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The Sounds of Colours: A Pragmatic Study of Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye

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Abstract:

Little is known about the pragmatic and cultural meanings of colours that authors use to deliver specific ideas and messages. It is still undetermined whether colours can express the speaker's intended meaning. One of the areas that should be visited is the literary works with a long history of familiarity with colours. The present study scrutinizes the most frequently used colours in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970); it investigates their pragmatic and cultural meanings. It aims to determine the primary concept revealed through colours and identify the most flouted maxim in the novel. The main question that the study tries to answer is what are the most frequent colours and their cultural sounds in Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* that determine the main concept by pinpointing the most flouted maxim. It is hypothesized that blue, white and black are the most common colours in the investigated contexts. Racial discrimination is the central concept shown through flouting quality maxim. Randomly selected extracts are analysed according to a model based on Grice's (1975) Maxims Breaching. In the present study, data has been approached qualitatively. The study has come up with certain conclusions to prove the above hypotheses such as it is found that blue, white and black are the most used colours.

Keywords: Colours, Pragmatic and Cultural Meanings, Maxims Breaching, Discrimination.

صوت الألوان: دراسة تداولية في رواية توني موريسون "العين الاكثر زرقة"

الخلاصة:

نسبيًا، لا يُعرف سوى القليل عن المعاني التداولية والثقافية للألوان التي يستخدمها المؤلفون لايصال أفكار ورسائل معينة. ومن غير المعروف ايضاً امكانية الألوان في تحديد المعنى المقصود للمتكلم. واحدة من مجالات الألوان التي ممكن دراستها هي الأعمال الأدبية التي لها تاريخ طويل من الإلمام بالألوان. تحاول الدراسة الحالية العثور على مصطلحات الألوان الأكثر استخداما في رواية "العين الأكثر زرقة" (١٩٧٠) من خلال التحقق من معانيها التداولية والثقافية. يهدف البحث إلى تحديد المفاهيم الأساسية التي تم الكشف عنها من خلال استخدام الألوان والتعرف على المبدئ الأكثر اختراقا في الرواية. السؤال الرئيسي الذي تحاول الدراسة الاجابة عليه

هو ماهي الالوان الاكثر شيوعا واصواتها الثقافية في "العين الاكثر زرقة" لموريسون والتي تحدد المفهوم الرئيس من خلال تحديد المبدأ الاكثر خرقة. يفترض البحث أن اللون الأزرق والأبيض والأسود هي الألوان الأكثر شيوعا في السياقات قيد البحث. علاوة على ذلك، فإن التمييز العنصري هو المفهوم الرئيس الذي يظهر من خلال خرق مبدأ الجودة. لفحص صحة هذه الفرضيات تم اختيار مقتطفات عشوائية من رواية "العين الأكثر زرقة" لتحليلها وفق نظرية كرايس وهي (١٩٧٥) Maxims Breaching. وقد تم التعامل مع بيانات الدراسة بشكل وصفي. جاءت الدراسة باستنتاجات معينة لتثبت الفرضيات أعلاه حيث وجد ان الالوان الازرق والابيض والاسود هي الالوان الاكثر استخداما.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الألوان، المعاني التداولية والثقافية، خرق قواعد الكلام، التمييز.

1.Problem of the Study:

The study of colours has lately attracted the attention of researchers in various fields, such as sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, semantics, and so forth. However, the current study approaches colours differently. It adopts a new approach, a pragmatic one, in its analysis. The issue of identifying the cultural meanings of colours is a complex one and requires a flexible rather than a static view that leads readers to recognize the exact meanings. Assigning a meaning to a colour does not necessarily involve an exact match in terms of characteristics and properties. Colours differ with different cultures. To the best of the researchers' knowledge, no previous study has investigated colours pragmatically in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* in a culture-specific way (Eastern and Western cultures). The choice of the topic was explicitly motivated by this reason.

2. Aims of the Study:

The present study aims at:

(1) Investigating the most commonly used colours and their cultural sounds in Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*.

(2) Determining the main concept represented in colours.

(3) Pinpointing the most used flouted maxim in relation to colours in the investigated extracts of the novel.

3. Questions of the Study:

What are the most frequent colours and their cultural sounds in Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* that determine the main concept via the use of colours by pinpointing the most used flouted maxim related to colours in the novel under study?

4. Hypotheses:

To achieve its aims, the present study hypothesises that:

(1) Blue, white and black are the most frequently used colours and their cultural sounds in Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*.

(2) Racial discrimination is the central concept exposed through the use of colours.

(3) The maxim of quality is the most flouted in the novel.

5. Significance of the Study:

The importance of this study lies in the fact that it provides a better understanding of colours, revealing the cultural and pragmatic concepts behind them since most studies have concentrated on the semantic meaning of colours.

6. Methodology:

To achieve the aims of the study and test its hypotheses, the following steps have been followed: presenting colours from a pragmatic point of view, selecting the data for the study which are eleven extracts collected from Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, adopting a model to suit the analysis of the data, analysing the data qualitatively according to the adopted model which is based on Grice's (1975) Maxims Breaching and finally drawing up the significant results. The qualitative analysis, which tackles the selected extract in this study, will be divided into three phases: the first is concerned with colour identification using bold typewriting for the words that represent colours, the second level examines the macro pragmatic strategy, which is maxims breaching and the third level introduces a more detailed scrutinisation of this macro pragmatic strategy. Maxim's breaching includes floating, violating, opting out, infringing and suspending a maxim.

