

The Racial Myth of the Black Violence: A Žižekian Study of Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, *Sula*, and *Beloved*

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Abstract

The bulk of what we know as violence is myth. Since myths have been told and retold over the years, they have been taken as truth. This paper explores racial myths as representations of verbal violence in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, *Sula*, and *Beloved*. Toni Morrison as an African-American identity explorer dwells on the slogans and myths as manifestations of Žižekian symbolic violence. Methodologically, this study uses political discourse analysis, black gendered feminism and psychoanalysis in the light of Slavoj Žižek's commentary on violence to be the approaches of analyzing the drawn data. The fusion of psychoanalytic terms with political ones sheds a fresh light on the concepts of ideology and violence. This paper aims at exploring the mechanisms of *the black violence myth* that spread the racial beliefs that Africans are more violence prone and have higher pain tolerance than Europeans. The conclusion extracted from this study confirms that the discourse of the myths functions as pseudo-ideologies to normalize the violence against non-European races and stop the African subalterns' resistance in the form of fighting back against the raids of the Europeans.

Keywords

Black violence myth; Violence; Pseudo-ideology; Slavoj Žižek; Toni Morrison.

1. Introduction

A fixed design of myths marks the experience of African-Americans that according to Houston A. Baker, Jr. call for "the black person's separation from a dominant, white society" (*Blues* 153). Myths are challenging notions resembling Alice's Looking-Glass: both too problematic to force one's way into and to force one's way out of. Roland Barthes in *Mythologies* (1957) writes that myths have the potentiality to change the course and

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meaning of history. Barthes goes on to claim that "however paradoxical it may seem, myth hides nothing: its function is to distort, not to make disappear" (231). Firstly they should be separated from their social and historical background, and next redefined to be of service to another aim. The myth of white hegemony is juxtaposed to the myth of black inferiority to make up for the Manichean evil and good, black and white dual structure dominating Western mythology. They represent Euro-American ways of thinking and behaving on the concept of race in slave-master dialectic. European myth-making is a strategy to arrive at an agreement with the dialectic between the slave and the slave master. During the nineteenth century racist narratives were developed into myths to maintain their social system and White dominant position by decentralizing diasporic Africans.

In early narratives concerning rape including *The Life and Dying Speech of Arthur* that was broadcasted in eighteenth century the reader unanticipatedly notices that the raper is a savage black slave. Such narratives set the foundation for *the myth of Black rapist*. Evan Stark in "The Myth of Black Violence" (1993) argues that there is a widely-accepted belief as myth that Africans are more inclined to violence than Europeans. This negative stereotype makes the society allow more extreme degrees of violence among African people than among Europeans. The major awful and concrete consequence of *the myth of Black violence* is taking for granted the unavailability of violence among Africans. Campel and Edwards claimed that "African-Americans, compared to non-Hispanic whites, suffer a greater burden of pain and pain-related suffering" (219). The myth of Africans' higher pain tolerance originated from Benjamin Moseley, an English medical practitioner in eighteenth century, who claimed that he "amputated the legs of many Negroes who have held the upper part of the limb themselves" (292). *The myth of Black violence* is a widespread false belief that has penetrated Western culture. Since myths as slogans all the time sum up the ideology of a person or a class, they facilitate and accelerate the process of domination. According to Slavoj Žižek "The starting point of the critique of ideology has to be full acknowledgment of the fact that it is easily possible to lie in the guise of truth" (*Mapping* 8). In *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, Žižek argues that the theory of ideology has to focus on the "process by means of which hidden meaning disguised itself" (8). Paradoxically, myths are applied to convey the endorsed ideology of a specific group; however, in the course of time they stop to convey any ideological doctrine and ultimately convert into a doctrine themselves.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Racial Myths

