

DEMOCRATIC AND POPULAR REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY ORAN 2 MOHAMED BEN AHMED



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The Role of Family and Society in the Development or the Destruction of African American Children's Selfhood in Toni Morrison's selected Novels.

A Dissertation submitted in Partial Fulfilment for the Acquisition of an M.A Degree in American literature.

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Academic Year: 2015-2016

Dedication

Among the indispensable engines of life, a pure relationship of love that is intertwined with respect and embodied in the web of family and friends. My endless thanks and gratitude to all and every one of you. To you all, I dedicate this humble work.

To the soul of my Mother who is still protecting and guiding me, God bless her in heavens.

To my father who is the source of security and protection.

To my sisters Halima, Mouna, little Arbia Aya and all my nieces and nephews for their great help and endless understanding.

Special thanks go to Safou Djamel, Hadi Sarah, Bekhada Meriem, Fersaoui Imane, and Bensaha Imene for their infinite help and support. You are my best spiritual family.

Extended thanks to SASSI Kheirazed, her poems have inspired me all the way.

To my friends in medicine who are fighting all conditions in order to help people overcome their hard situations. To Dr. Kahli Khaled, Dr. Kahli Nawel, Dr. Guerbouz Rabah, Dr. Berdi Fatima, Dr. Boudia Mokhtaria, Dr. Benameur, Dr. Kharoubi Salima, and Mr. Pipo, Without forgetting the nurses, Faiza, Karima, Houaria, kheira, Amel, Samia, and Aissam. Thanks for giving me such priceless knowledge in medical care.

To my classmates in the Doctoral School of English, Fidouh A, Belmokhtar S, Rahli S, Chouih F Z, Bentaleb I, Kerroum F, Benkhaoula D, Daouadji M, Kahli Kh, Kaddour A, and Beidi L.

To everyone trying to protect and develop my BELOVED ALGERIA

Acknowledgements

My deepest gratitude and sincere acknowledgements go to Dr. Ghenim Neema for her kindness, hard work and support. Her constant constructive feedbacks and criticism have inspired me along the writing of this dissertation. Thank you for all inspirational moments, endless kindness and pure love. I feel very lucky and grateful to accompany you along these years.

All my debts and gratitude go to Pr. LAKHDAR BARKA Sidi Mohamed for being the intellectual father who kept feeding my hunger for knowledge. His inspirational words motivate me to give more to myself and to the world around.

My thanks go to Pr. YACINE Rachida for providing me such freedom in her laboratory that helped me greatly in going through the hardest parts of this dissertation.

I am very grateful to Pr. NAIT BRAHIM Abdelghani for his active soul that is a constant reminder that Algeria has active fighters who seek its development worldwide. Thank you for devoting your time and expertise to the reading of this dissertation.

My thanks also go to Miss BESSEDIK F. Z. and Mrs. GADI I.S. for their everlasting support as colleagues in university as well as sisters outside university.

My Deepest gratitude goes to all my teachers who helped me in a way or another along my B.A and M.A studies.

Great thanks also go to the administrative staff who welcomed me and trusted me that much. To Mr. BOUDEHIR, Mr. GOUAL, Mrs. BOUKRERIS, Miss. OMARI, Miss TOUATI, Mrs. HASSINI, and Mrs. DAHIAS.

Sincere appreciations are devoted to CEMA staff, Bob, Karim, Hayet and Nabil.

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Abstract

Through fiction, Morrison projects the history of the African Americans and their everlasting struggle to reach their authentic selfhood. This dissertation sheds light on the experience of African American children's journey to reach selfhood. Morrison's three novels, *A Mercy*, *Beloved*, and *The Bluest Eye*, present the history of African American struggles in America. From the first seeds of racism in *A Mercy* and, through Civil War in *Beloved* to Civil Rights Movements in *The Bluest Eye*, the changing and challenging societies and parents' reactions influence the Children's attempt to reach their self-accommodation into family and society.

African American children are vulnerable within their own home and society. Thus, this dissertation is devoted to the influence of the society, the mother, and the father in the development or destruction of African American children's selfhood.

Chapter one projects the influence of the struggling American and the African American society on children from the new world (America) to the modern America. Chapter two is devoted to the influence of the mother. Mothers are always present for their children, yet their presence takes the form of fatal love in *A Mercy*, thick love in *Beloved*, and abandon love in *The Bluest Eye*. The third chapter is devoted to the role of the father in the children's lives: The absent father in *A Mercy*, the invisible father in *Beloved*, and the destructive father in *The Bluest Eye*.

RESUME

Grâce à la fiction, Morrison présente l'histoire des Afro-Américains et de leur lutte éternelle pour atteindre leurs véritables individualités. Ce mémoire traverse l'expérience et le parcours des enfants Afro-Américains ainsi que leurs ascensions à leurs propres individualités. Trois romans de Morrison, *A Mercy*, *Beloved*, et *The Bluest Eye* présentent l'histoire des luttes Afro-Américaines en Amérique. De la nature sauvage dans *A Mercy*, à travers la guerre civile dans *Beloved*, jusqu'aux mouvements des droits civils dans *The Bluest Eye*, les sociétés changeantes et provocatrices ainsi que parents influencent l'évolution des enfants à pouvoir s'adapter dans la famille et la société.

Les enfants Afro-Américains sont vulnérables à l'influence de leurs parents et de leurs sociétés. Par conséquent, ce mémoire sera consacré à l'influence de la société, la mère et le père dans le développement ou la destruction des enfants Afro-Américains.

Le premier chapitre étudie l'Amérique et la société Afro-Américaine et son influence sur les enfants dès le début de sa création (les Etats Unies) jusqu'à l'âge de la liberté. Le deuxième chapitre est consacré à l'influence de la mère dans le développement ou la destruction de ses enfants. Les mères sont toujours proches de leurs enfants, cependant leur présence prend la forme d'un amour fatal dans *A Mercy*, un amour profond dans *Beloved*, et un amour d'abandon dans *The Bluest Eye*. Le troisième chapitre est consacré au rôle du père dans la vie des enfants: le père absent dans *A Mercy*, le père invisible dans *Beloved*, et le père destructeur dans *The Bluest Eye*.

ملخص

من خلال الأدب الروائي، تسعى "توني موريسون" لإبراز تاريخ الأفارقة الأمريكيين ونضالهم الأزلي لإثبات ذواتهم وإبراز هويتهم الحقيقية في الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية. "موريسون" ومن خلال رواياتها الثلاث (رحمة) *A Mercy*، *Beloved* (محبوبة)، و(العين الأكثر زرقة) *The Bluest Eye*، تكشف وتوضح تاريخ الصراع العرقي في أمريكا بدءاً من البرية (أمريكا) التي أنتجت أول بذور العنصرية في (رحمة) *A Mercy* مروراً بالحرب الأهلية في (محبوبة) *Beloved* وصولاً لحركات الحقوق المدنية في رواية (العين الأكثر زرقة) *The Bluest Eye*. تكشف هذه الروايات الستار عن المجتمعات المتغيرة، الصعبة والقاسية التي أثرت على حياة الوالدين والذنان بدورهما اثراً على الأطفال الأفارقة الأمريكيين في محاولتهم التأقلم والاستقرار الذاتي داخل العائلة والمجتمع.

تهدف هذه المذكرة إلى تسليط الضوء على تجربة الأطفال الأفارقة الأمريكيين في محاولتهم بلوغ ذواتهم وتحقيق فديتهم. يتعرض الأطفال الأفارقة الأمريكيين إلى تأثير كبير من طرف العائلة والمجتمع وعلى هذا الأساس، تركز هذه المذكرة على تأثير المجتمع وكل من الأم والأب في تطوير أو هدم حياة الأطفال الأفارقة الأمريكيين.

يعرض الفصل الأول تأثير الصراع بين المجتمع الأمريكي والأفروأمريكي على الأطفال الأفارقة الأمريكيين من البرية إلى عصر الحرية المدنية. أما الفصل الثاني فهو مخصص لتأثير الأم التطويري أو التدميري على أطفالها فالأمهات دائماً موجودات في حياة أطفالهم، ولكن وجودهم يأخذ شكل الحب المقفر في رواية (رحمة) *A Mercy*، وشكل الحب العميق في رواية (محبوبة) *Beloved*، والحب المهجور في رواية (العين الأكثر زرقة) *The Bluest Eye*.

يرمي الفصل الثالث إلى إبراز دور الآباء في حياة أطفالهم. ففي رواية (رحمة) *A Mercy* يلعب الأب دور الغائب وغير الموجود، ويلعب دور الوالد غير المرئي في رواية (محبوبة) *Beloved* ودور المدمر في رواية (العين الأكثر زرقة) *The Bluest Eye*.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The majority of children in the contemporary world have grown up watching movies and listening to parents telling stories of Snow White, Cinderella, and the charming prince who would save the poor girl from her step-mother and make her a queen. Most girls wish to be in the place of this poor girl, and most boys wanted to be the charming prince in that splendid castle to live happily ever more. Yet, these ideal dreams fade away when they are confronted with reality, the harsh reality of African American children in particular. In the middle of this dreamy like world, they are not identified equally to the other characters; as a result, they can not understand the world that is not considering them as worthy of existence. In the 2015 version of Cinderella, the most developed one as far as picture quality is concerned, the black figure is added to the crew, yet in the form of a servant to the king, the beggar in the street, and a thief in the forest; Whereas, the white figures are the king and the poor servant who becomes a queen. The white characters are dynamic, they grow up to become better citizens; however, the black ones are static. If they are servants, they are likely to die as servants.

Despite the growing body of literature concerned with “the black characters”, little attention is directed to it even in a “Postmodern” world that claims the abolition of racism. Toni Morrison along, with other writers, tries to introduce new African American heroes and heroines to the body of American literature labelled as “African American Literature” or more arbitrarily “*Black Literature*”. The latter is taught as “sociology, as tolerance, not as a serious, rigorous art form” (Angelo 258). Morrison’s literary works are considered a historical representation of fictitious characters whose life are inspired from the fragmented reality of a racialized minority. Morrison’s literary heritage can be considered as an art for life’s sake and not an art for art’s sake. She reconsiders the truth in a more reasonable way in which she can have access through a literary way.

I felt very motivated to tackle Toni Morrison’s novels for two specific reasons. The first is my life dream. I have been dreaming of building an orphanage for homeless and orphan

children. Her characters, especially children, fall in a way or another in the category of the accepted list. The second reason is an incident similar to that of Rosa Parks who refused to give her seat to a white passenger, yet the setting is different, Oran, Algeria. In an ordinary day, I took a bus going back home at 16:30. The bus was very crowded but surprisingly, I saw the whole back bench which contains 05 seats empty, except one on which a Malian adult child was sitting. I smiled and sat next to him, he smiled back as if he knew me before. I asked some other to sit on, but they *ALL* refused telling me “we cannot sit next to this negro”. Kids as well as adults refused to sit next to him as if he was a monster; whereas, he was a very good looking kid. Despite his young age, he understood their glances. At that moment, I wished I could have access to his mind to hear and feel him. These African refugees come to be labelled, “Negroes” and lately “camarade” (friend). Despite the fact of having Algerian citizens with black skin colour, these Africans are treated the same way as African Americans or maybe harsher. In Morrison’s novels, one could have access to the inner mind and heart for the African American racialized children. As a result, one can easily venture in the analysis of her three selected novels despite of the complex nature of their lives in both history and literature.

African American children’s lives are influenced by parents and the conditions of society. Smith Valerie highlights the importance of children in Morrison’s work by saying, “The lives of children in her novels provide a window into pathologies of adults. They are the canaries in the mine of American Culture; their psychological and spiritual health is an index to the health of the communities within which they live” (Valerie 99). The adult world can be seen and read with the eyes of its children because they are its own products.

The child is a new brand paper, black or white, they are eager to know and experience more to develop their personality. Morrison’s selected novels present different families and different societies under changing and challenging circumstances. Through her novels, Morrison has dealt with motherhood and childhood alike as she explains how children make

mothers free. African Americans can not own themselves and the sense of having children of their own has freed them. She explains that having children is freedom itself asserting that children are essential part in her Narratives. The Children presented in her novels are those under eighteen.

The three novels represent the child's maturation to adulthood. African American children undergo traumatic experiences that do not enable them to reach full awareness of themselves; consequently, they are disoriented to reach eventual accommodation into society. This disorientation can be caused primarily from the trauma inherited by the members of one's family that is living in a society developed on the basics of racialized principles that challenge their mental development.

The novels are chronologically ordered according to their fictional setting and not to their date of publication. *A Mercy* (2008), is regarded as a prequel to *Beloved* (1978) and *The Bluest Eye* (1970). Each one of them completes the other in different ways. They have different settings in the ongoing history of American pre-racialized, racialized, and post-racialized society. The whole process in *The Bluest Eye* (1970) invites the reader to search for the primary reasons that lead to psychological destruction of black characters under the separatist white's ideology. These answers would be explained separately in other novels starting upside down, going through the middle of the Civil War period explaining the pre-war and post war period's effects and the traumatic effects explained in *Beloved* (1987). Finally, Morrison explains how it all started in *A Mercy* (2008) where she pictures the beginning of slavery and the idea of racism. First readers of Toni Morrison's fiction had to spend thirty eight years to get a fictional explanation in the series of her narratives.

1600 is a unique time setting in *A Mercy* that represents the New World when slavery and racism have not paved their roads in the wilderness yet. The New World is based on indentured servitude and its developing road toward the system of slavery. The father figure is

absent, no fathers and no sons, only women leading the house. The mother figure is presented in various ways, yet the child's response to motherhood is greatly reserved to Florens, an abundant child of a black mother. This child is thrown to a new family that added another orphan to its six members. Mothers are represented by three characters, the first is Minha Mae, the mother of Florens. The Second is Lina, Florens' new mother. The Third is Sorrow who was mentally freed when having her own child. Two kinds of fathers are represented in the novel, the unknown fathers and a desperate white father who is mourning for lost children.

In *Beloved*, Morrison visions the life of blacks before and after the Civil War period through the first generations of freed slaves. The mother is presented as a killer, who tries to rescue her daughter's return to slavery by killing her. The girl's ghost comes back to haunt the mother and explains her traumatic experience that took her life. The terror caused by the crime pushed the boys to run away and obliged Denver to live with her mother waiting for her turn. Though the mother sacrifices everything for her children who are not able to see her sufferings and wish of a living father. In *Beloved*, the child could not develop a self-hood until she/he is separated from the family. How killing a child under the name of protection from the point of view of the child and the society could be accepted?

White colour is glorified and has become a dominant and crucial element in the identification of mental beauty and most accurately physical beauty in *The Bluest Eye*. The ideal of beauty is depicted as a woman with light skin and blue eyes; therefore, the value of blackness is diminished leading to a racialized society. A society that is built on the implementation of white's standards in all aspects of life over neglected and damaged black values. The Dick and Jane world, the Shirley Temples, and the blue-eyed doll are the guiding lines of white beauty which blacks are in constant admiration, and idealization. African Americans endure a traumatic experience in their way of reaching self-satisfaction in the imposed culture. Pecola becomes a scapegoat to this supremacist ideology by the pressure of

society presented in the inside world of her own family and the outside world of school, friends, and environment.

Researchers in the narratives of Toni Morrison focused on the theme of motherhood and feminism. The self-made woman and mother rather than her relationship with her children. Children are used to show how these mothers overcome their hard life and has succeeded in having children of their own with or without a father. When reading Toni Morrison's narratives, one can observe her focus on the theme of motherhood, the traumatic experiences of mothers under slavery and racism. What took my attentions is the over presence of mothers and the absence of fathers. In nearly all her novels, mothers exist negatively and positively; they are either the overprotecting mothers or the neglecting ones but they are always there for their children. Fathers, however do not exist in some novels and if they do, they are portrayed as destructive and evil human beings. The father in the latter case becomes an absent figure because he does not exist at all or if existing, he is sent by the devil.

The relation between children and parents is never stable and undergoes traumatic experiences that affect the children's psyches. The communication between parents and their children is always broken; therefore, they have no sense of belonging leading all family members to suffer psychologically. Instead of loving parents, children will get strange Mrs. Mr Parents. The primary cause of family disconnection is the imposed system of living; from slave-based society to race based society. The white supremacist ideology breaks any attempt for black citizens to function deliberately as a family.

My reflexion would be significant in underlining the child's journey toward selfhood with the help of family and society. My areas of exploration mean to provide new ways of reading Morrison's narratives from African American children's perspectives. It gives voice to the traumatic experience of children through a thorough psychological analysis.

My research methodology would comprise interpreting and analysing the selected primary sources written by Toni Morrison; *A Mercy*, *Beloved*, and *The Bluest Eye*. To make my interpretations more significant and relevant, I would work within the specific guidelines of critical theories. The above mentioned novels of Toni Morrison would be critically evaluated within the framework of the Trauma and psychoanalytic theories. Trauma theory provides the guideline to study the impact of traumatic events such as neglect, abandonment, domestic abuse, physical and mental violence, rape, and murder and their effects on personality development and the relationships inside and outside the African American family. It also provides an understanding of the kinds of responses to these traumatic events that include fighting back or attacking, getting mad, giving up, or running away from society. The psychoanalytic theory expresses the inner self of the child and justifies their reaction under all happy or painful experiences generated by family and society.

