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Identity in Toni Morrison's *Jazz*

Petra Paulusová

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Jméno a příjmení: **Petra Paulusová**
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Z á s a d y   p r o   v y p r a c o v á n í :

V úvodu práce studentka stručně zařadí zvolenou autorku do literárně-historického kontextu, především do souvislostí Afro-Americké literatury. Studentka s použitím relevantní sekundární literatury nejprve podrobněji pojedná o pojmu identita, (příp. post-identita) a to jak osobní, tak kulturní, a o vztahu identity, národnosti a rasy. Jádrem práce bude analýza zvoleného románu (Jazz) z hlediska zachycení problematiky osobní a rasové (příp. genderové) identity. Studentka své vývody bude ilustrovat ukázkami z primárních děl a konfrontovat s relevantními kritickými zdroji. Závěrem studentka své vývody shrne a pokusí se vyslovit obecnější závěr o způsobu pojednání problematiky identity ve zvoleném literárním díle.

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prof. PhDr. Petr Vorel, CSc.
děkan

Mgr. Šárka Bubíková, Ph.D.
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Prohlašuji:

Tuto práci jsem vypracovala samostatně. Veškeré literární prameny a informace, které jsem v práci využila, jsou uvedeny v seznamu použité literatury.

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Petra Paulusová

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Annotation

This bachelor thesis deals with the analysis of different types of identity depicted in Toni Morrison's novel *Jazz*. Firstly African-American literature is introduced, after that Morrison's novels are briefly described within the context of African-American history. The largest part of the thesis is covered with defining and examining the selected types of identities, namely personal, ethnic, racial and gender identities. Each chapter dealing with a different type of identity includes an analysis of its depiction in the novel *Jazz*. Throughout the thesis a special attention is devoted to the situation of African Americans in early 20th century in America, predominantly the 1920s, the period in which *Jazz* is set.

Keywords: *Jazz*, Harlem Renaissance, identity, personal identity, racial identity, ethnic identity, gender identity.

Anotace

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá analýzou různých typů identit zobrazených v románu Toni Morrisonové *Jazz*. Nejprve je představena afroamerická literatura, poté jsou krátce popsány romány Morrisonové v kontextu afroamerické historie. Nejrozsáhlejší část práce se zabývá definováním and rozborem vybraných typů identit, tj, osobní, etnické, rasové a genderové. Každá kapitola zabývající se konkrétním typem identity obsahuje také analýzu jejího zobrazení v románu *Jazz* založenou na teoretickém pojednání o identitách. V průběhu práce je věnována zvýšená pozornost situaci Afroameričanů na počátku 20. století v Americe, především pak ve dvacátých letech, což je období, do kterého je román *Jazz* zasazený.

Klíčová slova: *Jazz*, Harlemská renesance, identita, osobní identita, rasová identita, etnická identita, genderová identita.

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Introduction

Identity is a part of every person regardless of where, when, in which social class and to whom they were born, who they are and what sort of people they become in their life. The term is frequently associated with identity theft, which is an often discussed problem these days, as it has become easy to steal someone's identity and use it for example to request a loan. People's identities are important for the way they are perceived by others: a person can be 'labelled' in a positive or a negative way. People build multiple shared identities throughout their lives including example 'a mother', 'a child', 'a teacher', 'a deceiver', 'a comedian', etc., but at the same time they keep their unique identity which distinguishes them from others.

As in this bachelor thesis the concept of identity will be examined in Toni Morrison's *Jazz,* the novel will be briefly introduced. *Jazz* is the second novel in a trilogy dealing with different kinds of love. The first book in the trilogy is *Beloved* and the last one is *Paradise*. *Jazz* is predominantly set in 1920s New York. The main characters are Joe and Violet Trace, agricultural laborers from rural Virginia who migrate in 1906 to the city. The opening paragraph of the book summarizes the entire plot:

> [T]hat woman […] used to live with a flock of birds on Lenox Avenue. […] her husband […] fell for an eighteen-year old girl with one of those deepdown, spooky loves that made him so sad and happy he shot her just to keep the feeling going. When the woman, her name is Violet, went to the funeral to see the girl and cut her dead face they threw her to the floor and out of the church.[1]

Apart from this basic storyline, Morrison moves back and forth between times and places; throughout the book the reader learns above all about Joe's and Violet's childhood, their migration from the South, their relationship after the funeral and also lives of other characters.

Jazz was inspired by a true event, as Morrison explained in her foreword to *Jazz*. She once saw a photograph of a dead girl lying in a coffin in *The Harlem Book of the Dead* and the scene became the inspiration for the main storyline. Like Dorcas in *Jazz*, the girl from the photograph was shot by her ex-lover at a party and refused to be helped or reveal the murderer's identity.[2] Setting the novel in a specific period of the African-American history,

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[1] Toni Morrison, *Jazz* (London: Vintage, 2001), 3.
[2] Toni Morrison, foreword to *Jazz* (London: Vintage, 2001) ix-x.

Morrison examined the period very carefully to be able to depict it as authentically as possible. As she explains in the foreword to *Jazz*:

> To reproduce the flavor of the period, [she] had read issues of every "Colored" newspaper [she] could for the year 1926. The articles, the advertisements, the columns, the employment ads. [She] had read Sunday School programs, graduation ceremony programs, minutes of women's club meetings, journals of poetry, essays. [She] listened to the scratchy "race" records with labels like Okeh, Black Swan, Chess, Savoy, King, Peacock.[3]

The aim of this thesis is to analyze different types of identity depicted in Toni Morrison's *Jazz* including personal, ethnic, racial and gender identities. The thesis is divided into two main chapters. Firstly, African-American literature is outlined and Toni Morrison's novels are briefly described in the context of African-American history. In the second chapter, identity is defined as a generic term as examined by several different experts. This chapter includes three subchapters. In the first one focused on personal identity, the term itself is defined and described. After that, its depiction in *Jazz* is analyzed on the examples of two main characters.

In the second subchapter, ethnic and racial identities are intentionally described together, as in some aspects they may seem to mingle with each other, yet they should be understood as two different terms. Thus at the beginning of the chapter concerning ethnic and racial identities differences between both terms are described with regard to opinions of various people focusing on this particular field of study. The characteristic of African-American identity, particularly its development during the Harlem Renaissance, is included in this chapter. Firstly the terminology and theory are described followed by the examination of different parts of books relevant to the selected topic.

In the third subchapter gender identity and its formation are described, focusing on defining the term as well as distinguishing between the terms 'gender' and 'sex.' Increased emphasis is put on female gender identity and the role of mothers, as these concepts play an important role in the novel. The theory is after that applied on different parts of the novel and ideas concerning the depiction of identity in the book are supported with various excerpts focusing predominantly on women, gender roles and gender identity differences in *Jazz*.

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[3] Morrison, foreword to *Jazz*, x-xi.

1 Toni Morrison in the literary and historical context

African-American literature is a literature written by Americans of African descent. Works deal with various themes and issues, such as African-American culture, the role of African Americans within American society, equality, racism, slavery and migration.

The first African-American book was written by African-born enslaved Phillis Wheatley. Written in 1773, it was called *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral*. Another early African-American author, a poet Jupiter Hammon, is considered to be one of the founders of African-American literature.

From 1830 to the Civil War, the fugitive slave narrative dominated the black literary world. Usually written by fugitive slaves or later by former slaves after slavery was abolished, slave narratives serve as historical documents due to accuracy of historical facts they include. The most popular narratives written before the Civil War by writers such as Frederick Douglass, William Wells Brown or Harriet Jacobs were focused on the survival in slavery, attempts to escape northward, slaveholder brutality, working conditions, the cultural and religious life of slaves, etc. The most famous slave narrative published after the Civil War by a former slave is Booker T. Washington's *Up from Slavery* (1901).

The Civil Rights leader W.E.B. Du Bois became famous in the post-slavery era for his work *The Souls of Black Folk*. Probably the most significant period of African-American literature was the Harlem Renaissance, a cultural movement that spanned in the 1920s. The most famous writers were for example Langston Hughes, Jessie Faucet, Countee Cullen, Zora Neale Hurston and Nella Larsen.

To continue with, the Civil Rights Movement era was marked with the second wave of Great Migration, during which many African Americans moved to industrial cities in the North for more job opportunities. The most important writers of this period are for example Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison and Lorraine Hansberry.

Beginning in the 1970s, African-American literature reached the mainstream, as books written by black authors received many awards and became bestsellers. The most famous recent writers are Alice Walker with her epistolary novel *The Color Purple* and the first African-American author to win a Nobel Prize for literature, Toni Morrison.[4] This author was born in Lorain, Ohio, 1931 as Chloe Ardelia Wofford. Both of her parents had migrated from the South as children and consequently the topic of the migration from the South later

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[4] Encyclopædia Britannica Online, s. v., "African American literature," accessed November 13, 2013, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/926640/African-American-literature.

appeared in some of Morrison's novels. She was the only African-American student in her first grade class and thus was forced to deal with racial issues. Morrison's work is closely related to African-American history and many of her novels map a particular aspect or a period of African-American history or culture.

African Americans have been part of the American culture from the beginning of the first European settlements on the American continent. They were brought as servants and later as slaves. Slavery further developed in the second half of the 18th century when slave trade increased. In one of her later works, *Mercy*, Morrison goes back to the beginning of slavery in America telling a story of an Anglo-Dutch trader in 1680s United States.

After the Declaration of Independence in 1776 slavery had been gradually abolished in the North. In the South, however, cotton industry expanded at the beginning of the 19th century and thus slavery was strongly supported there. Consequently the nation was divided into two groups of states; slave states and free states. Although the international slave trade was prohibited in 1808, the internal slave trade continued. Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 was one of the last steps towards abolition and after the end of the Civil war which resulted in the Union' s victory, Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution was passed freeing the remaining slaves. Probably Morrison's most famous novel, *Beloved* is predominantly set after the Civil War and focuses on slavery and life after slavery was abolished. The theme of the slave transportation from Africa to America, known as the Middle Passage, is also discussed in the novel. This work is based on a true story of a mother, an escaped slave, attempting to kill her children to spare them from the horrors of slavery.

Finally free, illiterate African Americans found themselves with no shelter and work and they were often forced to work on plantations for absurdly low wages. Not many employment options were available for them, as all they were acquainted with was farming. At the end of the 19th century and in the early 20th century they began to move to the North and Midwest. It led to the Great Migration which started in 1916 and by 1930, more than one tenth of African-American population moved north. Morrison depicts the migration in this period though the main characters in her novel *Jazz*. Joe and Violet left the rural, agricultural South to move to the urban, industrial North. Like many other African Americans, they began their new lives in Harlem, New York, dealing with geographical dislocation, culture shock and integration. After the First World War a struggle for jobs and housing in urban American areas began, as white soldiers returning from the war wanted back their former job positions, now held by blacks, which eventually culminated in riots and bloody conflicts between the

white population and African Americans. Harlem, an African-American urban community in New York, spread and since the 1920s and ever since has been known as a major African-American residential, cultural and business center. African-American creative literature, music and arts began to flourish there. This period, also known as the "Harlem Renaissance," will be examined from different aspects in detail throughout this thesis. The novel *Jazz* is predominantly set at this time. Jazz music plays an important role in the novel: it is present in the background and gives the story a specific form.

