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MIGRATION, MENTAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL IDENTITY IN TONI MORRISON'S TRILOGY

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MIGRATION, MENTAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL IDENTITY IN TONI MORRISON'S TRILOGY

By

LEILA TAFRESHI MOTLAGH

This Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

October 2016

This thesis is dedicated to

my parents for their endless love and support &

my dear brother and little sister for their encouragement

MIGRATION, MENTAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL IDENTITY
IN TONI MORRISON'S TRILOGY

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October 2016

Chairman: **Wan Roselezam Wan Yahya, PhD**
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This interdisciplinary study attempts to bridge the gap between Migration literature and
Trauma literature, by synthesizing a theoretical framework constructed from migration
theories, mental health and social identity. For this purpose, it systematically addresses
typology of migration and related theories as well as mental health issues, such as trauma,
stress and coping strategies. Migration, which is linked to a number of social problems
and health issues, is a major global concern recognized by the United Nations (UN), the
Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), the World Health Organization
(WHO), and the World Mental Health (WMH). In line with the global concern, this
interdisciplinary thesis seeks to analyse Toni Morrison's trilogy, *Beloved* (1987), *Jazz*
(1993) and *Paradise* (1997), generally regarded as migration literature.

The WHO defines mental health as a state of well-being whereby individuals can cope
with the normal stresses of life and productively contribute to their community. WHO
notes the significant rise in mental health problems and predicts that this will be the
second greatest cause of death and disability, by the year 2020. According to Dinesh
Bhugra, the migration process comprising pre-migration, migration and post-migration
is potentially stressful and a leading cause of mental health problems. As such, the
application of both adaptive (problem-focused strategy) and maladaptive (avoidance and
emotion-focused strategies) coping mechanisms become critical to the maintenance of
mental health. The push factor of migration theory is mainly associated with heightened
trauma, as manifested in Toni Morrison's novels through the forced migratory journeys
undertaken by the lead female characters. Since post-migration stresses, such as
resettlement, unemployment and social identity can exceed people's coping resources. A
systematic textual analysis of Toni Morrison's migration literature reveals that mental
health problems in migrant women are partly due to gender-specific stresses, pre-
migration traumas, post-migration stress factors and post-traumatic stress disorder
(PTSD). More importantly, maladaptive coping strategies and lack of social support can
undermine mental health. Consequently, the critical psychological states of migrant
women in Toni Morrison's trilogy, result from a combination of migration stresses,
traumatic events, maladaptive coping strategies and lack of social support.

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Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

PENGHIJRAHAN, KESIHATAN MENTAL DAN IDENTITI SOSIAL DALAM TRILOGI TONY MORRISON

Oleh

LEILA TAFRESHI MOTLAGH

Oktober 2016

Pengerusi: **Wan Roselezam Wan Yahya, PhD**
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Kajian antara disiplin ini mencuba untuk menghubungkan jurang antara kesusasteraan penghijrahan dan kesusasteraan trauma, melalui sintesis rangka kerja teori, dibina dari teori-teori penghijrahan, kesihatan mental dan identiti sosial. Untuk tujuan ini, ia menyampaikan tipologi penghijrahan dan teori-teori yang berkaitan serta isu-isu kesihatan mental seperti trauma, tekanan dan strategi menghadapinya secara sistematik. Penghijrahan, adalah berhubung kait dengan masalah-masalah sosial dan kesihatan, di mana ia adalah kebimbangan global utama yang dikenalpasti oleh Pertubuhan Bangsa-bangsa Bersatu (PBB), Bahagian untuk Kemajuan Wanita, Pertubuhan Kesihatan Sedunia dan juga Kesihatan Mental Dunia. Berhubung dengan kebimbangan global tersebut, tesis antara disiplin ini bertujuan untuk menganalisa trilogi Toni Morrison, secara amnya dikenali sebagai kesusasteraan penghijrahan: *Beloved* (1987), *Jazz* (1993) dan *Paradise* (1997).