My predominant query is: what roles can family and society play in the development or the destruction of African American children's selfhood in Toni Morrison's selected narratives? This leads to my sub-queries: what influence does the institution of racism and slavery have on African American families and their children? How can mothers influence the development of their children's selfhood? At last, what role can an absent, an invisible or a destructive father play in the life of his children?

For each query, there is an envisioned hypothesis, the role of society in the development or the destruction of African American children can vary from a setting to another, yet the child level of traumatization can determine that influence. The mother will develop her children's selfhood because she is their safety zone and emotional home. The father is crushed by the difficulties of fatherhood and society and his absence haunts the children rather than develop their selfhood.

Each chapter will carry out a theme that will be developed in relation to *A Mercy*, *Beloved*, and *The Bluest Eye*. Each novel is a prelude to the other.

Chapter one deals with society where an Eden world is established in the New World which will be destroyed by human sins represented in the institution of racial slavery. *Beloved* highlights two societies, before and after the Civil War and the traumatic experiences slaves lived during long years of war. The last parts examines the world of “Dick and Jane” that is built upon a racialized beauty in *The Bluest Eye*.

Chapter two deals with the role of mothers in their children’s lives. The mother’s love and the child’s reaction to it are examined under the traumatic experiences caused by the racialized society they live in and to the vulnerability of their selfhood. In *A Mercy*, the mother abandons her child causing fatal traumatic experience. In *Beloved*, the mother kills her daughter in the name of protection and tortures the others on behalf of love. In *The Bluest Eye*, the child goes to madness as a sign of failure of mother nurturing and protection.

The third chapter tackles the theme of fatherhood. It highlights three categories of fathers who are presented by Morrison as absent, invisible, and destructive. These fathers are more silenced than female characters.

The Literature Review: Morrison's Historical Fiction

La Littérature est le reflet de la Société et de la vie. Quant à la civilisation, elle nous enrichi culturellement et constitue la base de la littérature. (Yacine 07)

“The writer cannot break away from his community. He is the conception of a society, and his product reflects his environment.” (Ghenim 21)

Derrida has tackled the issue of the History-of Literature (l'histoire-de la littérature) in most of his essays collected between (1963-1967). He attempted to highlight new dimensions to the line that is situated between history-of literature. This line is referred to as a hyphen, dash, and a graphic paus. This line connects two things which still have a gap between them as Derrida suggests, “the hyphen appears to make one out of two, but this two in one also indicates what is always more than one” (qtd. Gaston 40). Derrida indicates the importance of the relationship between history and literature asserting that they are separate entities, yet they can connect despite the gap between them. This literature is neither a copy of the past nor plans for the future, it is “a turning back again that demands a ceaseless negotiation with what remains to come” (Derrida qtd. Gaston 58). This dash or hyphen allows the writer and the reader to go into both side as Gaston explains,

The line, the trait enretrait that Derrida marks between “the history of literature”, between a history of literature and a literature of history, is always with-drawing, retreating and repeating and exceeding itself, re-marking a gap that is at once irreducible and ungraspable. The gap, the trait between the “history-of literature” moves-it oscillates, exposing history to literature and literature history, without

one ever resolving itself entirely, into the other or without separating itself entirely from the other-without rest (58-59).

Literature-of history is a literature that embarks its fictional grounds from history, it recreates, revises and exposes history in fictional representation. History becomes the birth mark but not the whole certificate.

Literature and history are two faces of the same world. Many historical events are glorified thanks to their embodiment in works of fiction and many fictitious literary works could never raise without grounding their roots in history. One of the few writers who succeed in intertwining the history of African American traumatic experiences in a body of literature is Toni Morrison. She recreates the sociohistorical aspects of the African Americans' real life in fiction as Kakutani presents it, "Ms. Morrison has rediscovered an urgent, poetic voice that enables her to move back and forth with immediacy and ease between the worlds of history and myth, between ordinary daily life and the realm of fable" (Kakutani) . Her literary works give loud voices and coloured pictures to those who were hidden between the shadows of civilisation.

To talk about the literature of America is to dive to a nation full of colour wars, the white, the black, the coloured, and the yellow. Morrison believes it is difficult to delve in the literature of the United States without dealing in the binary 'Black' and 'White' opposition. Her primary concern is to present those who were presented in literature as, "always peripheral-little black girls who were props, background, those people were never center stage, and those people were me" (Parker 252). She wants to recreate a world where everybody can see and feel her own community, which was dismissed from the realm of the world.

The issues of race and slavery were taboos in the modern American fiction; therefore, many writers have avoided raising these issues in their literary works especially American

writers. African American writers were struggling to draw new borders in the American literature, but up to the 1960's, African Americans literary works were still invisible to the whole nation. People were moved by Frederick Douglass's autobiography and Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* during the Civil War, yet they were still invisible in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* later in the fifties years. Morrison believes that the nation speaks about race matters only in public, "a sort of political game which is kept outside the literary texts... great authors like Poe, Hawthorne, Melville, Cooper used Black "things" but never characters, "not real flesh and blood people'" (Moyers, 262). They are objects to be used in order to fulfil tasks that are reserved to them.

Due to this political game, Morrison places herself as a 'literary politician' who would stand up for the struggle of African Americans on papers. She tries to fight for a place that would be reserved for African American people inside the American society in the real world through the fictitious one. Her conflicts sparks out from the belief that the dominant white culture places itself as the master narrative and degraded all other forms of narratives.

Among all novels, *The Bluest Eye* and *Beloved* took the centre stage in Toni Morrison's literary works. Their Artistic language and challenging themes attracted a great number of researchers and readers on the African American issues worldwide. Morrison's crafts of playing with time inside each novel was extended to include other novels separated by time of publication, yet continued, as far as African American history is concerned.

In her book, *African American Women writers' historical fiction* (2011), Ana Nunes explores the different ways African American writers highlight the lives of segregated women and families in fiction, how these females contributed in the development of African historical novels and celebrated their uniqueness inside the African American community. She has selected 05 writers and works that she felt contributed to the rise of African American narratives that also renders the harsh reality of race and slavery, among these, Margaret walker's *Jubilee*

(1966), Gayl Jones's *Corregidora* (1975), Sherley Anne William's *Dessa Rose* (1986), Phyllis Perry's *Stigmata* (1998), and Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (03). These novels combine history and imagination to "recreate" the past especially for those who "remained outside the pages of history" (04) as a way of "uplifting" (04) those whose voices were never heard in literature. In her last chapter, she exposes how Morrison's *Beloved* uses gothic elements such as "the ghost" to illuminate the lives of absent African American slaves who have been forgotten. Nunes focuses on the representation of female voices; therefore, reducing, the voice of male and their contribution to the development of African American historical fiction.

Robert Samuels shares similar issues with Nunes, yet he analyzes the historical fiction of Morrison as a national trauma, that has to be alleviated from prejudices and reconciled with the difficult part of history. Samuels has proceeded a psychoanalysis study of Morrison's *Beloved* and *The Bluest Eye* and focused on the impact of postmodern prejudices where Morrison places her reader in the "position of displaced slave" (131).

Geneva Moore criticizes Morrison's representation of history in literature. She uses postmodern deconstructive techniques to support her opinion. She claims that Morrison has deconstructed the American history and reconstructed in her novels; as a result, she considers Morrison's novels as a hypertext; i.e. a parody. She claims that, " Parody and deconstruction become weapons with which writers like Morrison can excavate and create history... parody keeps the memory of the experience alive, for it is constantly before us to recall, to remember, so that we will not repeat history and its trauma" (Moore 02). Morrison creates her literary works from history, but it is not the exact copy; otherwise, her novels would become history books rather than works of fiction.

In fiction, Morrison plays with time, setting, characters in order to make the world understand the physical and psychological trauma of African Americans. Yet, Moore explains that Morrison goes more than just a simple to a "Demonic Parody" where an "apocalyptic

representation of an unbearable world of evil [in order] to reach the hellish history of the marginalized other” (Moore 03). She claims that Morrison has presented the hell on earth that has been already created by other writers with reference to Orwell’s *1984*, Sartre’s *No Exit*, Koestler’s *Darkness at Noon*. Moore have seen the picture of Morrison’s world so dark; as a result, she could not examine and see other hopes. Morrison has dealt with what she believes could be true during that period, but she does not neglect the bright side of each story as she explains, “Sometimes good looks like evil; sometimes evil looks like good” (Stepto 14). My research deals with some aspects of this darkness through a physical and psychological traumatic analysis, yet it also deals with some positive experience that came out of this darkness.

Zebialowicz and Palasinski have analyzed *The Bluest Eye* psychologically in their article, “Probing Racial Dilemmas In “The Bluest Eye” With the Spy Glass of Psychology” (2010). Their focus is to arise the veil on literature under the “spy glass” of psychology. They have analyzed each character’s way of life under the pressure of white ethnocentrism. Their analysis is based on “black characters” directing their analysis towards a “black psychology”. They argue that new kind of racism has developed over the traditional one, a racism that is built upon “egalitarianism or overt repudiation of white superiority” (221). The authors have highlighted convincingly the importance of exploring the deep psyche of all characters in order to assess their destructed selfhood, especially when this destruction is caused by what they call “white supremacism” that is based on “social judgment and stereotypes” (226). The article has privileged the individual’s self-loathing over the collective one. The child is more related to a larger entity that shapes the way he/she is conceiving the world around.

In “Not So Fast, Dick Jane: Reimagining Childhood and Nation in *The Bluest Eye*”, Debra T Werrlein directed her research on childhood that is nationally presented through the prime “Dick-and Jane”. Her primary interest lies in the heart of “fake childhood representation”

or what she calls “supposed innocence” (53). She has fostered debate on Morrison’s use of childhood that is intentionally victimized to promote a superficial view of the voted states.

Unlike, *Beloved* and *The Bluest Eye*, few literature is explored in *A Mercy*,. Maxine L. Montgomery edited *Contested Boundaries. New Critical Essays on the Fiction of Toni Morrison* where she gathers eight articles criticizing the novel. Divided into five sections, the book discusses the implementation of female characters and their lost identities in a new geographical area presented in the New World. The articles widely discuss the theme of feminism, spirituality, and maternal loss. The theme of orphanhood and childhood are less critically present in the book despite its importance in the novel. The novel is also discussed in relation to *Beloved*, through the shared maternal sacrifice that both Sethe and Minha Mea have gone through to protect their own children from the future evil waiting for them.

Laura Burns, a Master candidate has raised the issue of constructing a female identity through the eyes and the pen of Florens entitling her dissertation, “The Telling in the Master's Room: Constructing Female Identity in Toni Morrison's *A Mercy*”. Her analyses are very rich with deep psychological analysis especially the journey of Florens towards constructing her identity. Burns focuses more on the feminine aspect of Florens more than that of childhood, disregarding that Florens is not just a female, but a child too.

The theme of fatherhood and especially African American fatherhood is not widely explored. The main literatures provided in the subject are those experiments in sociology that tend to reshape or redefine the notion of fatherhood in the modern period. The main aims of these experiments are to replace the notion of patriarch and masculinity and the breadwinner father with a modern caring concept that would justify both nurturing and caring carried by these fathers.

Nancy Dowds tries to introduce new dimensions of fatherhood in the modern period. In her book, *Redefining Father*, Dowds suggested new definition of fatherhood that stands against traditional fatherhood that is based on, “material model... the bioeconomic model” (213). She suggests that redefining fatherhood needs to redefine the notion of nurturing that is associated with mothers only. Relating nurture to breadwinner father makes the children and their mothers a property owned by virtue of economic support” (218). She introduces and supports social fatherhood that is not connected and dependent of financial issues. She calls for equality in nurturing between men and women.

Nancy Dowd’s book focuses more on the difference between mothers and fathers’ nurturing. She calls for the equality of nurturing between mothers and fathers, yet the conduct of father is not simply nurturing a child. Each parent has his/her own capacities and duties that are projected by history, culture, tradition. She visions a New World with a new set of principles and could not tackle the already existing one and on top, the psychological life of the father as well as the child.

Andrea O’Reilly has specialized in feminist studies and specifically in motherhood and mothering in novels written by females. She is interested in the way mothers present motherhood. In her book, *From Motherhood to mothering, the legacy of Adrienne Rich’s Of Woman Born* which she edited tackles the importance of Adrienne Rich’s book considering it, “the best feminist book on mothering and motherhood” (01). The book gains widespread acknowledgment because it deals with the theme of motherhood from a wide range of disciplines including literature. Emily Jeremiah wrote a chapter entitled “Murderous Mothers: Adrienne Rich’s *Of Woman Born* and Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*” in which she applies Rich’s assumption of Maternal ambivalence and rupture on the infanticide act of *Beloved*’s main character, Sethe. The latter is widely developed on a whole book entitled *Toni Morrison and Motherhood A Politics of the Heart* (2004). She investigates the theme of motherhood in all

Morrison's novels published before 2003. She finds in Morrison's novels a way to delve in African American motherhood that is oppressed by slavery and racism where she extensively explains disconnection and rupture from mothering. She also proposes and devotes three chapters to reconnection with motherhood as a way of healing, reconciliation, and redemption especially in *Jazz* and *Paradise*. O'Reilly highlights the power of what she calls 'Black Motherhood' where the mother empowers herself and her children culturally and politically by the "Mother work" (172) or the act of mothering as a source of power rather than a weakness. Yet, she neglected to a certain extent the view of the child about mothering.

Through my readings, I came to conclude that most of the critics focused on the feministic side in most novels rather than tackling it from different perspectives. The theme of motherhood and womanhood are extensively discussed unlike the theme of fatherhood or childhood. The focus is more on how a woman struggles in a racialized/enslaved society and can raise her children on her own without the help of a man. Children are means or motives for women's independence; the focus was more on the independence rather than the motive.

My analysis would focus on both male and female children rather than "only female". I tried to avoid the too over presented and analysed feministic assumption in her novels. My view is not based on feminism but rather the co-existence of both genders.

Chapter One

Society

I. 1. Introduction: African American Community in American Society

Society is considered as a big cell in which multi-communities and different races are mingled and considered as a representative entity. Though the words “society” and “community” are used interchangeably to define each other, in most of African American literature, the terminological significant of the community is contradicted to what Harding and Martin call: “the western concept of society” (87). The contradiction lies in the interrelationship between particular groups’ members and the ties that gather them. For African Americans, the word community holds a deeper meaning, as they struggle to keep their identity and ancestral heritage alive on a larger group as much as they can especially under the horror of racism and slavery.

The African American community is considered as an extension of its members’ personal identities; their community is built upon the will and potentials of the members. On the other hand, the western concept of society is associated with larger borders of “national territory or civilized settlement” (Harding and Martin 88). The individual in this concept falls in the category of the “meritocratic individualism [where] central characters are pitted against society in a struggle between personal desire and collective law” (Harding and Martin 88). In short, the western view of society is more idealistic, the individual has to struggle in order to be recognized in the society; whereas African Americans favour group work and can help each to succeed and survive. The latter is due to the feeling of segregation on an individual level.

African Americans are considered as a racialized minority within the larger American society. They have to assimilate according to the norms of this culture that is basically constructed from the European one. Throughout the American history, Africans and African Americans are considered as outsiders, especially when they try to enlarge their self-definition beyond their own communities. They are in constant struggle to develop their communities to

fit a larger mainstream society without dismantling their own culture and identities. In order to achieve this accommodation into the American society, African Americans have suffered traumatic physical and psychological injuries. From their childhood, they grow up with the idea of being the alienated other who is not supposed to be a human being and his/her primary function is to serve the dominant culture, the *WHITE* one.

Morrison uses other terms to refer to the African American community such as “village” or “tribe”. These words are used interchangeably in her novels to refer to the African American people without the interference of any other group especially white Americans. Therefore, her novels are about these villagers and tribes, which are in constant struggle to assimilate with the larger society as she declares,

I write what I have recently begun to call village literature, fiction that is really for the village, for the tribe. Peasant literature for my people, which is necessary and legitimate. . . . My work bears witness and suggests who the outlaws were, who survived under what circumstances and why, what was legal in the community as opposed to what was legal outside it. . . . My people are being devoured. (LeClair 120-121)

Morrison wants to push her characters as far as they could go to search for their lost identities or establish new ones to reserve their communal inheritance.

This chapter highlights the influence the society has on African American children. This influence is examined within psychoanalysis and trauma theories through an assessment of historical, cultural, economic, spiritual, political and social norms. It is a literary journey towards selfhood through Morrison’s *A Mercy*, *Beloved*, and *The Bluest Eye*.

A Mercy highlights the journey of Florens in the newly discovered world where societies are not constructed yet. She witnesses the development of this world within her own development in relation to a multiracial group of Portuguese, Dutch, Natives, Puritans, English

and unknown set of individuals fighting nature and each other to construct safe societies. Florens, the African slave, lives in pre-racial world regulating its compass towards the industry of slavery.

