different occurrences that contribute to the shattering of Pecola's self.

One of the incidents that establish to Pecola that whiteness is treated gently while blackness is treated violently. As Pauline talked to Fischer girl there was" Honey" and politeness in her words while at the other three children she threw words like ''Rotten apples'' (Morrison, 1999, p. 107). Such treatment is highly violent and degrading. Pauline and Cholly represent colonized ridden personalities who transmit internalized negative self-images towards others.

Not only Pauline & Cholly, but the whole society and even the black community are also responsible for Pecola's self-destruction. She was insulted not only by the students but also by the teachers at school. Morrison describes Pecola's psychological trauma in a very profound way when she says, "Long hours she sat looking in the mirror, trying to discover the secret of ugliness, the ugliness that made her despised at school, by teachers and classmates alike" (Morrison, 1999, p. 45). She is an outcast in the school and is not given any right to develop the feelings that she is as much human as the other students and teachers are. She feels depressed when she sees other students, white and bright sitting and enjoying together. Students of Pecola's school hate her and taunt her in different ways. "She was the only member of her class who sat alone at a double desk. The first letter of her last name forced her to always sit in the front of the room" (Morrison, 1999, p.45).

Being black is the inherent sin committed by the black people. They were tormented because of their skin color. Whites formulated myth of white beauty which had no space in the society for Africans. The power of this myth also cannot be falsified. Beauty is the main concern linked to many women and this myth of white beauty is deep rooted (Wolf, 1990).

Besides the racial features that excluded the blacks from the society of whites, the poverty contributed as the second major reason of misery and insult of Pecola and other individuals of her community. Geraldine also degrades her when she sees her in her home in torn, dirty clothes clumsily made hair, cheap muddy shoes, "she had seen this little girl all her life" (Morrison, 1970, p.71-72). Pecola goes to Junior's house to see him but his mother accuses her of killing her beloved cat. Pecola gets highly terrified and frightened

because of the behavior of the white woman who abuses her by using the words which are unbearable. For white people calling someone black is enough for showing their hatred. She utters these words at a high pitch in severe anger for abusing Pecola, “You nasty little black bitch Get out of my house” (Morrison, 1970, p. 92).

Black people are mentally disturbed and under great pressure because of the injustice incurred in their lives by the white people. Black women are not ready to accept the inferior status in the society and they are striving to get rid from the stigma which has made their lives stigmatized. They cannot undo the black skin and with that skin, they have no respectable status. Pecola thinks to get rid of these insulting behaviors of the people and she prays for blue eyes. She thinks that only blue eyes can save her from the brutal treatment of whites as the blue eyes will make her claim one of the similar traits as whites have and she may enjoy some respect in the society. The examples show micro-aggressions that Pecola has suffered. Getting abused verbally and physically constantly damages her state of mind. Seeing herself ugly with the present appearance, she starts longing for the blue eyes in order to become part of the current community. Pecola’s rape and miscarriage leads her to lose her state of mind and descend to madness. Pecola loses control on her mind due to multiple external pressures and shocks and humiliation which shatter her internally. She gets disconnected with the real world and takes refuge in an imaginary world where she can compare herself with the white women. She now believes to have blue eyes and believes that people cannot look at her out of jealousy. She feels excited as her wish for the bluest eyes is fulfilled. Even though she has gained blue eyes, but sense of insecurity constantly chases her when she talks to herself: “But suppose my eyes aren’t blue enough? Blue enough for what? Blue enough for... I don’t know. Blue enough for something. Blue enough... for you! (Morrison, 1999, p. 201). Pecola relates beauty with the appreciation, but she sees when nobody is prepared to listen to her, she becomes insecure. Pecola personifies the history of black oppression and marginalization. She suffers unending domestic and communal violence leading her to take refuge in a world of illusion.

**Jazz and the Trauma of the White Beauty on Black Women**

Morrison starts her novel with an epigraph that ends with the words: “the designation of the division” which aptly summarizes Morrison’s intentions of writing this novel. Apart from music this novel also throws light on the social divisions. All the characters live in Harlem, a city of segregated Blacks. This novel describes women’s self-destruction and the role of family and society in adding psychological trauma in their lives. In *Jazz,* Morrison stresses that the women can heal their wounds when imposed.