The scientists who investigate the dissimilarities in human nations all share the view that biological races never exist. However, racial intolerance and discrimination embedded in the myth of race are deep-rooted in European mindset. Robert Wald Sussman in *The Myth of Race: The Troubling Persistence of an Unscientific Idea* (2014) investigates the

means by which, race has popped out as a social conception from primary Christian rationalization to the pseudoscientific investigations of present-day. Robert Sussman's *The Myth of Race* tracks down the rise of twenty-first-century racist ideologies and unfolds how sixteenth century assumptions of race-related debasement prepared the grounds for Western colonial and slavery systems (11-42). These theories in the nineteenth century merged with Darwinism to give rise to the extremely noteworthy and destructive segregation action. Robert Sussman explores how opponents of segregation threw light on myths and fallacies in racist thinking. A number of eighteenth-century politicians and thinkers publicly asserted that Africans were by nature inferior to the whites and were best suited for slavery. Even a few thinkers revived an older image of the Great Chain of Being to expose that nature or creator had created human beings unequal. This old hierarchical paradigm became a perfect echoing of the dissimilarities and inequalities they had created to maintain their superiority. During these times the term *race* was widely used to the ranking, social position and inequality of African people and their placement in the Great Chain of Being.

2.1.1. Related Literature on Racial Myth

Over the centuries, two physical myths that the blacks suffered from too bloodless lungs that could be treated just by sweating physical toil; and that the blacks can tolerate extreme pain compared to the whites were widespread. Benjamin Moseley in his handbook of *A Treatise on Diseases; and on the Climate of West-Indies* (1878) claimed that people of color could tolerate painful surgeries much easier than the whites: "what would be the cause of insupportable pain to a white man, a Negro would almost disregard" (80). These misconceptions and falsehoods about the Black's high pain tolerance were snatched by proslavery advocates and gave a green light to the American physician J. Marion Sims to practice surgical operations on African women that would be amoral today, without using drugs as anesthetics to prevent pain during surgery. Marion Sims in his *The Story of My Life* (1884) describes the terrible pain enslaved African women tolerated as he amputated their sex organs as an attempt to improve his surgical techniques in child-birthing operations. In the years that followed, Samuel Cartwright, a medical practitioner of diseases of the Negro in his well-circulated medical pamphlet "Report on the Diseases and Physical Peculiarities of the Negro Race" (1851) maintained that black slaves were subject to a disease of mind called drapetomania, hypothesized as a supposed mental illness as the main cause of enslaved Africans to escape from their masters (589-590). Taking no notice of the inhumane conditions that motivated the black slaves to escape from captivity, he prescribed lashing the devils out of them as a treatment.

Up to now, among the critical works, the majority of literature about Toni Morrison has focused on the manifestations of women. In the current paper the paramount area the researchers intend to look at, is much broader than the exploration of Toni Morrison's representation of classical gender, and that is how this study is related to the psychology of violence. There is restricted research on Žižekian violence in Toni Morrison's texts; however, the present paper studies the discourse of violence that is internalized in the mind of African-Americans through racial myth of *the black violence* as a pseudo-ideology and as a political means in the selected novels of Toni Morrison.

3. Approach and Methodology

3.1. Theoretical Underpinning

The methodology applied by the researchers in this paper to interpret Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, *Sula*, and *Beloved* as the corpus of the study is Political Discourse Analysis, Black gendered feminism as well as psychoanalysis. It is based on a close reading that focuses on their exploration of *Black violence myth* that focalizes on the theories of Slovenian radical thinker, Slavoj Žižek (1949 –) related to the topic of violence represented mostly in his magnum opus, *Violence: Six Sideway Reflections* (2008). Among the modern thinkers and theorists who study the notion of violence and ideology of violence: Foucault, Fanon, Lacan, Gramsci, Althusser, and Žižek the perspectives of Slavoj Žižek have been focalized in this paper due to Žižek's individual method of studying violence and his individual method of merging violence with political affairs. In their studying and analyzing of physical violence, Slavoj Žižek as well as feminist writers Pulma Gqola and Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela suggest a different way about the topic of violence by looking beyond perceptible and visible manifestation of violence. According to Žižek, violence takes three forms: subjective violence such as criminal acts and terror which insists on the intended practice of bodily strength to cause damage, and objective violence embedded in racism, hate-speech, and discrimination among other manifestations of violence that is hidden because it "suffers the zero level standard against which we perceive something as subjectively violent" (*Violence* 2). Objective violence is subdivided into two divisions: "symbolic violence" that mirrors the violence embedded in speech and "systemic violence" which addresses the dire catastrophic consequences of economic systems. As Žižek notes in the opening of his *Violence*: "When we think about violence we tend to think about criminal acts, acts of terror, civil unrest and war" (3). In accordance with him if we want to perceive violence, we should ignore the "fascinating lure" of subjective violence which is "violence performed by a clearly recognizable agent" (*Violence* 9-11) and we should instead stare at the objective violence in the backdrop that produces subjective violence.