Pertubuhan Kesihatan Sedunia, yang mendefinisikan kesihatan mental sebagai satu keadaan kesejahteraan di mana individu-individu boleh menghadapi tekanan dan menyumbang kepada komuniti mereka, memberi perhatian mengenai kepentingan masalah-masalah kesihatan mental dan menjangka bahawa masalah tersebut adalah penyumbang kedua terbesar kepada kematian dan ketidakupayaan pada tahun 2020. Berdasarkan Dinesh Bhugra, proses penghijrahan, termasuk pra-penghijrahan, penghijrahan dan pasca-penghijrahan, adalah tertekan dan berpotensi dalam menyebabkan masalah kesihatan mental. Oleh yang demikian, penggunaan kedua-dua mekanisme pengatasian sama ada secara penyesuaian (strategi penumpuan masalah) dan secara bukan penyesuaian (strategi pengelakan dan penumpuan emosi) menjadi kritikal dalam penyelenggaraan masalah mental. Teori penolakan atau penghijrahan, yang berkaitan terutamanya dengan trauma yang lebih serius, telah ditunjukkan dalam novel Toni Morrison melalui perjalanan penghijrahan terpaksa yang digunakan oleh wanita yang mempunyai sifat kepemimpinan. Sebagai tekanan pasca-penghijrahan, seperti penempatan semula, pengangguran dan kebimbangan identiti sosial, boleh melebihi sumber pengatasian seseorang. Analisa teks kesusasteraan penghijrahan Toni Morrison secara sistematik telah menunjukkan bahawa masalah kesihatan mental yang dihadapi

oleh wanita yang berhijrah sebahagiannya adalah disebabkan oleh tekanan khusus jantina, trauma pra-penghijrahan, faktor tekanan pasca-penghijrahan dan gangguan stress pascatrauma. Yang lebih pentingnya, strategi pengatasian yang kekurangan penyesuaian diri dan kekurangan sokongan sosial telah melebihi sumber mental mereka. Akibatnya, keadaan psikologi wanita berhijrah yang kritikal, dalam trilogi Toni Morrison, adalah disebabkan oleh kombinasi tekanan penghijrahan, kejadian trauma, strategi pengatasian yang kekurangan penyesuaian diri dan kekurangan sokongan sosial.

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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 23 May 2017 to conduct the final examination of Leila Gharibshahi on her thesis entitled "Synthesis and Characterization of Silver Nanoparticles by Thermal Treatment Method" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Doctor of Philosophy.

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This thesis was submitted to the Senate of the Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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Declaration by Members of Supervisory Committee

This is to confirm that:
- the research conducted and the writing of the thesis was under our supervision;
- Supervision responsibilities as stated in the Universiti Putra Malaysia (Graduate Studies) Rule 2003 (Revision 20120-2013) are adhered to.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background of the study

Toni Morrison is a well-known African-American novelist, editor, instructor, mother, literary scholar and leading public intellectual who brought post-colonial and ethnic concerns to the forefront of the literary world. While best known for *Beloved* (1987), that won a Nobel Prize in 1993, she is also critically acclaimed for her renditions of African-American discourse, the black diaspora and Black Feminism. More significantly, the narration of African-American migration is best portrayed in her trilogy: *Beloved* (1987), *Jazz* (1992) and *Paradise* (1997).

It is essential to point out that the three selected novels are bound by the common themes of migration and traumata. Whereas migration is the building block, the characters and the setting differ in each novel. With reference to the common migration theme, Toni Morrison's trilogy can be regarded as migration literature. Migration literature, as one of the main literary products of twenty-first century literature, can be defined as the story of any individual, character or group that migrates from home to a host society or a receiving society. Similarly, Tony Morrison's trilogy deals with the story of African-Americans from the rural South, to urban areas, in the United States. Due to the large numbers of African-Americans who participated in the mass migration, it is also called Black Migration or Great Migration. As illustrated in the appendix, the Great Migration maps indicate that African-Americans migrated from the Southern states to industrial areas in the United States. The Great Migration is considered to be one of the main demographic changes in the modern history of the United States.