7. Introduction:

Language is a means of communication that conveys multiplicity of meanings (Al-Qassab, 2024). As a part of language, colours have various implications and explanations. Writers have employed colours to achieve deeper understanding and create something more memorable (Dhayef and Hussein, 2021). Colours are significant in individuals' lives and are utilized in different fields like photographs, painting, or even wearing daily clothes *(Alomari* and *AL-Qadi, 2017*). They convey specific meanings and communicate ideas without words. Every colour is associated with particular concepts in the real world; for example, red is related to danger. Colours are meaningful since they can collocate with particular situations (Qatatsheh, 2015).

Xing (2009) argues that each colour has three meanings: original meaning, extended meaning and abstract meaning. The first one is defined as the etymological meaning of the colour. The second is the meaning extended from the original meaning through metaphor, metonymy, or other cognitive means. The last one refers to the meaning that has been further derived from the extended meaning. According to Hasan, et al. (2011), the first basic meaning is always the earliest; after that, the extended meaning is developed, and the abstract meaning is the most recent extension of any given colour, such as black hair, black night and black hell. According to Steinvall (2002), the figurative meaning of colours shows that colours no longer refer to colours at all but to other concepts. Colours indicate other meanings, which could be regarded as additional connotations or attributes. Steinvall states that a figurative meaning of a colour is one in which the primary domain is not the colour but to which the colour refers.

The denotative meaning is different from the connotative one. As a pragmatic category of meaning, *connotations* are defined by Allan (2007) as "pragmatic effects that arise from encyclopaedic knowledge about its denotation (or reference) and from experiences, beliefs, and prejudices about the contexts in which the expression is typically used". The connotative meanings of colours are realised linguistically using different conventional linguistic expressions such as black-handed, white record, yellow leaf, to feel blue, to be in the pink and to see red. These phrases enhance the currency and existence of the connotative meanings assigned to colours in reality in particular cultural settings (Niemeier 1998, as cited in Philip, 2006). AL-Adaileh (2012) defines the connotative meaning as what is communicated utilising language users refer to. Therefore, this kind of meaning, compared to other types of meanings, is not fixed and may differ from one culture to another and

from one individual to another. AL-Adaileh (2012) emphasises the idea of colour connotation. He asserts that Arabic colours could convey different connotative meanings, in addition to their literal meanings, that are realised in linguistic expressions.

8. Categorizing Colours by X-phemisms:

Categorising colours in terms of "X-phemisms" necessitates discussing the uses of colours. Colours are categorised as orthophemistic, euphemistic, and dysphemistic. X-phemisms is a term that describes the set of orthophemisms (straight-talking), dysphemisms (offensive language) and euphemisms (sweet talking). Orthophemisms and euphemisms are substitutions for words, phrases, or expressions that are aggressive or offensive, using less offensive language. The utilisation of orthophemisms and euphemisms is because of the need to hide the identity of the subject of the conversation or to be polite. That is, euphemisms and orthophemisms protect the speaker's and the addressee's faces. The only difference between orthophemism and euphemism is that the former is more formal and direct (literal) than euphemism, whereas the latter is more colloquial than orthophemism. This means that orthophemistic expressions (straight-talking) are neither sweet-talking nor obviously polite nor harsh or offensive. Dysphemism refers to using an offensive or harsh word or expression instead of a sweet one. Realising the negative connotations of black, some people intentionally avoid stating the word black. In Egyptian Arabic, for example, Egyptians are more likely to replace black with white when saying what a white day! (yanhar abyadʕ), or what white news! (ya xabar abyadʕ) in reaction to bad and black news. Such lexical replacement is because of the need to be polite while addressing others to protect the speaker's and the listener's face (AL-Adaileh, 2012).

Black appears in a dual form in standard Arabic. It can have either euphemistic or dysphemistic connotations. Whereas *al-aswadan*= the two blacks (nominative case) are used euphemistically to indicate date and water, *al-aswadayin*=the two blacks (accusative case) is used dysphemistically to refer to snake and scorpion. Euphemistic uses of black in Arabic include the black hair and black eyes of women, which are considered marks of beauty. However, depression, pessimism, anger, death, deceit, fear, hatred, aggressiveness and funereal clothes enhance the dysphemistic uses of black (AL-Adaileh, 2012).

According to *psychologycolors.com*, black holds multiple meanings in African culture. While it represents darkness and mourning, it also signifies strength, power, and authority. People wear black during significant ceremonies since it is associated with wisdom and maturity. Therefore, each colour has different connotations by the cultures in which it is used. Black includes two opposite connotations, i.e., it is the colour of fear and pain, but on specific occasions, it refers to elegance and sobriety.