3.1.1. Slavoj Žižek's Theories of Violence and the Myth of Black Violence

Myth of Black Violence is a manifestation of hate-speech as a form of verbal violence that is considered as symbolic violence from Slavoj Žižek's standpoint. Symbolic violence is a type of 'othering' and is defined as the process of regarding or treating a single person or grouping of people as inherently different from or alien to oneself. Racism as a Žižekian form of objective violence produces trauma that can be transmitted inter-generationally. The racism-induced trauma can last for many years after the initial trauma. Addressing and healing the internalized Black inferiority and White superiority induced by racism take much more than talk therapy. Racism is a type of violence that is prone to remain invisible as Žižekian subjective and objective violence that is not subject to legal persecution and punishment, unless it ends up with some forms of violence, whether physical and/or psychological. Multiple effects of racism are represented in xenophobia, shadism, exclusion, economic dispossession, and other masked violent experiences. Racism takes both forms of visible and invisible violence.

3.2. Data Collection

The current paper is qualitative descriptive research based on applying a context-oriented approach. The researchers selected data extracted from Toni Morrison's novels: *The Bluest Eye*, *Sula*, and *Beloved* as the basic source of data. Due to inaccessibility to some hardcopies of books and papers printed in various journals, in addition to conferring with reference librarians, the researchers had to practice internet surfing by searching the key words related to the topic of *the myth of Black violence*. The extracted data are in the form of the characters' indirect and direct speech in the corpus novels' monologues, dialogues, phrases, sentences and quotations which describe aspects of violence practiced in slavery.

3.3. The Black Violence Myth

The myth of Black violence is a common belief that Negroes are more prone to violence and criminality. Body abuse, domestic violence, teen drug addiction and teen pregnancy contribute to this false belief. Africans have been arrested for more than half of robbery, murder, rape and aggressive acts as adults. The flip side of the coin is that victims of violence are also more likely to be black. It seems that society's perception and rigid response to violence in the black community leads to maintenance of the myth of blacks as violence-prone.

3.3.1. Myth of Race: Is Race a Myth?

The majority of myths of violence revolve around race, especially Black race. Race is defined in Webster's as "a local geographic or global human population distinguished as a more or less distinct group by genetically transmitted physical characteristics" (933). European societies to some extent have taken for granted this definition. Yet many

anthropologists, biologists, thinkers and social scientists believe that race is nothing more than an invention of our imagination. Naomi Zack in her critical work, *Race and Mixed Race* (1993), asserts that "ordinary concept of race in the United States has no scientific foundation" (18). Since the advent of slavery in the U.S., segregation has rested on the belief that there are basic discrepancies between the 'whites' and the 'blacks'. However, once the reader accepts the reasoning of Naomi Zack and many other scientists that fundamentally race is a barren and empty notion, racism would fade away: with no race, racism cannot exist.