The next society is the slave based one in *Beloved* where Beloved, Denver, Bugler and Howard and their family witnessed the horror of slavery and survived in a way or another to retell their stories. Morrison assists the society with a ghost that pushes the horrific memories to speak themselves and haunt the world around including children.

In *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison projects two main families during the mid of the 20th century. The Breedloves, Pecola and Sammy and the MacTeers Claudia and Frieda. These children search for their selfhood in the middle of a society in which they are considered legally as free and equal to their white counterparts, yet they are separated in every aspect of life. These children are affected by the dominant culture's social construction more than affecting it; as a result, they struggle within themselves only in order to survive and reach a healthy selfhood.

I. 2. The Society of the New World

“We never shape the world [...] the world shapes us”

(Morrison *A Mercy* 71)

Race¹ has always been regarded as a socio-historical phenomenon that kept its stamp in every aspect of the American as well as the African American lives. Carey suggests that A

¹ Racism is defined as, “any action, practice, or belief that reflects the racial worldview-the ideology that humans are divided into separate and exclusive biological entities called “races”, that there is a causal link between inherited physical traits and traits of personality, intellect,

Mercy calls for a reconciliation between the past, the present, and the future as she stated, “The text is a rumination on the American psyche, a historical examination of what “went wrong” and a reminder that the United States has a legacy of racism that still needs to be addressed” (Carey 05). It is an indirect call to think again in a different plot if things stayed the same before slavery turned to be institutionalized. As Morrison explains, “to see what it was like, or it could have been like, and how that had something to do with the ways we live now” (Miller 62-64). Obama becomes a medium of this reconciliation, an African American president for a nation that is raised upon a racial heritage. He represents the realization of dreams that have been lasting four hundred years.

In 2008, Barack Obama, an African American senator, organized a campaign for presidency, and became the first African American to win the candidacy as a president for the United States. During the same year, Morrison published her ninth novel, *A Mercy*. The setting of the novel is different from the other novels, yet it completes them in a fabulous way. Morrison chooses the New World, the 17th Century new discovered wilderness to retell and remind the 21st century readers of the beginning of what is now America. It tells the story of the first settlers and how they introduced indentured servitude and slavery to this wilderness. Furthermore, it draws the guiding line that defined racism in a multi-ethnic society. Morrison tries to separate Slavery from race in order to re-examine the world with and without Racism.

Barack Obama’s presidency and *A Mercy* are two faces of the same coin. The first face is reality (the contemporary period), and the second face represents the New World initiation of racism. *A Mercy* is a 21st century revival for that symbol. Cantiello suggests two different terms for that coin, Pre-racial for *A Mercy* and Post-racial for Barack Obama (165). Morrison’s

morality, and other cultural behavioural features, and that some races are innately superior to others”. (“Racism” Encyclopaedia Britannica).

A Mercy and Obama link the past with the future reserving a middle passage for *Beloved* and *The Bluest Eye*. The term post-racial is used to describe the contemporary American status towards Racism that is believed to be expunged. Yet, Morrison in a number of interviews hesitates in using the word saying, “I sort of don’t like that word. I don’t know why. But it seems to indicate something that I don’t think is quite true, that we have erased racism” (Cantiello 168). She questions the existence of racism in the contemporary period and raises new shift of perspectives about multi-racial groups that have been fighting since the 17th Century.

Morrison differentiates between slavery and servitude in the 17th Century’s society. Servitude is a state of being for the natives, the British, the Africans, and all other settlers who could not pay their passage to the New World or for those who are sold or brought by force. Whites like Willard and Scully are indentured servants² whose unknown length of servitude changed their status to be like debt slaves. Racism on the basis of skin colour was not connected to social identifications in the construction of the colonies. The colour of the person or the origins do not determine the fact of being slave or not. Morrison tries to take the readers back in time to show them that America could have survived without racism, and could have gained a space between past and future, a space between the New World and the election of Obama.

A Mercy’s society is multi-ethno-racial which gathers a group of characters who have learnt to live together in a harmonious way. It includes an Anglo-Dutch farmer and trader with his English wife Rebekka, a cast of servants, indentured and slaves, Lina, a native girl, Sorrow, a survivor of a ship wreck and Scully with Willard. Florens, an African slave’s daughter is added to the crew in addition to a free African blacksmith.

² A person became an indentured servant by borrowing money and then voluntarily agreeing to work off the debt during a specified term. (“slavery” Encyclopædia Britannica)

The crew of *A Mercy* can be seen in another epic novel, *Moby Dick* (1851). Herman Melville visions multiracial set of characters from all over the world in a vessel roiling in unknown wild seas. Jacob Vaark gathers an orphaned crew that is attracted by the newness of the New World. Both crews believing themselves to be a manifestation of civilization set their journeys in the wilderness to hunt their desires. Both crews were haunted by the glorification of whiteness at the end of their journeys.

Jacob Vaark, the Anglo-Dutch farmer is willing to expand his fortune in a healthy way. Yet, his definition of healthy secure way changes according to the alteration brought by the new breeze of slavery and racism. He has gathered a group of six orphans in his farm including himself. However, this group is basically formed for financial and economic purposes. Jacob is engaged in rescue missions by his humanitarian spirit. The fact of being orphan himself allows him to see and understand the sufferings in others. He surrounds himself with people who can share with him the same meaning of life without the risks of running away. They could all depend on each other and path their roads of secured life in the wilderness.

I. 2.1. Lost Paradise

The cover page³ of the book summarizes Morrison's *A Mercy* by using two aspects, the painting and the title. What attracts the reader first is the painting on the cover page by Frederic Edwin Church entitled *Morning in the Tropics* (1877). The painting represents Eden, a pure world empty from the darkness of the human hearts as Morrison describes it, "forests untouched since Noah, shorelines beautiful enough to bring tears, wild food for the taking" (Morrison *A Mercy* 13). There was mercy in the world, an invitation to return to the origins, if we act by our

³ See Appendix 1 page 151

instincts, the world would be a better place. First settlers were innately good, not destructed by the quest of wealth. Yet, the satanic desires for wealth and power overcome and destroy their heavenly world. In this earthly Eden, Satan promised those men absolute power and wealth; therefore, those new settlers were driven far away from heavens. The New World is a promised land turned to be heaven for whites and hell for blacks.

The title which is written in small letters calls the readers and the characters to go back to their origins and reconcile with themselves and the world around. *a mercy*, an innate one driven by hearts that could not fight the evil of racism. *a mercy* to the contemporary readers and a redemption for the destructed heaven. *a mercy* for the traumatized souls of the world.

Society in *A Mercy* is portrayed as a damaged paradise, Jacob is regarded as Adam as Morrison says, “Adam (like Jacob) was a good man but (unlike Jacob) he had been goaded and underlined by his mate” (Morrison *A Mercy* 115). Morrison named Vaark’s farm “Milton”, indicating a more profound significance to the world she created in the novel. Morrison is greatly influenced by John Milton’s *Paradise Lost* (1667)⁴, the epic poem that tells the story of the first man created by God, Adam, and his wife Eve and their fall from heaven because of satanic advice. Jacob Vaark is an orphaned trader who has brought and bought slaves and Indentured servants to his farm as a humanitarian act more than a business one. He links those members and helps them integrate his family.

Jacob represents Adam because both share healthy reflections of the world around, yet the quest of wealth and power invaded their very souls gradually. In the beginning of the novel, Jacob tells the story of Bacon’s Rebellion where natives, white, freed, Indentured and slaved Africans fought with their owners to protect themselves and their property against local gentry.

⁴ The poem is included in Appendix 2, page 152

The war's failure leads to establish new categories of social hierarchy. The rulers start to clean up their mass by dehumanizing Africans, in other terms blacks, as Jacob explains,

By eliminating manumission, gatherings, travel and bearing arms for black people only; by granting license to any white to kill any black for any reason; by compensating owners for a slave's maiming or death, they separated and protected all whites from all others forever. Any social ease between gentry and laborers, forged before and during that rebellion. (Morrison *A Mercy* 12)

The desire to hold absolute power pushes white rulers to deny their humanitarian values and establish rules that allow them to kill other attempts of reactions. Jacob Vaark explains that these acts are themselves cruel and have no solid judicial pillars making the world a massy one. Though slave trade was a fashion, a sign of wealth, Vaark is unwilling to enter in such profitable domain.

Adam's desires of immortality excluded him from heaven. Vaark experienced the same exclusion. Fascinated by D'Ortega's house, Jacob becomes obsessed with having a similar one. Valkeakari explains that Jacob's journey contains, "both pre- and postlapsarian indications-on the one hand, intimations of what seems to be Jacob's kindness and egalitarianism and, on the other hand, evidence of his quickly deepening, profoundly self-serving desire to become rich" (Valkeakari 113). Morrison projects the failure of Jacob to remain innately pure and good against all desires.

It was a fashion to own a cargo of slaves under the owners' services. Trading with the "currency of human bodies" (Valerie 155) turned the inhabitants of the New World to be evil and cruel. Moore, Babb, and Updike share the same notion about this world, "a New World turning old and poisoned from the start" (Valerie 148). Using human beings as cash crops is an evidence that this world is contaminated. Frye referred to it as an "existential hell" (qtd. Moore 12) as opposed to Eden due to the fall of Adam. A hell that is created by man on earth, referring

to some men “fulfilling the curse on Ham, to be servants of servants: “in other words to be slaves”” (Roynon 595).

A Mercy recounts the horror of slavery that is raising in the south. In addition to the damage inflicted to the natives. The use of slaves in the plantations was very profitable to the point it is compared to marriage as Jacob recounts, “especially here where tobacco and slaves were married” (Morrison *A Mercy* 116). For those slaves, it was definitely not marriage out of love, but rather it was a forced one. These slaves were arranged to meet their brides in plantation, a meeting between a machine and crops. They were considered inhuman, a machine in its fullest potential. These machines were treated harshly and lawless as Florens’ mother explains, “Unreason rules here” (Morrison *A Mercy* 193). It is a world with no moral nor judicial laws. Those in power, the plantation owners, are very proud of their growing industry from those flesh industry inviting everyone else in power to join the wealth.

Kathryn Mudgett suggests that through “the voice of the free and unfree, Morrison presents a “trial” of the American construction of identity in a new land in which law, both man's and God's is manipulated to privilege the trading of “conscience for coin” at the expense of a just civilization” (73). D’Ortega sets his own coin's based laws on “euro-American avariciousness and possessiveness” (Łoboziec 331). He is the embodiment of “inhuman opportunism” (Łoboziec 331). He never hesitates to humiliate and abuse his slaves. He is more engaged with the financial loss and the way to profits, rather than worrying about the health of the coming cargo dying from fever.

Florens’ mother explains her aftermath journey with D’Ortega and the physical trauma they endured from slaves’ trade. They prayed for death to visit them since their owners did not allow them to invite it. They tried endless attempts to die, yet she explains,

It was hard to figure out how to die. Some of we tried; some of we did. Refusing to eat the oiled yam. Strangling we throat. Offering we bodies to the sharks that

follow all the way night and day. Who lives who died? Who could tell in that moaning and bellowing in the dark, in awfulness? It is one matter to live in your own waste; it is another to live in another's (Morrison *A Mercy* 192- 193).

They were not living a life, but rather making theirs a stair or in Mudgett term “a constructs” (74) to build life for those who consider themselves the only human beings on earth.

Living two lives, the first as themselves, unrecognized by anybody, and the second as property needed by everybody, slaves lived a “double character” (Mudgett 75). One is self-subjective and the second is the others' object. The latter exposes them to “psychic distress” (Ramírez 76). They were exposed to both physical and psychological trauma. Children and adults were treated alike; the property of slave is the property of the master. Florens is saved from all this terror through an act of abandonment. She saved her daughter from the wreck of slavery.

I. 2.2. Racialized Religion

The use of Eden implies the use of a deeper religious pretext that builds up the New World and determines its boundaries of behaviour according to religious restraints. Florens, the African slave girl has developed a happy religious connection with a Christian priest, Reverend Father. She believes that because she is baptized, she can live happier when she dies. (Morrison *A Mercy* 6). The priest teaches Florens and her family writing and reading despite the dangers of being caught teaching slaves. Education plays a great role in the construction of African independent selfhood; therefore, the owners punish severely those who teach and those being taught. As a result, such an act is practiced secretly and only by the alliance of good hearted religious symbols.

Education is a way of saving the self; those who could read and write would not be exposed to heavy physical work, but rather preferred for light work that involves amusing the master. Through reading and writing, the slave can live better, be close to god and can change his/her destiny as Minha Mae explains, “There is magic in learning” (Morrison *A Mercy* 191). This powerful magic played a great role in saving Florens and her mother's magical interaction.

The New World attracts large groups of people having different religious background. Some of them learn how to live in multi-religious communities, but others established their own territories like the puritans. In her journey to the blacksmith, Florens enters a puritan house seeking food; but instead she encounters another religious interpretation for her existence. The woman, Widow Ealing, is accused of dealing with demons because of her daughter's black eyes. When she sees Florens she asks, “if [she is] of this earth or elsewhere.” (Morrison *A Mercy* 125). For Widow, blackness is not identified with humanly world, it is reserved to demons. Florens' blackness is a cultural signifier that differentiates between good and evil. Good that is related to whiteness and evil that is related to blackness.

In order to legitimize the beginning of racial discrimination, Blackness is connected with the unwanted black demon that helps in excluding Adam from heaven. The puritan's view of the black as a devil is more presented in Nathaniel Hawthorne's, *The Scarlet Letter* where it is referred to as “a common euphemism for the Christian devil, whom the puritans associated with the forested wilderness that surrounded their settlement and with the Native Americans who devilled within it” (qtd. Łoboziec 335).

Similarly, Morrison projects Jacob Vaark's exchanging Florens for debts a humanitarian and good intention that excludes him from his own Miltonic heaven. Jacob sees himself in Florens. As her mother begs him to take her, he remembered his own orphanhood. Yet, he indirectly participated in the Atlantic Slave trade. Jacob burns fifty trees in order to have a new big gated house that becomes his own tomb. Despite his precautions from slave trade,

Jacob's failure to resist the materialistic wave grants his failure. From a puritanical reading, Florens can be depicted as the demon that excluded Vaark from his heaven whereas it can be read as a test to discover Jacob's greed on earth where he has also failed.

The *Freed* black blacksmith who has made the Iron work Vaark's Entrance gate was accused of being evil; the Dutch white farmer died because he has also dealt with that devil. His accusation of being a devil stumps out from the settlers' different religious background and their beliefs about the other who is opposed to themselves, as explained by Babb, "their theology has taught [them] not love but fear of difference, whether manifested through the appearance of an eye or through the color of skin" (158). These three manifestations of blackness were accused of being devil and could harm the others, and in Jacob's case leads to death. John Carey argues that the attempt to isolate evils in Satan, "has arisen the urge to locate evil in a single kind of being, which has borne fruit throughout history in pogrom, ghetto, and racial massacre" (160).

A Mercy projects the journey of Florens from childhood to adulthood and her changing, improving, and renewal definition of life and selfhood in the New World. Florens introduces the notion of being alive with the notion of beauty in using shoes. Shoes are very important to protect one's feet, Florens' feet are described as "useless, will always be too tender for life and never have the strong soles" (Morrison *A Mercy* 04). Her weak feet suggest her vulnerable life inside the Portuguese slave hold. Morrison projects Florens as a child who cannot stay without shoes though she never had them before. Shoes also suggest the absence of the father, who could not provide protection for his family. Florens' weakness makes her a conceivable victim to slavery, as she recounts, "[I] always beg for shoes, anybody's shoes, even in the hottest days" She wants any kind of shoes that belong to anyone (Morrison *A Mercy* 04)..

The mother's reaction to her daughter's cries for shoes is interpreted differently. As a slave woman, Minha Mae suffered from physical abuse imposed by her owners. She projects

the shoes as danger especially that her daughter cries for “anybody’s shoes”. Regarding her innocence, the mother calls her daughter, “dangerous” claiming that, “There was no protection. None. Certainly not with your vice for shoes. It was as though you were hurrying up your breasts and hurrying also hurrying the lips of an old married couple. Understand me. There was no protection and nothing in the catechism to tell them no” (Morrison *A Mercy* 190-191). She is afraid that the signs of girlhood would attract the master and inflict his desires on her own little daughter.

The mother experiences the loss of the humanness of her body since she was obliged to be transported to the New World. She was forced to leave her own people by her own people to a wild world where her skin becomes the only identification as she says, “I was not a person from my country, nor from my families. I was negrita. Everything. Language, dress, gods, dance, habits, decorations, song-all of it cooked together in the color of my skin.” (Morrison *A Mercy* 194). Her blackness becomes a direct signifier of her being.