9.**The Basicness of a Colour:**

Colours acquire more or less significance according to their inclusion or exclusion in the criteria of basicness. A colour can be defined as basic if it has the following criteria: it should be monolexemic; its meaning should not be involved with another term; it should not only be used to refer to specific objects or within a narrow or specialised field of reference; and it should be prominent or prestigious, i.e., be frequent in language use. The exclusion of specific terms such as *sky*

blue and *vermilion* is justifiable in that the former is monolexemic while the latter is included within the red, which native speakers can interfere with its meaning (Philip, 2006).

The importance of colours corresponds to their frequency and refers to what is central and typical in a language (Sinclair, 1991). There is an essential relationship between the frequency of the occurrence of a colour and the number of meanings it is likely to create. The colours that occur regularly in the language will be more polysemous than those that occur uncommonly. The more connotative meanings a colour has, the more essential it is. If a colour proves to be frequent, it would have more metaphorical meanings and more conventional linguistic phrases would exist for a word than for lower-frequency items to exemplify these meanings. This results in the principle (more frequency=more meanings) (Philip, 2006).

The basicness of a colour is culturally conditioned since it may have more or less importance relying on the importance or the prestige of the colour in a particular cultural context. Basic colours are more likely to be prominent and frequent in the everyday language of the educated classes. The prestige, importance and currency of colours involve a certain degree of cultural knowledge (ibid).

10. Colours and their Variables:

Though there are typical ways in which the meanings of colours are recognized, it is not always the case that these meanings will be the same in every situation. A colour has a mercurial state to shape itself in accordance with various variables. This state gives a kind of flexibility for colours to crystalise their meanings in relation to the following variables:

1. Gender:

Colours are essential to most individuals' choices. They are connected to colours even before they come to life. They choose different colours for different reasons, including gender. Blue gifts are dedicated to boys, while pink is for girls. It is found that women are more interested in colourful clothing than men. It indicates that gender and cultural differences affect colour choice *(Alomari* and *AL-Qadi, 2017*).

2. Psychological State:

The variable of psychological state refers to the psychological dimension of colours. The human mind reacts either positively or negatively to colours provoking different stimuli. Certain choices of colours can be ascribed to the psychological comfort and discomfort (Dantas, et al., 2022). People choose colours according to their mood. When they view colours, different psychological indications are motivated. Colours interfere with and affect people's everyday lives. Colours play an essential role in choosing everyday objects. Colour psychology raises specific emotions. Therefore, brands consider colour psychology when creating products *(Alomari* and *AL-Qadi, 2017*).

Colours easily control individuals' moods and emotions. They cannot be interpreted apart from the cognitive environment in which colours occur. They are not used arbitrarily since they are related to the mental and emotional states (Qatatsheh, 2015).

3. Nationality:

Soriano and Valenzuela (2009; as cited in AL-Adaile, 2012) show that Spaniards treat red and yellow positively because they are the two colours of the Spanish flag. Red and yellow outfits represent the country in international competitions.

There is a relationship between skin colour and nationality since the former is predictor of the latter. More accurately, there is a strong association between negative attitudes towards nationalities of dark skinned colours. Skin colour is one of the decisive markers of nationalities. The existence of a national superiority and inferiority are largely based on colour skin that leads to catergorisation, differentiation, hierarchy and essentialisation of different nationalities. Nationalities are divided according to colour skin such as white and non-white people. The absence of white colour in a nation refers to the absence homogeneity (Negreiros, et al., 2022). Blackness is behind marginalisation. The colour black is always associated with African people. According to Akinbode and Ogunbanjo (2024), Africa is still a marginalised continent whose people have a distorted identity.

4. Time:

What is preferable today as a favourite colour for a particular person could be disliked on another day *(Alomari* and *AL-Qadi, 2017*). It is clear that the two colours, red and yellow, have lately become positive in people's minds as a result of Spain winning the UEFA European Football Championship after 44 years, as well as the Davis Cup in tennis (Soriano–Valenzuela, 2009 ; as cited in AL-Adaileh, 2012). Various meanings of colours differ according to the periods during which these meanings are developed. White and black are the two colours that have the most extended history in all languages in the world. The longer the period is, the more comprehensive the range of meanings will be (Hasan, et al., 2011).

5. Culture:

Colours have received much attention in pragmatics because of their universal character. Despite all humans knowing colours, not all cultures name them all. How the colour spectrum is separated differs from language to language and culture to culture. There is no satisfactory definition for a colour in all languages or cultures. At first glance, defining a colour is unremarkable. On closer examination, it becomes clear that the definition is based on the norms and conventions of a specific culture. There are eleven basic colours familiar to the world's languages. They more prominently appear in languages in a stable sequence. This means there is a highly reliable order with which cultures identify colours. All colours are organised hierarchically, i.e., no colour trespasses the others' positions. The order of appearance of colours can be expressed as follows: if a language has only two colours, they are always white and black; if it has three colours, the new one is red; if a fourth is added, it will be either green or yellow; when the sixth added, it is blue; the seventh added, it is brown; and if an eighth or more terms are added, it or they will be purple, pink, orange, or grey. No language acquires a blue term before a black or a pink term before a blue one (Berlin and Kay, 1969; as cited in Philip, 2006).