4. Data Analysis, Discussion and Findings

This paper studies the ideologies and political strategies that end up in myths that serve political goals. In fact beliefs are hard to change even if they are scientifically proved to be wrong because they are skillfully manipulated for big goals. Myths produced by political people are "ways of communicating ideology" (Charteris-Black 22). A myth is a narrative that explains and justifies things and actions intended to make them acceptable to the receivers. Christopher G. Flood cites that political myth is inseparable from the discourse of hegemony and injustice in which one party patrols and exploits another (*Political* 174). Political myths are set up to accomplish a political target which is in the service of the benefits of dominant class. Since myths are practiced and engineered by upper class to exercise control over the subalterns, myth-making is "a normal feature of political life" (*Political* 11). Observing the discourse of the Toni Morrison's texts under investigation, one can recognize political discourse ideologies and strategies that are employed skillfully to generate *the myth of Black violence* and reinforce it in the public's mindset. Yet, this investigation will be limited to seven more frequently used ideologies and strategies in myth-making in order to perceive proper rationalizations for the exploitative and violent acts they inflict upon African-Americans.

4.1. Non-verbal strategies

Non-verbal system of communication is an integral segment in the creation of *the myth of the Black violence* represented in Toni Morrison's novels. The non-verbal system of communication depicted in the practice of violence is misused by exploitative slavery system to dominate the African slaves. Physical and psychological violence are extensively employed in the target novels of Toni Morrison by slaveholders and next rationalized and accounted for as inevitable preconditions to stop or limit the Blacks' resistance in the form of fighting back. Slavoj Žižek's book, *Violence*, emphasizes that violence stems from the system itself. Hence, systemic violence reproduces and supports the political and social status quo and its basic structures (8). Toni Morrison presents numerous examples of applying non-verbal strategies against African subalterns to dominate them. In *Beloved*, Sethe's ma'am, identified as a slave is branded with hot iron.

She bears "a circle and a cross burnt right in the skin" (72). The sign of branding on ma'am skin identifies her as a property that no longer has any claim of ownership of her own body. Ma'am's branding scar is a signifier that signifies naked violence embedded in slavery. Toni Morrison presents another evidence through the chokecherry tree "growing" on Sethe's back. Marked by schoolteacher's leather lash, Amy calls the shocking floggings on Sethe's back as a cleaved open trunk decorated with "mighty lot of branches. Leaves, too ... [with] tiny little cherry blossoms" (93). This scar, given as a result of being punished for reporting her being raped to Mrs. Garner, represents the historical tree of slavery. In all the mentioned cases, the scars signify unspeakable violence. The wound, as a historical map of slavery designed on the African slaves' flesh and bones "at once imposing identity and differentiating them from the unmarked" (Thomson 121) disappears under the destructive violence of slavery through concentrating on clearly visible acts of violence instead of studying violence in terms of its systemic and symbolic characters.

4.2. Stereotyping

African-American males have been presented and stereotyped as drug addicts, lazy, dumb, jobless, paranoid, savage criminals and violent; whereas, gendered language attributes negative stereotypes and epithets to black women such as slut, cunt, whore, bitch, and *angry Black woman trope*. In fact, negative stereotypes that follow African-Americans are dire products of the institution of black slavery. For white masters, the effective stereotypical beliefs were supposed to control how black slaves should be behaved always collectively but never as individuals. General Philip Sheridan has frequently been named as the father of the most effective and hateful proverbial stereotype against American Indians: "The only good Indian is a dead Indian" (Mieder 101). More often than naught, Sheridan's political proverb has been modernized and instead of being cited directly this proverb is minimized to the formulaic expression 'The only good X is a dead X' that gives its user a hackneyed and clichéd slogan with almost each one of the harmful, biased and negative connotative meanings attributed to its initial myth. Thus, the original proverb against Native Americans has been redirected to African-American slaves registered in Joseph Carr's *The Man with Bated Breath* (1934): "That is one of the houseboys. Honest enough if you discount the saying in these parts that the only honest nigger is a dead nigger" (33). Moreover, black women suffered much more by the negative racist, and gendered myths. Practically, black women were living in a very different situation with no social status. Bell Hooks affirms "No other group in America has so had their identity socialized out of existence as have Black women" (*Ain't* 7). They were placed at the first step of social hierarchal ladder. The ideological strategy of attributing fetishes, negative stereotypes and images to enslaved Black women in Morrison's *Beloved* works better compared to political oppressive strategies. The economic demands of extreme rate of childbearing with no lawful marriage put the Black