Although African Americans fled from the South, they did not escape segregation and discrimination which spread very soon in the North. The educational and work opportunities and living conditions were poor; their living standards, however, considerably improved compared to the lives they led in the South. In the 1930s the already desperate economic situation of African Americans worsened due to the Great Depression. They lost their jobs and most employers preferred hiring white people. Published in 1970, Morrison's first novel *The Bluest Eye* is set in Ohio in the times after the Great Depression and the author depicts incest, domestic violence and racism.

Help came with the New Deal programs, from which African Americans greatly benefited. Low-cost public housing was made available to black families; their children were allowed to continue their education. Many African Americans were given jobs and the work of many black authors was supported. During the World War II, the Second great migration of blacks from the South began. During the Korean War in the early 1950s blacks fought side by side with whites for the first time. Morrison's latest work, *Home*, is set in the 1950s. It focuses on a story of a soldier who has come back from the Korean War and tries to find himself in racist America.

Since the Civil Rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s, the situation of African Americans has much improved in terms of politics and economy. Racism against them, however, never completely disappeared. Morrison's second novel, *Sula*, is set around the half of the 20th century and deals with discrimination and racism against African Americans. The novel *Love* takes place in a sixty-year period in the latter half of the 20th century and depicts an impact of racial segregation and the process of desegregation on the lives of one family. For her third novel, *Song of Solomon*, the author won her first prize. It focuses on the African-American experience of three generations focusing on a man who is trying to find his own self. It is predominantly set in a thirty-year period finishing with the Civil Rights Movement.

2 Identity

There are many definitions and interpretations of the term identity. Metaphysicians, psychologists, philosophers and sociologists perceive the term in different ways and each definition examines the issue from a different point of view. The root of the word identity is Latin 'idem', which means 'same'. It originated in the late 16th century.[5]

To begin with, in the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, identity is explained as "the characteristics, feelings or beliefs that distinguish people from others."[6] Similarly, the social psychologist Richard Jenkins claims that identity "denotes the ways in which individuals and collectivities are distinguished in their social relations with other individuals and collectivities."[7] Hogg and Abrams, also social psychologists, understand identity as "people's concepts of who they are, of what sort of people they are, and how they relate to others."[8] It follows that many definitions suggest that identity is something unique distinguishing individuals from other people. Steph Lawler emphasizes the uniqueness of one's identity as well claiming that it is something hidden inside each person, influenced by the surrounding world and people but not made by it. Identities are for example constituted and shaped by stories of people's life, stories about their childhood, their experience, feelings and memories. Identity is not only formed by one's own past; often individuals take stories of others and imagine themselves in them. By this process they identify and empathize with those people, or they merely draw inspiration from other people's stories. Lawler notes that these stories always need to be told in relation to social rules and that borrowing from stories of others is limited.[9] She also points out that people "share common identities, […][such as] 'women', 'men', 'British', 'American', 'white', 'black', etc."[10]

Stuart Hall looks at the issue from a different point of view and claims that "identities are constantly in the process of change and transformation."[11] On the contrary, Steph Lawler asserts that a newly born person keeps the same identity until death.[12] Similarly Elizabeth

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[5] A.S. Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learner' s Dictionary (8th edition)* (Oxford: Oxford university press, 2010), CD edition.
[6] Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learner' s Dictionary*, CD edition.
[7] Richard Jenkins, *Social Identity* (Oxon: Rutledge, 2008), 18.
[8] Hogg and Abrams as quoted in James D. Fearon, "What is Identity (As We Now Use the Word):" 4, last modified November 3, 1999, https://www.stanford.edu/group/fearon-research/cgi-bin/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/What-is-Identity-as-we-now-use-the-word-.pdf.
[9] Steph Lawler, *Identity: Sociological Perspectives* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008), 2-5, 29-30.
[10] Lawler, *Identity*, 2.
[11] Stuart Hall, "Introduction: Who Needs 'Identity'?" in *Questions of Cultural Identity,* eds. Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (London: Sage Publications Ltd., 1996), 4.
[12] Lawler, *Identity*, 2.

Wolgast argues that "we change in many ways over time- in physical characteristics, personality, mannerism- but our identity remains the same."[13] Her opinion implies that people are the same persons when they are born and when they die. At the same time she admits that it is relevant to ask what of one's identity remains unchanged when one diversely changes. It is argued that there is always an essential feature making an individual the same person today, tomorrow and in the more distant future. This feature has been identified as one's self. Moreover, even though a person changes over time due to aging, he/she is recognized by others owing to several typical features remaining unchanged, such as their voice, mimics, specific behavior, etc.[14]

Lawler points out the importance of the process of "identification," and claims that people sometimes identify themselves differently from the way others identify them.[15] An often quoted philosopher Akeel Bilgrami calls these two aspects of identification the subjective and objective identity. As he explains: "Your subjective identity is what you conceive yourself to be, whereas your objective identity is how you might be viewed independently of how you see yourself. […] Your objective identity is who you are in light of certain biological or social facts about you."[16] These two aspects of identity are connected.[17] People always identify themselves with more than one identity and their multiple identities influence each other, positively or negatively. A typical example often used nowadays is the clash between the role of a 'mother' and a 'worker'. Yet some identities are not possible to combine at all. The concept of identification is also discussed by Stuart Hall, who claims that it is a never ending process which cannot be completed or quit and it "is constructed on the back of a recognition of some common origin or shared characteristics with another person or group, or with an ideal."[18]

Following the overview of theoretical approaches, one cannot claim that there is only one single meaning of the term identity. Steph Lawler argues that defining identity is a very difficult task. According to her the term can be looked at variously depending on the context in which the term is examined. Each individual is composed of various identities; personal, social, collective, national, racial and gender identities are generally considered as the most

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significant ones. In the following subchapters, some of them will be closely examined and their depiction in Toni Morrison's *Jazz* will be analyzed.

2.1   Personal identity

To begin with, the terms *identity* and *personal identity* are closely related and their description often overlaps. However, there are many definitions of personal identity as an individual term.

John Locke, a representative of the classic discussions of personal identity in the second half of the 17th century, was one of the first to study personal identity. Firstly, he defined a person as "a thinking intelligent being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing, in different times and places."[19] Subsequently he claimed that "the identity of persons consists of sameness of consciousness."[20] His theory assumes that one's identity includes everything one can remember from one's past and if the past experiences, thoughts, or actions have been forgotten, they are not part of one's identity.[21] Further, in *Encyclopædia Britannica* the term is explained from the metaphysical point of view as "the problem of the nature of the identity of persons and their persistence through time."[22]

Understanding personal identity is not simple as there are various aspects of life that have an impact on it. Derek Layder states in his book *Social and Personal Identity: Understanding Yourself*, that "everyone is influenced by family, friends, education, ethnicity, work, class, gender, politics and history. At every point at our life we both rely on, and contribute to our social environment."[23] People are influenced by surrounding society and relationships though each is a unique individual at the same time. As an individual one responds in an own way to problems and various situations that emerge in his/her live and experiences life differently from other people. Everybody has their own desires, hopes, wishes and needs but individuals also need to respect desires, hopes, wishes and needs of others in order to be unselfish. Sometimes individuals have to conform to other people's

[19] John Locke, "On Identity and Diversity," in *Personal Identity*, ed. John Perry (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2008), 39.

[20] Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "Personal identity," accessed November 13, 2013, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/452945/personal-identity.

[21] John F. Kihlstrom, Jennifer S. Beer and Stanley B. Klein, "Self and Identity as Memory," accessed November 28, 2013, http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~kihlstrm/SelfIdentityMemory.htm.

[22] "Personal identity."

[23] Derek Layder, *Social and Personal Identity: Understanding Yourself* (London: Sage Publications Ltd., 2004), *8.*

expectations to fit in society and as a consequence there might be a conflict between what people want and what others expect of them. At the end, however, the people themselves are responsible for who they are, their lifestyle, how they behave among others and how those other people accept them.

Individuals can be also influenced by their feelings, as people are emotional beings.[24] Layder admits that "many social scientists and psychologists have either denied or subordinated the influence of emotions by claiming that we humans are basically 'rational actors' […]. These writers believe that to behave on the basis of how one feels emotionally is to be irrational."[25] Layder denies this statement and argues that people do not "behave according to some practical calculus."[26] In his opinion, rationality is as important in one's life as feelings such as love, fear, empathy, etc. He suggests that human behavior is never entirely empty of emotion.[27]

Personal identity is under a long-term development but the changes are not substantial or radical and do not come one after another in a short period of time. They are gradual and often only slight. Furthermore the changes do not happen when individuals decide they are tired of their current self-image. This process is complicated and sometimes people try very hard to make the images and ideas about themselves real. A person usually changes when experiencing a turning point in life that marks some significant transition. Such turning points can be for example reaching certain ages, becoming an adolescent or an adult, marriage, divorce, childbirth, promotion or illness. These cause alterations in one's self including changes in feelings, values and opinions. The development is often accompanied by some struggle and is not always smooth.[28]

Layder distinguishes between the "public and private aspects of self."[29] These two aspects denote the possibility of the difference between what people say and what they actually feel, fear, remember or think about themselves and other people. Individuals often have secrets or habits for which they are ashamed and do not reveal them to everybody.[30]

The theory of personal identity and its definitions will be demonstrated on the main characters in the novel, Joe and Violet Trace. Rejected by his own mother, Joe dedicates his life to a quest for his own identity. He seems to put the search aside after he marries Violet

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[24] Layder, *Social and Personal Identity, 1-3,* 10.
[25] Layder, *Social and Personal Identity,* 12.
[26] Layder, *Social and Personal Identity,* 12.
[27] Layder, *Social and Personal Identity,* 12.
[28] Layder, *Social and Personal Identity*, 15-16.
[29] Layder, *Social and Personal Identity*, 17.
[30] Layder, *Social and Personal Identity*, 17.

but the void left by his mother's abandonment is never filled. "[T]he inside nothing he travel[s] with"[31], as he calls it, is finally overcome when he meets Dorcas. He feels he can confide in her and she will understand. In his view, Dorcas "knew better than people his own age what that inside nothing was like. And who filled it for him, just as he filled it for her, because she had it too."[32]

As mentioned earlier, an individual responds to problems and different situations in life and gradually develops. Throughout Joe's life, his personality greatly develops. He changes many times, as he himself admits:

> I couldn't talk to anybody but Dorcas and I told her things I hadn't told myself. With her, I was fresh, new again. Before I met her I'd changed into new seven times. The first time was when I named my own self, since nobody did it for me, since nobody knew what it could or should have been.[33]

Carolyn M. Jones suggests that by changing so often, Joe is escaping, afraid to face his own identity. As she explains: "His problem is change: He goes through seven lives before he finally confronts his self in the person/mirror of Dorcas."[34]

In Joe's life there are several critical moments-turning points which cause his transformation. Joe is born in 1873 in Vesper County, Virginia, in a little village called Vienna. He is raised by adoptive parents, Rhoda and Frank Williams. While growing up together with 6 siblings, Rhoda and Frank's own children, he becomes very close with his only three months older stepbrother, Victory. When Joe asks where his real parents are, Rhoda tells him they disappeared without a trace. As he is only three years old at the time, he supposes that the trace they disappeared without is him. Therefore later, when he is asked about his name at school, he replies that it is Joseph Trace. As mentioned in the excerpt above, Joe's personal identity changes for the first time in this moment; he names himself.

