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A Critical Study of Toni Morrison's Jazz on the Post-Colonialism Interpretation of Black Identity in Terms of Race, Class, and Gender

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In her novel *Jazz*, Toni Morrison, the African American Nobel laureate novelist, addresses how African American women confront different discriminations (1992). Harlem is shown as a racially and socially segregated location in the novel, which this article examines using the qualitative technique. *Jazz* tells the stories of African American women who moved to Harlem in the early twentieth century and their hardships. African American female protagonists in this book are haunted by memories of slavery and face injustice within their community because of their race. It is established throughout the book that Harlem, which is referred to as "the City," is the relational location in which black women are subjected to and alienated by the interlocking oppressions of their race, class, and gender.

Key Words: Race, Gender, Marginality, Feminism, Consciousness.

"Thunder, Perfect Mind," an epigraph from The Nag Hammadi book, opens Toni Morrison's novel *Jazz*. The epigraph concludes with the phrase "the designation of the divide," which seems to sum up Morrison's motivations for writing the book. Apart from the narrator's musical rhythmic alignment, this work seems to "designate" societal "divisions" based on race, class, and gender. Toni Morrison's *Jazz* is the subject of this research, examining inequality based on race, class, and gender. It investigates Harlem, referred to throughout the book as "the City," as a chauvinistic and xenophobic setting where African American individuals are subjugated and segregated based on their race, class, and gender. The storey is about African Americans who

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migrated to "the City" and settled in Harlem during the Great Migration1. They come to Harlem hoping to be rid of the traumas of slavery in the future. Despite their desire for emancipation from tyranny, they seem to have absorbed the repressive white standards. As a consequence, they face prejudice in their community. Morrison's trilogy includes Beloved (1987), *Jazz* (1992), and *Paradise*(1993). (1997). At the moment where Beloved stops, *Jazz* begins. It is a book that tells the storey of African Americans in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century America via many narrators. *Jazz*, unlike Beloved, concludes on a hopeful note. Some sections of the book, on the other hand, discuss African Americans' experiences of pain, marginalization, and segregation. Morrison does not confine *Jazz* to the periphery of prejudice. She explains why she decided to write the "Foreword." She wants to "reflect the content and characteristics of its music, romance, freedom of choice, doom, seduction, anger, and the manner of its expression" through a lens that "reflects the content and characteristics of its music, romance, freedom of choice, doom, seduction, anger, and the manner of its expression" (ix). The image of a lovely girl in a coffin that Morrison sees in James Van Der Zee's The Harlem Book of the Dead inspires the narrative of *Jazz* (Morrison ix). Dorcas, the girl who also dies in the book, is inspired by the narrative of the dead girl in the image. Her or her death impacts the book's primary protagonists, and their time in Harlem is interwoven with her destiny. Morrison depicts the sorrows of important characters in America caused by the prevailing white patriarchy via her tragic experience.

Harlem in the 1920s does not give a solution to racial equality; rather, the majoritywhite community in Harlem's culture opposes African Americans' social rights. When Joe and Violet and Alice, Malvonne, and Dorcas try to settle in the city, they are met with racial inequity and violence. Morrison demonstrates how "light skin people" deprive dark-skinned African Americans of their social privileges. Within the African-American community of Harlem, "internalized" racial alienation manifests itself in the form of "colourism." Harlem also falls short of establishing gender equality. The chauvinistic attitudes of black males towards black women are seen in the relationships between Joe and Violet, Joe and Dorcas, and Dorcas and Acton. Joe's chauvinist ego and rejection of Dorcas's autonomous personality are to blame for Dorcas's death, despite the storey of Joe's psyche seeming to downplay the crime. In the

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narrative, as Acton grows more aware of himself while Dorcas is dying, the estrangement based on gender is also obvious. Violet's aggressive conduct and disinterest toward Joe are also shown by the novel's narrator(s). Joe seems to exhibit submissive masculinity in his Harlem conjugal relationship with Violet.

Harlem also serves as a hotbed of social tension. Apart from the class strife between black and white communities, Alice Manfred seems to have developed a class awareness due to the dominant white society's worldview. Her attitude toward *Jazz* music and thoughts on black people in Harlem exemplifies the black community's socioeconomic strife and estrangement. This research will provide an in-depth examination of race, class, and gender while examining these discriminating variables, demonstrating Harlem as an intersectional setting in Toni Morrison's *Jazz*.