women in the category of whoredom. The negative stereotype of Jezebel comes from the erotic violence the African people were exposed to in the slavery period. In *Beloved* a type of ideological oppression is operating in the form of controlling negative stereotypes applied to Sethe's and Baby Suggs' bodies: *mammy*, *breeder woman* and *jezebel*. The first two stereotypes are used by the dominant party to force Sethe and Baby Suggs to provide their master with slave babies for their economic profit; albeit in the absence of lawful marriage, they turn to be jezebels. It seems that Sethe's situation was an exception. "Sethe had the amazing luck of six whole years of marriage to that somebody's son who had fathered every one of her children. A blessing she was reckless enough to take for granted, lean on ..." (23-24). However, in the case of her mother-in-law six different black men fathered Baby Suggs' eight children without legal marriage.

4.3. Racism

Due to the fact that the problematic notion of race as an inhumane issue is mostly faced by African-Americans, it has moved to touch novel as a widespread form of literary means. It is no surprising that the concept of race has obsessed Toni Morrison's mind as a giant in Black literature. Toni Morrison in her novels tried to bring the reader closer to the depth of her characters' sensitive souls suffering from racial segregation. In *The Bluest Eye*, racism is linked with negative stereotypes as savageness, ugliness, and dirtiness. Toni Morrison has peopled her debut novel with the African-Americans who due to their black skin are far distanced from cleanness and neatness. Throughout the novel the color black connotes ugliness and dirtiness. Pecola, Claudia and Frieda regard filthy places as their place and waste their time only in dirty ruins and "could go up the alley and see what's in the trash cans" (*Bluest* 26) wearing ragged clothing:

She looked at Pecola. Saw the dirty torn dress, that plaits sticking out on her head, hair matted where the plaits had come undone, the muddy shoes with the wad of gum peeping out from between the cheap soles ... (*Bluest* 94).

The negative stereotypes that result in self-loathing pass from one generation to the next generation to stick to the Africans' collective unconsciousness and mindset. Non-black kids of Morrison's novels are ingrained into the assumption that Blacks are unidentifiable and messy whilst Whites are identifiable and neat; and that whiteness associates neatness. Geraldine does her best to disconnect her family from the black community: "[Junior's] mother did not like him to play with niggers. She had explained to him the difference between colored people and niggers. They were easily identifiable. Colored people were neat and quiet; niggers were dirty and loud" (*Bluest* 87). Associating blackness with dirtiness is adopted as a natural fact. This idea is deeply internalized even among the Africans.

4.4. Othering

The etymology of the term 'other' is derived from Latin 'alter' that signifies *one of the two*. After the closing of the fifteenth century and with the growth of Eurocentrism, the term 'other' started to signify difference. 'Othering' is a process that misleadingly deindividualizes a group of subjects on various grounds such as gender, race, ethnicity, caste, and religion that are labeled as others by excluding them from the community of 'selves'. Being a black is an excuse to be othered, dehumanized and marked as violent. The blacks are, in Ela Przybylo's very words: "the marginalized group often framed as inferior or less than the group power [the whites]" (94). In *The Bluest Eye*, Pecola is othered and blamed because she is not able to fit the white standards. According to Jerome Bump, there are two types of disgrace in Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* regarding the character of Pecola: "the bodily stigma of ugliness and feminity" and "the tribal stigma of being an African-American" (156). From the beginning to the end of the novel the reader is exposed to the miserable condition of Pecola's existence who is decentralized and othered not only by white society but also by her own community.

Almost all aspects of slavery studies have been touched by race and gender. Early European settlers and explorers by misusing these concepts assumed that Black Africans were recognized as "other" and that these "others" are subject to slavery. Malesela J. Masenya extends the definition of "other" and claims "xenophobia can be viewed as attitudes, prejudices, and behavior that reject, exclude and often vilify persons based on the perception that they are outsiders or foreigners to the community, society or national identity" (81). It is not surprising that Europeans thought that they had no moral obligation to behave Africans as fellow offspring of Adam and Eve that supported the religious belief that in essence humanity is a single family. Ambrosiaster's words fortify the myth of the curse of Ham: "In God's eyes, however, a slave is a person who has sinned. Ham became a slave as a result of his sin" (De Wet n.p.). European people also assumed that polygamy as the custom of having more than one sexual partner confirmed African women's inferiority. It was females, not males, who were the easy preys of the masters and overseers' sexual harassment. It seems that bondswomen were considered first as handworkers and second as child reproducers.