What women consider a colour of romanticism in one culture is a colour of anger by females in another. One colour can have different extended meanings in different cultures depending on the cultural background of the individual *(Alomari* and *AL-Qadi, 2017*). The colour systems of cultures are not connotationally similar. Colour associations are culturally determined connotations based on cultural conventions and stereotypes, not on the individuals' previous knowledge and experiences. They are established societal connotations that all people are supposed to know. This emphasises the importance of the cultural context in determining the connotations of the basic colours (Crisp and Chang, 1987; as cited in AL-Adaileh, 2012).

According to Mario De Bortoli and Jesus Maroto (2001; as cited in *Alomari* and *AL-Qadi, 2017),* orange in Asia is a positive, enlightened and life-affirming colour, while in America, it is a colour of road dangers, traffic delays, and fast-food restaurants.

Cross-cultural differences are noted to exist. Fire and the sun are yellow in English but red in Japanese and Chinese. Purple has implications of anger and passion for Americans, but it implies royalty only for the Chinese and Japanese. Yellow does not habitually indicate cowardice for Asians as it does for Americans (AL-Adaileh, 2012). White has negative connotations. White land (al-ardˤ al-baydˤ) is used dysphemistically to indicate the unplanted land, whereas black land (al-ardˤ al-sawda?) is used euphemistically to indicate the planted land. This is because ancient Arabs call everything relevant to vegetation black. These expressions are culture-specific in that they are unique to the Arabic language in general and Jordanian Arabic in particular (ibid).

According to *Cultural-Color.com,* colours represent different meanings for different people in different cultures. Understanding a cultural colour is essential to anyone doing business with other countries. These positive and passive associations of colours are significant to be aware of when marketing to these societies. With the advent of the World Wide Web, the differences in the meanings of colours among cultures are narrowing. With technology and the internet, people have learnt about cultural differences. Western cultures have adopted some uses of Eastern colour and vice-versa. For instance, red in the West indicates danger and anger, while in the East, it represents prosperity and good fortune. While orange signifies Halloween in the West, it implies spirituality and happiness in the East. More surprising is that green indicates jealousy in the West, but it represents a new life and hope in the East.

The colours used in conventional linguistic expressions are predetermined by the habitual patterns of the culture, which affect the speaker's and the community's perception of the colour. Niemeier suggests that although ideas can be green in English, they cannot be so in German (1998; as cited in Philip, 2006). According to Hasan, et al. (2011), every language has a set of colours. Colours are construed in cross-cultural diversity.

There are numerous kinds of socio-cultural associations concerning colours. These colours play a substantial role in intercultural interaction. The more knowledge about the colour words, the better the recognition of the foreign culture. Colours represent feelings, cultures, countries and even people (Adeeb, 2012). According to Blair and Bloom (2011), "Colours could mean whatever people wanted them to mean." Generalisation is impossible when studying colours since the interpretation differs from one culture to another; it might also differ within the same culture over time and space. Accordingly, colour is viewed differently in each culture.

11. Cultural Sounds of Colours:

Colours are culturally situated. Studying colours in relation to cultures represents a coherent and meaningful picture because they resonate with the values, beliefs, ideas and ideologies of the cultures in which they are used. Colours are only felicitous and successful by the extent to which they are recognised by cultures. In this case, they can be seen as credible and valid. Table (1) shows the connotative meanings of each colour in both Western and Eastern Cultures

Table (1): The Pragmatics of Colours (adopted from Cultural-Color)

Colours	Western Cultures	Eastern Cultures
Red	• energy, excitement, action • danger • love, passion • a warning to stop • anger • Christmas combined with green • Valentine's Day	• prosperity • good fortune • worn by brides • symbol of joy when combined with white
Pink	• caring and nurturing • love, romance and feminine	• feminine
Orange	• affordable or inexpensive items • Halloween	• happiness • spirituality
Yellow	• happiness, joy • hope • cowardice • caution, warning of hazards and hazardous substances	• sacred • imperial
Green	• lucky color in most Western cultures • spring, new birth, regeneration • nature and environmental awareness • color for 'go' at traffic lights • Saint Patrick's Day • Christmas combined with red • jealousy • greed	• new life, regeneration and hope • fertility
Blue	• trust and authority • conservative, • corporate • peace and calm • depression, • sadness • "something blue" bridal tradition • masculine color • baby boys	• immortality
Purple	• Royalty • spirituality • wealth and fame • high-ranking positions of authority • Military honour	• Wealth
White	• brides and weddings • angels • hospitals, doctors	• death, mourning and funerals • sadness

	• peace - the white dove • purity and cleanliness	
Black	• power, control, intimidation • funerals, death, mourning • rebellion	• wealth, health and prosperity
Brown	• down-to-earth, practical • comfortable • stable, dependable, • wholesome	

12. The Model Adopted: Grice's Maxim Breaching (1975):

Meanings can be conveyed or implied without expressing them directly. This creates a phenomenon called implicature which is Grice's basic contribution in the field of pragmatics. Grice distinguishes between two levels of meaning. The Gricean idea of "what is meant but not said" is the basic principle in this theory. Communication is a matter of cooperation between interlocutors to convey messages effectively. Cooperation is considered the most critical pillar in any interaction. Speech is a cooperative engagement (Grice, 1975).