Harlem was, and continues to be, a centre of segregation in America based on race and skin colour. In Toni Morrison's novels, racial prejudice is a major theme. In *Jazz*, the pain of raced men and women becomes visible in Harlem's urban setting. Almost all of the novel's black protagonists are victims of racial prejudice. They are not, however, invariably oppressed by whites. Many discriminatory attitudes are imposed on the African American community by a male-dominated white culture, and the community internalizes them in surviving in Harlem. Consequently, black characters in Harlem are often marginalized within their community. They live in perpetual terror and provoke racial disputes in Harlem as victims of racial discrimination.

Morrison's representation of blackness depicts her characters' survival through America's history of racial tensions. "I am a black writer battling with and through a vocabulary that can forcefully suggest and reinforce concealed indicators of racial superiority, cultural hegemony, and disdainful othering of people and language," Morrison writes in Playing in the Dark (xii). "The shared identity of black Americans in Morrison's books hinges on the constancy of public political activity and private awareness," McKee writes in her book Producing American Races (1). She claims that white identities are "in circulation," and that this circulation occurs "between every individual white person and the irremediably 'other,' massed identity of blackness" (13).

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In early twentieth-century America, "The City" in *Jazz* seems to offer the arena where "racial superiority" and "dismissive othering" function. Despite their independence, white Americans in Harlem in the 1920s could not move beyond considering African Americans as enslaved people. According to Heinert, racist traditions are a matter of "privilege" for whites, and they are "learned and handed on" (63). When African Americans migrate to Harlem from all over the nation, whites find it difficult to accept their presence. "How come so many coloured people are dying when whites are doing fantastic things," a black figure named Winsome wonders in one of the letters Malvonne reads (43). The "wonderful thing," i.e., white Americans' hierarchies and privilege in Harlem, is only conceivable when "coloured people" die in service to them. In this part, Morrison emphasizes whites' persecution of people of colour. The whites are "terrified" by "the southern Negroes flooding the towns" and seizing their city space, according to Morrison's narrator (57). Without question, white

Americans are not ready for black people to be self-sufficient. When Joe and Violet are looking for a home in Harlem, the white Americans attempt to drive the blacks out. As a result, Joe and Violet become victims of segregation from the start of their lives in Harlem.

"*Jazz* is the racial unconscious of American literature," Nowlin observes, "and Morrison is not just reorganizing national literature but also asking for a new American reader receptive to the possibilities this literature offers when confronted with its investment in the concept of race" (156). *Jazz* manifests racism's persistent and damaging grip on the black family. Almost every character in Harlem and elsewhere is a victim of racial persecution. Harlem regenerates race victims, and Harlem's racially distinct location tells what is feasible and impossible for raced people in a specific storyline.

Race riots, according to Kubitschek, have been regarded in the United States since the late 1960s as eruptions of violence inside black communities in poor inner cities (140). The killings, injuries, and property destruction that resulted were virtual "exclusively perpetrated on and restricted to black inner-city inhabitants" (140). On the other hand, race riots were a completely distinct occurrence in the early twentieth century. Then "armed white gangs infiltrate African American neighbourhoods," most of whom are cut off from "police protection or legal retribution" (140). The East St. Louis Riot of 19172 is an off-stage incident in *Jazz*, impacting

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two key characters, Alice Manfred and her niece, Dorcas. Dorcas' parents are assassinated during the uprising. When their home is set on fire, her father is taken from a streetcar and beaten to death, while her mother is burned to death.

Dorcas is one of the novel's notable victims of racial riots. She is the tragedy's only survivor. Dorcas seemed to be unable to forget the catastrophe. She suffers from psychological disorientation in Harlem, and when she recalls the massacre, she "cries" (38) and "covers her lips with her hand" (40). The incident has left an indelible mark on her mind. She enters into a tumultuous connection with Joe to find solace in her tragedy. Dorcas is emotionally susceptible and indecisive in her relationships throughout the storey. Her perplexing conduct stems from a childhood tragedy of racial violence.

Racial violence also instils dread in black characters and leads them to lack confidence in their actions. The novel's principal protagonists do not engage in any acts of anti-racist activism. Malvonne seemed to be very satisfied although working in the lowest tier of municipal employment. When white women and children "turned away from her" (54) because she is black, Alice Manfred, who seems to be highly intelligent in her decisions, does not respond. Dorcas is taught to be "deaf and blind" (54) among whites, nearly non-existent since she feels she is "vulnerable" (55) in the company of white women. As a result, Alice treasures the racial anxiety instilled in her by Harlem's white residents. Dorcas is terrified, and she wants to put that terror in her.