4.5. Hate-Speech

A few modern thinkers have focused on destructive force of hate-speech. Slavoj Žižek asserts that objective violence is rendered in hate-speech. Jacques Lacan, Michel Foucault, and Sigmund Freud believe that the human mind is under the influence of the surrounding environment. Hate speech acts are practiced to set up and preserve adjustment of forces by manipulating the mentality of the subalterns to the subordinate position they are assigned to. Judith Butler's theories represented in her political book,

Excitable Speech (2013) render that speech has a "power to injure", once language "acts against us" (1). To support her argument, Butler quotes the American activist, Mari Matsuda: "speech does not merely reflect a relation of social domination; speech enacts domination" (4), just as language is used as a means to rebuild social foundations. Practically, speech acts theory has been regarded of significant importance in perceiving verbal abuse, sexism, gender discrimination, sexual assault, cultural diversity and crisis of identity.

In her narratives Toni Morrison gives voice to suffering souls of the people kept in slavery to make them visible and bring their physical and psychological tortures to surface. Morrison claimed that she felt she was the spokesperson for "[...] a whole world of women who either were silenced or who had never received the imprimatur of the literary world" (Lister 8). In Morrison's novels the white characters use rude mannerism, sarcasm, and insulting tone to dehumanize and humiliate the black characters. In different situations Cholly in *The Bluest Eye* is addressed by the whites as "an old dog, a snake, a ratty nigger" (18) and "dirty nigger" (189). Toni Morrison's other novels are loaded with such humiliating acts of addressing; "Breakfast? Want some breakfast, nigger? ... Hungry, nigger? (*Beloved* 63). Similarly, in *Sula* the Black community's wretched calamity is presented as "Niggers was [sic] dying like flies" (69) as though in the dominant White society they are as worthless as flies are. The racist and pejorative overtones of the term "nigger" represent the Blacks' situation in the White society. The hate speech of the White through verbal dichotomies displays the strategies of "out-group" and "in-group" This kind of collective violence is defied by Krug, et al. as "the instrumental use of violence by people who identify themselves as members of a group – whether the group is transitory or has a more permanent identity – against another group or set of individuals, to achieve political, economic or social objectives" (115). In addition, the negative stereotypical outlooks of Europeans affect the victim's psyche to such a degree that they become prone to internalize them. For example, in *The Bluest Eye*, the Breedlove's fellows share the notion that they are awfully ugly. Moreover, because ugliness is linked with being dark/nasty and darkness/and nastiness are taken as the signs of evil, the Breedloves see themselves as avatar of nastiness and evil.

4.6. Dehumanization

Dehumanization is another strategy explored in this paper which is associated with political and racial discourse when it deals with subjects of exclusion, dominance, and subjection. In this study the psychological dimension of dehumanization is emphasized. Nick Haslam claims that dehumanization in general bears upon "perceiving a person or group as lacking humanness" (401). It takes place in situations in which one group wants to harm another psychologically. Dehumanization is a psychological process by which

people in conflict devoid each other of human mental and physical characteristics and therefore were not worthy of moral consideration. In Morrison's *Beloved*, Sethe remembers: "the men coming to nurse her" (6) "those boys came in there and took my milk ... Held me down and took it" (16) "two boys with mossy teeth, one sucking on my breast the other holding me down, their book-reading teacher watching and writing it up" (70). Sethe's mind is obsessed with the memory of being dehumanized and violently raped by schoolteacher's nephews, whilst he only writes down.