The second change occurs when he turns into a man. He is chosen to be trained to become a hunter under the guidance of Henry Lestroy, who is also called Hunter's Hunter. Having no parents, Joe partly adopts Lestroy's identity. He is taught to live independently and to feed himself. His personal identity undergoes another change when his birth town, Vienna, is burned to the ground and he has to leave his home and take care of himself. While working on the way, he meets Violet. They get married and have to work hard in the field to make

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[31] Morrison, *Jazz*, 37.
[32] Morrison, *Jazz*, 37-38.
[33] Morrison, *Jazz*, 123.
[34] Carolyn M. Jones, "Traces and Cracks: Identity and Narrative in Toni Morrison's Jazz," *African American Review* 31/ 3 (1997): 482, accessed January 8, 2014, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3042574.

some money for living. In 1906, Joe moves to New York with his wife and his identity changes from a country boy to a city man. He can no longer hunt and work in the field, as he has been used to. He has to learn how to take care of himself in a whole new world. He chooses to undergo this dramatic change primarily because of Violet and her stories about life in the city. It is a surprising and even shocking decision considering he loves woods more than anything else. "For fourteen years Joe listened to [those] stories and laughed. But he resisted them too, until, abruptly, he changed his mind."[35]

Later on Joe and Violet move from downtown to a better uptown neighborhood and another phase of Joe's life begins. The situation between the white and black citizens in New York gradually escalates. For African Americans the prices of rents and meat are raised causing riots during which many black people die. Joe almost loses his life in one of the riots and is convinced of being "brand new for sure."[36] The last, seventh change occurs after the end of the War. Confident of never changing again, Joe encounters Dorcas who gives him love that his mother did not. When the girl leaves him, his desperate search for her and the ongoing search for his mother conflate and when he asks himself: "But where is *she*?"[37] it is not clear whether he is referring to Dorcas or his mother. Killing the girl finally helps him to conclude his search both for his mother and his identity.

As far as it concerns the earlier described private and public aspects of self, Joe is seen as a good trustworthy person by other people. This is how Alice Manfred perceives him:

> A sample-case man. A nice neighborly, everybody-knows-him man. The kind you let in your house because he was not dangerous, because you had seen him with children, bought his products and never heard a scrap of gossip about him doing wrong. Felt not only safe but kindly in his company because he was the sort women ran to when they thought they were being followed, or watched or needed someone to have the extra key just in case you locked yourself out. He was the man who took you to your door if you missed the trolley and had to walk night streets at night. […] Women teased him because they trusted him.[38]

In her description of Joe, Alice uses many positive expressions and explains reasons for her trusting him, exemplifying situations in which one would seek Joe's help. Not only Alice, but all the people who know him think of him as an exemplary man. What is it then that makes him kill a person? There are several issues which have influenced Joe's personal identity, including his origin, relationships with other people, his feelings and desires. Joe's

[35] Morrison, *Jazz*, 106.
[36] Morrison, *Jazz*, 128.
[37] Morrison, *Jazz*, 184.
[38] Morrison, *Jazz*, 73.

ancestry is not completely revealed to the reader of the novel. His father is unknown and his mother is said to be a wild woman living somewhere in a forest. Surely, this uncertainty about his own origin has a great impact on Joe's personal identity as he never stops searching. Firstly, he is searching for his mother, whom he never finds; later on he is searching for Dorcas because he feels he might lose her. When he sets out to find Dorcas, he is thinking of the past and his mother. He is armed but has no intention to kill the girl at all. All he wants is to convince her to return, to hear from her that she did not mean to break up with him. As soon as he finds her, he realizes that she has moved on. Seeing her with a boy of her age, Joe feels that he does not belong in her world anymore. Not realizing what consequences this action might have, he shoots her. Suddenly, the decent, sensible and gentle man adored by people in his surroundings turns into a murderer. As he is a unique individual, his reaction might differ from what others would do in his situation. This uniqueness is the substance of one's identity. Joe does not act rationally, but under the influence of his feelings and emotions.

Like Joe, Violet is also deeply affected by growing up without parents. Unlike Joe, as a child she learns what her mother is like, knowing her in person before the mother's death. Her father leaves when Violet is very young and her mother commits suicide after being abandoned by her husband and suffering due to her race. The girl is then raised by her grandmother. Having all this in mind, Violet decides to never have children, which is a decision she regrets many times when she is too old to be able to become pregnant. Born in the country, Violet grows up into a strong woman capable of taking care of herself. When she and her sisters are sent to pick cotton on a cotton plantation to make money, Violet never returns home, as she meets Joe and decides to stay with him. She is the one who takes the initiative in their relationship, she "claim[s] him"[39] and later Joe "*agree[s]* to marry [her]."[40] At this time she has to learn to work hard and she does it all for Joe. "It was there she became the powerfully strong young woman who could handle mules, bale hay and chop wood as good as any man. It was there where the palms of her hands and the soles of her feet grew shields no gloves or shoes could match. All for Joe Trace […]."[41]

The first years of marriage are not easy for the couple, especially for Violet, who suffers three miscarriages. All the time she dreams about life in Baltimore. A massive change in her life comes when she move to New York with her husband, becoming an unlicensed

[39] Morrison, *Jazz*, 105.
[40] Morrison, *Jazz*, 106, emphasis added.
[41] Morrison, *Jazz*, 105.

hairdresser and transforming her personal identity again, this time for her own sake. Her new lifestyle developed after a couple of years spent in the city is completely different from the previous one. Suddenly she does not need to be the strong woman she used to be, she does not have to take the initiative. She begins longing for a child when it is too late. Consequently, she and Joe become alienated. Lonely and childless, Violet separates herself from everyone by living in a world of her own which is disturbed when Joe murders his lover. Becoming introverted and fragmented, she realizes how much she has changed:

> She didn't use to be that way. She had been a snappy, determined girl and a hardworking young woman, with the snatch-gossip tongue of a beautician. She liked, and had, to get her way. She had chosen Joe and refused to go back home once she'd seen him taking shape in early night. She had butted their way out of the Tenderloin district into a spacious uptown apartment promised to another family by sitting out the landlord, haunting his doorway. She collected her customers by going up to them and describing her services. […] Long before Joe stood in the drugstore watching a girl buy candy, Violet had stumbled into a crack or two.[42]

Violet's personal identity has two sides. As Carolyn M. Jones notes, there is "a split in her being – […] a part of her knows things that another part can neither narrate nor change."[43] On the one hand, Violet is a silent woman preoccupied with her parrots who would never take a knife to disfigure a dead girl's face. That is the Violet from the city, who does not know what she is doing at the funeral: "[S]he sat in the drugstore sucking malt through a straw wondering who on earth that other Violet was that walked about the City in her skin; peeped out through her eyes and saw other things."[44] The other side of her is the one that is strong and takes the initiative, the one that earlier claimed Joe. This other Violet knows where the knife is hidden and is capable of disfiguring the dead girl's face: "*That* Violet not only knew the knife was in the parrot's cage and not in the kitchen drawer, *that* Violet remembered what she did not. Knew too where the funeral was going on."[45] While Violet does not understand what is happening to her, people think that she has become disturbed or emotionally unstable and start to call her Violent.

Surprisingly, Violet becomes a friend of Alice Manfred, the dead girl's aunt and together they try to find a reason for what Violet has done and who the other Violet is. With Alice's help, Violet accepts both halves of her personality and as Jones suggests, laughter

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[42] Morrison, *Jazz*, 23.
[43] Jones, "Traces and Cracks," 485.
[44] Morrison, *Jazz*, 89.
[45] Morrison, *Jazz*, 90.

helps Violet to finally "unite[s] the two Violets"[46] and thus end her uncertainty about her own personal identity: "She buttoned her coat and left the drugstore and noticed, at the same moment as *that* Violet did, that it was spring."[47] The friendship of Violet and Alice helps both women define their traumas and recover from the hurtful events from the past.

2.2   Ethnic and racial identity

In some aspects the concepts of ethnicity and race overlap, however, they should be seen as two distinct terms with different meanings and substance. The essential distinction between the terms is generally thought to be following: the term race refers to a person's physical features,[48] while ethnicity is connected with one's cultural background, usually inherited and shared with others of the same ethnic identity.[49] In other words, a person's racial identity is recognized on the basis of for example skin or eye color, hair type and color, face shape and other physical features, while one's ethnic identity is related to the area or country in which one was born, grew up or currently lives, their beliefs, language and culture.[50]

In his book *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives*, T. H. Eriksen gathers opinions and ideas about race, ethnicity and their relation as presented by different experts. Many claim that race and ethnicity should be distinguished including Banton who argues that "race refers to the categorisation of people, while ethnicity has to do with group identification."[51] Eriksen notes, that "Pierre van Berghe […] would rather regard 'race' as a special case of ethnicity."[52] Similarly, Eriksen considers 'ethnic' a "generic term of which ideas about race may be taken as a sub-set"[53] but notes that in public and in press these terms are used on the same level and one can be substituted by the other. Eriksen explains that while race is connected with differences in physical appearance, often skin color, and associated with oppression, ethnicity is often considered a "voluntary identification of peoples."[54]

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[46] Jones, "Traces and Cracks," 487.
[47] Morrison, *Jazz*, 114.
[48] Thomas Hilland Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives* (London: Pluto Press, 1993), 6.
[49] Steve Fenton, *Ethnicity: Racism, Class and Culture* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999), 62.
[50] Linda Mooney, David Knox and Caroline Schacht, *Understanding Social Problems* (Stamford: Cengage Learning, 2012), 266.
[51] Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 5.
[52] Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 5.
[53] Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 69.
[54] Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 6.