Morrison depicts an identity crisis in which black characters ally themselves with white ideas, confirming the black community's racial inferiority. The two ends of black identity, knowing the authenticity gained through a link to the ancestors and self-dignity in a racially conflicted world, are absent from the Harlem characters. They are occupied with acclimating themselves to white patriarchy's dominance. Even though they have come to the city in search of a feeling of independence, they seem to value the precise beliefs they are meant to oppose.

Felice's narrative towards the storey's conclusion likewise depicts an identity dilemma. Felice remarks on Dorcas' ring on the night she is murdered. Felice's mother stole the necklace from Tiffany's in retaliation for an insulting encounter with a white salesperson. Although the ring might be seen as a sign of resistance against prejudice, it also affirms white values. The ring

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reflects the whites' riches and status emblem. Felice's mother attempts to create the appearance of a high position by snatching the ring. She doesn't realize that the ring provides her with little comfort other than a feeling of vengeance. She takes a valuable item, but it does not provide her with any pleasure. Although the ring is lovely, "there's a trick in it, and I have to consent to the trick to claim it." It reminds me of the nefarious blond youngster who lives in Mrs. Trace's brain" (211). Felice learns to separate the thing from her mother's brave deed, rejecting it while loving the gesture. She keeps it with Dorcas since it complements her bracelet "and the home where the party" (215). In Felice's perspective, the gleaming lure fashioned as a sign of white grandeur is an appropriate decoration for her shallow companion, Dorcas. The act of stealing response to the charge made by the white Tiffany's salesperson. When the salesperson refers to Felice's mother as a thief, Felice and her mother get enraged. By taking the ring, she transforms into a thief. As a result, she validates whites' repressive ideas by being a thief, an inferior being in society.

Heinze calls attention to "institutionalized racism" (97), exacerbating tensions in Harlem's black community. In their book, The Color Complex, Russel, Wilson, and Hall argue that African American feminist fictions vividly interpret the portrayal of "colourism," the result of "internalized racism" (73). They track down "those deracinated blacks with pale enough complexion and sharp enough features" (73) who have completely abandoned their origins. When "deracinated" mulattos in Harlem approach the "light-skinned" for a place to rent, they create difficulties and make derogatory remarks. Violet's grandma True Belle treasures the "spirit of Golden Gray, the fabled figure, the adored mulatto kid" (33), whom Heinze recognizes. Violet gets engrossed in the narrative of this youngster and fantasizes about having fair skin. Because of Violet's attraction to lighter skin, Joe and Violet's marriage becomes acrimonious and sad. Violet's mother dies when she is a child, and True Belle raises her. Golden Gray, the ideal western beauty with a golden complexion and hair, absorbs her love and feeling of self. From Violet's perspective, he symbolizes "miscegenation as an avenue of assimilation and acceptability" (Heinze 33). Despite being a beautiful lady, Violet confesses her wish to lose her ebony skin and become white. There isn't a single member in her family who isn't white to enhance her self-esteem. Her grandma, also a fan of lighter skin, reared her. She appreciates the

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standard of beauty, which includes being white, as a hairdresser in the beautifying sector. Joe chose Dorcas, Violet thinks, because she had a lighter complexion and longer hair. "[A] youthful me with high yellow skin instead of black?" she wonders what Joe sees in her. Instead of short hair, how about a youthful me with long wavy hair?" (90).

She acknowledges, however, that she mistook her wishes for Joe's. She admits that she "loved Golden Gray more than anybody" and wants Joe might be his "golden boy" (90). Violet learns that Gray, like a "mole," "lives within her thoughts," and she has to "get rid of it" (203). Violet also kidnaps a toddler whose complexion is "honey-sweet, butter-coloured" (17). She seems to see a reflection of Golden Gray in that child's face. Her desire to have a kid is influenced by her wish to have lighter skin. She attempts to possess the kid with lighter skin to satisfy her yearning since she cannot have lighter skin on her own. Violet has a parrot with a "green and blond head" who tells her "love you" over and over again (93), and it is another sign of Violet's love of whiteness. The prevailing white society influences Violet and

True Belle's perceptions of conventional beauty. Violet dislikes Joe's darker complexion, so she excludes him from their relationship and substitutes him with a parrot with a "green and blond head." Violet seemed to be satisfied with the parrot's meaningless utterance, "love you." Violet is still caught in the trap of the white culture's notion of beauty, despite her independence in Harlem. She lacks the dignity and confidence meant to make her feel at ease in her flesh. She picks up the notion of "colourism" from the dominating whites and fails to respect her race and skin colour.