Despite her longing for shoes, Florens does not pay attention to visual beauty. She is aware of her difference from the rest of Jacob's household members, yet she accepts that difference with positive spirit. Her conversations with Lina about her hair that looks like a “lamb” (Morrison *A Mercy* 120) comparing her with an animal does not bother her; instead, she is happy with the funny moments when she is unravelling that lamb’s hair. The notion of beauty that is connected with physical appearance has no such importance in the New World. The feeling of shame for being like a “lamb” does not cross her mind during her stay in Milton farm. She comes to know the importance of beauty when meeting “Jane”, the Black-eyed girl suspected to be a devil in the Puritan society. Her shame is aroused when the religious guest of widow Ealing examined her alien body depriving her from all clothes looking for,

A tail, an extra teat, a man's whip between my legs. Wondering eyes that stare and decide if my navel is in the right place if my knees bend back ward like the

forelegs of a dog. They want to see if my tongue is split. Like a snake's or if my teeth are filing to points to chew them up. To know if I can spring out of the darkness and bite (Morrison *A Mercy* 135).

This examination humiliates Florens and accelerates her feelings of shame for things she could not understand. The accusation of being different and alien dehumanizes her. The “lamb” becomes so real and worse, the happy memories have gone away expressing, “I am not the same (...) something precious is leaving me. I am a thing apart” (135). She becomes a “turtle without shell, a minion with no tell-tale signs but a darkness I am born with, outside, yes, but inside as well and the inside dark is small, feathered and toothy”. (135). Florens confronts with something that destroyed her from the inside. Her physical appearance that was once accepted, becomes a shame that she has to live with. The puritan group has initiated racism by alienating Florens. One can understand that racism was instructed by religion before being implemented by economic or politics.

Florens' emptiness sparks from a traumatized self forced to feel alien with itself. Erikson has explained this spilt as “dying inside”...[where] something alien breaks in on you, smashing through whatever barriers your mind has set up as a line of defence. It invades you, takes you over, becomes a dominant feature of your interior landscape, [...] and in the process threatens to drain you and leave you empty” (Erikson 183). Florens was already selfless, living her life momentarily. This trauma awakens her suspicions about herself, as a black little human being.

Since beauty is mostly acquainted with facial appearance, Florens dreams of losing her face, therefore, losing herself. After the incident, she explains that her face is not even a shadow and starts for the first time wondering about herself (162) a self that she never possesses. The face is a symbol of one's identity, a signifier for historical and cultural heritage. To lose one's face is to lose one's identity. Florens has lost her face between political claims and religious restraints.

I. 2.3. Enslaving the Self

Florens is not able to connect to the society which deprives her from values that could categorize her as normal with real rights and duties. The latter does not allow her to develop a healthy self-reflection. After her mother's rejection, Florens starts searching for love outside the circle of family. Her hunger for love destroys her self-esteem and pushes her to rebel

Florens is emotionally paralysed by her mother's abandons, which is half rearticulated by Lina who nurtures her as if she is her daughter. Florens could not fully walk in her own shoes, she always walks in the others' shoes. This is symbolic of her own self in which she could not have access to. She is living the life of society, the Dutch, the native, the other... she can not live her own life, not because she is a servant, but because she does not connect to her own identity in which she has not discovered yet. She tries to forget the trauma of her mother's rejection, however, she forgets everything except that. She forgets her claims for shoes, or rather for herself. She lives for the sake of living. Her unwillingness to search for herself stamps out from the fear of remembering. Her memories that are connected to her own identity are thrown away in a deep sub-consciousness. If she initiates a search for her own self; she will confront all the unwanted memories. She drops and goes on to live in the others' lives.

Florens does not either think nor use her experience as a reference. She is a momentous decision taker, who is affected by the other persons. A reference to this claim is her obsession with the free black smith as Morrison explains, "A bleating desire beyond sense, *without conscience* the young body speaking in its only language its sole reason for life on earth." (Morrison *A Mercy* 70; emphasis mine)

To enslave oneself is to make it vulnerable to the extent that others can control and affect your emotional, psychological, mental, and physical condition with the permission of one's own will. Florens gave herself to the blacksmith happily and freely without his

permission. Emotions are frozen by the shock of giving her up as a slave by her own mother, and melt under the lid of the blacksmith.

Florens surrendered herself to the free blacksmith before knowing him or at least him noticing her, as she expressed “before you know I am in the world I am already kill by you” (Morrison *A Mercy* 44). In fact, Florens is interested in the idea of black freedom rather than the African blacksmith since her childhood; she never came to dream of a life where she could be free and mean somebody to someone rather than something. It is not even a love at first sight; it is an obsession of being free. Lina expresses the danger she noticed and neglects when Florens knew that he “had rights, then and privileges, like Sir, he could marry, own things, travel, sell his own labor.” (Morrison *A Mercy* 53)

Florens’ obsessional attitude creates a feeling of rebirth in herself as if the blacksmith throws a spell that makes her born again as she elucidates it, “for the first time I am live” (Morrison *A Mercy* 44). Florens’ years of servitude as a slave in Jacob’s house were not real for her because she was not alive, living but not alive; a little girl taking orders from everyone except herself. In fact, the idea of choosing a mate, a lover, or in a more sense a “freer” fuels her desire to live again rather than to keep holding the same status as her mother. When her mistress send her to look for him she expressed, “For her is to save her life, for me it is to have one” (Morrison *A Mercy* 43). Florens wants him to “own” her. Giving herself to him is an act of giving up all her haunted memories to somebody else to deal with them. The dream of the absent face interpreted itself; her face means nothing to anyone, even to herself.

One can notice that Florens started to notice the destruction she caused to herself after her sexual relationship with the blacksmith. Her ‘hunger for him’ cannot be satisfied except in sexual terms. Despite that, she does not pass quickly to womanhood and reach her adulthood until she is confronted once more with her kept memories in her sub-consciousness.

Psychologically speaking, it is the chock Florens has re-passed through that awakens her; the (phallic) stage could have helped, but not as much as the chock itself.

Florens wins the battle against herself and starts walking in her own shoes. When she is confronted with her haunting mother's dream, another dearest lover replaces her for another kid. Unlike Pecola in *The Bluest Eye*, Florens' journey does not end in madness, Florens' secret lessons in writing helped her greatly in overthrowing her endless sorrows, disappointment and repressed memories of abandonment from her uncontrollable forced life.

Florens' journeys to both her lover and herself ends when the blacksmith fired her out of his life. The loved one once more crushes her life, her dream, and her desires. The free blacksmith could not accept the offer of her enslavement, accusing her of enslaving herself. He rejected her without hesitation saying, "Your head is empty and your body is wild" (Morrison *A Mercy* 166). The trauma of abundance has revisited her once more, the loss of her beloved once explains Ramirez "produces an irreversible psychic rupture, which may cause a drastic change in personality as well as mental disorders" (76). Death has visited Florens once more and extended her life in traumatic exile.

Florens adjusts what Maria Root Calls "insidious trauma" (qtd. Ramirez 76); Florens has been traumatized psychologically. Babb argues that the blacksmith's rejection act is a way of protecting his own freedom as he argues,

Too close approximation to her enslavement jeopardizes his own liberty [...] His tenuous free status and his skin color are a threat to a society that is increasingly employing enslaved blackness to shape the meaning of white freedom and white privilege. For his own social survival he must maintain a clear demarcation between his free blackness and Florens' enslaved blackness" (Babb 154)

Florens' journey to herself is realized unintentionally. Through different clashes with different individuals and culture, she witnesses the changing breeze of the world towards her as being an African enslaved female. Florens lives in a new paradise and grows up to witness its destruction.

At this moment between the discovery of her lost self and her hunger for the black smith, Florens falls in the category of 'splitting' which occurs according to psychologists when a child "can't keep contradictory thoughts or feelings in mind at the same time, and therefore keep the conflicting feeling apart and focuses on just one of them" (object relation theory. html). At this stage, Florens chooses to continue walking in the road she has already chosen, she neglects her loss of herself and offers her life to the blacksmith.

The image of her brother in the protection of her mother's hand becomes visible when she meets the blacksmith holding a baby as well, a child called Malaik. The embodiment of trauma in Malaik whom she confuses with her brother visits Florens who sees Malaik as "silent but the hate in his eyes is loud. He wants my leaving. This cannot happen. I feel the clutch inside. This expel can never happen again" (Morrison *A Mercy* 162). Once more Florens is rejected for a child and fired her dream's shelter; she has literally lost herself and finds another. She loses the enslaved one and becomes free from the inside. Florens concludes that she loves things that are not hers and builds dreams so high, as a result, she loses them, but in their loss, she finds herself. Schroeder explains that, "to lose oneself is to find oneself: not to lose oneself is to remain forever lost" (Vi). Florens has stayed lost for a long time because she did not know how much lost she was. In a New World that could not afford anything but traumatic experiences and psychological wounds that could not be healed, Florens learns how to wake up again. She has learnt how to make her feet stronger without a need for shoes.

After having solid feet, Florens' uncertain future threatens her again. Due to Jacob death, Florens and other female crew become in danger as Morrison explains, "without the status or shoulder of a man, without the support of family or well-wishers, a widow was in practice

illegal... three unmastered women... belonging to no one, became wild game for anyone” (Morrison *A Mercy* 115). Florens freed herself but could not own it. *A Mercy*’s society has erupted Florens’ journey towards healthy selfhood politically and religiously. At the end of her journey, Florens becomes subjugated to slavery like all other black individuals in America.

I. 3. Society in *Beloved*

The story that started with *A Mercy* continues through *Beloved*. *A Mercy* ends up with questions that only *Beloved* can answer. Indentured servants, white and black, slaves and free human beings are in danger and their lives become uncertain. The World that was new becomes so wild, dull, and full of racial discrimination. Slavery is codified and becomes a horrific reality for those whose skin is black. Lead by traumatic experience of slavery, each character suffers in his/her own way.

Beloved is recreation of the middle passage's horror and the brutality of slavery and the jungle laws after The Reconstruction Period. It is a memorial novel for those who died in the middle of silence that preceded the storm without telling their tales. Their inappropriate death and horrific memories that could not just die with them turns itself to ghosts. The novel is also a way of healing these destructive souls and a space for repressed traumatic memories of a brutal slave system.

The past haunted Florens in a form of dream, whereas it haunted Sethe and her family in a ghost form as Samuels elucidates, “the past is always present, and that even if we repress it, it will return” (Samuels 124). The ghost is the embodiment of the sixty million who died in the middle passage. The horror of slavery and the middle passage embodied in the ghost that is described in Lacan’s word as “real” (qtd. Samuels 70) and functions as a historical trauma that subjected all Africans.

I. 3. 1. “Sixty Million and More”

Morrison dedicated *Beloved* to “sixty Million and more” (XI) whom she calls, “my people which were not my people. And her beloved which was not loved” (Morrison *Beloved* XIII). She calls the contemporary readers to look back to the past and love those who were not loved, for all African Americans who have been killed and disappeared during their escape from slavery.

The society of *Beloved* is totally based on legalized slavery, thus indicates that anybody who has black skin colour is destined to be a slave. Slaves are considered as subhuman, objects to be used for the production of wealth. As much as the farm adds slaves, as much it gets wealthier. Slavery is the condition in which one human being is owned by another. A slave was considered by law as “property or chattel, and was deprived of most of the rights ordinarily held by free person” (*Encyclopedia Britannica*). A Slave was no more than a piece of property to be used for the sake of serving the master.

Slaves in comparison to any living creature were treated in some societies the same as animals. They have no birth descent; therefore, no relatives who could help. They are ‘outsiders’ owned by the society. They are not members of a society; rather, they are objects. Ali explains that, “this form of objectifying the other imprisons the self within its own overwhelming omnipotence” (1422). As much as slaves want to free themselves, as much as they are imprisoned by their own incapacity to free themselves from those who consider them as commodities to serve the society’s privileged members. The continuous and overcoming discrimination African American people faced years and decades turn them to be objects waiting for the order of the master.

Americans consider themselves rescuers of the humanity. They are the ones who will bring social, moral and economic stability to the American society. The latter is directly

expressed by Lunden & Srigley as a saving act, “The argument was economic, but it also had a moral and a social aspect: the negro, so it went, was intellectually and morally inferior; therefore he needed the care and the guidance made available by the Institution of slavery- in fact, without such a system of control, society would disintegrate.” (165). In short, slavery as William Edward Burghardt Du Bois defines it, “was the freedom to destroy freedom, the freedom of some to exploit the rights of other” (qtd. Franklin 35). The freedom the white people gave themselves to take the freedom of those who were inferior to their colour.

In *Beloved*, Morrison uses African American history to give an extraordinary piece of fiction. A novel that is inspired by real story representing slave narratives in a fictitious work. In addition, Morrison provides the plot with a haunting ghost giving the story more gothic elements. Jennifer Heinert and Lee Jordan consider *Beloved* as a “neoslave narrative” (128) where, slave narratives are combined with history and gothic fiction that are all influenced by Race and Slavery.

Slave narratives account the lives of slaves in America and their everlasting battles to reach freedom. Morrison’s *Beloved* is inspired from the story of a slave woman called, Margaret Garner, “a young mother who, having escaped slavery, was arrested for killing one of her children (and trying to kill the other) rather than let them be returned to the owners’ plantation” (Morrison *Beloved* xvii). Margaret Garner becomes a symbol for abolitionists who were seeking to break down the institution of slavery. Bell Bernard has explained that,

Margaret Garner, with the tacit sympathy of her sexagenarian mother-in-law, cut the throat of one of her four children and tried to kill the others to save them from the outrages of slavery that she had suffered. Guided by the spirits of the many thousands gone, as inscribed in her dedication, Morrison employs a multivocal text and a highly figurative language to probe her characters’ double

consciousness of their terribly paradoxical circumstances as people and non-people in a social arena of white male hegemony. (54)

Though the story is fictionalized on a historical departure, the setting played an important role in the structure of the novel. The eighteenth century marked the Civil War and the Emancipation Proclamation.

The physical punishment was the most clearly and famous treatment the slaves had. The famous image of physical pain is the image of slaves working very hard in the plantations; with only few hours to take a rest and nothing to satisfy the master. Slaves who worked in the plantations were most of the time subdued to punishment from the owner or the overseer which was called “the Negara breaker”. Slaves were punished for many reasons and among running away or a rebel. For the runaways, the letter R would be written by Iron on their chests. For those who rebelled, whipping, shackling, hanging, beating, imprisonment and burning alive is the most suitable punishment. They were also punished by putting Iron staff on their mouth and neck to prevent them from eating so that they die from starvation

After the Civil War, new freed slaves became homeless, lost first for their freedom and second in their freedom as Morrison posits it through Paul D,

During, before and after the war he had seen Negroes so stunned, or hungry, or tired or bereft it was a wonder they recalled or said anything. Who, like him, had hidden in caves and fought owls for food; who like him, stole from pigs; who like him, slept in trees in the day and walked by the night.... He saw a witless colored woman jailed and hanged for stealing ducks she believed were her own children. (Morrison *Beloved* 78)

The abolition of slavery does not either bring peace to the African American character in reality nor in fiction. They are left with open psychological injuries that could not disappear.

Morrison projects slavery as a national trauma that leads to individual trauma and psychological distortion if its reality is repressed. The rejection of the past contaminates the psychological wounds that are produced by the harsh reality of slavery. Acceptance rather is a way of healing so that slaves can move on. Sethe cannot have a peaceful life, until she confronts her past with her present. With the return of Paul D and Beloved from her horrific past, Sethe passes a traumatic experience that only confrontation and acceptance heal her. Linda Krumholz projects Beloved's ghost as a ritual of healing for the mother as well as for the contemporary readers as she explains, "As an eruption of the past and the repressed unconscious, Beloved catalyses the healing process for the characters and for the reader; thus, she is a disruption necessary for healing" (397). After the Civil War, people want to move on, but their tired memories could not help them. Confrontation healing is more difficult than the self-reconciliation act.

I. 3.2. Slaves' Education

The moral pain was presented in the education of slaves. The white thought that education is not appropriate for slaves since they are nothing than a piece of a property. Many laws were legislated against slaves' education. In his biography, F Douglass narrates his own experience with his attempt to read and write and his master's objection, he said retelling his master's word, "If you give a nigger an inch, he will take an ell. A Nigger should know nothing but to obey his master...learning would spoil the best Nigger in the world" (41). Education was the sword that slaves would fight with to maintain their freedom and the sword that whites destroy to strengthen their power.

Because of the absence of education, Morrison intensified the use of oral folklore presented in stories in addition to songs and dances. These techniques are called "ritual" in

which the previous activities function as a “formal event in which symbolic representations [...] are spiritually and communally endowed with the power to shape real relations in the world.” (Krumholz 396). These rituals are pedagogic in the sense that they teach indirectly and heal the psychological wounds of slavery. Every character adopts this form of healing, each one using it the way he/she objects his/her life. Rituals replace the advantages of writing and reading as well. In *A Mercy*, both Florens and Minhae Mae confronted their trauma by writing their horrific traumas. Unfortunately, not all slaves read and write; as a result, the process of healing is reserved for a few characters, only those who can read and write. In *Beloved*, all characters go through a process of healing because these rituals do not require capacities beyond reach for the slaves. They are also a way to reserve and pass culture from one generation to another.