Like race, ethnicity has also become a frequently used and discussed term, especially the topic of ethnic minorities connected with attitudes towards foreigners and cultural minorities. Opinions about their identity are often in the center of public discussions. T. H. Eriksen points out that while ethnicity decreased in political importance in the early 20th century, recently, particularly after World War II, the importance has grown.[55]

Concerning ethnicity as an individual term, Eriksen notes that the term *ethnic* is "derived from the Greek *ethnos* […] which originally meant heathen or pagan".[56] In his words, "the term ethnicity refers to relationships between groups whose members consider themselves distinctive, and these groups may be ranked hierarchically within a society."[57] Steve Fenton's definition states that "the concept of ethnicity refers to the way in which social and cultural difference, language and ancestry combine as a dimension of social action and social organisation, and form a socially reproduced system of classification."[58]

Historically, there have been many aspects which changed the perception of the term ethnicity and phenomena which contributed to the development of different types of ethnicities, such as slavery and migration of workers, colonial domination of Europe in the world, claiming people's properties, diaspora, etc.[59] Steve Fenton argues that there are "three historical trajectories of the modern world: the slavery and post-slavery world, the colonial and post-colonial, and nation-state formation in the capitalist West."[60] Fenton further analyses five types of ethnic typologies within these trajectories: "urban minorities, indigenous peoples, ethnonational groups, ethnic groups in plural societies and post-slavery minorities."[61] The first four were originally defined by T.H. Eriksen, the last one was added by Fenton. Some of the above named ethnic groups are referred to as minorities. As Dr. H. Esra Arcan explains, minorities are "ethnic groups [which] are not dominant or equal in the power sharing mechanism."[62] He further comments that minorities are distinct from others based on race, kinship, religion, language, customs connected with living and regionalism.[63]

Typical examples of *indigenous minorities* are Native Americans of North, Central and South America, Koori and aboriginal peoples of Australia, Maori of New Zealand, or

[55] Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, 2.
[56] Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism,* 3, Eriksen's emphasis.
[57] Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism,* 6.
[58] Fenton, *Ethnicity*, 62.
[59] Fenton, *Ethnicity*, 28.
[60] Fenton, *Ethnicity*, 28.
[61] Fenton, *Ethnicity*, 28.
[62] Dr. H. Esra Arcan, "Ethnic Identities And Conflict: Ethnic Conflict Prevention Approach Of European Union," *Journal of Educational and Social Research* 4/1 (2014): 29, accessed March 13th, 2014, doi: 10.5901/jesr.2014.v4n1p27.
[63] Arcan, "Ethnic Identities And Conflict," 29-30.

Hawaiians. Not only did the Americans invade and claim their territories, but they often also hunted and killed them. *Ethnonational groups* or proto-nations are nations who made and still make efforts to create some form of self-government or become independent on the state in which they live. These ethnonationalist groups are always defined in relation to the state in which they live and the state systems may or may not acknowledge their existence. These involve for example Basques in Spain, Kurds in Turkey or the Frech-speaking Quebecois in Canada. *Ethnic groups in plural societies* usually include descendants of populations of workers who were forced to migrate, migrated semi-voluntarily or voluntarily into foreign countries. Plural societies usually include various ethnic groups which retain their culture, traditions or language and they make no serious attempts to integrate within the society they live in. Further, people from *post-slavery minorities* are descendants of enslaved Africans, whose original ethnic identity and culture was meant to vanish and be replaced by labels like 'labor' and 'slaves.' These people, now officially called African Americans, were able to preserve the African culture despite the opposite attempts. Finally, *urban minority* population includes traders and migrant workers. These people usually came to American and European cities searching for better work opportunities or a new life. Concerning urban minorities in American cities, these minority people can also be descendants of those brought from Africa who later migrated to urban areas, or 19th and 20th century migrants from the rural USA and Europe.[64]

As the novel analyzed in this bachelor thesis is set in the early 20th century Harlem, it is important to concentrate more intensely on the African-American urban minority and community in this period. Ronald L. Taylor, a specialist in African-American studies, focuses in his study on blacks in northern cities and their residential segregation. As mentioned earlier, in early 20th century African Americans migrated to the north seeking work opportunities, settling firstly in the suburbs and later near the city centers. The main aspects having an impact on their choice of a city to live in were for example the type of industry in the city, percentage of African Americans in the city population and local racial segregation approach. The factors influencing in which area to settle were for example the level of employment opportunities and the cost of housing. Between 1910 and 1930 residential segregation rapidly increased. It has been reported that in most cities the segregation of all ethnic groups was high, but the one of the black population was considerably higher. Furthermore a study has discovered that the level of immigrant groups segregation was

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[64] Fenton, *Ethnicity*, 32-42.

influenced by their socioeconomic status and the length of their residence.[65] Further, as Taylor claims, "there is some evidence that the growth in residential segregation promoted the development of a variety of specialized black institutions and services (newspapers, churches, bars, cafes, etc.)."[66] These establishments encouraged social relationships between older residents and newcomers, supported community stability and gave rise to a strong collective identity. They also contributed the new environment adaptation of those who moved into the city, often without family and friends. Residential segregation encouraged the involvement of the black community in political life. On the contrary to the 1890s when African Americans were almost powerless, their situation changed, as their influence grew with the next generation.[67]

To continue with, the next part of this thesis deals with racial identity. In the 1997 US census concerning race and ethnicity identification five racial categories were and ever since have been recognized: American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander and White.[68] The census, however, does not consider mixed-race people, whose parents or other ancestors are of two or more different races. The earlier mentioned subjective and objective aspects of identity are also applicable on the theory of racial identity. These concepts are related to Naomi Zack's distinguishing between "racial identity"[69] and "racial identification"[70] Racial identity is a part of the way a person identifies himself or herself, whereas racial identification is done by another person. Accordingly, as Zack asserts, mixed-race people can claim they have a different racial identity from how others identify them.[71]

All over the world, there are people of different skin, eye and hair color. McCarthy and Crichlov say that "racial difference is the product of human interests, needs, desires, strategies, capacities, forms of organization, and forms of mobilization. […] "[R]ace" is a social, historical and variable category."[72] Omi and Winant come to the conclusion that since

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[65] Ronald L. Taylor, "Black Ethnicity and the Persistence of Ethnogenesis," *American Journal of Sociology* 84/6 (1979): 1408, accessed November 12, 2013, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2777898.
[66] Taylor, "Black Ethnicity and the Persistence of Ethnogenesis," 1409.
[67] Taylor, "Black Ethnicity and the Persistence of Ethnogenesis," 1409-1412.
[68] Office of Management and Budget, "Revisions to the Standards for the Classification of Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity," accessed February 4, 2014, http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/Form-SF-181-Aug2005.pdf.
[69] Naomi Zack, *Race and Mixed Race* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press: 1993), 143.
[70] Zack, *Race and Mixed Race*, 143.
[71] Zack, *Race and Mixed Race*, 143.
[72] Cameron McCarthy and Warren Crichlow, eds., introduction to *Race, Identity, and Representation in Education* (New York: Routledge, 1993), xv.

race is not "an objective biological fact,"[73] it must be an "illusion"[74] created by people to suit their needs. On the contrary Bailey W. Jackson III suggests, that "race is a collection of ethnic groups with similar cultural and physical characteristics and that there were groups of this type before the term race, as it is referred to currently, was popularized."[75] In her article about racial identity, Kristen A. Renn defines race and in a way similar to Nomi Zack distinguishes between identification and identity:

> Race is a social construction based on physical appearance (skin color, hair color and texture, facial features), ancestry, nationality and culture. It is used for *identification*- for example, to place individuals into demographic groups for various purposes – and as *identity* – the meaning individuals and groups ascribe to membership in racial categories. Identification results from external assignment or categorization, whereas identity results from internal processes as individuals encounter external influences.[76]

Renn analyzes psychological and sociological approaches to the racial identity and points out, that whereas psychologists focus more on one's racial identity development, sociologists concentrate more on what contributes to a person's realization of being a part of a racial group. Sociological studies especially pay attention to relationships among racial groups.[77]

To continue with, African Americans identity will be examined with the emphasis on 1920s in America, a period in which black population attempted to create new identity for themselves to disprove stereotypes about them. For too long, African-American identity had been defined in relation to visions and needs of white people. After the Civil War, African Americans were finally free and their identity was not dependent on the white population. At the end of the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century African Americans moved to the northern cities transforming their identity from rural to urban. Harlem in New York became the center of African-American culture. After the First World War black soldiers were warmly welcomed back to New York. Their celebration, however, did not last for long. In the years after the war, racism was restored with new intensity. Ku Klux Klan was strongly

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[73] Michael Omi and Howard Winant, "On the Theoretical Status of the Concept of Race" in *Race, Identity, and Representation in Education*, eds. C. McCarthy and W. Crichlow (New York: Routledge, 1993), 4.
[74] Omi and Winant, "On the Theoretical Status of the Concept of Race", 4.
[75] Bailey W. Jackson III., "Black Identity Development: Influences of Culture and Social Oppression" in *New Perspectives on Racial Identity Development: Integrating Emerging Frameworks*, eds. Charmaine L. Wijeyesinghe et al. (New York: NYU Press, 2012), 48.
[76] Kristen A. Renn, "Creating and Re-Creating Race: The Emergence of Racial Identity as a Critical Element in Psychological, Sociological, and Ecological Perspectives on Human Development" in *New Perspectives on Racial Identity Development: Integrating Emerging Frameworks*, eds. Charmaine L. Wijeyesinghe et al. (New York: NYU Press, 2012), 11.
[77] Renn, "Creating and Re-Creating Race," 17-18.

supported by the white population and violence against African Americans occurred more and more often. Blacks decided to fight not by the means of violence but intellectually, through journalism, exposing race problems. Their goal was also to positively present themselves and show their achievement. With a strong encouragement of magazines, African Americans had the opportunity to publish their work. Yet they were dependent on white supporters helping them with publishing.[78]

Not only African Americans, but also immigrants, white and native people had to overcome the crisis of identity in the 1920s. N.I. Huggins suggests that it is a consequence of expectations to become a part of one common culture. These expectations arose from American dream, which had not come true for them. While immigrants tried to integrate within and adopt new culture, native peoples looked back on their traditions. African Americans firstly followed emancipation and had high hopes for manifestation but later discovered that America was not the country they wanted it to be. They began their quest for identity, which was very difficult for them as they had to look in the unclear past with which they were not able to identify. With a sense of slavery in the past and racism in the present, it was problematic to define a black person within the American culture.[79] Huggins notes that most Americans believed in the "stereotype which defined Negroes [...]. Laziness, slovenliness and excessive sensual appetite deserved no reward except poverty and dishonor."[80] It was a task of African-American writers to create a black character that would overcome this stereotype and be accepted by whites. In order to create this "New Negro,"[81] they had to face their own history and culture. The attempt, however, was not successful and with the Great Depression in the 1930s disappeared together with Harlem Renaissance.[82]