I believe that *Jazz* (1992) and *Paradise* (1997) are shining examples of mass migration stories in African-American literature. By contrast, *Beloved* (1987) represent an individual case within African-American migration. Although the mass migration of African Americans is best exemplified in *Jazz* (1993) as a great movement sparking social change during the Harlem Renaissance, the novel *Beloved* (1987), set in the era of Post-Civil War Cincinnati, deals with the precursor movements of the Great Migration. *Paradise* (1997) covers different stages of the Black Migration, such as post-Emancipation period and the consequent Civil Right Movements. As a result, each novel in the trilogy narrates a different period of time in African-American migration, and has a different typology of migration. Consequently, each novel requires close reading and discussion, as far as textual analysis is concerned. More interestingly, this thesis will also take gender issues into consideration. Although male migration is mainly associated with the labour market, female migration, on the other hand, is not only associated with cheap labour but also subject to gender-specific stress factors, such as rape and miscarriage. Therefore, I will examine gender-specific stress factors with reference to different migrant women in Toni Morrison's selected novels.

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The other predominant theme across Toni Morrison's trilogy is trauma, which refers to a sudden physical or physiological event that has long-lasting effects, such as rape or torture. Accordingly, trauma literature or trauma fiction, being one of the main literary products of twenty-first century literature, refers to any piece of writing centralising on traumatic themes. More importantly, trauma literature dramatizes the grim realities, as it seeks to visualize the psychological state of the characters. Hence, trauma literature can be interpreted as an extension of psychological novels, and trauma is one of the most frequent themes in Morrison's works. For instance, issues of rape trauma are dealt with in her major novels, such as *The Bluest Eye* (1970), *Tar Baby* (1981), *Beloved* (1987), and *Paradise* (1997). Moreover, major characters in her trilogy experience specific traumatic events, such as crime of passion, race riots and infanticide. In comparison to other post-colonial novelists, the frequency of traumatic events in her various novels makes Toni Morrison a master of trauma literature. Thus, her novels provide solid ground for examining different psychological methods and various theoretical approaches.

It is critical to clarify that Toni Morrison's trilogy serves not only as migration literature, but also as trauma literature. This being said, it is vital to clarify the difference between the two. As mentioned earlier, both migration literature and trauma literature take their names from events involving migration and trauma, respectively. As far as literature is concerned, these two types of novels are perceived as separate entities. My argument is that since trauma may lead to migration, these events may be analysed simultaneously. Thus, it is important to point out that migration literature can go beyond its own boundaries to encompass trauma literature. By contrast, trauma literature is limited by its own boundaries. The uniqueness of this thesis lies in the central argument that although Toni Morrison's trilogy is recognized as migration literature, foregrounding trauma would elucidate the link between trauma and migration literature.

Although this trilogy shares the common theme of migration, each novel describes a distinct set of traumatic events experienced by its female characters. For instance, the opening paragraphs of *Jazz* (1992) narrate a crime of passion. Similarly, the opening of *Paradise* (1997) describes the massacre of migrant women. More importantly, *Beloved* (1987) elaborates, within a migratory narrative, the trauma of gang rape and infanticide. In comparison to other novels by Toni Morrison that are mainly concerned with trauma, the trilogy addresses these traumatic events in the historical context of the Great Migration. For these reasons, literary critics consider her novels to be either migration literature or trauma literature, not both. However, this thesis makes distinction through the critical and theoretical link between migration and trauma, which helps to elucidate interdisciplinary interpretation of the trilogy.

On the other hand, Toni Morrison's novels seem to lend themselves to post-colonial theories and diaspora criticism. Therefore, extensive literary criticism has been carried out in these areas. Most studies are concerned with the diasporic experiences of black people in a white context. To be specific, literary criticism has mainly focused on the black-and-white dichotomy in post-colonialism, diaspora and cultural studies. Unfortunately, the migration theories that are central to Morrison's trilogy, and their consequences, have been overshadowed by the abovementioned post-colonial and diaspora criticism and slavery discourse. While acknowledging the horrible conditions

faced by black slaves, this thesis will attempt to take the existing knowledge in post-colonialism and diaspora criticism a step further, by taking inter-disciplinary studies into consideration.