I. 3.3. Sweet Homes

Through *Beloved*, Morrison tries to highlight the scars that slavery spread between African Americans. The trauma that is presented both physically and psychologically. Each community's members are related with one thing that hold them together; as Žižek puts it, “this relationship towards the thing, structured by means of fantasies, is what is at stake when we speak about the menace to “our way of life” presented by other” (qtd. Samuels 121). This special thing that holds the African Americans together is the system of brutalized slavery that is imposed by the “other”, the Americans.

African Americans also share ‘common memories’ with each other as if these memories are still alive haunting their present. Through a process of “*Rememory*” which is regarded by Samuels as “new theory of history results in an unconscious discourse where words are treated as real thing” (124). Like Florens, Sethe tries to repress her past and forget it, yet it haunts her. The memory becomes alive and gives essence to the space that might have perished long ago,

yet the memory becomes so real as Sethe explains, “where I was before I came here, that place is real. It’s never going away. Even if the work farm –every tree and glass blade of its dies. The picture is still there – if you go there and stand in the place where it was, it will happen again; it will be there for you, waiting for you.” (Morrison *Beloved* 36). Sethe remembers not only the place as a place of suffering, but she recalls all her trauma, both physical and psychological. She remembers all the whippings, all rapes, all cries and all pains.

This place has got a ‘spirit’ and a soul of its own which Bessedik considers as the “spirit of place” which she defines as a, “character that gives place meaning in the world, and by extension, gives it wholeness and saves it from being perceived only physically” (560). The traumatic spirit of Sweet Home farm haunted Sethe and her family in their new sweet home in 124 Bluestone road. Sweet home is a slave farm owned by Mr. Garner and by schoolteacher after his death. Mr. Garner makes his slaves connect to the farm physically and psychologically. It was a real “sweet home” in comparison with other slave holds. Mr. Garner treated his slaves as human beings rather than objects. He brings them and owns them as men and not as slaves; he was proud to be different from all others and was glad to illustrate his point.

Nancy Jesser argues that Mr. Garner is “a model of good “ownership”. His policy of containment allows the slaves to exercise some selfhood [...] an enlightened slaver –one who is not threatened by the manhood of his slaves and who patronizes them with his outstanding care” (327). Mr. Garner gives his family name to his slaves who do not have one as if they were his sons, “Paul D. Garner, Paul F Garner, Paul A Garner, Halle Suggs and Sixo, the wild man” (Morrison *Beloved* 13). They were proud and glad for the names. This gesture related them more to the house and to the work in farm. These slaves did not have a sweet home as the name may allude, but they were very attached to it. They knew they are protected inside the home better than running away; as a result, they stayed in the farm and gave it all their spirits.

The sweet home men's spirits are crushed out when Mr. Garner died and is replaced by schoolteacher. At his arrival, schoolteacher breaks the connection between the master and slaves; therefore, breaks the connection between slaves and Sweet Home as a house and as a home. He aims to write a book about slaves as special species close to animals rather than human beings. He teaches his nephews to distinguish between human beings and animals; therefore, he allows his students to anatomize Sethe's body as Jester explains, "Under school teacher's tutelage, the pupils learn to turn people into animals. Property is property, because of its assigned properties." (329). They are no more men or women, schoolteacher appropriates them. He tries to reinforce any new law about slaves to apply it on them as stamp paid reveals,

White people believed that whatever the manners, under every dark skin was a jungle. Swift, unnavigable waters, swinging screaming baboons, sleeping snakes, red guns ready for their sweet white blood [...] the more colored people spent their strength trying to convince them how gentle they were, how clever and loving, how human, the more they used themselves up to persuade whites of something Negroes believed could not be questioned, the deeper and more tangled. The jungle grew inside (Morrison *Beloved* 199)

All slaves' good attentions reserved to Sweet Home have vanished; it becomes a mere house of torture and horror.

After Sethe's running from Sweet Home, she was headed to her mother's in law rented house. The house was a good place to escape to because it was, "a way station where messages came and then their senders" (Morrison *Beloved* 77). It was a house of hope for a shining future far from the monsters of Sweet Home. This house was situated in the North; the direction itself was cheerful, full of hopes as the North represented freedom and equality as Paul. D describes, "Free North. Magical North. Welcoming, benevolent North" (Morrison *Beloved* 132). 124 Bluestone was a very good place to escape from the horror of slavery.

In addition to its significant place, 124 was the house of the whole community including Abolitionists and it was ruled by Baby Suggs who help the society come together and give helping hand to each other as Morrison narrates, “124 had been a cheerful, buzzing house where Baby Suggs, holy, loved, cautioned, fed, chastised, soothed. Where not one but two pots simmered on the stove; where the lamp burned all night long. Strangers rested there while children tried on their shoes” (*Beloved* 102). The house opened its arms to all members of the society to heal each other.

When the schoolteacher came looking for Sethe and her children to return them to Sweet Home, Sethe slaughtered her daughter inside the house and attempted to add the others. The child’s hanged spirit haunted the house, making it her own. The spirit of the place became a human spectre; therefore, Denver regarded the place as a, “person rather than a structure. A person that wept, sighed, trembled and fell into fits. Her steps and her gaze were the cautious ones of a child approaching a nervous, idle relative (someone dependent but proud)” (Morrison *Beloved* 35). Due to this ghost, 124 Bluestone loses its communal spirit and becomes more personal haunted by the living activity of the dead child before it stabilized in Beloved’s body.

I. 3.4. Mrs. Priest

Religion is presented in the novel through Baby Suggs’ spiritual practices that lightens the dark life of the African American people. Her religious perspectives are different from priests and churchmen. She knows that religion is but another playful game whites’ use in order to dehumanize the African slaves as seen in *A Mercy* where Blacks are considered aliens and sons of the Lucifer. She established her own religion as Morrison posits it, “she became an unchurched preacher, one who visited pulpits and opened her great heart to those who could use it.” (Morrison *Beloved* 56). Baby Suggs represents the generation of former slaves who

come to the conviction that their freedom is the production of their hearts, minds and souls. She tries to empty their tired souls and calls their crushed hearts to raise from the ashes. She does not impose but rather speaks to their hearts,

She did not tell them to clean up their lives or to go and sin no more. She did not tell them they were the blessed of the earth, its inheriting meek or its glory bound pure. She told them that the only grace they could have was the grace they could imagine. That if they could not see it, they would not have it. (Morrison *Beloved* 56)

She calls for the revival of the broken hearts and crushed imagination. Baby Suggs tries to heal the community's members by the power of love she was deprived from. She calls them to dance, to sing, and to cry in her own yard. She wants to take off their tired souls and refresh their desire to live free after the abolition of slavery.

Before she dies, Baby Suggs confesses that certain hearts will deceive the lover. After her daughter in law killed her daughter, she comes to know that some of her free practices allow Sethe to kill her daughter. Baby Suggs joins physical freedom with that in the heart and the mind, yet some will miss the point and go beyond them all.

I. 4. "Separate but Equal" Society in *The Bluest Eye*

The death of self-esteem can occur quickly, easily in children, before their ego has "legs" so to speak. Couple the vulnerability of youth with indifferent parents, dismissive adults, and a world, which, in its language, laws, and images, re-enforces despair, and the Journey to destruction is sealed (Morrison TBE X)

Postmodern African American criticism offers a binary opposition view to society where white Americans play the role of the tormentor to black African Americans and their artistic heritage.

African American criticism theory is highly presented in *The Bluest Eye* since it deals both with sociological and psychological aspects of the oppressed African American characters. The society is under the role of white hegemony where families are in daily fight of survival, which paves the way to the destruction of African American children's selfhood. African American children are very vulnerable, as their first battle would be winning a place in a society haunted by the white gaze. They start an identification trip from a destructive or over protective family to the middle of a war against existence. The battle is not new for African American families and winning it or at least not losing too much will need a huge support from the self and the family.

Society offers traumatic experiences accompanied by psychological suffering to African American children in *The Bluest Eye*. It started with school where American children study how to segregate and destroy the African American children by creating a world named "The Dick and Jane" where white families live happily ever more. Teachers, parents and classmates practiced the lessons of segregation and violence on what they consider as alien children having black colour asserting the power of education in eliminating the self and praising the other. The society as a whole is based on racialized rules that govern it. Parents as well as children are governed by the rules of the white gaze that is presented by the superstar Marilyn Monroe, the white doll, and Shirley temple. The latter specific features of beauty, visual beauty, determined the guiding line of life in a society where both Americans and African Americans live. Morrison narrates the story of Pecola, nine years old, Claudia ten and Frieda eleven and their lives in this struggling society. She exposes how they interact with the world and how the world responds to them. Their journey towards a healthy selfhood is full of obstacles and traumatic experiences.

I. 4.1. The “Dick and Jane” World:

Americans set a dream for themselves and especially their children, the world of Dick-and-Jane. It is typical to the American dream⁵ of a happy life with a nice house, cute children and good environment. The “Dick and Jane” stories are taught at school as a primary instruction guide for American children. According to Kismaric and Marvin, almost all pupils of the United States’ primary schools were studying from the primer of Dick and Jane’s collections. They provided a perfect world where American children are supposed to live. This world is described as follows,

Dick is a six-year-old all- American (white) boy. He has a dog, he does his chores without complaining, he plays nicely with his younger sisters, and he is polite with grownups. Jane is sugar, spice, and everything nice. She is a pretty, poised, and polite little girl. Throughout the series, Jane is in training to become the all-American housewife. She learns to set the table, do the laundry, bake cookies, and go to the store. The father packed up his briefcase for work every morning

⁵ James Truslow Adams used the term in his book *The Epic of America* that was written in 1931. He states, “The American Dream is ‘that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement.’ It is a difficult dream for the European upper classes to interpret adequately, and too many of us ourselves have grown weary and mistrustful of it. It is not a dream of motor cars and high wages merely, but a dream of social order in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain to the fullest stature of which they are innately capable, and be recognized by others for what they are, regardless of the fortuitous circumstances of birth or position.” (214-215).

and the mother stayed home to take care of the home and her husband. Both parents were always there to tuck the children in at night. Dick and Jane lived in a quaint house in suburbia with a green backyard. The family had two cars, one dog, and one cat. Dick and Jane were living the American dream (Kismaric, Carole and Heiferman 134)

It is a world where everything is white and any existence of blackness would be a disturbance. Children were educated to worship the white colour and disguise the black one; therefore, destroying every attempt to raise a black independent selfhood. This society kills any African American child's dream to become an independent grown up and develop a healthy selfhood.

In *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison opens her book with three different versions of the “Dick and Jane” world, each represents the social order of the 1940's society. The First is the perfect version that is correct and clear, punctuation and grammatical structure are respected; it symbolizes the American dream family⁶.

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. She wants to play. Who will play with Jane? See the cat. It goes meow-meow. Come and play. Come play with Jane. The kitten will not play. See Mother. Mother is very nice. Mother, will you play with Jane? Mother laughs. Laugh, Mother, laugh. See Father. He is big and strong. Father, will you play with Jane? Father is smiling. Smile, Father, smile. See the dog. Bow wow goes the dog. Do you want to play with Jane? See the dog run. Run, dog, run. Look, look. Here comes a friend. The

⁶ See Appendix 03 for more visual understanding of the Primer of “Dick and Jane”, pages, 163

friend will play with Jane. They will play a good game. Play, Jane, play.

(Morrison *TBE* 03)

In the second version, Morrison ignores capital letters and punctuation; it is less clear with a different visual appearance yet still readable. It represents the struggling MacTeer family, which is trying to be on the safe side, not so near and not so far from the American culture. It represents also a group of coloured people, who give up their African American identity and start imitating the American culture in order to save their lives,

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 she wants to play who will play with jane see the cat it goes meow-meow come and play come play with jane the kitten will not play see mother mother is very nice mother will you play with jane mother laughs laugh mother laugh see father he is big and strong father will you play with jane father is smiling smile father smile see the dog bowwow goes the dog do you want to play do you want to play with jane see the dog run run dog run look look here comes a friend the friend will play with jane they will play a good game play jane play (Morrison *TBE* 03)

The third version lacks everything making the story blocks of letters without meaning. The latter represents the disordered world Pecola and her family are living in.

Hereisthehouseitisgreenandwhiteithasareddooritisveryprettyhereisthefamilymotherfatherdickandjaneliveinthegreenandwhitehousetheyareveryhappyseejaneshehasareddressshewantstoplaywhowillplaywithjaneseethecatitgoesmeowmeowcomeandplaycomeplaywithjanethekittenwillnotplayseemothermotherisverynicemotherwillyouplaywithjanemotherlaughslaughmotherlaughseefatherheisbigandstrongfatherwillyouplaywithjanefatherisssmilingsmilefathersmileseethedogboww

owgoesthedogdoyouwanttoplaydoyouwanttoplaywithjaneseethedogrunrundogr
unlooklookherecomesafriendthefriendwillplaywithjanetheywillplayagoodgame
playjaneplay (Morrison *TBE* 03)

The society in which *The Bluest Eye* develops is based on racial discrimination. Pecola and her family are very poor and their internal connections are broken which leads to family destruction. Morrison asserts that one of the basic factors for family destruction and loss of identity is the family support and the heritage of the past, “Parents don’t sit around and tell their children those classical, mythological, archetypal stories...” (Diane 126). African American children are projected to specific “Dick and Jane” stories where they do not exist; therefore, they lose a sense of belonging to any specific community. They exist within themselves but they are invisible to the others.

The concept of this imaginary world has grown up rapidly under the American educational system. In order to understand how these racialized principles are planted in the children’s minds with the help of every member of school, the reader has to go deeper inside the relation between classmates, and the teachers’ responses to racial issues. The worthiness of the self and the worthiness of the world around is implemented by family first and is fixed by education.

At school, children learn that whiteness is the colour of the high class. Blackness is regarded as a threat; therefore, racism is taught from a younger age. In an interview with Angelo, Morrison explains the role of education in American schools as follow, “I’m talking about racism that is taught, institutionalized. Everybody remembers the first time they were taught that part of the human race was other. That’s a trauma. It’s as though I told you that your left hand is not part of your body” (Angelo 258). It is very traumatic to live in a world that does not recognize your existence. African Americans try to adapt, to integrate, and to be the part that should be added to the American society to realize the collective American dream. Yet, the

traumatic neglect pushes them to internalize all what has been decided out of them. Morrison explained this gap by questioning the role of African Americans themselves in the process of education or whether the platforms and the design phase are entirely left for Americans.

At school, Pecola is always unique in a way, isolated as a diamond covered with dirt and dust. Everybody runs from her or attack her all at once, “They tried never to glance at her, and called on her only when everyone was required to respond” (Morrison *TBE* 46). She represents the collective hatred, she is visualized and embodies all the dirt of the world around her and this makes her the direct object for students’ insults. When a girl wants to insult a boy in the classroom and destroy his worthiness, she would simply say, “Bobby loves Pecola Breedlove, Bobby loves Pecola Breedlove” (Morrison *TBE* 46). Humiliation is a very good tool to sustain the self and diminish the other. Pecola in this case is considered as a humiliating object between schoolmates; the girl set up herself high and degraded the value of the boy by connecting him to Pecola. To be at the centre of ignorance from both classmates and teachers is a distressing and a puzzling experience. As children in the school, African Americans are neither able neither to adapt nor to ignore the racist ideology spread in the society.

Children love to be pretty among peers, love to be appreciated, but Pecola is bewildered on the things that made her out from the borders of peers and instructors, and she could not find an answer except in her ugliness (Morrison *TBE* 45). This ugliness made the other boys sacrifice Pecola in a ceremonial disgrace as if giving her body and soul to the devil. The insults are directed to her skin and her black family, two things she could not change. Pecola is forced to surrender and pray for a miracle that would change their attitudes towards her as Klotman expressed it, “Whether one learns acceptability from the formal educational experience or from cultural symbols, the effect is the same: self-hatred” (Klotman 124). Pecola became a scapegoat to the white society and the black one as well.