Fenton suggests that the "category black"[83] was an American invention and Americans contributed to the development of the division into white and black. This division changed forms throughout history. The first form was "rationalized slavery,"[84] the second was "racial segregation and oppression"[85] which lasted up to 1954, and in the present America, as the third form, "racial categories are highly contested and embraced by those who have been disadvantaged in radicalized America."[86] This division can be seen as a cause of racialization,

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[78] Nathan Irvin Huggins, *Harlem Renaissance*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 5, 27-29, 129.
[79] Huggins, *Harlem Renaissance*, 137-139.
[80] Huggins, *Harlem Renaissance*, *142*.
[81] Huggins, *Harlem Renaissance*, 303.
[82] Huggins, *Harlem Renaissance*, *142*-143, 303.
[83] Steve Fenton, *Ethnicity*, 67.
[84] Steve Fenton, *Ethnicity*, 67.
[85] Steve Fenton, *Ethnicity*, 67.
[86] Steve Fenton, *Ethnicity*, 67.

defined by Antonia Darder and Rodolfo D. Torres as "a process by which populations are categorized and ranked on the basis of phenotypical traits or cultural signifiers."[87]

Racism is closely related to race and racial identity, as previously shown. According to Fenton, the term refers to the classification of races, difference between them and inequality leading to oppression. The concept of inequality between races is represented by their superior and inferior roles and thus the racial hierarchy is emphasized.[88] Being racially distinct from the majority of the population in a particular area does not always mean having to face racism, but it has a great impact on one's life. Toni Morrison declares in her essay *Home*: "I have never lived, nor has any of us, in a world in which race did not matter."[89] She continues, that a "world […] free of racial hierarchy, is usually imagined or described as dreamscape."[90]

To continue with, in the second half of this subchapter the above described concepts will be examined in Morrison's *Jazz*. Main characters in this novel are African Americans and therefore descendants of slaves or other black people who were brought or came from Africa. As mentioned earlier, African Americans managed to preserve their culture, which became significant particularly in the early 20th century. The novel *Jazz* is set in the 1920s, the decade nicknamed 'The Jazz Age' for African culture flourished at the time in terms of arts and music, jazz and blues in particular. Not only is jazz music present in the background throughout the whole book, it also gives the text a specific form. As Mariangela Palladino explains:

> The novel […] seems to be written like a jazz piece: repeating, creating, relating, and handling unsolved issues is what the novel is about. Love, murder, everyday life, memories of slavery and displacement are the main themes of the early city jazz played and sung in the suburbs of the northern American cities inhabited by thousands of former slaves fled from the South.[91]

Violet and Joe are typical representatives of black urban minority as they migrate from rural Virginia to New York seeking better employment opportunities. They arrive in 1906 on a train in a section designated for black people, falling in love with the city immediately. Feeling nervous and blissfully happy at the same time, they follow many other African

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[87] Antonia Darder and Rodolfo D. Torres, *After Race: Racism After Multiculturalism* (New York: NYU Press, 2004), 13.
[88] Fenton, *Ethnicity*, 62.
[89] Toni Morrison, "Home," in *The House that Race Built,* ed. Wahneema Lubiano (New York: Random House LLC, 2010), 3.
[90] Morrison, "Home," 3.
[91] Mariangela Palladino, "Sound and sign in Toni Morrison's *Jazz*," accessed March 5, 2014, http://www.strath.ac.uk/media/faculties/hass/knowledgeexchange/ecloga/media_135055_en.pdf.

Americans: "The wave of black people running from want and violence crested in the 1870s, the '80s, the '90s but was a steady stream in 1906 when Joe and Violet joined it."[92]

Characters from *Jazz* live their lives affected by race. As Christa Albrecht-Crane suggests: "not only does race inform the social landscape as a political force, but it enters into the characters' most intimate and personal experiences of themselves in the world."[93] Albrecht-Crane supports this idea with several specific examples from the novel, starting with Violet Trace's traumatic childhood. Violet's mother is abandoned by her husband and is forced to raise her children alone; she has to deal with poverty, lynching and racial segregation laws, so called Jim Crow laws. [94] As a result of all her hardship, she commits suicide by jumping into a well. After that, Violet is raised by her grandmother True Belle, whose life is affected by slavery, as she used to serve a white mistress, Vera Louise Gray. To complete the circle of racial issues surrounding young Violet, her grandmother tells her stories about Golden Gray, the half white and half black child of Vera Louise Gray and a former slave. Vera Louise's father, a typical representative of White race and a strict adherent of racial hierarchy, is deeply ashamed for his daughter's degradation. As a result, he sends her away to avoid public humiliation of his family. Therefore, Golden Gray is raised by two women: his mother, who does not admit he is her son for a long time, and True Belle. As Jones explains, this light-skinned boy becomes an ideal for Violet:

> Golden Gray represents an ideal for black Americans and a horror for white ones. His name indicates his in-betweenness. He is golden, not white; gray, not black. He is identified, by the narrator, not as "other," but as "intimate"-as being at the heart of racial tension, of the meaning of slavery, of black self-hatred, and of Joe's and Violet's stories. For white Americans, he is the symbol of miscegenation, of the "sins of the fathers"- in this case, of the mothers. […] For black Americans, and for Violet in this novel, he represents a kind of internalized ideal. […]He is the Dorcas in Violet's mind, the image of what she ought to be to keep Joe's love and to be a whole self.[95]

In the present time of the novel, Violet is a dark-skinned woman in her fifties. When comparing her appearance with Dorcas, Felice, the best friend of Dorcas, says about Violet: "Mrs Trace […] is very dark, bootblack, the girls at school would say. And I didn't expect her

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[92] Morrison, *Jazz*, 33.
[93] Christa Albrecht-Crane, "Becoming Minoritarian: Post-Identity in Toni Morrison's "*Jazz*"," *The Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association 36/ 1: Thinking Post-Identity* (2003): 58, accessed January 8, 2014, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1315398.
[94] Albrecht-Crane, "Becoming Minoritarian," 58-59.
[95] Jones, "Traces and Cracks," 489.

to be pretty, but she is. You'd never get tired looking at her face."[96] Violet, however, has a different opinion. She is not satisfied with her racial identity and thinks that if she was light-skinned like Golden Gray or Dorcas, she would more beautiful. She, like many other African-American women at the time, wishes to fit the white standards of beauty. Nevertheless, at the end Violet admits: "[I] messed up my life. […] Forgot it was mine. I just ran up and down the streets wishing I was somebody else."[97] When she is asked who she used to want to be, she answers: "Not who so much as what. White. Light. Young again."[98] It follows that Violet realizes that in the preceding years she was influenced by the picture of Golden Gray in her mind as well as the picture of Dorcas and eventually chooses to be herself again. While Violet is a typical representative of the Black race, Golden Gray and Dorcas belong neither to the Black nor the White race.

As far as Golden Gray is concerned, even though his father is black, the boy is raised in a conviction that he is white.[99] At the age of eighteen, his world is suddenly shaken by the discovery of his black heritage. Seeking revenge, he decides to find his father immediately and on his way he encounters a wild black woman who falls unconscious after hitting her head against a tree. At first he does not care and wants to leave her but eventually he decides to help. Golden Gray meets his father, Henry Lestory, for the first time and the woman gives birth to a boy. The first conversation with his father makes Golden Gray rather angry:

> [Lestroy:] "I know what you came for. To see how black I was. You thought you was white, didn't you? She probably let you think it. Hoped you'd think it. And I swear I'd think it too."
> [Gray:] "She protected me! If she'd announced I was a nigger, I could have been a slave!"
> [Lestroy:] "They got free niggers. Always did have some free niggers. You could have been one of them."
> [Gray:] "I don't want to be a free nigger, I want to be a free man!"
> [Lestroy:] "[…] Be what you want- white or black. Choose. But if you choose black, act black […]."
> Golden Gray was sober now and his sober thought was to blow the man's head off. Tomorrow. It must have been the girl who changed his mind.[100]

Eventually Gray does not kill his father. The first encounter with him and the wild woman, both black, makes him realize what his true identity is. After the initial refusal, his

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[96] Morrison, *Jazz*, 206.
[97] Morrison, *Jazz*, 208.
[98] Morrison, *Jazz*, 208.
[99] Albrecht-Crane, "Becoming Minoritarian," 58-60.
[100] Morrison, *Jazz*, 173.

view of his own racial identity suddenly transforms. He identifies himself with the racial identity which is looked down at by society to which he has up to now belonged.

The wild woman's child, as it is revealed throughout the book, is Joe. Wild, as the woman is called, abandons him and he grows up with foster parents searching for her. Wild lives alone in the forest at the community's edge and does not want to be found. That is also why Joe never sees her. His racial identity is connected with the one of his mother's, who is seen by others as a wild black 'savage'.

Joe encounters serious racial problems in New York, where the situation of African Americans grows worse and worse in the early 20th century, especially after white people begin renting uptown apartments to the black population. Firstly the prices of rents, later of beef are raised but only for black people. Eventually many blacks are killed in riots and conflicts with the white population. Joe almost dies in one of the riots and his memories of the fateful summer of 1917 are as follows: "[A]fter those whitemen took that pipe from around my head, I was brand new for sure because they almost killed me. Along with many a more."[101] Sadly, nobody is arrested or punished for any crime committed against African Americans. Not only the police but also the ambulance seem to be indifferent to black people in need of help. After Joe's shooting of Dorcas, Felice calls the ambulance twice, although Dorcas asks her not to. The ambulance does not arrive immediately but in the morning. Felice indicates that the reason is their race, as no one wants to help black people. Earlier, Dorcas had a similar experience. When she was young, the house she lived in with her mother burned to ground because firemen did not come although they had been called.