To illustrate the argument, the existing knowledge in African-American literature is associated with black identity and/or ethnic identity; I will attempt to take it a step further with social identity, which is a new plateau of knowledge. Likewise, the literary criticism surrounding Toni Morrison's novels highlights black feminism. Black feminists are mostly infatuated with gender, class and race discriminations. I will also attempt to take the existing knowledge from black feminism to gender studies, which can be regarded as a recent phenomenon in academic doctrine. For the purpose of this study, I will identify gender specific stress factors affecting the female characters. By addressing gender studies and social identity, this thesis bridges the gap between black identity, social identity and black feminism. In turn, this will create more room for inter-disciplinary discussions and critical appreciation.

Another point to consider is the differentiation between forced labour in the slavery discourse and voluntary migration in the labour market that separates diaspora and migration literature. To be specific, diaspora studies and migration literature are two distinct entities with different implications. Diaspora studies have wide implications in literary theory; whereas, migration theories are firmly established in the social sciences and psychology. Most diaspora studies which have been carried out in relation to culture and ethnic issues, have overlooked many psychological and social concerns. In contrast, migration studies in the social sciences are well documented by the most recent empirical research in the fields of psychology and sociology. In comparison to diaspora studies, psychosocial issues are more authentic and relevant in the novels. Although the aforementioned disciplines are very closely related to literary theories, there remains a gap in the critical analysis of these novels.

Thus, this thesis attempts to present new and interesting insights into both, literary theory and critical analysis, as there is a need to enhance critical outlook by implementing more practical methods related to psychological theories. This is due in part to the fact that the previous methods worked for either migration literature *or* trauma literature. In comparison to the previous literary theories, such as black feminism and/or ethnic studies, the current approach takes critical analysis a step further by covering different dimensions of the novels. To be specific, it employs interdisciplinary studies as an umbrella term, in order to cover different disciplines, (figure 1.1) and present the link between migration literature and trauma literature.

1.2   Statement of the problem

In the present day, migration is linked to a number of social and health issues in the global community. The rapid increases in global mobility and mass migration have resulted in a great influx of migrants within North America. Due to vast social and demographic changes, many international organizations, such as the United Nations (UN), the World Health Organization (WHO) and World Mental Health (WMH), are concerned about the socio-economic aspects of migration, such as public health, mental health and the psychological well-being of migrants. Along with annual global

conferences centred on migrant issues, the United Nations is specifically concerned with the effects of migration on women. Consequently, the United Nations' Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) follows the latest trends in women's studies and migration.

Given the aforementioned global concerns, the focus on gender, migration and mental health, is imperative. Furthermore, these issues highlight the gap in literary theory, and consequently, in the criticism of Toni Morrison's works. This study attempts to develop an argument in order to lay the groundwork for a novel analytic view point, in which mental health problems of Toni Morrison's female characters can be viewed not only as a consequence of their traumatic pasts, but also due to their migratory stresses.
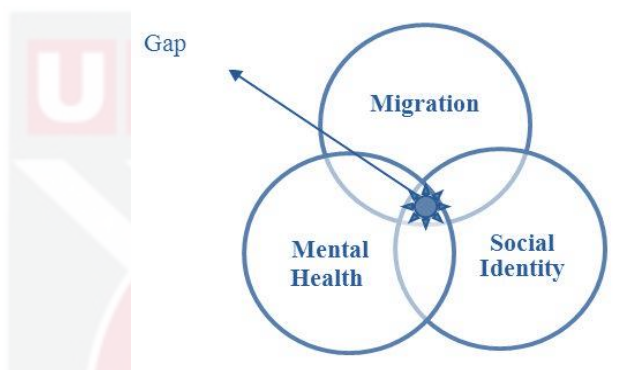
Figure 1.1: Interrelatedness of Migration, Mental Health and Social Identity

The central question in this research, however, is focused on the way that migration can affect mental-health in Toni Morrison's trilogy. Migration is stressful and the vital question about mental health is how one copes with stress. To illustrate, there are three common coping strategies, namely avoidance, emotion-focused and problem-focused. Avoidance and emotion-focused coping strategies are associated with mental health problems, while problem-focused coping strategy is regarded as an effective way to cope with different stresses. Accordingly, it considers how female characters cope or fail to cope with migration stress factors. In particular, this study examines how social identity can either induce and/or buffer stress, in migration studies or the fictional world of Toni Morrison's novels.