Morrison tackles the issue of education to highlight its effectiveness in asserting or destroying African Americans' selfhood. After the Civil War, African American children entered a new phase; they can go to school and learn since they are free. The American society could not accept that reality and launched a doctrine of segregation called "Separate but equal"⁷ under the *Plessy v. Ferguson* law in 1896 which was broken later by *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*. Kenneth and Mamie Clark supported the case by assessing a "doll test" in which the result favours a multiracial school than a separate one. They explain that African American children's self-esteem can be easily harmed among peers, feeling racially inferior to them (Bergner 300). Most children choose a brown doll that resembles them, yet they prefer a white one to play with. As Bergner explains, "The children who exhibit white reference behaviour experience a horrible self-division that can only be remedied by, in historical order, integration, black militancy, and multicultural education." (Bergner 300). The Civil Right Movements' activists embraced the doll test results in an attempt to raise the importance of

⁷ A case in which the U.S. Supreme Court, on May 18, 1896, by a seven-to-one majority, advanced the controversial "separate but equal" doctrine for assessing the constitutionality of racial segregation laws. *Plessy v. Ferguson* was the first major inquiry into the meaning of the Fourteenth Amendment's (1868) equal-protection clause, which prohibits the states from denying "equal protection of the laws" to any person within their jurisdictions. Although the majority opinion did not contain the phrase "separate but equal," it gave constitutional sanction to laws designed to achieve racial segregation by means of separate and supposedly equal public facilities and services for African Americans and whites. It served as a controlling judicial precedent until it was overturned by the Supreme Court in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (1954). ("Plessy v. Ferguson" Encyclopædia)

multiracial schools and curriculum. By 1965, another element was added to the “Dick and Jane world”, new African American neighbours, Kismaric and Heiferman narrates,

They’re here! Mike and the cute little twins, Pam and Penny. Their pretty Mother and handsome Father are here too. It’s 1965, and they’re the new neighbors who live next door or maybe just down the block. They make great new friends for Dick and Jane and Sally ... Mike is just like Dick. He’s the same height, wears the same kind of clothes and runs around just as much. Mike’s a leader too. He is Dick’s first real friend, and more than his match at games, bike riding and making up new things to do ... Mike’s a gentleman too, neat and well-behaved (qtd. Mori 130).

Introducing this narrative in school curriculums proves that the world of “Dick and Jane” is a racialized one because it ignores the existence of another element that could be different in terms of identity and colour. Yet, the present narrative does not necessarily lead to the integration of the other in the American dream. Mori strongly approves that the newly added African American family behaves, dresses, works, and lives exactly like Jane’s family (Mori 131). African Americans have to forget who they really are in order to be fitted and live happily within the American society as Morrison affirms it in an interview saying, “ Becoming an American is based on an attitude: an exclusion of me.” (Angelo 255). “Me” that stands for the emotional, psychological, physical and historical life of an African American person; burning one’s identity and wearing a new one.

The best-fitted examples to identity loss are Pecola’s classmate coloured family that has blue-eyed black cat and the new wealthy coloured classmate. Geraldine remembers all her past when she sees Pecola holding her cat in her green neat house. Memories flowed from the unconscious mind projecting dirty and unsolicited flashbacks that were supposed to be detached from her reservoir as Morrison elucidates it,

She had seen this little girl all of her life...they had stared at her with great uncomprehending eyes. Eyes that questioned nothing and asked everything. Unblinking and unabashed, they stared up at her. The end of the world lay in their eyes, and the beginning, and all the waste in between (Morrison *TBE* 92).

Pecola is the embodiment of all what has been discarded from the desert of memories, and her presence in Geraldine's house is not questionable. She does not fit the standards of entering to Geraldine's house.

Maureen Peal, the school's new coloured student, is admired by everyone, teachers and students alike. She fits the Mike's world as Claudia describes her, "A high-yellow dream child... she was rich, at least by our standards, as rich as the richest of the white girls, swaddled in comfort and care." (Morrison *TBE* 62). Maureen gains respect not just for being a duplicate of Jane and Mike's life but she is better; in other words, richer. Her richness develops her self-esteem that allows her to differentiate herself from the other children who bear a darker complexion.

The over reacted attitudes towards Pecola from her classmates are due to the system of education they receive. Gibson argues that education is a powerful force to exercise the hegemony of the dominant culture as he explains, "It reveals the role of education in both oppressing the victim –and more to the point- teaching the victim how to oppress her own black self by internalising the values that dictate standards of beauty." (Gibson 20). The imposed educational system has internalized racism since a very young age, racism that is accepted by both conflicting races.

Pecola becomes so vulnerable to the oppression of the white gaze because her family was already destroyed. They were poor and black; entering such a world will be a dream. The white colour fascinated Mr. and Mrs. Breedlove, they learnt how to adore whiteness and disguise everything else, even their own selves as Morrison expressed it,

It was as though some mysterious all-knowing master had given each one a cloak of ugliness to wear, and they had each accepted it without question. The master had said, "You are ugly people." They had looked about themselves and saw nothing to contradict the statement; saw, in fact, support for it leaning at them from every billboard, every movie, every glance. "Yes," they had said. "You are right." And they took the ugliness in their hands, threw it as a mantle over them, and went about the world with it. (Morrison *TBE* 39).

How can a family so destroyed like Pecola's help her overcome such white tyranny! The master is the American society who injected Pecola's family and others a special treatment in preparation for a surgery that would take out all what seems ugly. Sometimes the surgery procedures will not go well; as a result, victims are sacrificed like Pecola. The Breedlove family is not strong enough to support the pain of that injection; as a result, they give up the move and smiles to their healer and killer.

Schools are considered a neutral place where children learn academically how to be good and productive members in society; yet *The Bluest Eye's* school is but an American or a semi-American dream in which neither American nor African Americans can reach or realize. Formal education in *The Bluest Eye* is a weapon for white to destroy the black peers. The consequences are very traumatic to the most vulnerable innocent African American children. In addition to that fairy-tale world, the society of *The Bluest Eye* encounters another socio-economic aspect concerned with an obsession of white beauty, which constructed another world based on visualized racism where, Shirley Temple, Mary Jane, Marilyn Monroe and the white blue-eyed doll are its protagonists.

Morrison divided *The Bluest Eye* into four sections representing the four seasons of the year. Her seasons function differently following the trends of the world rather than be followed by it. The connotation given to each season functions in the opposite way. When the MacTeer's

daughters wanted to plant marigold as an attempt to save Pecola's child, the earth did not respond to them in spring. Fick explains the latter by connecting it to T.S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*, he declares that, "*The Bluest Eye* is framed by the narrator's brooding collection of a waste land, and the seasons which title the major section "autumn" "winter". "spring" and "summer" mark off a parody of rebirth and growth"(Fick 20). The main problem was not in the marigold, the problem is on the earth that becomes a waste, useless land representing its controversial owners.

Gravell compares the seasons of *The Bluest Eye* to the seeds Thoreau has planted in Walden, this comparison stamps out from, "The activity of planting as a metaphorical act, a hope that the virtues lacking in his society could be cultivated with the proper care" (88). Both planters want to find in their community virtues like, "sincerity, truth, simplicity, faith, innocence, and the like" (Walden 164; qtd. Gravell 88). Yet both Thoreau and the MacTeer sisters fail to see the result of their hard work. The failure of land to nurture the seeds reflects the failure of society to accept its members as Thoreau explains, "The finest qualities of our nature like the bloom on fruits, can be preserved only by the most delicate handling. Yet we do not treat ourselves nor one another thus tenderly" (6; Qtd. Gravell: 89). *The Bluest Eye*'s society proves to be a waste land.

I. 4.2. Racialized Beauty, a look into the self and the other

"*The Bluest Eye* is an inversion of a familiar fairy tale, but in this case the ugly duckling never turns into the beautiful swan." (Williams 07)

Western civilization has always been regarded as a symbolic culture to be followed and integrated to maintain self and social satisfaction. White colour has been glorified and has

become a dominant and a crucial element in the identification of beauty, most accurately physical beauty. The ideal of beauty is depicted as a woman with light skin and blue eyes; therefore, the value of blackness is diminished leading to a racialized society. Toni Morrison constructed a racialized society in *The Bluest Eye*; a society that is built upon the implementation of white's beauty standards in all aspects of life over neglected and damaged black values.

White people are considered as Noble, god-like creatures and all other species are their servants. Cholly Breedlove presents God as "a nice old white man, with long white hair, flowing white beard, and little blue eyes" (Morrison *TBE* 134); on the other side, Blackness represents a strong Devil. This image of White old god and Black strong devil is one of the basic guidelines of supremacist white society. Morrison asserts the importance of white civilisation by saying that, "all civilisations derive from the white race, that none can exist without its help, and that a society is great and brilliant only so far as it preserves the blood of the noble group that created it." (Morrison *TBE* 168). Americans are the nobles of the white race and African Americans are the black race that cannot stand without the white's help. Morrison explains the importance of the white gaze that gives birth to the so-called 'black race'; yet the child grows carelessly and requests to be called free African American.

The white dominated culture has racialized beauty; therefore, it is easier to call a white blue-eyed woman beautiful and a black woman ugly. The experience of black female children trying to reach beauty is different from that of a white one; it is hard, painful, leads to self-destruction, and self-despise as Hooks stresses it, "a white-supremacist society, a society that is everywhere everyday of our lives urging us to hate blackness and ourselves" (Hooks 80). Black women characters loathe their blackness because it makes them invisible, objects with deadlines, to be used and thrown when not needed. Morrison identifies self-alienation as one of

the most egregious result of white supremacist ideology that lead to psychological and physical crimes as in Pecola's case.

To plant the standard of white beauty in the brains of Americans and African Americans alike, American people throw their seeds in socio-economic aspects of life. They impose their racialized culture as Gibson explains it through "movies, billboards, magazines, books, newspapers, window signs, dolls, and drinking cups" (113). Wherever you go there is something white with blue eyes watching you. George Orwell's notion of "Big Brother is watching you" would become White blue eyed beauty is watching and following you. In his book *The reality of Mass Media*, Niklas Luhman states, "the fact that observing systems, specifically the system of mass media, must distinguish between self-reference and other-reference in order to create the boundaries to continue and sustain the closed system" (qtd. Schalk 198). Mass media imposed a definition of the American self where African Americans are made sure to know that they are different in this society. They know their self-reference, black colour identification, which is asserted through the other-reference of identification, the white colour. This method has internalized racism, led to despise and self-hatred; therefore, following the wave and neglecting the self. Resistance is reserved for those who reject those standards with the help of their families.

Pecola Breedlove is an African American child who suffers from the dominant white culture. She has grown up with white supremacist ideology and no one took her hand and showed her the way out. Pecola's urge to have blue eyes is the result of the pressure she underwent from her family and her society. Understanding these two crucial forces may lead to understanding Pecola and her desire to have blue eyes. Morrison named the book *The Bluest Eye* or rather the Bluest "I" as each white/black character follow his/her white blue idealism.

The first world to any child is family. The family structures the identity of its members and prepares them to the alien society. Pecola's family is unique in preparing her to that white

society. Each plays a crucial role in the psychological destruction of the innocent child. There is no love, no compassion, no care, and no protection... simply no life. From parents to children, they all believe their ugliness as Morrison affirms it, "The master had said, "You are ugly people." ... "Yes," they had said. "You are right." And they took the ugliness in their hands, threw it as a mantle over them, and went about the world with it" (Morrison *TBE* 39). Their ugliness was a stump in which people identify them because simply they integrated it in their disordered world.

The mother, Mrs Pauline Breedlove is the untouchable mother who idealizes white beauty. She learns physical beauty from movies, "along with the idea of romantic love, she was introduced to another physical beauty. Probably the most destructive ideas in the history of human thought. Both originated in envy, thrived in insecurity, and ended in disillusion" (Morrison *TBE* 95). Pauline sees her daughter as ugly and sought refuge in serving a white family. The latter resulted in the destruction of Breedlove Family where love has escaped to hold a new white family. Pauline becomes a slave of her own dreamlike world where her '*black*' family does not exist.

With the absence of a guiding mother, Pecola suffered with her black father. Living in horrible conditions, "being outdoors" and lastly being raped by her own father, Pecola reached her utmost suffering. Lynn Orilla Scott sees that, "The novel represents father–daughter incest as a consequence of the disempowerment of the black male, who because of racism is not able to fulfil the role of father." (qtd. Collins 97). Because of racial oppression, the incestuous father is regarded as a victim as much as the daughter.

The family's internalization of idealized white beauty pushes Pecola to look for a solution, she thought of looking different, looking new as a white baby for the sake of unifying the family again. She wishes, "If she looked different, beautiful, maybe Cholly would be different, and Mrs. Breedlove too. Maybe they would say, "why, look at pretty-eyed Pecola.

We mustn't do bad things in front of those pretty eyes" (Morrison *TBE* 46). *The Bluest Eye* starts with describing the romanticized world of white parents with their children Dick and Jane.

Without protection, Pecola finds herself in the mid of the white struggling society without a helping hand to pull her out. American and African American communities give the final push towards Pecola's tragedy. Schoolmates and teachers alike hated and avoided her; she is the subject of her peers' insults and disgust.

Morrison smartly presents to us the impact of the white culture on the lives of African-American people. It shows how this white culture with its symbols left a shocking impact on the soul of a young girl such as Pecola Breedlove. As Edward Jackson puts it, "Pecola is a Black girl growing up in white culture where everything beautiful is identified as white...all the models for the Black girls in the book are white ones. They want to be or are told to be Greta Garbo, Ginger Rogers, or Shirley Temple." (Jackson 48). After being neglected by family, rejected by society and misidentified by the self, Pecola asks for blue eyes as a last refuge. She tried to identify the problem and it is as usual her ugliness,

Pecola tried to portrait the world differently but there is always a problem in the eyes, ...The face was hard, too. Almost done, almost. Only her tight, tight eyes were left. They were always left. Try as she might, she could never get her eyes to disappear. So what was the point? They were everything. Everything was there, in them. All of those pictures, all of those faces. She had long ago given up the idea of running away to see new pictures, new faces. (Morrison *TBE* 95).

Morrison develops a visual representation of beauty, which is reserved to the eyes as a reserving memory. She wants to be invisible in order to be saved because she is not considered as a human being. Mr. Yacobowski, the shop owner, considered Pecola as an object when she wanted to buy Mary Jane sweets and he, "hesitates, not wanting to touch her hand" (Morrison *TBE* 48); because he does not want to be assured she exists. In his consciousness she does not exist;

therefore, no need to touch or see. Pecola's angry reaction proved her existence in a world that does not see her.

The only happy interesting faces she got are Shirley Temple and Mary Jane. They are happy and everybody loves them. She wanted to be them so that she would be loved and most importantly, she would be visible; therefore, she eats Mary Jane sweet, because "feelings are exchanged for things, rather than things for feeling ... Eating Mary Jane is a strictly capitalist magic: by ingesting the product she hopes to ingest what advertising associates with it" (Fick 27). Pecola wants to be another person with blue eyes in order to build another positive self-image.

Through negative stereotypes, the black children see themselves as the primary source of pain and because of that, they are abandoned, ignored or killed. Their broken communication with parents prevents them from understanding the other version of the story; as a result, they adapt what they believe to be true and act accordingly. In Toni Morrison's three novels, the children succeed in seeing and understand what is real only when they separate from the restraints of family and society except in *The Bluest Eye* where Pecola got mad before realizing the truth. The vision of the children's self is adapted primarily from their own visions of the world. Children see themselves in the eyes of others.

Pecola likes the blue-eyed black cat Geraldine has. It can work for her if her eyes are blue, the cat's blue eyes fascinated her. The love and the care the family gave to that cat and not her imprisoned and fascinated her. She was given a hint of a miracle, a sign from another world, which confirmed that her dream might be realized. A lovely cat with blue eyes would be a dense proof that pushed and motivated her towards the search for blue eyes that would change her world around. She found the answers all at once inside this coloured family, which had a blue-eyed black cat.

Pecola's oppression pushes her to search for new white identity. Joyce Anna Jones explains that, "the desire to be white is assumed pathological in nature, leading to identity delusions, feelings of inadequacy and self-rejection, which are likely to produce other psychological consequences in the behaviour, attitudes and sense of well-being of the black child." (Jones 4). Pecola's feeling of her ugliness is intensified by her experiences of exclusion and loneliness. She is confronted with prejudice and humiliating images on a daily basis. These experiences contribute to her lack of self-esteem, and drive her to hold herself up to standards that she does not fully understand nor could realistically achieve.

W.E.B Du Bois developed the concept of "Double Consciousness" which is defined as, a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness,— an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder (Starke 5).

Pecola finds herself in the middle of two conflicting cultures; the first is an African American culture at home and the second being the American culture at school and neighbourhood. The two cultures rejected Pecola; consequently, she tries to change her eyes to be better fitted in the American culture and gain respect and love from the African American culture.

It is very challenging for an African American female to grow up psychologically, mentally, and emotionally due to their traumatic experience in developing their selves. Morrison tries to encourage the African American girl to speak for herself and fight for her black beauty. During the sixties, the slogan "Black is Beautiful" was created as a reaction to the dominant white values in American society. It was a highly successful slogan, as songs and other propaganda forms spread the idea around the world. The slogan has helped, in some

aspects, to frustrate some of the racist stereotypes that refer to African Americans as ugly. As Hooks observes, the “‘Black is Beautiful’ slogan worked to intervene and alter these racist stereotypes that had always insisted black was ugly, monstrous, undesirable.” (Hooks 173-174). During that time, many African Americans adopted this slogan, and advocated a mood of African-American pride and a rejection of white values of style and appearance. As Morrison says: “it was precisely in that spirit of reacting to white values that late, when Civil Rights became Black Power, we came up with the slogan ‘Black is Beautiful’- an accurate...observation if ever there was one” (Hooks 175).