2.3   Gender identity

Gender identity is a crucial part of human identity. Before describing the concept of gender identity, it is necessary to define the term gender as such. According to *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* gender is "the fact of being male or female, especially when considered with reference to social and cultural differences, not differences in biology."[102] Although often used interchangeably, the terms gender and sex must be distinguished. *Sex* refers to one's biological characteristics whereas *gender* is a social construct. Differences between male and female are clear in terms of biological characteristics. Sex identity is fixed already at

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[101] Morrison, *Jazz*, 128.
[102] Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learner' s Dictionary*, CD edition.

conception. On the other hand, when speaking about gender, differences are variable and they are defined on the basis of social and cultural influence. There is no scientist who would define the exact difference between men and women when referring to gender.[103]

To continue with, the basic concept of gender identity is usually explained as a person's perception of the self as a man or a woman based on the biological characteristics but not necessarily given by them. Sometimes people feel that they belong or should belong to the opposite sex.[104] Children usually develop their own gender identity during the first three or four years of their life.[105] It has been pointed out that "gender identity is not fixed at birth; both physiologic and social factors contribute to the early establishment of a core identity, which is modified and expanded by social factors as the child matures."[106] Social background, family and other influential figures in the child's surroundings play an important role in the process of formation and recognition of his or her gender identity.[107] The crucial influence on the gender formation comes from parents. It has been proved that from birth mothers treat boys differently from girls. Boys are provided more freedom and independence whereas girls are more protected and controlled. In the process of gender formation children are affected by the view of their mothers on them, toys and other specific objects they are given in relation to their gender (e.g. dolls for girls, cars for boys), the way they are addressed by mothers (e.g. a good girl, a bad boy) and activities supported or regulated by parents. Some activities stimulate identification with one of the two gender groups contributing to the development of the child's gender role. [108] It is important to distinguish between the terms *gender role* and *gender identity*. The former refers to a person's behavior, in other words whether one behaves like a woman or a man, whereas the latter is related to whether one feels like a woman or a man.[109] Gender role and gender identity are not mechanically adopted by children from their parents, but by variously identifying with them. Children want to be similar usually to the parent sharing some characteristics with them or the more dominant parent. These parents then become and serve as their models, whose behaviour, reactions and attitude they tend to imitate. Apart from their family, children also encounter gender roles in the company of other children and in books full of gender role stereotypes. Such a stereotype is represented for

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[103] Ann Oakley, *Pohlaví, gender a společnost*, trans. Milena Poláčková and Martin Poláček (Praha: Portál, 2000), 20, 121,

[104] "Gender identity," Encyclopædia Britannica Online, s. v., accessed November 13, 2013, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/228219/gender-identity.

[105] Oakley, *Pohlaví, gender a společnost*, 125.

[106] "Gender identity."

[107] "Gender identity."

[108] Oakley, *Pohlaví, gender a společnost*, 131-135.

[109] Oakley, *Pohlaví, gender a společnost*, 126.

example by a picture of a family, in which mother takes care of children and spends a lot of time doing housework, while father comes home from work, repairs broken appliances or washes the car. As children gradually grow up, they begin to understand that gender roles are differentiated on the basis of sex. They become aware of their gender role and eventually accept it as a part of themselves.[110]

The substantial part of the gender development process is identification. Girls usually identify themselves with women and boys with men, yet if this pattern is disrupted, the possibility of a deviation rises. It has been argued that the influence of biological facts is insignificant, as the most important aspect in the process of gender identity development is the social factor.[111]

Ann Oakley suggests that differences between personalities of men and women are not only determined by social and cultural influence but may also proceed from the biologically fixed differences affected by the production of hormones. Men are seen as stronger than women, self-centered, boastful, arrogant, aggressive, thinking in a goal-directed way, whereas women are considered more gentle, sensible and emotional than men, caring for other people and driven by the maternal instinct.[112]

Motherhood and taking care of household are parts of a woman's gender identity and gender role. As Anne Woollett and Harriette Marshall note: "In most societies, women are expected to become mothers and motherhood is construed as "normal" and "natural." "[113] Regardless of what women do in their lives, motherhood is generally seen as essential for them. Sometimes women do not become mothers for various reasons. They are for example not able to have children, voluntarily choose not to have them or find themselves in a situation which does not enable them to bring a child into the world. Motherhood often interferes with the woman's goals and activities which she wants to conduct and it causes tension between her roles and often leads to encountering difficulty combining them. Woollett and Marshall compare the functions of a mother and a father concluding that there is a considerable difference between them. Motherhood is considered a central part of a woman's identity whereas fatherhood is "more optional than motherhood, and men are expected to consider fatherhood as only one aspect of their adult male identities."[114] Many women see

[110] Oakley, *Pohlaví, gender a společnost*, 135-139.
[111] Oakley, *Pohlaví, gender a společnost*, 129.
[112] Oakley, *Pohlaví, gender a společnost*, 45-46.
[113] Anne Woollett and Harriette Marshall, "Motherhood and Mothering," in *Handbook of the Psychology of Women and Gender*, ed. Rhoda K. Unger (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2004), 171.
[114] Woollett and Marshall, "Motherhood and Mothering," 172.

motherhood as a constraint, therefore they tend to postpone their pregnancy to "live and do things before [they] have children"[115] or to build their careers.[116]

To turn back to examining gender identity, identification with either of the two gender groups, male and female, is influenced by experiences that are very often expected of members of these groups. Expectations from each group differ and they are frequently associated with stereotypes about preferences and activities typical for men and women. This distinction can be applied on for example education tendencies or job positions offered to women or men.[117]

In *Jazz*, African Americans move to cities seeking work opportunities. On the contrary to the rural life, cities offer various job positions for men and women and sometimes work typical for men is performed by a woman and vice versa. Joe, who originally works with wood and as a hunter, which is a job only for men, eventually turns to work for a cosmetic company selling beauty products, which would be generally considered a job for a woman. The concept of gender identity depicted in *Jazz*, however, is rather related to the position of women and their roles.

The gender-oriented identity of black women is rooted in the times of slavery: enslaved African-American women were perceived as servants and sexual objects from the beginning of their enslavement. Many stereotypes about black women emerged, including the "Jezebel stereotype."[118] It was based on the excuse invented by white slave owners for abusing black female slaves explaining that the fault lay with the women who were said to be promiscuous. Later, the Jezebel stereotype served to the slavery opponents as well as defenders.[119] Even though slavery was abolished, the stereotypes about black women persisted for some time. Joe's mother, Wild, can be seen as a prime example of the victim of such a stereotype, as she is not treated the way a woman deserves: she is beaten, raped and made pregnant. Consequently, she separates herself from society, fearing people in her surroundings. Hiding from everyone, she has never been seen again since giving birth to Joe. Her reasons for this action are left to the reader's imagination but it can be assumed that she is not ready to become a mother and feels she would not be able to provide for her son. Wild is not the only victim of gender and race identity in *Jazz*. Before Dorcas' own eyes, her mother dies at their house in a fire set by white people only a few days after her husband's death.

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[115] Woollett and Marshall, "Motherhood and Mothering," 172.
[116] Woollett and Marshall, "Motherhood and Mothering," 171-172.
[117] Oakley, *Pohlaví, gender a společnost*, 99-100, 139.
[118] Wilma P. Mankiller et al., eds., *The Reader's Companion to U.S. Women's History* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1998), 565.
[119] Mankiller, *The Reader's Companion to U.S. Women's History*, 565.

Finally, Rose Dear's tragic destiny speaks for itself. Oppressed by Jim Crow laws, left by her husband, humiliated and bullied by racially motivated society, she commits suicide, leaving her children including Violet to their grandmother.

While Violet claimed Joe in the country long ago, after the discovery of his betrayal she wants to gain his love and attention. She feels the need to change in order to be liked and admired by him again. By various means, as for example straightening her hair, Violet attempts to look younger and more attractive for Joe, influenced, as Cannon explains, by the "sexist, racist ideology"[120] rooted in the past. The former desire for being white, described in the previous chapter of this thesis, grows even stronger after Dorcas' death, as the girl's skin was lighter then hers and this girl was the one loved by Joe. Consequently Violet becomes obsessed with the dead girl, trying to explore all about her to be as similar to her as possible.

At first, Dorcas seems to be different from Violet, being the admired one, the one whose desires are being satisfied in the relationship with Joe because he loves her the way she is. Dorcas, however, thinks he is being indifferent: "He didn't even care what I looked like. I could be anything, do anything–and it pleased him. […] Joe didn't care what kind of woman I was. He should have." What she hates most about Joe is this attitude to her and she is also uncomfortable with the power she has over him. Moreover, Dorcas' relationship with Joe is a secret and she does not like it that way. She feels the need of talking about her boyfriend with friends and more than anything she wants the whole world to envy her, which she finally accomplishes by dating Acton. She is immensely proud when he chooses her: "Other women want him–badly–and he has been selective. […] Dorcas is lucky. [She] [k]nows it. And is happy as she has ever been anytime."[121]

Her relationship with Acton is completely different from the one with Joe. Dorcas is trying to change not only her appearance but also her personality to suit Acton's desires. Dorcas is coerced by him to change the way she fixes her hair, she does not wear glasses in his presence and she also laughs differently. In her words, "[she] wanted to have a personality and with Acton [she is] getting one."[122] In reality she refuses to be herself to become someone else. According to Michelle Loris, "[i]n this male-dominated romantic structure, Dorcas represents how the female loses her self and is ultimately destroyed."[123]

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[120] Elizabeth M. Cannon, "Following the Traces of Female Desire in Toni Morrison's Jazz," *African American Review* 31/2 (1997): 240, accessed February 28, 2014, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3042462.
[121] Morrison, *Jazz*, 188.
[122] Morrison, *Jazz*, 190.
[123] Michelle Loris, "Self and Mutuality: Romantic Love, Desire, Race and Gender in Toni Morrison's *Jazz*," Sacred Heart University Review 14/1 (1994): 59, accessed February 11, 2014, http://digitalcommons.sacredheart.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1150&context=shureview.

The attitudes of the two men, Joe and Acton, toward Dorcas are vastly different. Joe wants the girl to be herself while Acton forces her to change. Dorcas chooses to be subordinate because she likes when someone else tells her what to do: "I'm Acton's and it's Acton I want to please. He expects it. With Joe I pleased myself because he encouraged me to."[124] Nevertheless, Joe proves his male dominance by killing Dorcas at the end. His name is not revealed as Dorcas refuses to identify him and rather choses to die. Alice, Dorcas' aunt, notes that "he killed her just because he could," which shows the defenselessness and vulnerability of black women. Dorcas' case is not the only one, there are many killed and humiliated women as Alice discovers while regularly reading newspapers:

> Every week since Dorcas' death, […] a paper laid bare the bones of some broken woman. Man kills wife. Eight accused of rape dismissed. Woman and girl victims of. Woman commits suicide. White attackers indicted. Five women caught. Woman says man beat. In jealous rage man.[125]

At first Alice thinks these women are "defenseless as ducks,"[126] but reading carefully all the articles, she ascertains that women have learned to defense themselves, as many of them are armed and therefore they are no longer easy victims.