1.3   Scope of the study

This study focuses on a textual analysis of Toni Morrison's trilogy of novels, *Beloved* (1987), *Jazz* (1993) and *Paradise* (1997), which are both popular and controversial because of their multifaceted characters. It is the complexity that contributes to both, literary analysis and global migratory discourse. Although previous literary analyses of Morrison's trilogy have been conducted from different perspectives, it still poses one of the greatest challenges in the theoretical development of this study academia and literary critics have already attempted more common literary approaches, such as psychoanalysis or feminism. Therefore, interdisciplinary methodology is an alternative

approach that allows a simultaneous contribution to both the field of literary criticism and the existing global concerns.

Due to the interdisciplinary nature of this thesis, it defines its limitations based on the interaction between three theories (figure1.1) namely, migration, mental health and social-identity. First and foremost, this thesis focuses on Dinesh Bhugra's theory of migration. In particular, this section will address migration stress factors which in the second part, mental health will limit itself to strategies for coping with stress. Thus, the relationship between migration and mental health becomes meaningful in terms of stress and coping strategies. The last section in this interdisciplinary study will address social identity theory, which has wide implications in the social sciences and literary theory. This research limits itself to intergroup relationships, and the social psychology of minority groups. In comparison to other concepts in social identity theory, intergroup relationships are more applicable to the relationship between migrant communities and receiving societies. In addition, the social psychology of minority groups, serves to demystify migration stress and mental health.

1.4   Theoretical framework

As previously mentioned and illustrated in the figure 1.1, this research is an interdisciplinary study of migration, mental health and social identity. Its conceptual theory is synthesized from the aforementioned theories to explain the psychological state of migrant women in Morrison's trilogy. It is important to highlight that migration theory is at the core of this thesis, while other complementary theories, such as social identity theory, serve as a link to explain mental health and well-being of migrant women. This research also deals with two fundamental distinctions concerning migration theories. First of all, it is important to determine the typology of migration, because this affects the process and outcomes of migration. Accordingly, the typology of migration refers to either push or pull theory of migration. The push theory of migration is associated with forced migration; whereas, the pull theory refers to voluntary migration. These key concepts which also deal with migration stress factors will be fully discussed in the third chapter. Despite the typology of migration, all migrants feel multiple stresses, albeit in varying degrees. Thus, migration theories and stress factors are at the core of this study.

It is worth mentioning that common psychological debates in mental health cover different disciplines. Since migration resides at the core of this thesis, any other elements will be explained in relation to it. For the purposes of this thesis, I refer to Tajfel theories. Hence, this thesis will employ social identity theory, in general, and intergroup relations, minorities and communities in more specific ways.

To be specific, the framework of this thesis is based on Dinesh Bhugra's theory of migration. For more details please refer to Figure 1.2. According to his theory, migration consists of three main stages, namely pre-migration, migration and post-migration. And each stage has its own stress factors; when dealing with this area it is essential to have a concise view of migration theories. As migration narratives are fragmented within Morrison's novels, it is reasonable to identify migration theory for

each individual female character separately. On this research journey I aim to examine how different stages of migration affect mental health of migrant women.
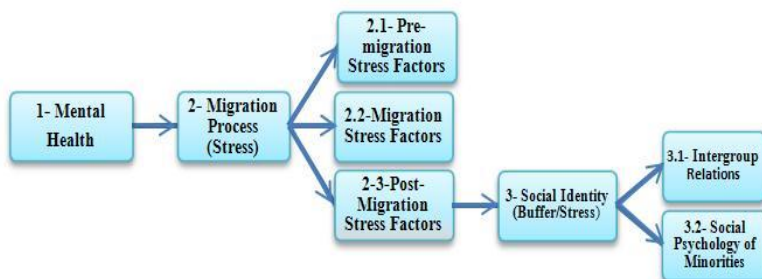
Figure 1.2: Theoretical Framework