It is worth noting the connection between CP and the maxims on the one hand and conversational implicatures on the other. Conversational implicatures can be drawn either by observing or breaking the maxims. Concerning the former in which the maxims are being obeyed the listener depends on what is said to make propositions. While in the latter, the speaker obliges the listener to make more inferences. Grice states that participants in a conversation may fail to observe the maxims in different ways, which include the following:

1. The S may VIOLATE a maxim to mislead or deceive the hearer. The violation of maxims occurs when the maxims are intentionally manipulated to mislead the H. The S speaks the truth implying something false.
2. The S may OPT OUT from the maxim and the CP. She/he refuses to cooperate in a conversation for some legal, ethical and medical reasons. Thus, the S cannot replay in the same way she/he is expected to. There is a kind of unwillingness to cooperate, and at the same time, the S wishes to avoid generating a false implicature.
3. The S may be confronted by a CLASH. She/he sometimes breaches the maxim of quantity to observe the maxim of quality, finding herself/himself unable to observe both of them simultaneously.
4. In contrast to violating, the S may FLOUT a maxim intentionally for the purpose of implicating something. A flout happens when the S obviously selects not to observe the maxims for generating implicature. S/he does not intend to mislead, deceive or unco-operate but encouraging the listener to search for a deeper meaning beyond the sematic one. The H can fill in the missing information depending on the context. Flouting is the intentional breach of one of the maxims, which triggers a reasoning process the listener can go through to come up with the hidden meaning. It is the most interesting case in the non-fulfillment of maxims. Any flouting of Gricean maxims should be interpreted as implying an additional meaning. Although meaning is not explicitly stated, it is understood in the following examples in Table (2), which illustrates how maxims are flouted at the

level of what is said, but they are observed at the level of what is implicated, making observation/ exploitation dichotomy.

Table (2): Types of Flouting Grice's Maxims of Speech

Maxims	Observance of Maxims	Examples of Non-Observance of Maxims (Flouting)	Explanation
Quantity	• Make your contribution as informative as is required.	*Business is business.*	The first maxim of quantity is broken because tautologies are totally non-informative. This sentence is not cooperative. It indicates that there is nothing one can do about it. It is inadequate and uncommunicative. It is identical with itself.
	• Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.	*The colour of my bag is white to contrast my dress which is black.*	The second maxim of quantity is disobeyed because the S gives more information than the situation requires.
Quality	• Do not say what you believe to be false.	*Irony: Good, so the grey is a combination of red and green, right?*	Irony is the result of flouting quality maxim. It is a friendly way of being offensive (mock-politeness).The first maxim of quality is broken because the S says something that is not believed to be true. Something is said by the S untrue or inconsistent with the truth.
		Banter: You are not a good friend.	It is an offensive way of being friendly (mock-impoliteness). It is a negative utterance, but it implies positivity. What the S says is impolite and untrue but what S/he implies is polite and true.
		Metaphor: You are an open book.	The S makes a comparison between the H and the open book trying to show that the listener is transparent and can be read freely.
		Meiosis: The sound was a bit loud.	Meiosis is a euphemistic device used to understate something. The S implies that the sound was quite loud.

		Hyperbole: I have told you a million times not to lie.	The S tries to exaggerate to create strong feelings. S/he uses hyperbole for emphatic purposes or to make something sound much more bigger than it actually is.
	• Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence	*He probably stole the money.*	The S has no adequate evidence.
Relation	• Make your contributions relevant	*A: How much is your salary?* *B: What a nice car.*	B's answer is not associated to A's question. So, B changes the topic because S/he does not want to tell the H about the salary.
Manner	•Avoid ambiguity.	*I went to the bank.*	It is ambiguous since it has more than one meaning. The word bank may refer to either a financial bank or the edge of the river.
	•Avoid obscurity.	*I am going to ask somebody about something.*	The S does not want anybody to understand what S/he means.
	• Be brief	*I am going to buy five thin slices of meat.*	The S says more than is necessary because the meat is already thinly sliced.
	• Be orderly.	*Anna attended the lecture and went to the university.*	It is not spoken in the chronological order in which it occurs. The meaning of *and* means 'and then.'

13. Data Analysis:

This section presents an in-depth analysis of the selected extracts, which mirror the novel's main ideas. It depicts the blacks' inferiority and whites' superiority, showing the suffering, self-hatred, rejection, discrimination, dehumanization, disapproval, marginalization, humiliation and scattered identity of the African-American characters. All these concepts are reflected in Pecola's character who is a black girl. According to Jasim (2024), "black females have always played an important role in literature". The above ideas are embodied through flouting quality maxim under its umbrella there are various figures of speech, such as simile, metaphor, hyperbole, pun, synecdoche, and so forth.