Gwendolyn Brooks’ poem is considered as a second shorten version of *The Bluest Eye* as far as cultural awareness is concerned. It goes as follows,

You have not bought Blondine
You have not hailed the hot-comb recently
You never worshipped Marilyn Monroe
You say: Farrah’s hair is hers
You have not wanted to be white
The natural respect of Self and Seal!
Sisters!
Your hair is Celebration in the world! (Bloom 15)

The poem is dedicated to the “Black is Beautiful” movement and to the girls who suffered from the internal psychological racism caused by physical appearance.

Through the voice of Claudia, Morrison rejected the prejudices of white dominant culture. She hated dolls and Shirley Temple. She was aware of the danger of adopting western standards of beauty. She does not direct her hatred towards coloured or white people but rather hated the motivation that makes them see themselves as superior to black people as she declares it, “And all the time we knew that Maureen Peal was not the Enemy and not worthy of such

intense hatred. The Thing to fear was the Thing that made *her* beautiful, and not us.” (Morrison *TBE* 74). The glorifying of whiteness ideology reinforces the Americans’ self-esteem and lowered the blacks’ as Bouson explains it, “the thing Claudia learns to fear is the white standard of beauty that members of the African American community have internalized, a standard that favours the light yellow Maureen peel and denigrates the black and ugly Pecola Breedlove.” (Bouson 31). The example of Claudia’s resistance to the white vision wave asserts her ability to maintain her self-esteem when surrounded by a protective family.

Morrison encourages African-American women and especially young girls to value their own spiritual beauty and to be positive in setting and communicating their own standards of beauty, to appreciate the uniqueness of each person's beauty, including their own. As a feminist, Morrison argues that African-American women’s emphasis should be on spiritual beauty rather than physical.

Morrison introduces a new definition of beauty tackling the subject from an African American viewpoint. She proposes,

It seems a needless cul-de-sac, an opiate that appears to make life livable if not serene but eventually must separate us from reality. I maintain that black women are already O.K. O.K. with our short necks. O.K. with our calloused hands. O.K. with our tired feet and paper bags.... O.K. O.K. O.K. (Walther 776).

Morrison calls the reader to see behind the masks of charming beauty and gloomy ugliness; to address a fair real talk about things African Americans are responsible for and not on what is determined by nature. Walther asserts Morrison’s new definition of beauty, where African American should be judged by their reality, as hard workers in all conditions. On the contrary, Americans are more consuming since they live more in dreams far from reality. The definition of beauty is determined by the causes and the consequences of its use.

Pecola has internalized racism within herself due to four main forces, her weakness, her vacillating family, White racist society and African American acceptance for white beauty standards. Pecola is a victim of everything that surrounds her. Her madness is the result of forced adapted standards to reach a legal need, to be considered as a human being and live like a human being. In *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison tries to speak for the silenced, to reach parents, teachers, neighbours, friends, classmates and the surrounding environment. Judging a person for something that has no control of is an act of psychological crime as Claudia concludes it,

All of our waste which we dumped on her and which she absorbed. And all of our beauty, which was hers first and which she gave to us. All of us—all who knew her—felt so wholesome after we cleaned ourselves on her. We were so beautiful when we stood astride her ugliness. ... Even her waking dreams we used—to silence our own nightmares... We honed our egos on her, padded our characters with her frailty, and yawned in the fantasy of our strength.... She, however, stepped over into madness, a madness which protected her from us simply because it bored us in the end (Morrison *TBE* 205-206).

Despite all the difficulties, racial differences based on public education presented in school and public culture presented by a large dominion mass media, African Americans endured traumatic experiences that affect their psychological life. From physical trauma presented in *Beloved*, the struggle becomes more psychological. If the psyche is hurt, the physical pain is nothing in comparison though it is the primary source. The psychological sufferings imposed by the white gaze destroys the African American children's selfhood and isolate them from the real world. Children are more vulnerable human beings because they need support from family and society. If the latter is not provided, African American children will invent their own world. In 2006, an African kid could not stay silent in front of racial prejudices and accusations, he wrote a poem where he explains the difference between being white and being coloured. The

poem was originally written in Aboriginal Australian by an unknown writer. The poem was nominated by the United Nations as the best poem of 2006, and it goes as follows:

When I born, I black
When I grow up, I black
When I go in Sun, I black
When I scared, I black
When I sick, I black
And when I die, I still black
And you white fellow
When you born, you pink
When you grow up, you white
When you go in sun, you red
When you cold, you blue
When you scared, you yellow
When you sick, you green
And when you die, you gray
And you calling me colored? (www.nafra-sfo.org).

In *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison projected the Era before Civil Right Movements where African Americans struggle to prove their Identity presented by colour, race, history, and cultural heritage. She presented a moral fight, a struggle of pride in a society full of racial standards based on visual appearance. A worshiped white beauty that is housed inside the family and inside the brains of those whose self-esteem and self-hood are already destroyed. The Breedloves have internalized racism that brought their destruction and the madness of their child, Pecola.

I. 5. Conclusion

Through her novels, Morrison tries to send a message to her community that they have to accept their “selves” as they are and develop their identities according to their heritage. She calls for the love of the self as she declares in an interview with Moyers, “Love, we have to embrace ourselves. Self-regard. James Baldwin once said, “You’ve been already bought and paid for. Your ancestors already gave it up for you. You don’t have to do that anymore. Now you can love yourselves. It’s already possible the solution is the admiration and the love of the self” (Moyers 266-267).

The African American children in these novels are like seeds that had been planted in a hard, rough and dry ground. It is for the people who planted them to take care of them, to soften their rough soil, and to pave the way for good water to refresh them. The American soil is so tough for these children, but they do not have another place to go to. They have to fight and value themselves. Florens in *A Mercy* reached her selfhood after a total self-destruction. She fights herself first to free herself. In *Beloved*, Denver fought the ghosts of slavery present in the haunted ghost and grew up a healthy girl, keeping her African American identity in the Reconstruction Period, reconstructing herself and her past. The twin's escape is itself a way of accomplishing a selfhood that refuses to live under the chains of a horrified haunted past. Unfortunately, Pecola could not make it in *The Bluest Eye* because the traumatic effects were rooted deeply in her psyche, whereas Claudia and Frieda learn how to adapt rather than to win.

To grow up in this hard soil, all these children need the assistance of their parents and alternative caregivers. The mothers provide emotional attachment translated mainly in the form of love. Whereas as parents are generally an embodiment of financial and secure attachment, this role is critical and debatable.

Chapter Two

Motherhood

II. 1. Introduction: Motherhood and mothering:

Teach me to survive my momma
teach me how to hold a new life
momma
help me turn the face of history
to your face. (Jordan 75)

The notion of motherhood has been under investigation since the rise of feminist movement. Mothering, as the essential work of the mother, is given new dimensions and interpretations. Motherhood has been perceived by culture as central to women's identities. Yet, in the postmodern world, mothering is a supplementary act the woman can choose to ignore or accept. Feminism has given loud voices to women whose voices were silenced for a long time.

Motherhood is regarded by Abena Busia as, "the key to the political, spiritual, and even economic foundations of the society- a fact which has implications beyond the individual or even the family, and extends itself to the cohesion and survival of the group." (qtd. Eckard 21). She argues that women are respected more because of their capacity of enlarging the society by providing and nurturing new members. The mother becomes the symbol of hope which fabrics the line between the past, the present, and the future.

Psychoanalysis criticism has not paid too much attention to the mother's voice. Paula Gallant Eckard argues that both Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis have silenced the mother's voice claiming that it was replaced by the "child's perspectives" (25) and the dominion of male. This failure in representation is due to the use of language that represents the woman as, "sexist and politically repressive" (Eckard 25). Toril Moi refers to this misrepresentation as "the weakness of language" (138) which is subjugated to the dominion of the male's voice and body. In order to give the mother her place in writing, women should write their own language through their own bodies which Cixous refers to as "white ink" (94). The latter will

help to shift the stereotypes that are connected to the body of women and open space of creativity.

In Africa, the mother serves as, “the symbol of Africa itself” (Christian qtd. Eckard 21); therefore, mothers were very respected. Women who failed to be mothers were ignored and viewed as incomplete. This latter is presented in the writing of African authors and most notably Ngugi Wa Thiongo’s short story “And The Rain Came Down” (1975). Nyokabi is rejected by the society because she could not have children of her own, she always remembers the song her mother used to sing,

A woman without a child, a child

Must needs feel weary, a-weary.

A woman without a child must lonely be,

So God forgive her!” (Wa Thiong’o 10).

It was a privilege to have children in Africa. The African society is like a mother for all children; the power of trust that was spread inside “the neighbourhood” was as real for any child as Morrison declares, “They felt that you belonged to them. And every woman on the street could raise everybody’s child, and tell you exactly what to do and you felt that connection with those people and they felt it with you.”(Stepo 11)

When they were forcibly transported to America, African American women and mothers become more and more silenced. This silence is intensified because its accordance with the stereotypes associated with mothers whose skin is black under the legitimization of slavery and racism. Throughout the history of the United States, women from African origins were considered as property and their status was reduced to animals. As a result, they were deprived from maternal feelings (Davis 476) which was once a strength and a pride as Harriet Jacobs

expressed it in her narrative: “Women are considered of no value, unless they continually increase their owner’s stock. They are put on a par with animals.” (qtd. Eckard 22). The mother’s belly becomes a machine for the production of labour force.

African American women have undergone traumatic experiences that affected their bodies and psyches. This trauma has been passed on to the children and passed over from a generation to another through a form of haunt, physical and psychological. These traumas are not covered through politics and literature; they were violently silenced from the realm of the American life. Morrison takes the initiation to speak out for those silenced mothers and provide literary healing for their contaminated wounds.

African American mother-work has been divided by O’Reilly into four tasks, preservation, nurturance, cultural bearing, and healing. She suggests that,

Mothers, by way of these four tasks, seek to empower their children by keeping them alive in a world often hostile to their well-being (preservation), by loving them so that they may develop a loved sense of self (nurturance), by teaching children the values and traditions of black culture—in particular the ancient proprieties and funk—so that they may acquire a strong selfdefined identity as a black person (cultural bearing), and finally by mending those adults who never received such mothering as children (healing). (O’Reilly *Toni* 171).

These four tasks are essential to mothering, but because of slavery and racism, it was hard for African American Mothers to fulfil them. The latter affected the African American children and distressed their journey towards healthy selfhood.

Children perceive motherwork as an act of love; therefore, they learn and develop their own concepts about love through their caregivers during infancy. The amount of love perceived by the child influences his/her relationship with the mother and the world around. Lee (1973)

proposed six major styles or attitudinal orientations towards love, “The love styles include Eros (Passionate Love), Ludus (game-playing love), Storge (friendship love), Pragma (Practical love), Mania (Possessive, dependent love), and Agape (altruistic love)” (qtd. Inman-Amos 457). Love in Morrison’s novels explains and justifies maternal discourse in a more profound way as an act of resistance, power, and identity.

Through this chapter, we are going to see how mothering empowers the child and shapes his/her definition of the self in Toni Morrison’s novels. This relationship between the mother and the child is overlapped with the magic whispers of love that is presented differently throughout the three novels.

In *A Mercy*, the slave mother abandons the child, Florens, as an act of love and protection, which is referred to as a fatal love that haunts the girl all her life. In this part, a new kind of mothering is presented through Lina’s adoption to Florens who is not her daughter. The latter represents the society’s capacity to nurture abandoned members. At last, we will see how writing releases the haunted psychological trauma especially for slaves when they write the unspeakable.

Thick love is presented in *Beloved*, in which the mother’s great love gives her the right to slaughter her child to protect her from returning to the hellish life of slavery. This act terrifies the rest of children and shapes their journey to appropriate self-definition. *Beloved* highlights the role of the grandmother in nurturing her grandchildren.

The Bluest Eye posits an abandoned love in which the mother unintentionally abandons her children under the failure to cope with the perfect image of the white mother. The failure of integration and the child’s desperate act of satisfying the white gaze leads her to insanity. The novel also highlights the role of Blues in connecting between the child and the mother and reserves the cultural heritage of African American tradition.

II. 2. Fatal Love in *A Mercy*

Toni Morrison tackles the theme of love in a very deep way. *A Mercy* presents love that has been growing up and cut as soon as it becomes visible. The characters are overwhelmed by love from the beginning of their lives, but at a point that love becomes a delusion, a cause that leads to unwanted results. The principle of cause and consequence is dismissed in *A Mercy*, to love someone will not lead to that someone loving you. The principle of cause and effect is dismissed under a powerful law called slavery, legitimized after the bill of “white superiority over black”. The characters were searching for love that was taken from them but never given back. It has gone with the wind of slavery, and the wind of being a master and having servants. Morrison presents a haunted love shared between mothers and daughters representing the immortal love.

Love is always accompanied with pain, it can be healed because the pain of love is sweet and it is bearable. However, love in Morrison’s fiction is horrific, it is the unwanted, unnamed and unreachable feeling that tortures the characters physically and psychologically as Terry Otten explained, “The horrific love in Morrison's novels is multifaceted—psychological, social and historical. It is for the most part the manifestation of a culture corrupted in its racial past and in its present.” (Otten 652) Love is a metaphor understood by lovers only.

Love is the healer of love. It is the cause of suffering and the cause of healing. For lovers, mothers, masters and slaves, love is fatal. All the characters run to search for a lost love that could only be found in the other. The individuals, the family and the society are gathered by magical whispers of love and destructed by its absence.

The love of the mother is sacred, pure and free from boundaries. Morrison expressed that she never felt the meaning of life, of being loved and free until she got children and she reflects it in *A Mercy* and in all her novels. The notion of motherhood is the central theme in

the book, and the notion of motherhood's love is even greater. The feelings of the mothers and their sacrifices are denied, ignored, sometimes unknown, and never understood. The face of love shared between mother and daughter is presented in the relationship of Florens and her mother Minha Mae, Florens and Lina, Rebecka and her daughter and Sorrow and her daughter. Morrison used female characters to reveal the power of love in wilderness. Males are less emotional in comparison to females.

II. 2.1. Minha Mae's Love

Florens' mother gave up her daughter to Jacob Vaark to fulfil Senhor D'Ortega's debts and became his slave. Unlike the mother in *Beloved* who killed her daughter to protect her from being a slave, Minha Mae begs Jacob to take her daughter to be his own slave. The scene of giving up a daughter of eight to unknown person stacked in the mind of the daughter, "take the girl, she says, my daughter, she says. Me. Me" (Morrison *A Mercy* 08). Because the little baby boy is still feeding through her breast, the mother gives the girl to Jacob. Florence's image of rejection is a constant reminder, an obsession, a mania that hunts her childhood and threatens her coming adulthood. It influences her self-image and prevents her from developing appropriate reactions towards the surrounding people and society.

Burns considers the act of the mother as a metaphorical form of death. The death of all emotional attachments that are sacred for the loving mother. The astonishment and the horror of the word "take the girl" (...) plays the role of the poison that kills the little girl gradually. The trauma of the scene pushed Florens to repeat the pronoun me, as a way of asking if it is true. She couldn't control her consciousness and emotional outrages under this traumatic abandonment.

This moment was repeating itself over and over, all she wanted is to disappear behind the only person she trusts and belongs to. In D'Ortega's farm, the only caregiver Florens knows is her mother. This dis-attachment makes the little girl lose her only source of security and belonging; now she belongs to no one and will be controlled by everyone. Cathy Caruth interpreted this loss psychologically as a "wound of the mind", the first "breach in the mind's experience of time, self, and the world" (04). Florens lost all forms of belonging starting from herself to the world around including her mother and her little brother.

The girl never understands the sacrifice the mother has done. She tries to forget a love given to her along the first eight years of her childhood as she explains, "the first time it is me peering around my mother's dress hoping for her hand that is only for her little boy." (Morrison *A Mercy* 160). The cause of the offer is never spoken out loud. Each one of them reads it the way she projects the future, has accepted it within her own realities and internalized it within her conscious and walks with it for the rest of her live.

For Florens, trauma is considered a "breach in time" where everything stops at that moment where she was killed. All she wants is to forget it in order to live. Caruth explains that,

Focusing on survival, rather than on trauma, puts the death back to the traumatic, experience, because survival suggests that there has been death, and the survivor there for has had a death encounter, and the death encounter is central to his or her psychological experience. (128)

In order to survive, Florens has to forget the trauma of psychological death she has encountered. Therefore, she always projects her mother and her little brother as invisible. She is brainwashed, they do not exist in her subconscious as happy memories. They are the horror, so her subconscious puts them in the road of a deleting list and thus kills gradually any kind of affection and love she had had for them.

Florens could not justify that great love that was destroyed by the beloved and no one was there to explain. On the contrary, she comes to believe, from her painful experience, that love could never brighten her life since she is hurt by the ones she loves and attached to most. The mother's love she was deprived from makes her weak and vulnerable to the cruelty of life.