Based on my synthesized theoretical framework, (Figure 1.2), the last step in the migration process, the post-migration stage, also deals with social identity problems. More precisely, migrants go through different procedures to acquire their social identity in the receiving society. According to Henri Tajfel's social identity theory, challenges consist of different parts. For the purposes of this thesis, I focus on the 'intergroup relations' and 'social psychology' of minority groups in his theory. I believe that migrants also face community and minority group challenges in the post-migration period. I will discuss my theoretical framework in the third chapter.

1.5 Methodology

This research employs different disciplines from the social sciences, to derive an applicable theory for literary criticism. To this end, it examines different theories in areas such as migration, mental health and social identity, to develop a theoretical framework. In developing a logical argument, I will examine various theories in subsequent chapters. It is expected that the current interdisciplinary study will cover the gap between migration literature and trauma literature.

This chapter intends to lay out a roadmap for our research journey, which begins with the reasons for migration, the difficulties encountered during migration, and concludes with the difficulties experienced in adapting to the receiving society after migration. In this discussion, I will refer to Dinesh Bhugra's migration theory and diagrams, as well as Henri Tajfel's social identity theory. Of significance is Dinesh Bhugra's migration theory which is central to this thesis.

To begin, I provide readers with the definition of terms and the key concepts employed. Then, the procedures and mechanisms through which migration, mental health and social identity affect each other will be elaborated. For instance, migration has a negative effect on mental health, whereas, social identity and social ties have a positive impact on it. In particular, the interactions of the variables will be discussed.

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1.6   Objectives of the study

This thesis seeks to address the following issues. The first and most important research question or task in this thesis is to construct a typology of migration for Toni Morrison's trilogy. Generally, a typology of migration is divided into two categories, including push or pull theories of migration. In pull theory, people migrate for the promise of a better life in another place. As a matter of fact, the pull factors of migration are associated with voluntary migration. In contrast, the push factors of migration are associated with forced migration. In this type of migration, people leave their homes because of some threats, such as political pressure, social upheaval, financial crisis, natural disaster, war, violence or trauma. Trauma is therefore a significant factor of migration, in the push-pull theory of migration. Due to its critical role in migration typology, I will attempt to investigate the implications of trauma in Toni Morrison's trilogy.

The second research question or task, is to identify the stress factors associated with migration in Toni Morrison's trilogy. Based on Dinesh Bhugra's theory of migration, it is crucial to investigate specific pre-migration, migration and post-migration stress factors, since migration can affect migrants' mental health.

The third objective seeks to investigate the relationship between migration and mental health alongside stress and coping strategies. According to Lazarus and Folkman's model, there are three types of coping strategies, including avoidance, emotion-focused and problem-focused. A fundamental issue concerning migration stress is the way in which characters cope or fail to cope with stress. Based on the fact that coping strategies determine psychological well-being, this thesis will focus on their role in shaping mental health of Toni Morrison's migrant women throughout their journey.

Last but not the least, I will examine the role of social identity in Toni Morrison's migrant women using Henri Tajfel's social identity theory. To this end, I intend to explore how the traumatic experiences of migrant women can impact their everyday lives. To summarize, the following research questions will be addressed in the mentioned selected novels:

1- What is the typology of migration in Toni Morrison's trilogy?
2- What are the migration stress factors for migrant women in these novels?
3- How do female characters cope with migration stress and trauma? What coping strategies, related to stress and mental health are found in the novels?
4- What role does social identity play for female characters? Does social identity act as a buffer or an intensifier of stress in Toni Morrison's trilogy?

1.7   Significance of the study

This thesis makes several noteworthy contributions to literature, literary criticism and interdisciplinary study vis-à-vis Toni Morrison's trilogy. The main contributions of this study are divided into two sections.