4.6.1. Deindividuation and dehumanization

Deindividuation is a state when an individual becomes so immersed in the norms of the group s/he belongs to that loses his/her sense of identity. This psychological process facilitates dehumanization. The deindividuated people seem less than fully human. So they are viewed as less supported by social norms against violence than individuated ones. Once a specific group is categorized as evil, physically and mentally inferior, and not fully human, restrictions against violence tend to fade away. Dehumanization increases the likelihood of different types of violence. Dehumanization in most cases facilitates human rights' violation; violence and even genocide (leave none to tell the story).

4.6.2 Gendered Dehumanization

Within slavery system, female black slaves are dehumanized to be national resources. Each of slogans and myths that hurt the blacks paves the path to black women's exploitation such as having strong physical bodies to work as hard as men, and their ability in giving birth to child as easily as animals. All these falsehoods provide ideological justifications for inhuman struggles to patrol their fertility to meet the political economy of the White slaveholders. Compared to the white females, black women with strong, muscular body figures, rich breasts and extremely wide buttocks are considered as ideal breeders. The negative stereotype of breeder women legitimizes ideological exploitation of Black bondswomen's womb. "Strong black women were sold as breeders valued for their reproductive as well as productive capacity" (Doherty n.p.). Moreover, labeling Black women as jezebel with excessive sexual appetites is an ideological strategy. Its function is controlling Black women's reproductive organs to expand the labor of Black females' productivity for the dominating enslavers' benefit. Gurleen Grewal theorizes that black enslaved females were the "subjects of rape, enforced childbirth, and natal alienation from their children" (100). Black females' reproductive organs were controlled by their masters to deliver one child every year up to ten or more to provide their masters with economic profit. In Morrison's *Beloved*, Sethe experiences the trauma of being raped by schoolteacher's nephews and written down by schoolteacher. Sethe complains about her experience of being dehumanized: "And no one, nobody on this earth, would list her daughter's characteristics on the animal side of the paper" (298). Perhaps in order to keep her daughter human, Sethe kills her.

4.7. Animalization

Myth of Black violence is deeply rooted in stereotyped myths as extensive fallacies. Black violence myth stays strongly to the perception that African American males are much muscular and stronger than White men and lustful for the warm blood and flesh of White girls and can endure more physical pain than Whites and behave like savage beasts. A workable strategy in racism included the negative stereotype *barren sows* attributed to women unable to reproduce. Sterile women were treated like unproductive animals and were sold, in most cases, to another slaveholder. The animalization of African-Americans is a major theme in Toni Morrison slave narratives. "No, no. That's not the way. I told you to put her human characteristics on the left; her animal ones on the right. And don't forget to line them up" (*Beloved* 193). Sethe, the female protagonist in *Beloved* ponders, "[...] after they handled me like I was the cow, no, the goat, back behind, the stable because it was nasty to stay in with the horses" (237). In another scene when Pecola visits the doctor to examine her pregnancy conditions, her humanity reduces to not more than an animality: "They [niggers] deliver right away and with no pain. Just like horses" (*Bluest* 124). Observing the above quotations reveals that the black skin is connected with debasement, dirt, and animality.

5. Conclusion

This study dwelled on *the myth of Black violence* in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, *Sula*, and *Beloved*. The paper showed that through *the myth of Black violence*, Morrison is critiquing practicing misleading false slogans and myths as false beliefs, against the Africans. The analysis indicated that the discourse of the target novels witnesses practicing some discourse strategies to justify, rationalize and even legitimize the White enslavers' violence against their 'black properties' to keep them submissive and silent under the guise of protecting themselves and their society against the African slaves prone to commit rape, criminality and violence with much pain tolerance. Lastly, the current interest to Toni Morrison's texts is due to its high competency to render that exploiting the African-Americans is facilitated not by the evil nature of Westerners but by a widespread pseudo-ideologies such as *Black violence myth*. The analysis of the collected data unveils that *the myth of Black violence* is a false slogan that serves the interests of the enslavers in subjugating, exploiting and dominating the slave labor as the main source of human resources and maximum benefit.

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