Throughout her childhood Dorcas underwent extreme traumatic incidents in the East St. Louis race riot, her father was pulled off a streetcar and stomped to death, and her mother

was subsequently burned to death in a fire. The racial riots and violence made her childhood painful. Her traumatic experiences were recounted by Alice and Joe while remembering her sufferings. Alice watched her growing up with the hard part, she experienced "she must have seen the flames. She never said. Never said anything about it" (Morrison, 1992, p.57). Joe saw her soft corner for the loss of her mama and her paper dolls. He feels her tears on his shoulder. On the day of her death instead of remembering her traumatic of past, she focused on the passionate love for her new boyfriend, Joe's chasing for her and everything when she was shot.

The white society has never given blacks an equal status instead they manipulated them psychologically and physically. This manipulation is the direct cause of the destruction of the black people. Mentally they are forced to do wrong because of the white standards which always press in blacks down and down: "In this country, to be American means white. Everybody else must hyphenate" (Morrison, 1992). When Dorcas is rejected by the community, she searches for love which she does not have. No one loves her because she is black and does not conform to the standards of white. She suffers a lot while living in a white community and she tries to find love suitable for her. So, she sees a kind of satisfaction in the love of Joe and meets her tragic end due to her traumatizing experience.

The desire of sin because of the circumstances and rejection, Dorcas has suffered throughout her life, propels her to commit sin and she goes against the warnings of her aunt. Being rejected everywhere; Dorcas finds satisfaction in her own sin and wants to do anything which satisfies her physically and mentally. The music which is threatening for her aunt is giving Dorcas satisfaction and she finds everything clear in the sins she is committing. There is no rejection for her now she is accepted happily in the world of sin where people want to have sexual relation with her.

Violet was confused by her own split personality. She was crazy, violent as well as sane. She was confused and psychologically disturbed when she watched herself stealing a baby and at a funeral and attempting to tear dead body apart. Her grandmother was telling her stories about Golden Gray and his beauty which constructed white beauty standard in her mind. Violet told Felice (Dorcas's best friend) about the harm of Golden Gray's perfect beauty for her split personality: "My grandmother fed me stories about a little blond child. He was a boy, but I thought of him as a girl sometimes, as a brother, sometimes as a boyfriend. He lived inside my mind" (Morrison, 1999, p.208).

Violet tried to get herself free from the shackles of white beauty standards when she killed "That Violet" in herself. It was her effort to regain "Me" which is pure and authentic. Violet's subjectivity is experienced as synchronic while Joe's changing self is in diachronic mode (375). Violet tries to win her husband back by practicing "the dance

steps the dead girl used to do" (Morrison, 1999, p. 5). But her imitation was out of jealousy and disgust. Her trauma leads her to do unethical so she can satisfy herself. Morrison describes her mental condition aptly:"It was like watching an old street pigeon pecking the crust of a sardine sandwich the cats left behind" (p. 6).

Violet fails in making her family, but Joe succeeds as he gets Dorcas: "when she woke up, her husband had shot a girl young enough to be that daughter" (p. 109). Being subject to the same trauma by the Whites these people follow the footsteps of their oppressors by practicing the same violent behavior with others. Joe's killing of the young Dorcas is as brutal as killing of Dorcas's parents in a race riot. The silencing trauma of these victims acts like a phantom which appears in their violent behaviors. Their trauma is deep-rooted in unforgettable past and becomes permanent source of pain for them.

**Discussion**

Toni Morrison's novels *Jazz (*1992) and *The Bluest Eye* (1970) highlight different forms of oppressions like violence, rape, motherhood and racism directed towards blacks due to their skin color. They try to maintain their identity in the racial based society. Dorcas has some memories of her parents' murder which are highly agonizing for her, painful past memories play a major role in the trauma of these characters. Similarly, Violet also keeps a full-length history since her childhood in which her grandmother used to tell her about Golden Gray and his beauty. These past experiences have given a specific direction to her life which is now painful for her. In *The Bluest Eye,* Pecola is also having history of trauma since her childhood. She inherited this trauma from her parents who are also victims of myth of white beauty. All novelists are also psychiatrist they don't need psychiatrist for their characters. They themselves handle the internal and external of their characters so beautifully that we are forced to consider them as psychiatrist. They show us the inner stream of their character's thought and provide us solution for their psychological problems. Morrison shows us inner deep selves of her characters (Kubitschek, 1998).

*The Bluest Eye* shows damaging effects of racism on the black community particularly on black women. Sumana (1998) describes that sexism and racism are not separated from societal and psychological boundaries; in fact, they both have their deep impact on the lives and psyche of the black women. Black women suffered due to double marginalization i.e., gender and colour.