The narrator of Morrison's novel begins by describing why Joe murders Dorcas, with whom he had "those deep-down eerie loves" (3). Joe feels both "sad and joyful" while with her, according to the narrator, and he shoots her "simply to keep the emotion continuing" (3). The shooting's narrator seems to depict African American men's narcissistic tendencies while in a relationship with black women. Morrison illustrates the common response of a black lady, the narrator, to a black guy being accused of murdering a girl. Joe is made into a violent "bad nigger," the stereotypical black guy prone to criminal crimes, even though his neighbourhood sees him as a nice neighbourly man. His relationship with Dorcas gives him the confidence to control her, and he feels proud of himself as a man. Joe's pride eventually causes him to believe

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that he is "free to do something crazy" (4), which leads to her death. As a result, Joe, who was formerly humble and kind, becomes a murderer.

Morrison depicts Joe at the beginning to underline that the guy may seem kind at first, but he would eventually reveal his chauvinist side. According to Bouson's book on Morrison's books, "describes the vast pride and power felt by black males living in Harlem in the 1920s" (167). Ex-slave black males may find freedom in Harlem. White supremacy passes on the dominating chauvinist patriarchy, which they tend to revere within their African American society. Dorcas is a girl who "submits to dominion" and wants a "father figure" because she yearns for "independence, recognition, personal identity, and agency," according to Loris (58). Joe becomes her lover and her "father figure," and he takes advantage of this by controlling her. When Dorcas chooses Acton over him, his influence over her is challenged. Because he is scared of loneliness, Joe's possessive nature cannot endure Dorcas' absence. His insecurity drives him to assassinate her. "Dorcas's aunt understands the murder of all brutalizing guys who can kill defenceless black women simply because they can," Loris argues in her understanding of Joe's controlling mindset (59). Joe pretends to give Dorcas the independence and recognition she craves, but he can't recognize or appreciate her decisions in reality. He reveals the ultimate expression of his chauvinist attitude by murdering her. Similarly, Acton's narcissism is apparent in Dorcas and Acton's relationship. Dorcas reshapes herself to suit his desires, and she bows male dominance. He seems to represent a typical black man teenager in Harlem in the 1920s, one who has absorbed white patriarchy's chauvinism and values white men's masculinity and narcissism by dominating black women. His narcissistic conduct reflects his lack of concern for Dorcas. Dorcas' storey demonstrates her refusal to see Acton's narcissism and lack of empathy towards her. She attempts to style her hair "the way he loves," and she alters her laughter "to one he likes." (192).

However, nothing appears to please Acton, who is focused at the party, and Dorcas is simply another lady for him who wants to be seen among the throng. After Joe shoots Dorcas during the party, Acton reveals his narcissist and chauvinist behaviour. "Blood is on his (Acton's) coat, and he is rubbing at it with a white handkerchief," Dorcas writes (190). While Dorcas is dying, he seems unconcerned about her. Because Acton lacks compassion, he cannot

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appreciate Dorcas' presence and individuality. He's preoccupied with his coat. Acton portrays African American men's inhuman conduct via Morrison. Though we cannot conclude that all male characters in Morrison's novels mistreat black women, both Joe and Acton exhibit the chauvinist and narcissistic conduct that certain black males in Harlem exhibit.

According to Harding and Martin, the disposition of Violet and Dorcas' identity is endangered by black men's chauvinism and narcissism. They claim that Harlem's black women "reflect the black men's given position of the Other" (55). Through the sight of black males, the "Other" reflects on the inferior situation of black women, and the women seem to accept their inevitable lower status in the community. They are more likely to surrender to black patriarchy and fail to regain or reassert their identity as free people. Violet tries to flee Joe's patriarchal shadow, but she fails to realize her uniqueness. She ignores Joe for the most portion of the storey, yet Joe's decisions and actions appear to have a constant impact on her. Some women even corroborate black men's chauvinistic attitudes. Alice Manfred admits that she has "handed on" black men's patriarchal views "to her baby sister's sole kid," Dorcas (77). Dorcas' attraction with black males, she feels, is the result of her influence. The hostess is disturbed when Dorcas' blood stains Acton's coat since the shooting event disrupts her celebration. She gets irritated rather than tending to Dorcas as she is bleeding. Acton's coat is cleaned and returned by a woman, but "it is not clean the way it was before and the way he loves it" (192). Both the lady and the hostess exhibit little sympathy or care for Dorcas. They're more interested in Acton, the narcissistic black guy, and his wants. As a result, they affirm patriarchal dominance and willingly convert themselves into power victims.