As already mentioned, there are several aspects of the female gender role considered central for women, especially the role of a mother was pointed out earlier in this thesis, as motherhood usually comprises a significant part in a woman's life. Due to the ethnic and racial identity of female characters in *Jazz*, the following description concerning motherhood will be focused on African-American women. As Parvin Ghasemi and Rasool Hajizadeh suggest, "[h]istorically, the characterization of black women has been basically depicted in terms of their maternal role, a defined role which has been imposed on women as their sole source of identity by the society."[127] Pictures of black mothers have been stereotyped, considering them "superbly strong and protective, and at the same time, selfless, all embracing, demanding nothing or little, and totally self-sacrificing creatures whose identities are inseparable from their nurturing services."[128] Morrison's depiction of mothers in her works does not entirely correspond with the above stated description, partly denying it.[129] The problem of motherhood plays an important role in *Jazz*. Most female characters in the novel

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[124] Morrison, *Jazz*, 191.
[125] Morrison, *Jazz*, 74.
[126] Morrison, *Jazz*, 74.
[127] Parvin Ghasemi and Rasool Hajizadeh, "Demystifying the Myth of Motherhood: Toni Morrison's Revision of African-American Mother Stereotypes," *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity* 2/6 (2012): 477, accessed March 10, 2014, doi: 10.7763/IJSSH.2012.V2.151.
[128] Ghasemi and Hajizadeh, "Demystifying the Myth of Motherhood," 477.
[129] Ghasemi and Hajizadeh, "Demystifying the Myth of Motherhood," 477-478.

either never experience it or are absent from their child's life, maintaining their own identity at the same time.

Having an unwanted pregnancy, Wild gives up her child and thus refuses the gender role for which she is not prepared. Dorcas' mother dies leaving an empty space in her daughter's heart. For Rose Dear, the mother of five children including Violet, motherhood is an unrelenting burden and eventually her hardship leads her to suicide. Morrison's concept of motherhood seems to deny the stereotype about the strong, children-oriented nature of African-American women. All these women have been already described earlier in this chapter.

Violet's case is much more complicated. Affected by her mother's actions, she decides not to have children at first. Later she suffers several miscarriages but does not have any time to recover and cope with the loss due to hard work. When she comes to New York with her husband, Joe expresses his opinion that not having children is for the best, even though they both like them. As Violet grows older, she develops a strong maternal instinct and starts sleeping with a doll in her arms, longing for a child. At this point, however, her age does not allow her to have one. In her mind, she imagines what the last miscarried child would have been like: "A girl, probably. Certainly a girl. Who would she favor? What would her speaking voice sound like?"[130] Violet asks herself and continues imagining her responsibilities and private moments she would have shared with her daughter.

> After weaning time, Violet would blow her breath on the babygirl's food, cooling it down for the tender mouth. Later on they would sing together, Violet taking the alto line, the girl honeyed soprano. […] Violet would dress her hair for her the way the girls wore it now […]. Violet was drowning in it, deep-dreaming. […] [M]other hunger had hit her like a hammer. Knocked her down and out.[131]

Her desperate desire for a child leads her to peculiar acts, such as kidnapping someone else's baby that she is asked to look after for a moment. She is too overwhelmed by the idea of having her own child that she forgets her bag with hairdressing equipment near the carriage from which she has lifted the baby.

> When the baby was in her arms, she inched its blanket up around the cheeks against the threat of wind too cool for its honey-sweet, butter-colored face. Its gig-eyed noncommittal stare made her smile. Comfort settled itself in her stomach and a kind of skipping, running light traveled her veins. Joe will love

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[130] Morrison, *Jazz*, 108.
[131] Morrison, *Jazz*, 108.

this. Love it. And quickly her mind raced ahead to their bedroom and what was in there she could use for a crib until she got a real one. There was gentle soap in the sample case already so she could bathe him in the kitchen right away. Him? Was it him?[132]

While holding the baby in her arms, she feels like a recent mother or a woman who has recently discovered she is pregnant and starts making plans for the baby. Violet is not realizing the consequences of stealing a child, as they are overshadowed by her vivid imagination. When the baby's sister starts looking for her brother and other people join her, Violet is forced to return the child and pretend she has been merely walking him.

Feeling lonely, Violet gradually becomes attached to the vision of her own child that she can never have. Her craving for a child is in contradiction to other female characters in *Jazz* who voluntarily give up their children: Wild and Rose Dear.

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[132] Morrison, *Jazz*, 19-20.

3 Conclusion

Stuart Hall once wrote that "[i]dentity is not formed in the simple recovery of the past but the way that we position ourselves in relationship to the past and rename our selves and our realities."[133] Hall's point is proved in *Jazz* and aptly summarizes the whole concept of identity depicted in the novel. The main characters, Joe and Violet, are adversely affected by their past but eventually, their new identity forms when they surmount problems from the past and finally find support and love in each other. Joe finds a new job, Violet buys a new bird to take care of and with the help of her husband overcomes the loneliness and longing for a child, as they spend a lot of time together; they take walks around the city or stay at home and share their personal stories.

Four different types of identity are examined in this thesis: personal, ethnic, racial and gender identity. The development of personal identity analyzed by Layder and described in the first subchapter of this thesis is very well depicted in Morrison's novel. In case of the two main characters, it is a very long process. By changing so often, Joe attempts to find his true identity but fails because of his never-ceasing search for his mother Wild. When he encounters Dorcas, he is reminded of Wild and by killing the girl, his search for his mother and his identity is concluded. While Joe's development is represented by his changes, Violet's development can be seen in the gradual splitting of her self into two halves: one is strong, powerful and devastating, while the other one is weak, lonely and introverted. The first characterizes Violet from the country, the latter is typical for Violet from the city. By uniting these two halves, the uncertainty about her personal identity is resolved. Both main characters are eventually able to recover from their past and thus find peace in their lives.

The two aspects of the self, private and public, are depicted in the novel through the character Joe. On the outside, he appears to be a man of good manners with exemplary behavior, but in reality he is an unstable and reserved person with many secrets. The only person he feels he can confide in is Dorcas. When killing Dorcas, Joe does not act rationally, but under the influence of his feelings and emotions, which disproves the statement given in the theoretical part of this chapter that humans are rational actors and supports Layder's theory regarding humans as emotional beings not always listening to their reason. Accuracy

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[133] Stuart Hall as quoted in Carolyn M. Jones, "Traces and Cracks: Identity and Narrative in Toni Morrison's *Jazz*," *African American Review* 31/ 3 (1997): 493, accessed January 8, 2014, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3042574.

of this theory can be also supported by Violet's attempt to disfigure Dorcas' face, as her behavior is affected by her emotions.

In the second subchapter it is argued that the terms race and ethnicity should be perceived as two different terms, although they are often being used interchangeably. Experts differ in their opinions concerning this dispute. For example, given the way Renn defines race, she does not distinguish between race and ethnicity, as according to her, race is not only based on physical appearance, but also ancestry, nationality and culture, which, as perceived by others, are identifiers rather for ethnicity. Some consider race and ethnicity two different terms, others claim that race is subordinate to ethnicity. Closely related to ethnic identity, ethnic groups were analyzed in the second subchapter. Based on the earlier described characteristics, the protagonists of *Jazz* belong to two of the groups: post-slavery minority and urban minority. Joe's and Violet's characteristics are in accordance with the typical features of these two minorities: they are African Americans, thus descendants of enslaved and other Africans, and they migrated to the city from the South escaping oppression and seeking work.

As already mentioned, character from *Jazz* live a life affected by their race, some of them becoming victims of racial hatred and consequently dying, such as Dorcas' parents and Rose Dear. Joe is lucky to survive after being wounded in a riot and Wild and Golden Gray escape to live away from society. Violet suffers differently; influenced by the white beauty standard she desires being light-skinned like Golden Gray or Dorcas.

With the reference to the analysis of both identities as depicted in *Jazz*, it can be concluded that one's ethnicity and race complement each other and together they constitute an essential part of a person. Therefore both concepts should be examined in relation to each other.

The concept of gender identity is discussed in the third subchapter. It has been stated that the crucial influence on one's gender identification comes from parents. Abandoned by his mother, Joe never meets his father and grows up with foster parents with whom he does not develop a close bond, therefore, the process of gender identity formation in his case is problematic. Nobody in his life becomes a model to set a good example to him while forming his gender identity until he is chosen by Hunter's Hunter to be his pupil and the process of formation is completed. Finally, Joes is taught what being a man means: he learns to hunt, which is a typically masculine activity.

Influenced by a stereotyped image of subordinate girls, Dorcas is not happy in her relationship with Joe, as he allows her to make decisions and be in charge. She is satisfied in

the relationship with Acton, as he demands her to change to suit his desires. She feels that her gender role requires pleasing men.

Motherhood has been pointed out as central for most women's identity. Moreover, over time many stereotypes about African-American mothers emerged. Morrison's depiction of mothers in her novel does not entirely correspond with the description stated in the third subchapter. Mothers in *Jazz* are not strong, protective, self-sacrificing creatures whose identities are inseparable from their nurturing services. Most female characters in the novel either never experience motherhood or are absent from their child's life, maintaining their own identity at the same time. Three mothers: the ones of Joe's, Dorcas' and Violet's are victims of both their gender and racial identity. Joe's mother, Wild, is beaten, raped and made pregnant and after the birth of her son she abandons her maternal duties. Dorcas' mother dies in flames when her house is burned to ground only a few days after her husband' death. Violet's mother, Rose Dear, has to stay at home while her husband leaves and after years of suffering she commits suicide without thinking about the impact of her actions on her children. All these three mothers have one common feature: their absence in their children's lives has negative impact on these children. Not only are Joe, Violet and Dorcas linked by the love triangle they are all part of, but most significantly all of them are affected by the loss of their mothers causing a part of their identity to be missing. Two of the mothers voluntarily give their children up. It can be concluded that Morrison's concept of motherhood partly denies the stereotype about the strong, self-sacrificing and children-oriented nature of African-American women and that as depicted in her novel, maternity is not a vital part of African-American female identity. However, it is important to state that this conclusion is based on the novel analyzed in this thesis. On the contrary, Violet's character suggests that every woman starts sooner or later longing for a child. At first, under the influence of her mother's actions, Violet decides to never have children. Eventually, a strong maternal instinct is developed in her; however, she is too old for having a child.

Finally, the situation of women is examined as depicted in *Jazz*. One of the characters, Alice, observes that violence against African-American women is committed on a daily basis. This situation implies that men truly are strong, self-centered and aggressive as suggested in the third subchapter.

As already mentioned in the introduction, Morrison' intention while writing *Jazz* was to depict the period in which her novel is set as authentically as possible. It can be concluded that through the lives of her characters, she successfully achieved her goal and was able to accurately depict different aspects of African-American identity in her novel.