1.7.1 Significance of the study in Toni Morrison's trilogy

The main contributions to the field of literary criticism can be classified into three items. As mentioned earlier, this thesis presents the missing link between migration literature and trauma literature in Toni Morrison's trilogy. In addition, it takes the existing knowledge of black identity and/or ethnic identity to a new plateau of knowledge, which is social identity. Moreover, it expands the boundaries of black feminism to encompass gender studies in Toni Morrison's selected novels.

It is important to remind that the current state of literary criticism in Toni Morrison's novels focuses on black identity and/or ethnic identity, with reference to post-colonial debates. There is scant discussion on the social identity of Toni Morrison's migrant women. Therefore, this study enhances our understanding of the role of social identity in migration literature. As a result, it expands migration theory by taking it a step further to encompass social identity issues.

Furthermore, some critics have paid considerable attention to black feminism or the double-colonization of African-American women in Toni Morrison's trilogy. Despite these discussions, the gender role in historical events such as the Great Migration remains largely unaccounted for in the criticism of her novels. Thus, one of the main contributions of this study is to fill these gaps in relation to the literary criticism of Toni Morrison's trilogy.

1.7.2 Significance of the study in interdisciplinary studies

As an interdisciplinary study, this thesis will synthesize a new theoretical framework for literary criticism, which will be applicable to other migration literature written by other ethnic minorities. By merging migration theory with social identity theory, this thesis synthesizes a new theory which encompasses literary criticism and social science analysis. Notwithstanding, the most significant contribution of this synthesized theoretical framework is the alliance between migration literature and trauma literature, thus enhancing our critical appreciation of Toni Morrison's masterpieces. In addition, this synthesized theoretical framework will have implications for the social sciences, the construct of literary criticism and, more specifically, diaspora literature.

Literary critics have analysed Toni Morrison's trilogy as either migration literature *or* trauma literature. This thesis however, paints a comprehensive picture of both forms of critical analysis. It is worth stating that a significant objective contribution of this thesis has been the identification and explanation of the missing link between migration literature and trauma literature.

Uniquely, this thesis investigates global concerns related to migration and mental health, in line with WHO's prediction that by the year 2020, mental health problems will be the second most serious cause of disability after heart disease. This international concern further underlines the necessity for, and significance of this interdisciplinary study of Toni Morrison's trilogy.

1.8 Limitations of the study

This thesis limits itself to Dinesh Bhugra's theory of migration. According to Bhugra, migration is stressful, and the association between stress and coping strategies is a determining factor in mental health. Migration theories deal specifically with different stress factors whereas, mental health addresses coping strategies and stress factors.

It is also significant to point out that gender is a key concept in migration studies, because it intensifies migration related stresses in women. Consequently, this study limits itself to mental health and social identity of migrant women. Point often overlooked is that gender plays a critical role in the migration process and its outcome: hence some criteria of migration theories might not be applicable to both genders. For instance, male migration is mainly regarded as labour migration, whereas female migration studies are regarded as gender related stresses. Since the main characters in Morrison's trilogy are migrant women, this study necessarily takes gender into consideration.

Despite the fact that there are similar debates in post-colonialism and diaspora studies, this research must acknowledge that they do not fall within the scope of this study. Although this thesis takes psychology and the psychological well-being of migrant women into consideration, Lacanian or Freudian psychoanalysis and implications are not intended. Instead, this study will limit itself to the psychological and social aspects of migration, and use the interdisciplinary study to expand migration theories and critical discussion. Accordingly, Toni Morrison's trilogy will be analysed with reference to the expansion of migration theories that would be applicable to mass migrations or migration crisis.

1.9 Definition of key terms

Hereby, the researcher refers to the definition of key terms in the three interrelated fields. The key concepts that need to be addressed in this section are related to migration, mental health and social identity, as they appear in the succeeding paragraphs. In the context and scope of this thesis, the technical terms are defined as follows:

Push factors: Push/pull factors have been used to explain massive human migrations. "Push" factors include human relocation due to some environmental changes – such as greater aridity, social problems associated with famine, overpopulation, wars, disease, floods, absence of security, and religion persecution (Crawford & Cambell, 2012).