Psychoanalysis tries to find out the basic reason for the wrong done by any character. Dorcas chooses a different way of loving an old man because of the constant rejections by the young boys. They rejected her because of her skin colour and appearance which leads her to the wrong road. Dorcas is not happy, but she is alive. Violet tries to tear dead

body's face because of her extreme jealousy from the black girl. Her husband deceived her for Dorcas so she couldn't resist herself for tearing her face apart. The reason behind this extreme behaviour is trauma which is haunting them since their childhood. When it gets a release, it becomes severe and inhuman.

Even the titles of Morrison's novels show a great depth for the readers. In the title of the novel, *The Bluest Eye,* the word "bluest" is the superlative form which shows how much the desire for having blue eyes is essential for Pecola. It also throws light on the fact that Pecola is longing to have the bluest eye which means she wants to have blue eyes more beautiful than the white community. Similarly, Morrison's novel *Jazz* refers to music, but it is a kind of fear that haunts characters psyche like a ghost.

The textual analysis of these novels shows the role of colonial beauty standards in adding to the distress of the black women. The myth of white beauty is constantly pushing black women behind and snatching their identities. They are constantly judged based on false beauty standards set by the colonizers. Morrison's novels highlight episodes of violence, rape, and anxious motherhood as important outcomes of racism based on skin color. From *The Bluest Eye* to *Jazz,* Morrison gives us inside picture of past ridden women. However, for their traumatic experiences, she always gives a hope at the end by getting people closer to each other.

Over the course of a writing career spanning more than four decades, Morrison has written many novels that explore the topic of trauma and its resulting mental illness in her characters. She has used trauma not as a plot device, but her novels are meditations on the origin, treatment avenues, and communal and individual impact of mental illness. This is crystal clear that trauma needs narrative for highlighting the wounds of these black women. Toni Morrison has fulfilled this need; her narrative is so strong and alive that it can never lose its impact on the readers. The traumatic pain of Pecola, Dorcas and Violet is not alien but it is manifested everywhere in some or other form.

## Conclusions

Thus, the textual analysis of Toni Morrison's two novels *Jazz (1992) and The Bluest Eye (1970)* make an insightful reading in psychoanalytic domain. *The Bluest Eye* and *Jazz* succeed in exposing the sufferings of the colored women through Freud's psychoanalytical theories. The study clearly shows that all these characters are under the dictate of the unconscious part of the human psyche. We see their fear and aspirations, which are an essential part of their psyche. When they feel insecure, they change their priorities. The fear of being ugly in Pecola is much different from the fear of the Dorcas. Pecola suffered due to prolonged rejection and abuse from the society; whereas, Dorcas suffered due to racial discrimination. Both novels act like a journey for the understanding

of black traumatized females. These characters move back and forth. Sometimes, they keep remembering incidents from their past and next moment they relate to the current scenario.

The setting of *Jazz* is not limited to Harlem rather it involves current scenario where Blacks are being stigmatized based on false myth of white beauty. Freud's psychoanalysis clearly brings trauma of these black women to the surface. These women are made to turn to negativity due to the behavior and treatment of white community. From their childhood, these black women are suffering and being traumatized because of skin color, race, and other physical traits. For Morrison, reading as well as writing influences us and make us feel the severe pain of discrimination which was unknown before. Pecola and Dorcas suffered this discrimination since their childhood. As a child, constant rejection on the part of community and families made them over sensitive towards the white beauty standards. They wanted to achieve attention at any cost by indulging in negativity or illegal activities. Eventually, all these characters move forward to the future. Morrison's novels show her effort for restoring humanity to these trauma victims by highlighting the maltreatment of Whites with the Blacks. Through these female characters, Morrison renders a counter discourse. She shows the other side of the society through marginalized victim's point of view. At the end, the victims no longer stick to their past instead start chasing something new in their future. Morrison has aptly for grounded the silencing voices of these black women.

This study employed Freud's psychoanalytic theory to investigate the psychological trauma undergone by the female characters in Morrison's selected novels as a result of victimization and discrimination. Future studies may apply some other psychoanalytical frameworks to explore the texts in greater detail. Recently, some studies have employed sociological theories as a tool to investigate racial discrimination of Blacks in American literature. Future studies may also attempt to analyze Morrison's novels from social, cultural, racial, and sexual perspectives to examine the calamities faced by the minorities as portrayed in her novels.

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