Malvonne behaves so that she might be labelled a victim of masculine dominance. She is subservient, and her job entails examining "strong white men's" garbage (41). Her responsibilities are comparable to those of her female slave forebears. As a result, it's unavoidable that she'll have slave-like submissiveness in her demeanour, particularly when males approach her. Joe takes advantage of her submissiveness and convinces her to rent out her nephew's room to him. When Malvonne first meets Joe, she realizes that her nephew Sweetness' room would be Joe's pleasure-den for his extramarital affair. Malvonne first declines the

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proposition since she knows Violet and cannot tolerate such shady relationships. Malvonne, on the other hand, cannot say no when Joe gives her a sufficient sum of money.

Furthermore, Joe continues to claim that he is dissatisfied. Violet, he laments, "takes better care of the parrot than she does of me" (49). Malvonne cannot maintain her resolve and remain firm in her moral opposition to Joe's affair. Her submissive disposition allows black males, such as Joe, to exploit black women and break the marital holy tie. In early nineteenthcentury Harlem, white males dominated and subjugated black men and women. They also passed on to African American males their ability to manipulate women. As a result, Joe has little trouble manipulating Malvonne. Malvonne becomes Joe's accomplice and assists him in continuing his romance with Dorcas. She becomes into the person she despises. Joe can control her and exploit her for his purposes. To depict the subservient qualities of black women in early Harlem, Morrison constructs Malvonne, a figure who seems to have moral convictions but does not act on them. Joe's manipulative manner compels her to submit, and he uses his dominance to achieve his goals.

Dorcas' aunt, Alice Manfred, is a black lady with a strong and forceful personality, unlike Malvonne. When it comes to Dorcas' background, she is fairly vocal. Throughout the narrative, though, she is traumatized. We discover that she is motivated by a fear of losing, which began when she lost her spouse. Alice, like Violet, is the victim of an unfaithful spouse. Louis Manfred, her husband, is having an affair with another lady, who attends his burial in an improper white gown. Alice's rage is explained by Morrison, who claims that she has been "hungry for blood" for "seven months" (88). Even though her spouse abandons her and dies before she arrives in Harlem, the anguish created by his betrayal continues to haunt her. Dorcas is subjected to the restrictions imposed by her wounded psyche. Dorcas' personality and relationships may be unstable due to such coercion, according to Alice. However, the traumatic lives of African American women in the storey are caused by chauvinist and deceitful black males with domineering inclinations.

As a victim of dominance, Violet acts violently on Dorcas's body, earning her the moniker "Violent" (5). Her memories of her parents and husband conjure up strange images in her head, both past and present. She can't take the thought of her spouse having an extramarital affair. She

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knifes Dorcas's body during the funeral instead of confronting Joe. Violet's act of violence, according to Kubitschek, is the consequence of her "testing out some common responses to her husband's infidelity" (149). Apart from Violet's history, Joe is mostly to blame for Violet's erratic behaviour. Joe does not take any action to restore the intensity of their connection while Violet stays distant in her marriage life and seeks to replace Joe with a parrot. Instead, he begins a relationship with Dorcas. Joe has no desire to improve his connection with Violet. He becomes egotistical and shows no sympathy for Violet. As a result, Joe is the one who committed the horrific crime at Dorcas' burial. Violet's personality is thrown into disarray by his chauvinism and selfishness.