Extract 1:

"The Bluest Eye"

Starting with the title of the novel, *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison flouts the quality maxim using hyperbole in the word *bluest*. She can say the blue eye or the bluer eye, but she tries to exaggerate the strong desire for blue eyes, which she associates with whiteness and beauty, the societal standards of beauty. She believes blue eyes guarantee love, acceptance, happiness, self-esteem, respect, power and social security. The bluer eyes the person has, the more beautiful, respectful and powerful s/he will be. A blue eye is used to communicate what the protagonist of the novel considers beauty and

happiness involved with the white middle-class individuals. She thinks that if only her eyes were blue, things would change. She believes that by possessing this trait, her community will love and respect her, escaping from her painful reality. This will place her in a higher social position as it has been culturally built that those who own certain physical aspects will earn privilege and power over those who lack them. Blueness is linked to the paragon of beauty. It is a recipe for happiness because it is not just about physical appearance but also the perceived superiority and privilege associated with whiteness in a racial society. The bluest eye could mean sadness, the suffering of blackness and self-disapproval. Pecola's strong determination to possess clear blue eyes is to expose how society succeeds in placing in high regard white traits, excluding the representation of other races to earn society's respect.

Another breaching of quality maxim is made by using a pun which is a literary device that uses two words with similar sounds but different meanings. A pun is involved in the title using the singular eye to mean the pronoun I. The breaching of quality maxim expresses the singular form of sadness in one of the characters. Writing the title in the singular form demonstrates how the blacks lose their true identity by trying to be like the white community just to achieve beauty, ending up in loneliness, racial separation, insecurity and self-hatred which are the consequences of the obsession with white beauty.

Extract 2:

"*Adults, older girls, shops, magazines, newspapers, window signs—**all** the world had agreed that a **blue-eyed, yellow-haired, pink-skinned doll** was what every girl child treasured*". (p. 21)

Claudia, another black girl in the novel, describes the standards of beauty by mentioning the basic colours flouting quality maxim using hyperbole in the phrase *all the world*. The blacks are socialised to accept that beauty is related to whiteness only, suggesting that 'blonde hair', 'blue eyes', and 'white skin' are dominant white beauty standards which put a person on the top of the social hierarchy. With the racial discrimination, this model of beauty was directly related to white women with blue eyes and skinny figures. The author also breaches quantity maxim by listing all the colours related to the essence of beauty, like whiteness, blueness, yellowness and pinkish, in the same extract. The doll in the extract above contains attractive characteristics of beauty established by a white society that women must achieve: white skin, blonde hair and blue eyes.

Extract 3:

"*Each night, without fail, she prayed for **blue eyes**. Fervently, for a year she had prayed*". (p.40)

Repeating the phrase "*she prayed for blue eyes"* twice flouts quantity maxim giving more information than is required to show the fascination of Pecola to have blue eyes. Pecola approaches Soaphead Church, a psychic healer, and asks him to make her eyes blue to fit the narrow cultural definitions of beauty. She becomes psychologically ill by wishing to have 'blue eyes'. Pecola believes that the only way to change society's negative treatment is to possess blue eyes, managing to get rid of her cruel reality. She wishes and prays for blue eyes since only blue eyes can earn the love and attention of this world. Her love and admiration for white beauty and blue eyes become her shield for protecting herself. Her obsessive desire for blue eyes represents a wish for acceptance in the white dominant culture, which forces restrict beauty ideals rejecting and devaluing blackness.

Extract 4:

"*I destroyed **white** baby dolls*" (p. 22)

In the first chapter, there is a reference to a Shirley Temple doll gifted to Claudia. This doll represents the image of perfection that every young child aspires to become like her. Initially, it was too appreciated for a black child like Claudia, to possess. Being surrounded by socially determined beauty standards, such factors manipulate a young girl's idea of beauty, believing that assimilating Shirley Temple will give her a sense of equality. However, once she realises that it is unachievable, she destroys the white baby doll because this will leave her in despair and isolation. At this moment, the ideology of beauty will not be affected by the external environment, resulting in rejecting white ideals. This unfolds the negative feeling not only towards the doll itself but towards socially determined beauty standards. Claudia manages to escape society's influence. She does not want to fall a victim to white beauty. She tries to create a different beauty ideal that embraces African-American's culture, which impliedly disclosures her hatred for white supremacy. The author flouts quality maxim using personal symbol that reflects her bitter experience in the host culture in the phrase "*white doll"* to refer to all the standards of white beauty, such as blue eyes, yellow hair, and pink skin. By contrast with Pecola, Claudia resists white superiority and disagrees with the concept of white beauty. She is angered by injustice and instinctively feels threatened by society's standards of white beauty. Though Morrison describes the despair of a black woman, she also knows how to balance it with hope. She does not want to leave the picture of black women's lives all grey. She as a person with a sense of self-esteem, so she never has to hate herself for not having blue eyes, nor have to get rid of herself and her 'blackness'. She does not like the miserable condition of Pecola and how much of the female population lives under constant pressure to reach such narrow standards presented by society, receiving social rejection and shame if they do not assimilate into the gorgeous model of beauty. She is a positive, strong, optimistic, and hopeful answer to the miseries that almost all black women experience. She is a bright spot showing that black women can uplift themselves and refuse to be made ugly. For her, women should stay connected with their roots and restoring their identities. She understands the politics behind the humiliation of black people. She refuses to follow the beauty standards as transmitted by Shirley Temple and the blue-eyed dolls, which are socially constructed to shape blacks' perceptions of beauty and self-worth. She tries to end racism, redefining beauty in her terms. She resists the societal pressure to conform to white beauty standards and embraces her blackness and recognises its inherent beauty.