4 Resumé

Tato bakalářská práce se zaměřuje na problematiku identity a její zobrazení v románu *Jazz* afroamerické spisovatelky Toni Morrisonové. Většina děl této spisovatelky mapuje určitou epochu v historii Afroameričanů. Zatímco například *Milosrdenství*, jedna z jejích nejnovějších knih, zobrazuje počátky otroctví na americkém kontinentu, román *Milovaná* se zaměřuje na samotné otroctví a období po jeho zrušení. V díle *Domov* se naopak autorka zaměřuje na příběh vojáka, který se právě vrátil z Korejské války do rasistické Ameriky. Děj románu *Jazz* je zasazen do Ameriky ve dvacátých letech dvacátého století, jimž se někdy přezdívá „Věk jazzu" (The Jazz Age). To je způsobeno především rozkvětem afroamerické kultury, umění a hudby, přičemž jazz se stal jakýmsi symbolem tohoto hnutí. Tato epocha, či kulturní hnutí, je souhrnně nazýváno „Harlemskou renesancí." Morrisonová se však v průběhu románu posouvá v čase a kromě dvacátých let také v díle skrze své postavy zachycuje migraci Afroameričanů z venkovského jihu na průmyslově rozvinutější sever nejen ve snaze uniknout rasové segregaci, ale také hledat lepší pracovní příležitosti. Hlavní postavy románu *Jazz*, Joe a Violet, se stávají součástí této velké migrace a na počátku dvacátého století se spolu s mnoha dalšími Afroameričany ocitají v New Yorku. Během dvaceti let strávených v tomto velkoměstě jejich identity procházejí velkou změnou a zároveň se manželé navzájem postupně odcizují.

Cílem této práce je analýza díla z hlediska zachycení problematiky osobní, rasové, etnické a genderové identity. Identita, rozebíraná v druhé kapitole této práce, je nezbytnou součástí každého člověka, protože ho odlišuje od ostatních. Zatímco někteří odborníci tvrdí, že identita je neměnná a člověk zůstává tou samou bytostí od narození až do smrti, jiní prohlašují, že identita se stále mění a rozvíjí. Je však zřejmé, že existuje něco uvnitř člověka, co zůstává stejné a díky tomu ho ostatní rozeznávají v různých životních obdobích. Člověk má tedy unikátní identitu, zároveň však sdílí různé druhy identit s jinými lidmi. Stejně jako mnoho dalších tak může být identifikován například jako otec, matka, pracovník, snílek, podvodník, atd. Rozlišuje se mezi objektivní a subjektivní identitou, což znamená, že jedinec svou identitu může vnímat jinak než jeho okolí. Dále existují různé typy identit, za nejdůležitější jsou považovány především národní, osobní, rasová, sociální, kolektivní a genderová identita.

Tato bakalářská práce se zaměřuje na identitu osobní, rasovou, etnickou a genderovou. Osobní identita rozebraná v první podkapitole této práce je vlastnost identity zkoumaná

v průběhu života jedince. Ve svém životě člověk podstoupí několik změn osobní identity, tyto změny však bývají pozvolné a není možné je svévolně vynutit. Dále dochází v životě jedince k několika zvratům, které přispívají k jeho vývoji. Lze zkoumat dva aspekty osobní identity: soukromou neboli niterní a veřejnou. Jinými slovy se rozlišuje, co člověk říká či jak navenek působí, a co si ve skutečnosti myslí a jaký ve skutečnosti je, jelikož někdy se tyto aspekty liší. V životě na člověka působí mnoho vlivů, které přispívají k utváření jeho osobní identity, ať už to jsou jeho vlastní myšlenky nebo pocity či jeho okolí, rodina, vzdělání, zaměstnání atd.

Výrazný vývoj osobních identit v románu *Jazz* lze sledovat především v životech dvou hlavních postav. Joe ve svém životě prochází celkem sedmi změnami. Protože matka ho opustí hned po narození, nemá možnost od ní identitu převzít. Když jde poprvé do školy, vymyslí si příjmení Trace, a tak poprvé pojmenuje svou identitu. Poslední změnu podstoupí po seznámení s Dorcas, ve které spatřuje svou vlastní matku. Bezhlavě se do dívky zamiluje a svěřuje se jí se svými nejniternějšími myšlenkami. Když ho dívka nakonec zradí a opustí tak jako kdysi jeho matka, Joe svou lásku zastřelí a osvobodí se tak od nekonečného hledání jak své matky, tak své identity. Vývoj osobní identity Violet představuje postupné rozpolcení její osobnosti. Zatímco jedna část je silná, odhodlaná a ničivá, druhá část je charakterizována jako tichá, uzavřená a osamělá. První jmenovanou představuje Violet z venkova, druhou Violet z města. Konečné spojení těchto dvou částí nastává poté, co se postava vyrovná se svou minulostí a přijme sebe samu takovou, jaká je. Překonáním svých strastí z minulosti k sobě Violet a Joe opět nacházejí cestu a jejich láska dostává nový rozměr. Na postavě Joea lze sledovat výrazný rozdíl mezi subjektivním a objektivním aspektem osobní identity: navenek Joe vystupuje jako důvěryhodný muž, který na všechny působí velice kladně, uvnitř je však nevyrovnaný, poznamenaný hledáním své matky a také své identity. Svá tajemství se odvažuje svěřit pouze Dorcas, protože cítí její porozumění.

Obsahem druhé podkapitoly jsou různá pojetí etnické a rasové identity a vztah etnicity a rasy. Tyto termíny často zaměňovány, avšak mnozí je rozlišují. Někteří odborníci je považují za totožné a jiní vnímají rasu jako výraz podřazený etnicitě. Podstatou rozdílu mezi těmito termíny je fakt, že rasa je definována na základě fyzických znaků, jako jsou například barva pleti, vlasů, očí či tvar obličeje, zatímco etnicita jedince se vztahuje jak na jeho kulturní a sociální znaky, tak na původ, místo narození nebo bydliště či jazyk. Zvláštní důraz je v této podkapitole kladen také na etnickou a rasovou identitu Afroameričanů, především pak vývoj a snahy o změnu identity ve dvacátých letech dvacátého století v Americe. Cílem Afroameričanů bylo představit hrdinu černé pleti prokazující přednosti a úspěchy Afroamerického obyvatelstva a tím vytvořit novou Afroamerickou identitu zbavenou všech

stereotypních představ. V části věnované zvlášť etnicitě jsou rozebrané etnické skupiny na pozadí tří historických etap vývoje etnicity. Z nich jsou pro účely této bakalářské práce nejdůležitější dvě: menšina sestávající se z potomků otroků a menšina ve městě. Členové první minority se nyní oficiálně nazývají Afroameričané. Charakteristiky této skupiny se shodují s popisem postav v románu Morrisonové, které jsou černé či míšené pleti. Menšiny ve městech zahrnují obchodníky, lidi migrující do měst kvůli práci či obyvatele původně z Afriky, kteří později taktéž migrují z venkova do měst. Hlavní postavy románu *Jazz* migrují z venkovského jihu na sever do New Yorku a připojují se tak k vlně Afroamerických migrantů stěhujících se do měst na severu ve snaze najít práci a uniknout segregaci a utlačování. Podstatou jejich etnicity je jejich historie a kulturní dědictví, které sdílejí s ostatními Afroameričany.

Postavy rozebíraného románu jsou značně ovlivněny svou rasou a především vnímají její negativní dopady na jejich životy. Ze strany bílého obyvatelstva se nesetkávají s přijetím, ba naopak. V knize lze vyhledat několik příkladů rasové nenávisti vůči obyvatelům černé pleti. Rose Dear musí snášet ponižování, lynčování i odebrání majetku a její zoufalství ji nakonec vede k sebevraždě. Žena přezdívaná Wild žije po negativních zkušenostech stranou od komunity a vyhýbá se styku s ní. Joe se v ulicích New Yorku málem stane obětí rasových nepokojů. Violet zoufale touží po mládí a světlé pleti, kterou má pod vlivem obrazů o míšencích (Golden Gray a Dorcas) v její mysli vsugerovanou jako ideál krásy. Na základě vyobrazení těchto dvou identit (etnické a rasové) v daném románu lze shrnout, že etnicita a rasa se vzájemně doplňují a společně tvoří důležitou část jedince.

Co se týká genderové identity, je třeba rozlišovat mezi pojmy gender a pohlaví. Pohlaví se vztahuje k biologickým znakům jedince a jasně odlišuje muže od ženy. Zatímco pohlaví je dáno již při početí, gender se postupně vyvíjí a definuje se na základě sociálních a kulturních rozdílů. Při určování genderu záleží na tom, zda jedinec sám sebe vnímá jako muže či ženu. Obvykle je genderová identita dána pohlavím, není to však pravidlem. Při formování genderové identity působí na dítě různé vlivy, například sociální prostředí, rodina a jiné významné postavy, které dítě obklopují. Nejvýznamnější vliv představují rodiče, kteří zacházejí jinak s děvčaty a jinak přistupují k chlapcům, poskytují jim odlišné hračky a předměty odpovídající jejich pohlaví a v neposlední řadě podporují aktivity typické pro jedno či druhé pohlaví. Dále je rozlišeno mezi pojmy genderová identita a genderová role: první z těchto termínu se vztahuje k chování jedince, tedy zda se chová jako muž, nebo žena. Druhý z termínu je spojováno s pocity člověka: zda se cítí být mužem či ženou. V průběhu života se lidé setkávají s různými genderovými rolemi, v mnohých případech stereotypními. Důraz je

kladen na mateřství, jelikož role matky je klíčová pro mnoho žen. Dále je v této kapitole obsažena charakteristika Afroamerických žen, které jsou vnímány jako silné, obětavé a zcela oddané svým mateřským povinnostem.

Pojetí genderu hraje v románu Morrisonové důležitou roli, především je zdůrazněno znevýhodňování a ponižování Afroamerických žen. Jako příklady mohou být zmíněny osudy Rose Dear, Wild, matky Dorcas a nakonec i samotné Dorcas. Rose Dear je okolnostmi dohnána k sebevraždě, Wild žije stranou od společnosti a Dorcasina matka umírá v požáru jejího domu záměrně založeném bělochy krátce po smrti svého manžela. Dorcas vyhovuje podřazená role vůči jejímu příteli Actonovi a snaží se co nejvíce přizpůsobit jeho požadavkům. Na základě Aliciných poznatků získaných v novinových článcích je možné vytvořit si autentickou představu situace Afroamerických žen, které jsou v období, kdy se román odehrává, každý den týrány, ponižovány a zabíjeny.

Důležitou roli hraje v *Jazzu* také mateřství. Většina ženských postav v románu mateřství buď nikdy nepoznala, nebo se s rolí matky příliš neztotožňuje. Morrisonová tak ve svém románu odmítá výše zmiňovanou stereotypní představu o Afroamerických matkách. Speciálním případem je postava Violet, která zpočátku děti nechce, avšak v pozdějším věku po nich začne toužit. Na rozdíl od ostatních ženských postav v *Jazzu* Violetina situace naznačuje, že na každou ženu dříve či později dolehne mateřský instinkt.

Stejně jako v jejích dalších románech i v *Jazzu* byl záměr Morrisonové zachytit co nejvěrohodněji dobu, ve které se kniha odehrává. Pomocí svých postav tak dala konkrétní podobu Afroameričanům, kteří tak jako Joe a Violet opustili Jih a stěhovali se do měst na Severu, kde se potýkali problémy spojenými s novým prostředím, rasovou nesnášenlivostí nebo také odcizením.

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