On the other hand, Violet is to blame for Joe's submissiveness and lack of responsiveness in their marriage. Though Harlem masculinity in the early twentieth century was far from subservient, Matus points out that it may be seen in a few literary fictions (44). Violet puts more space between herself and her husband after learning of his affair with Dorcas. Violet places a photograph of Dorcas on the living room mantel to anger Joe. Violet attempts all she can to harm Joe. She's also enraged because she can't take the thought of Joe grieving over Dorcas. Joe, without a doubt, is unresponsive to Violet's actions since he is the one who has been having an affair. Violet is somewhat to blame for their relationship's demise. She has been overwhelmed by her great yearning for a child, and she has replaced Joe with a parrot. Joe is unable to bridge their relationship's chasm. Joe seems to be a black guy with a meek demeanour. His profession necessitates less social engagement. That is why he claims "he never pushes," and he likes his work "waiting tables" at "the Windemere" (122). Violet's demeanour makes Joe dislike her. Joe does not play a significant role in the relationship. Violet makes him keep his distance from her in their married life. As a result, he feels compelled to treat Violet "as if she were a piece of furniture" (123). As a result, Morrison conveys subservient masculinity via Joe's narrative.

Harlem, or "The City," sees itself as a social environment where class discrimination is practised. The dominant white culture's class consciousness casts doubt on the novel's inclusion of black migrants. When ex-slaves like Joe, Violet, Dorcas, and Alice travel to Harlem searching for freedom, white Americans foment racial tensions. Naturally, the ruling white elite cannot accept that blacks, who were once their slaves, might seek financial and social independence in

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"the City." In this process, their entire survival as superiors is imperilled. The concept of blacks having material goods affects white populations who desire to stay in the lower socioeconomic class. As a result, Joe and Violet are having difficulty finding a place to live. Whites refuse to acknowledge blacks who can struggle independently and become financially self-sufficient. As a result, blacks in Harlem are ostracised inside the economically prosperous white population.

The biggest instances of class conflict in *Jazz*, on the other hand, occur within the black community. According to Jill Matus, the "black others" often need to "assimilate with the dominant white culture's concepts of socioeconomic class" to fit into Harlem and their community (21). As a result, the dominating whites pass on their status awareness to the blacks, who internalize it. The narrator begins the narrative by describing the "freedom" that the city provides, along with its "ignorance and crime" (8). The city is designed to give a platform where "people can conceive of anything and get away with it" (8). The narrator, on the other hand, stays caustic. She humorously alludes to the social "freedom" that blacks believe they enjoy, apart from alluding to "criminality," or criminal acts committed by both blacks and whites. "Wealthy whites and plain one's alike swarm into houses refurbished and redecorated by black ladies," the narrator continues later (8). The whites maintain their social superiority, and they continue to accept help from black women as if they were still their slaves. Compared to the black population, the dominating whites reaffirm their superior social standing and stay "rich."

When the narrator states, "both are satisfied with the sight of the other," they accentuate the class struggle (8). The black ladies who are engaged in decorating the homes of white Americans seem content to work for them in this section of the book. They don't comprehend that they won't be able to break free from the white patriarchy unless they stop associating with white groups who are "terrified" of them and seek to "drive away" the blacks (57). The black ladies in Harlem seem to be content with mingling with white populations with social standing. They cannot establish a social standing in Harlem; therefore, they choose to be "pleased" with the "rich whites." When dominating whites perceive black women are thinking of themselves as inferior, they take advantage. Some black characters seem to "internalize" the whites' enforced class awareness and regard themselves as inferior.

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The "internalized" status awareness displays itself in various ways in Harlem's black community, causing class strife. Violet, for example, travels to one portion of Harlem to do the hair of a black mother and her daughter. They're dubbed "Dumfrey ladies" by their neighbours (19). Violet discovers that they are not at home. Violet learns about their class awareness from their next-door neighbour, another black lady. The Dumfries family, she claims, "handles money" and is "stuck up" (19). Concern about money and social status separates them from their neighbours. As a result, the Dumfries ladies are despised by their neighbours. The presence of such class awareness in the black community encourages division, and as a consequence of the class struggle, the group fragments. The Dumfrey family and the neighbours are also from Cottown. The Dumfrey family, on the other hand, ignores their Cottown origins amid their newfound social prominence in Harlem. Violet's adjacent black lady is a Cottown acquaintance, but the family now refuses to recognize her and pretends "to sound like they ain't from Cottown" (19). Women in Dumfrey are working to break their ties with their ancestors. They believe that their past as enslaved people is a source of shame. They attempt to reject their past, intended to give them a sense of effort and pleasure, instead of feeling proud of their success. The absence of community feeling and common identity in black communities is the consequence of white communities' dominating authority manipulating their minds via social status illusions and causing them to forget their origins. The Dumfrey women conceal their old identities to fit into the pretentious white idea of social class, and they seem to fit themselves into an illusory social standing by following in the footsteps of their previous rulers, the dominating American whites.