Extract 5

"*Here is the house. It is **green** and **white**. It has a **red** door. It is very pretty. Here is the family. Mother, Father, Dick and Jane live in the **green**-and-**white** house. They are very **happy**. See Jane. She has a **red** dress*". (p. 9)

The author flouts quality maxim using a family metaphor in assimilating the white house to the white family or races since the house consists of various parts that refer to the family members within which there is an interdisciplinary relationship.

The author also flouts quantity maxim by repeating the phrase *green-and-white house* for emphatic purposes. He makes his contribution more informative than is required as shown in Table

(2). He shows the vibrant colours of the life of a white girl, Jane Primer. Jane's family is an idealised white American family while Pecola does not have similarly healthy, ideal and happy family. Pecola's life could never have the perfection as that of white people. Red and green are the brightest colours, appearing happily and brightly in this extract. Collocating colours with the word *happy* shows that they are only found in white American families, indicating that their lives are colourful and full of happiness. In this way, the speaker better describes the hidden and clear sense of happiness and freshness for the audience.

Extract 6:

"*There is an abandoned store on the southeast corner of Broadway and Thirty Fifth Street in Lorain, Ohio. It doesn't recede into the background of leaden sky, nor harmonize with the* ***gray frames house*** *and black telephone poles around it. Rather, it points itself on the eye of passerby in a manner that is both irritable and melancholy […]. The* ***gypsy*** *family gave the large plate-glass window as much distinction and character as it ever had*". (p.30)

Morrison describes Pecola's home in the above extract. The colours of Pecola's world, in contrast to the white world, are 'grey', 'black' and 'gypsy*'* that display a grave contrast between the two cultures and the bitter realities of Pecola's life. Morrison depicts the depression of the blacks in the Afro-American community and their grey psycho-social state. This designates that a black woman's life cannot be like that of a white woman. Using these colours not only matches the disorder of the world of Pecola but also shows the sad, gloomy and disturbing environment in which the blacks live. They indicate the poor socio-economic conditions of the African-American family and its exclusion from power structures. Pecola's house is full of disorder, negligence, financial instability, disappointment, oppression, loneliness that reflects her struggle for survival. Further, richness, love and majesty are absent from the black world since their familial relationship is imperfect. Using grey and black in the same extract shows the life of the black family in general. She flouts quality maxim using a family metaphor in the words *gray frames house* to refer to an African-American family whose members are grey especially when Pecola is raped by her drunken father. Toni Morrison depicts the depression of the blacks in the Afro-American community and their grey psycho-social state. Using such gloomy colours reflects the writer's desire to expose how it feels like to be a black girl, how she thinks, the sufferings she experiences, and what sorrows she bears. "Breedlove", the name of a family, is ironic not only because of the passive way in which the family members demonstrate love, but also because of the harsh behaviour being a manifestation of self-hatred. The absence of vibrant colours in the black family represents sadness and emptiness.

Extract 7:

"*Somewhere between retina and object, between vision and view his eyes draw back, hesitate and hovel…He doesn't see her, because for him there is nothing to see [. . .]. Nothing in his life suggested that the feat was possible, nor to say desirable or necessary…The total absence of human recognition—the glazed separateness. She does not know what keeps his glance suspended. Perhaps because he is grown, or a man, and she a little girl. But she has seen interest, disgust, even anger in grown male eyes. Yet this vacuum is not new to her. It has an edge; somewhere in the bottom lid is the distaste. She has seen it lurking in the eyes of all* ***white people****. So. The distaste must be for her, her* ***blackness****. All things in her are flux and anticipation. But her* ***blackness*** *is static and dread. And*

*it is the **blackness** that accounts for, that creates, the vacuum edged with distaste in **white eyes**"* (pp. 40-2)

In the above extract, Morrison describes the feelings for a black girl in the minds of white people, represented by the white shopkeeper where she goes to buy Mary Jane candy. With the hatred in his eyes when she enters the shop, Pecola realises that her blackness is horrible. There was "separateness," "disgust," "anger," "vacuum," "edge," and "distance" in his eyes. Morrison flouts quality maxim by using synecdoche in the phrase *white eyes* to refer to white people, white values and white features in general. Pecola disclosures the pain of hatred she receives from the whites especially after the stony gaze of Mr. Yacobwski, in which there is love, respect, or appreciation for a little black girl. The author refers to the blankness in Yacobwsk's eyes and the inability to see black girls as being a healthy African-American child. This indicates the rejection of Western beauty standards, showing racist attitudes towards the blacks. The author describes society's superficial and passive judgment on the other race, establishing blacks as undesirable and unattractive due to their skin colour, placing them in the lowest sector of their community. The community rejection focuses on the physical aspect of the black girl. This treatment predicts the racial discrimination that Pecola receives in specific, as well as the discrimination of African American society in general. Another breaching is made of quantity maxim by repeating the word *blackness* more than once in the same extract. The frequency is made for emphatic purposes to show that blackness is the main reason behind the bad treatment of the blacks Black colour is used to describe not only the biological conditions of the characters but also their psychological states and emotions. One of the main functions of black colour in *The Bluest Eye* is to create an unpleasant feeling towards dark-skinned people and how it destroys their peace as shown in Pecola who experiences grieve sorrow.

