



Injured Psychological Personalities and their Abnormal Behavior: A study of Jazz as a Continuous Suffocating Journey

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Abstract- The study aims to highlight the continuous postcolonial psychological violence inflicted on the proletariat class, and their perpetual struggle to cope up with their new and past traumatic histories, which shape their current positions, behavior, and relationships. Jazz is a novel about the fractured psyche of all main characters, who are suffering at two ends, one because of their pre-migration violent violence, and secondly, their post-migration miserable struggle as second class citizens. It exposes their useless struggles to lift up their status and ultimately self-respect, which all go in vain, due to the White hegemony. Past memories haunt these characters and propel them to destroy their relationships, and behave abnormally in their new lives. The study is studied under the theory of Karl Marx's theory of capitalism and Cathy Crauth theory of trauma in migrated second class citizens. It is concluded that Black's abnormal behavior is the trace of White's violence and their past traumas are transgenerational due to their untiring permanent sufferings. Moreover, the label of the second class citizen can never be easily tagged off. The working-class lives in the same ditch. For them, freedom means, replacement of old masters with new ones.

Keywords: post-colonial violence, psychological issues, abnormal behavior, complex relations, suppression.

I. INTRODUCTION

The study attempts to highlight the psychological issues of black people in Toni Morrison's "Jazz" in America, due to their past traumatic history, which includes migration, loss of identity, a quest for motherhood, suppression of desires, which altogether create violence and incompleteness not in their personalities but their relationships also. All the characters in Morrison's novel are self-afflicted due to their own psychological injuries of their past and are unable to recover, due to the constant social pressure, where they are inferior and are perpetually in a struggle to stabilize their selves. The novel will be analysed with the help of the excerpts from the text, as the transgenerational trauma of slavery and oppression, where both genders are minced differently and suffer in their own spheres as exploited workers. Close reading will be used as a strategy for the psychological interpretations of the characters.

The article will first explain the background of the novel, then theories of migration and migrations' psychological impact in causing cycles of violence on the repressed class. The oppressed and repressed class (black people, who are the victims of social discrimination) will be further scrutinized under the theory of Karl Marx. Overall this paper will envelop the philosophy of Frantz Fanon about black people that is explained in Black Skin White Mask.

II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Jazz is written in the 1920s after World War 1, where both black and white Americans fought together to get liberation from German imperialism. It was called the "age of prosperity", but sadly a new gloomy chapter was waiting for Afro-Americans to remind them that they were not totally free. Though at the document level, they were free, yet they were still underpaid, with no provision of food, shelter, education, and medicine. Slavery was, but they didn't gain freedom in its true sense. They were made dependent on white Americans. They starved and died due to maltreatment. Lynching was another life-threat given to the Afro-Americans. It was usual for the White Americana to put the house on fire and dragged the male or the head of the family out of the home, and hung him with the tree till death. Women and children were no exception to this. This all leads to the formation of The National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP). Owing to this all treacherous life in South America, the blacks started shifting their selves stealthily, from South to North, in the city of Harlem (Jazz takes place here). This movement was called "The Great Migration" from

1915-1940(Eichenlaub et al., 2010; Tolnay, 2003). There, they did face another kind of racial discrimination, but they were free to make their livelihoods. This period was also called the Harlem Renaissance and it paved the way to make their destiny towards prosperity and identity. Jazz music was invented there to release their anxiety and frustration, which soon got fame in the whole of America. But they suffered loneliness and identity crises due to the loss of their roots; rural life and found it difficult to get adjusted to urban life. Many southern-born Afro-American felt strongly uncomfortable with the rhythm of urban life. Jazz is the experience of this all phase, framed in the story of two main characters; Joe Trace and Violet, who happened to be husband and wife and are migrated from rural life to Harlem. Joe psychologically throughout the narrative traces his “wild” mother, who was once lost in jungles and feels incomplete without her, and finally falls in love with an eighteen years old Dorcas, who appeared to be “Wild” and Violet turned “violent” as the narrator narrates with this love affair. She sliced the dead face of Dorcas, whose murderer was Joe, and Dorcas did not ask the police to arrest him, and bleeds till she died. Violet’s mother committed suicide due to poverty and Violet planned never to have babies, due to the past sufferings, but puts Dorcas picture in her home, as something alive, portrays some inner suppressed desires of her for motherhood. “but she wonders if she isn’t falling in love with her too” (15). So, the whole story is beautifully crafted in psychological implications, where all characters favour each other, cheat each other, yet never leave each other, become the cause of the suffering of each other and at the same time heal each other.

III. MIGRATION AND ITS IMPACT

People migrate due to push and pull factors. In the novel, the Great Migration is due to both factors. Apart from the pull factors, there are dominant push factors that have caused psychological issues in the main characters. There is a positive relationship between stress and communication in married couples. Infertile couples end in no communication or unhealthy communication due to stress and their vague attempts to manage it (Randall & Bodenmann, 2016). Resultantly, stress creates psychological implications also (Antonovsky, 1985; Pearlin, 1999; Scheid & Brown, 2010). The female characters Dorcas and Violet have seen pre-migration traumas and are inflicted mentally. Stress is highly correlated with gender and emotional well-being (Ritsner et al., 2001). The very first encounter with Violet on the first page is abnormal, where she cuts the face of dead Dorcas, “they threw her to the floor and out of the church. (Morrison:3). “The woman people called Violent now because she had tried to kill what lay in a coffin” (Morrison: 79). Throughout the novel, violet has been observed as violent and aggressive in her behavior, either it’s the case of cutting the face of his husband mistress, or bringing the picture of Dorcas at home and developing motherly feeling for her, or to console her cheating husband after his mistress death or kidnapping a child in the market. She has done all these acts after the migration, but at the backdrop of her life, there is a threshold of past traumatic memories which do not let her go smoothly. Crauth (1996) in his trauma theory of past violence explains that the effects of trauma are not always immediate. It may happen that at the traumatic appearance, the survivor behaves normally and endures as nothing has happened, but later on, after few weeks that traumatic incident starts haunting his mind and oscillates in the daily routine. This affects his physical, motor, and mental skills. He develops “traumatic neurosis” and it is quite incomprehensible why this lapse occurs. It occurs against the will of the sufferer, unconsciously, and the more painful part according to Freud (1961), is that the sufferer is oblivious of the relation between his past event and current traumatic situation. Gabriele (2010) explains that victims of racial discrimination, genocide, slavery, and wars, are transgenerational victims. They keep on passing the legacy of violence and trauma to their next generations. Past memories haunt the victims and made them suffer and thus the violence is unconsciously transferred and re-enacted (Schwab, 2010).

Textual references explain that Joe and Violet apparent movement towards the north was due to certain economic reasons, which includes better living condition, better working conditions and the attraction of the city. “city can’t hurt you” (Morrison: 8). I like that way, the city makes people think...they can do, what they want” (Morrison: 8). “there were streets where colored people owned all the stores; all block of handsome colored men and women laughing all night and making money all day.” (Morrison: 106). It seems that their only reason was to pull factors to migrate to earn money, as Violet was an unlicensed hairdresser and Joe could have sold the beauty items/cosmetics. But deep analysis reveals different facts that compel us to think that their post-migration traumas and psychological issues were not only due to the settlement, rather their past unconscious wounds disturb them to behave abnormally in their later lives. Dorcas's parents were lynched and slaughtered during the East St. Louis riot. She saw them flamed and burnt and she being a child kept on shouting for a doll in her hand. She was ultimately sent to her Aunt, Alice in Harlem. Her migration

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