Dorcas' aunt, Alice Manfred, seems to be influenced by the novel's notion of social rank. She seems to be part of a "class of black women" with "particular taste" in attire and decorating, as Peace argues (35). Violet's outfit irritates her when she first sees her. "The thread running free from her sleeve" irritates her, as does the "torn coat lining in three places" (82). When Alice first meets Violet, she believes that her attire does not portray her as a sophisticated person. Violet, "the embarrassed sort" (79), she seems to believe, belongs to a class of women who have an "awful and unpleasant closeness" to "red attire," "yellow shoes," and "racing music to spur them on" (79). The dominant white upper class has absorbed and ingrained the notion of sophistication in Alice's head, manipulating her thinking and alienating her from the women in

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her neighbourhood. Even though she subsequently becomes Violet's best friend, her initial view is impacted by her status awareness. Violet, a member of her group, is alienated by her stare at Violet's clothes. It depicts the status awareness that causes African Americans to be divided.

Alice's class awareness also causes her to undervalue *Jazz* music's core. *Jazz* "formed as part of the Harlem Renaissance3, a creative blossoming of African American culture made possible, in part, by increased concentrations of black people in Northern cities," according to Kubitschek (141). According to Bauson, the dominating whites in Harlem in the early twentieth century defined *Jazz* music as "race music" (23). The whites in Harlem believe that blacks in the neighbourhood belong to an "inferior class" (Bauson 23). The music of Harlem's blacks, in their opinion, is nothing more than "lowly cacophony" (Bauson 23). Alice Manfred also refers to *Jazz* music as "race music" in the book (79). Alice believes *Jazz* music is accountable for black people's "shameless" (58) deeds. According to Morrison's narrator, Alice believes *Jazz* is "dirty get-on-down music" (58). "Close and shameless or separate and wild," the men and women sing, play, and dance to the music (58). Alice is oblivious to the pleasure and laughter that music offers to the black community. *Jazz* music becomes the African Americans' hope for survival in a disadvantaged social milieu in the narrative. Because the dominating whites hold them in continual terror, it seems that the black population seeks sanctuary in *Jazz* music. Because African Americans sing and dance to *Jazz* music, it pulls them together. The music gives them a feeling of belonging, something Alice doesn't comprehend. Her class devalues *Jazz* music, which is central to AfricanAmerican culture. *Jazz* music becomes the "essence of African Americanism" (Bauson 23).

Because she tries her ideology with the class awareness gained from the white supremacy existing around her, Alice is oblivious to the significance of this song. As a result, she separates herself from her African-American identity.

As a result, Morrison's Harlem is a prejudiced area marked by oppression and estrangement based on race, class, and gender. Morrison's fictitious field, "The City," is where her narrator(s) play(s) as the maker(s) and breaker(s) of lives in the midst of a racial, class, and gender identity crisis. A book about love, friendship, freedom, music, motherhood, and sisterhood, *Jazz* is a novel about love, friendship, freedom, music, motherhood, and sisterhood.

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These precise rhythms of experience are how the narrator(s) make(s) their life. It's a trip into the heart of African-American identity. Trauma, enslavement, identity crisis, oppression, and alienation are all explored in this storey. It's a fight against the dominant white culture's restrictive conventions. Through these negative sounds of anguish, the narrator(s) breaks the characters' lives.

Jazz does not have to take place in Harlem. In the late nineteenth century, there were discriminating elements at work in the lives of the people who dwell outside of Harlem. A few of the characters are the forefathers and mothers of the main characters. Their stories typically take place in Virginia and Baltimore. Virginia and Baltimore may be classified as discriminatory locations since they cause people to suffer due to the oppression of dominating white Americans. However, in these settings, he discriminates features from race, class, and gender do not work together.

Morrison believes that reading and writing have a strong impact on us because it causes us to recognize voices of discrimination that we had never heard before. Morrison depicts the distinction between the sound that only certain people can hear and the text that everyone can read. In these letters, we see the tragedy being replayed as racially and sexually defined exclusion. The tale concludes with a message of optimism. Morrison's characters begin to change and comprehend one another. She paints a picture of the city that makes the characters dream. Morrison provides the joy of visualizing the dream of wholeness. Morrison is waiting for us to find the selves who acknowledge and struggle for equality in our racialized, sensitive intersectional environment.

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