Extract 8:

*"A little old doctor come to examine me […]. When he got to me, he said now these here women you don't have any trouble with. They deliver right away and with no pain. Just **like horses**. […] They never said nothing to me. Only one looked at me. Looked at my face, I mean. I looked right back at him. He dropped his eyes and turned **red**. He knowed, I reckon, that maybe I weren't no horse foaling. But them others. They didn't know. They went on. I seed them talking to them **white women**: 'How you feel? Gonna have twins?' Just shucking them, of course, but nice talk. Nice friendly talk. I got edgy, and when the pains got harder, I was glad. Glad to have something else to think about. I moaned something awful. The pains wasn't as bad as I let on, but I had to let them people know having a baby was more than a bowel movement. I hurt just **like** them **white women**. Just 'cause I wasn't hooping and hollering before didn't mean I wasn't feeling pain"*. (p.96)

Morrison flouts quality maxim by using simile in the word *like* to compare two women, the white woman and the black, i.e., two cultures. At the time of the birth, Pauline, Pecola's mother, finds no compassion or pity in the doctor's eyes. This indicates that black women are not worthy to be treated with sympathy. The treatment she receives from people around her convinces her that black women are disgusting. Pauline sees the doctor speaks nicely and behaves friendly with white women. This kind of breaching shows that the whites are superior, while the blacks are inferior citizens. Another simile is used at the time of the birth of Pecola when white doctors come to examine Pauline. One of them says: "*Here women you don't have any trouble with. They deliver right away with no*

pain. Just like horses". Pauline's doctor uses a simile to compare her to a horse because of the supposed ease black women have when giving birth. Dehumanising a person unfolds a kind of disapproval, marginalisation and humiliation. The dehumanising comparison of black women exposes the racial discrimination of the American white community, which causes identity fragmentation among black people and passively influences their self-esteem and identity. For the Whites, black women feel no physical pain and that they are insensate to any bodily hurt. Morrison stresses that just as the blood and sweat of black and white women are the same, so is their pain and suffering.

Extract 9:

"*Everybody in the world was in a position to give them orders.* ***White women*** *said, "Do this."* ***White children*** *said, "Give me that."* ***White men*** *said, "Come here."* ***Black men*** *said, "Lay down." The only people they need not take orders from were* ***black children*** *and each other. But they took all of that and re-created it in their own image. They ran the houses of* ***white people****, and knew it. When* ***white men*** *beat their men, they cleaned up the blood and went home to receive abuse from the victim. They beat their children with one hand and stole for them with the other".* (p.105)

Morrison flouts quantity maxim by repeating the word *white.* She can generalise the expression "*white people*" instead of categorising them into children, women and men. However, she tries to show that whites, regardless of their age and sex, have the ability and power to give orders to the blacks. Therefore, the colour white transmits purity, innocence and perfection. Whiteness is the standard of beauty and morality against which all other identities are measured. This standard marginalises other races, giving whites authority and power. Conversely, characters, like Pecola, internalise the belief that their blackness makes them inferior, leading to feelings of self-hatred and inadequacy.

Extract 10:

"I even think now that the land of the entire country was hostile to ***marigolds*** *that year. This soil is bad for certain kinds of flowers".* (p.105)

The author flouts quality maxim using a gold plant metaphor. Morrison uses Marigolds as a metaphor for Pecola's child, predicting his death. Claudia and her sister planted Marigolds in Autumn, hoping that Pecola and her unborn child would be safe. The season of Autumn is commonly associated with a time of endings. Marigolds show the most common colours, which are associated with Autumn, orange and yellow. Such colours represent an unfortunate event that transmits sadness and tragedy about the baby's destiny since they reflect his physical weakness. The fact that no marigolds managed to grow due to the poor soil interrupts their natural growth. Marigold flower has such colours due to the bad soil, which represents the oppression of a specific race in society, limiting them from having freedom and opportunity of renewal.

Extract 11:

"*We had dropped our seeds in our own little plot of* ***black dirt*** *just* ***as*** *Pecola's father had dropped his seeds in his own plot of* ***black*** *dirt*". (p.11)

Claudia flouts quality maxim by using simile in the word "*as"* to compare the dropping and planting of marigold seeds to Cholly's raping who deposits his seeds into his daughter Pecola's dark body. This simile uses the marigolds to symbolise Pecola's baby and later to Pecola herself. What

happens in an African-American family symbolises the usual association among the members of the black race. The rape is expressed symbolically. Another breaching of quality maxim is made by using a plot or black container metaphor. This metaphor associates Pecola's body with 'black dirt', presenting his skin colour as ugly and undesirable. The word black collocates with dirt because the novel links the whites to cleanliness while the blacks are linked to dirtiness

14.Conclusions:

The following conclusions have been arrived at: among the various colours mentioned above, such as blue, white, black, pink, red, yellow, grey, gold and green, it is found that blue, white and black are the most used colours. The main cultural sounds are superiority, inferiority, freshness, dirtiness, cleanliness, happiness and sadness. Though colours reflect many concepts, meanings and ideas; it is shown that racial discrimination is the most prominent one. Pragmatically, flouting quality maxim is the most salient type of breaching.

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