Pull factors: Pull factors denote migration into regions that are more desirable, such as having milder climates, more resources - for example, availability of food, land, grasslands for pastoral population, economic opportunities such as employment, and freedom from religious or political persecution (Crawford & Cambell, 2012) .

Migration literature: The present time is an age of unparalleled mobility, migration and border crossing … It is a grand spectacle of the virtual surge of people flowing across the surface of the globe: refugees, exiles, expatriates, international vagrants, guest workers, immigrants, globetrotting travellers and package tourists, wanderers of all kinds, crisscrossing the planet and all its national, ethnic, cultural, social and linguistic boarders … Movement and migration, and all the ideas that come with it of the human condition of restlessness and new mobile identity formations, has had noticeable impact on literary production too. It has even engendered a new type of writing, it is sometimes argued, in the form of a contemporary literature of migration (Moslund, 2010).

Migration: Migration is a process of social change whereby an individual moves from one cultural setting to another for the purpose of settling down either permanently or for prolonged periods. Such a shift can arise for any number of reasons, commonly, economic, political or educational betterment. The process is inevitably stressful and stress can lead to mental illness (Bhugra & Jones, 2001).

Pre-migration, migration, post-migration: The migratory process comprises three stages. The first, pre-migration, is when individuals decide to migrate and plan to move. The second involves the process of migration itself and the physical transition from one place to another which involves all necessary psychological and social steps. The third stage, post-migration, is when individuals deal with social and cultural frameworks of the new society, learn new roles and become interested in transforming their group (Bhugra & Jones, 2001).

Mental health: Mental health has been defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as the 'state of well-being where the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make contribution to his or her community (Ujano-Batangan, Wolffers, van der Ham, & Ignacio, 2011).

Coping strategy: Coping is defined as the person's constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/ or internal stressors that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the person's resources (Folkman, Lazarous, Dunkel-Shettle, Delongis, & Gruen, 1986).

Trauma literature: The dilemma of remembering a painful past has been crucial, especially in the last two hundred years which saw periods of unprecedented social, economic, and political changes, genocide and disappearing cultures. Testifying to the past has become a compelling task for many fiction writers as they attempt to preserve personal and collective memories from assimilation, repression, or misinterpretation. Their work reflects a growing awareness of the effects of catastrophes and oppression on the individual psyche: a perspective that has emerged with the examination of psychological consequences of wars, Holocaust, poverty, colonization, and domestic abuse… Trauma narratives - fictional narratives that help readers to access traumatic experiences - have gained prominence among diverse artistic, scholarly, and testimonial representations in illuminating the personal and public aspects of trauma,

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and in elucidating our relationship to memory and forgetting within complex interweavings of social and psychological relationships (Vickroy, 2002).

Trauma: An event or context is considered as potentially traumatizing if it is unpredictable, uncontrollable, and a severe or catastrophic violation of fundamental beliefs and expectations (e.g. about safety, physical integrity, justice […] direct life threat, observing violence and extreme suffering, and sexual assault (Antony & Barlow, 2010).

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD): PTSD patients are stuck in time and continually re-exposed to the traumatic event through daytime recollections that persistently interrupt ongoing thoughts, actions or feelings. They are assaulted by terrifying nightmares that awaken them and make them afraid to go back to sleep (Scott & Palmer, 2000)**.**

Trauma trigger: They cannot tolerate any reminders of the trauma since these often trigger intense fear, anxiety, guilt, rage or disgust. In some cases, they suffer PTSD flashbacks, psychotic episodes in which reality dissolves and they are plunged back into the apparent reality of a traumatic event that has haunted them for years or decades (Scott & Palmer, 2000).

Social identity: Social Identity Theory (SIT) proposed that salient social categorization, coupled with in-group identification, are both necessary and sufficient for intergroup discrimination to occur along a mutually valued and relevant comparison dimension. The theory expounds such apparently irrational discrimination in terms of fundamental social psychological processes that may occur in addition to, as well as in the absence of, any historical, ideological, or material justification for conflict (Rubin & Hewstone, 1998).

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