Denver in *Beloved* and Florens in *A Mercy* share to a certain extent the same haunting dream. In his book *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud asserts that,

The unconscious will express its suppressed wishes and desires. Even though the conscious mind has repressed these desires and has forced them into the unconscious, such wishes may be too hard for the conscious psyche to handle without producing feelings of self-hatred or rage. The unconscious then redirects and reshape these concealed wishes into acceptable social activities, presenting them in the form of images or symbols in our dreams/ or our writing. (Bressler 129)

Florens expressed her wishes and desires in dreams as well as in writing. She always dreams “a dream that dreams back at me... A Minha Mae leans the door holding her little boy's hand, my shoes in her pocket. As always, she is trying to tell me something. I tell her to go.” (Morrison *A Mercy* 161-162). The nightmares continue to haunt Florens; she declares that any other dreams are better than the ones about her mother no matter how horrific they are. The unfinished trauma of the past haunts her no matter how hard she wanted to forget as she narrates, in her dream, “in those dreams she is always wanting to tell me something. Is stretching her eyes. Is working her mouth. I look away from her”. (Morrison *A Mercy* 119).

The dream is but a wish fulfilment in spite of all the prejudices she is holding against her mother. Florens could see her mother's mouth articulating but not actually speaking. She is also stretching her eyes in a way to push her daughter to read them rather than turn away, eyes

can say more than words. Florens is not capable of reading the eyes as well as reading the lips. Dori Laub explains that those who live with haunted memories of the past are actually living with “an event that could not and did not proceed through to its completion, has no ending, attains no closure, and therefore, as far as its survivors are concerned, continues into the present and is current in every aspect” (69). The endless questions of the traumatic event haunts Florens’ present in a form of dreams, questions that are planted in her subconscious are revealed in an aspect of dreams and nightmares. Though Florens is striving to know the reasons behind her abandonment, her crushed traumatized soul could not agree. She directs her hatred towards her brother whom she never calls brother. She projects them as dead or on the process of dying.

The image of her mother holding her baby’s hand and not hers projects it whenever she encounters a mother with her son as Morrison explains, “nursing greedy babies scares me. I know how their eyes go when they choose. How they raise them to look at me hard, saying something to me, but holding the little boy’s hand.” (Morrison *A Mercy* 9). The constant fear of choosing him in the first place terrorized her. The strong mother’s attachment toward the baby troubles Florens whenever she meets other mothers with their babies. Caruth explains that horrific flashback as “not simply an overwhelming experience that has been obstructed by a later repression or amnesia, but an event that is itself constituted, in part, by its lack on integration into consciousness” (“recapturing the past” 152). Florens tries to suppress her memories, yet those flashbacks bring them to her conscious; therefore, the conflict between the two minds results in a lack of integration and fear for the present time.

Indeed the mother loved Florens and because she loved her, she gave her a life that her daughter wanted through her ongoing child to girl manners that could not be fulfilled if she stayed with her mother. The desire to grow up to an adult girl frightens the mother who could not provide a normal life for her daughter. Females are considered as property in Senhor’s farm.

She saw in Vaark little of humanity that was rare in a period where everyone looked for a source to produce money, and black slaves were the best.

A slave has no right to love, to be loved, to have a stable family or simply to live normally. The daughter of the slave is also a slave who would provide other slaves. The mother's affection for her kids was beyond imagination. By having them, she was free; she could give them all the love she has given up. The fact of owning somebody, being yours is the extreme happiness for a slave. Taking them from her to be slaves was a burden because they will experience the same unbearable things she had experienced before. The latter can justify to a certain extent the actions of the mother who killed her daughter and the mother who gave up her daughter for protection. To assert this notion, Morrison did not give a chance to the mother to justify her deeds until the end, and it was too late for Florens. She says, "There is no protection. To be female in this place is to be an open wound that cannot heal. Even if scars form, the festering is ever below." (Morrison *A Mercy* 191). The mother saw in Vaark a chance, the only chance to be, *MUST* be taken because he was different. He is the one who cannot protect but provide a living, a normal living for a black child not for slave child. She said, "I knelt before him. Hoping for miracle. He said yes. It was not a miracle. Bestowed by God. It was A Mercy. Offered by human... Oh Florens. My love. Hear a tua mae." (Morrison *A Mercy* 196). After receiving lot of love disappointments, Florens understood her mother, not fully but she guessed, "I will keep one sadness. That all this time I cannot know what my mother is telling me. Nor can she know what I am wanting to tell her. Mae, you can have pleasure now because the soles of my feet are hard as cypress" (Morrison *A Mercy* 189).

Sorrow, an isolated girl sought love in a twin inside her mind. The twin played the role of a loving mother who was always there, stood next to her and never abandoned her. The desire of having a mother pushed her to create an ideal mother inside her mind. Morrison puts the voice of the twin in the brain, the brain ruled and saved the fantastic mother for her. Sorrow's love to

her daughter was different. She holds to her because she was her world. She was her freedom and refuge. When the child came the twin disappeared, she is no more insane. She fought for her and plotted to run with her if any threat was ahead. She changed her name from Sorrow to Complete, in order to forget all the sorrow of her life and be a complete mother with a lovely daughter. Having a child completes the mother and frees her mentally and physically.

Rebekka was abandoned and sold-like by her parents and sent to unknown land at a very young age. She was eager to be a mother so she can contain her own children, but she was deprived from having them. She became surrounded by sadness, disappointments and self-destruction, she became useless. She threw her love on her husband, her land and her estate. She could not be free without a child.

II. 2.2. Lina, the Mother Nature

It is said that not only who delivers a baby is a mother, but also the one who raises up and educates is a mother. Lina was the new mother for Florens as Sorrow said, “The girl belonged to Lina. They slept together, bathed together, ate together. Lina made clothes for her and tiny shoes from rabbit skin.” (Morrison *A Mercy* 146-147). Florens found another welcoming, loving and a protecting mother. Lina adopted Florens and made her hers. Florens healed the wounds of Lina and flowered her world. Lina protected her from everything and especially from the free black man “The Blacksmith”. When Florens loved him, Lina’s world was on the way to destruction. She is no more able to protect her from the evil side of a free black man. Morrison used animal imagery to reflect the deep affection between Lina and Florens. The separation between them was as difficult as death. She remains near and far at the same time and that makes her suffer. She outlines Florens’ new life and tries to alleviate her trauma. As a native, she has inherited the oral tradition of storytelling from her people. Lina felt Florens’ traumatized soul because she has lived the same forced abundance; the new comers

burnt all her tribe's members including her parents alive. Again, Morrison portrays the real image of native Indians who suffered at the hands of western explorers and settlers.

Lina suffered from solitude; as a result, she deepens her relation with nature and becomes, "one more thing that moved in the natural world. She cowed with birds, chatted with plants, spoke with squirrels, sang to the cow and opened her mouth to the rain" (Morrison *A Mercy* 57). With no one to teach her how to live, Lina has learnt from nature the avenue to herself which Morrison calls "self-invention (which) was almost perfected. Soon it was irresistible" (Morrison *A Mercy* 59). Nature becomes her family and her greatest teacher. Emerson highlights the role of nature by saying, "He shall see, that nature is the opposite of the soul, answering to it part for part. One is seal, and one is print. Its beauty is the beauty of his own mind. Its laws are the laws of his own mind a nature then becomes to him the measure of his attainments. So much of nature as he is ignorant of, so much of his own does he not yet possess" (Emerson 52-53). Lina understands the laws and the beauty of nature; therefore, she understands herself better. Florens is ignorant of nature because she is ignorant of herself.

To pass her knowledge, Lina promises to become "mother nature" for everyone she cherished. She becomes very devoted in love and protection. Florens becomes the best copy of her previous miserable life. She tells Florens stories, especially, animal stories, to portray her life in a funny way that can heal her wounds and provide answers to her hidden questions. These kind of stories tells reality through animals. Powerful lessons and hidden messages are confined inside the text, the most famous books dealing with the same issue is *Animal Farm* by George Orwell and *Kalilah and Dimnah* translated by Ibn-Al-Muqafaa. Lina is delighted to pass her stories to Florens who is eager to listen.

Through Lina's wisdom, Florens becomes aware of the reasons behind her mother abandonment because of what she calls, "the evil thoughts of man" (Morrison *A Mercy* 72). She tells her the story of an eagle mother who is "fierce protecting her borning young". (73) Until

a traveller passing by sends a thunder to its inhabitants declaring his property for this world, in a state of defence, the eagle's sharp talons attack the traveller (Morrison *A Mercy* 73). The latter act symbolizes the selfishness of a man trying to possess everything rather than living in harmony with nature; he is driven by a sense of dominion. The mother's act of defence is natural because no one can accept the dominion of others upon himself. The traveller hits the wing of the eagle and frustrates her act of defence. The mother eagle continues to scream and fall, "carried away by wind instead of wing [she is] still falling" (Morrison *A Mercy* 73). The state of the mother indicates a deeper meaning, the mother does not control herself anymore, and she is injured and not dead. She is carried by the wind of the New World where the new settlers claimed the land ignoring its inhabitants "she is still falling", her self-esteem and existence are falling.

Florens becomes eager to know more about the eggs, the children, Lina answers, "they hatch alone", says Lina. "Do they live?" Florens' whispering is urgent is urgent "we have" says Lina".(Morrison *A Mercy* 73). The children are forcibly left alone, making their own way in the natural world, never understanding the sacrifice of their mother. Lina tries to explain to Florens the sacrifice of their mothers to make her reconcile with her own haunting dreams.

The story allows Florens to fill the gaps missed in her life that are preventing her from reading herself. Through folklore⁸, Lina reconnects Florens with her own abandoned culture

⁸ "Folklore is a general term for the verbal, spiritual, and material aspect of any culture that are transmitted orally, by observation, or by imitation". (Encarta). Shuman regards folk narrative as, "cultural artefacts that have been extracted from performances. The production of texts always involves processes of decontextualisation in which texts are removed from one cultural context and recon textualized in another- as well as [of] entextualization- in which a selection of communication is extracted and identified as a unit of meaning" (178)

which is necessary in grounding her selfhood as Paquet explains, “reconnection with folk culture is the key to psychological and spiritual reconstruction in a hostile and culturally alienating environment” (499). Folk culture indeed helped Lina, but could not fully reconcile her trauma because she is “crippled with worship” (Morrison *A Mercy* 71) of the blacksmith.

Lina tries to break the wall between Florens and her true self through folktale, but she could not. As a result, she moved directly to direct method, confronting her by saying, “you are one leaf in his tree” (Morrison *A Mercy* 71). Lina wants to protect her daughter from the blacksmith, but it was too late to save her, and she becomes “ugly” in keeping Florens away “from the patient and the healer” (Morrison *A Mercy* 150). Florens wakes up and understands Lina only when the blacksmith rejects her. In addition to Lina's tales, her two experiences of rejection, Florens finds her true self and blows out her trauma in a written form.

I. 2.3. Writing the Unspeakable

Florens run to writing in order to say what has not been received by the text. She chooses an abundant, useless home of Jacob Vaark to speak her mind and her freely asserting the freedom and the sweetness of writing when someone is given a space or as Virginia Woolf expressed it, ‘A Room Of One’s Own’ to be free to write. In that house that symbolizes the fall of Adam, Florens finds herself.

Babb argues that “The image of (Florens) expansive words confined reflects the necessity for augmented origins stories. Narrative space must be made for those voices that once talked to and for themselves but have been muted by the historical record” (159). Through her writing, Florens codifies her personal and historical narrative. Florens uses the house only in darkness and in secret, which also symbolizes the marginalized culture of first African slaves whose voices are heard only in darkness as Whitehead announces it, “The spectre of the black presence has yet to be fully integrated into the narrative of white American culture” (157).

Florens does not want to be silent and prefers to speak loudly through her writing about her own fulfilment of an authentic self-hood, and her transformation from an object to a subject, from a victim to a survivor. She achieves what Burns refers to as “psychic wholeness” (41). In which the Master's room becomes, “A site of agency, a creative space, a space of healing, a space of empowerment, a space of refuge, of rebirth, a wom-like enclave, a space of self-expression and self-affirmation” (Burns 41, 42). Florens tries to fill the dark place in the dark to resolve from the darkness of her life.

Florens repeatedly expresses her incapacity of crying, even with all her trauma and her taught life. Her incapacity to tear up is stemming from her misunderstanding of herself, or rather literate self. She has cried through her writing but never shedstears. She calls her writing “letter of talk”, where she can write the unspeakable. Florens wants her reader to understand her story rather than crying or feel pity for her as Robert frost explains, “No tears in the writer, no tears in the reader” (Encarta).

Florens has arisen from the ashes of her writings like the phoenix bird⁹. She burns the house she has been writing in and burns with it all her sufferings and traumas. The ashes of the writing will visit the world around and retell her story to the world not just to the people she wrote to. She knows that her words will haunt themselves if they stay in the dark room of Vaark’s house, she expresses, “perhaps these words need the air that is out in the world. Need to fly up then fall, fall like ash over acres of primrose and mallow. Over a turquoise lake, beyond the eternal hemlocks, through clouds cut by rain bow and flavor the soil of the earth”. (Morrison

⁹ “A fabulous bird associated with the worship of the sun as its end approached, the phoenix fashioned a nest of aromatic boughs and spices, set it on fire, and was consumed in the flames. From the pyre miraculously sprang a new phoenix. (Encyclopedia)” the phoenix consumed itself by fire every 500 years, and a new, young phoenix sprang from its ashes (Encarta).

A Mercy 188). She has freed herself from herself and from the world around, she becomes “wilderness” (189). She rises from the ashes, but never neglected her heritage, her suffering and her trauma and more precisely her past.

Florens' mother also used writing to express her abandoned maternal feelings. She addresses her daughter to ask for forgiveness and answers her daughter's questions that haunted her all her life. Florens reconciles with her mother and tells her “Mae, you can have pleasure now because the soles of my feet bare hard as cypress”. (Morrison *A Mercy* 189).

The unspoken words and explanation of both Florens and her mother haunt the text. The mother sends a letter to her daughter that projects the causes of her choice and asks for forgiveness. Yet, the daughter addresses her writing to her haunted lover, the blacksmith. Both writings remain packed in a bottle and thrown in the sea of time to be opened by Morrison and represented in a book called *A Mercy*. Morrison provides the text with haunted voices that remain flying and searching for their audiences who are us, the contemporary readers as Bellamy explains, “Morrison designs her novels to offer her readers a similar experience by providing them space to enter the text, allowing their personal memory and interior life to deepen and inform their reading” (16). Morrison makes us feel, hear and see beyond time and place.

II. 3. “Thick Love” in Beloved

“Don’t love nothing save it... don’t love anything, it’ll hurt” (Moyers 268-269)

Slavery deprived African Americans from living a normal life. It is a traumatic life to live with the idea that one belongs to another human being, who considers himself superior.

White Americans place themselves as 'deity' for black Africans controlling their faith in every aspect of life,

Marriage was discouraged, impossible, or illegal; in which birthing children was required, but "having" them, being responsible for them-begin other words, their parent-was as out of question as freedom. Assertions of parenthood under conditions peculiar to the logic of institutional enslavement were criminal (Morrison *Beloved* XVII).

Morrison ventures to retell a history of horror and brutality. Slaves are forced to produce slaves as they produce tobacco and cotton, just for beneficial purposes.

Mothers try to protect their children by imposing and spreading a great power of love that cannot be understood by children. Denver, beloved and Florens suffer from their mothers' thick love. The analysis of children's different reactions to their mothers will explain their disability to understand the function of the world; therefore, seeking refuge in other family members or society.

Thick love is the result of "free mothers" who got their freedom from their children: as a result, they would do anything to protect their freedom. The system of slavery has deprived mothers from their children and the thick love they provide to them played a great role in destroying their ability in developing a self-hood. Children have to live with or run away from a mother who lied, ignored, gave up and even killed her own child under the name of love and protection. Children are not able to express their wants and needs to the mother because they are afraid from the thick love that many actions would be justified wrongly under its definition. Mothers think they are doing their best for the sake of their children, but in reality, they are banding their children's ability and selfhood to function in the world.

Morrison excels in dealing with different kinds of love stretching it inside and outside a distorted world. In *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison presents a fatal love that haunts both the mother and her daughter. In a loving act, Minha Mae gives her daughter in exchange of financial debts to Jacob Vaark, an Anglo-Dutch trader to become his slave. Love in *The Bluest Eye* is not expressed directly since neither the mother nor the daughter could sit together and explain it; yet the truth is left between the wings of hopes.

In *Beloved*, Morrison presents another form of love, which she calls “thick love”, (164), a love that has no boundaries, a very powerful love that allows the lover to kill for the sake of saving the loved one’s. The novel centres on a slave mother and her difficult choices that were influenced by the brutality and horror of slavery during the nineteenth century Reconstruction Period and specifically before and after the Civil War.

Unlike Minha Mae, Sethe finds herself obliged to kill her daughter to save her from slavery. In order to understand the mutual relationship between Sethe and her two daughters, her process of being a mother under slavery must be highlighted. Mothers do not know how to be mothers until they have children of their own.

When Sethe was breast-feeding her baby and pregnant with the other, the white master feed his children with Sethe’s breast milk reserved for her daughter. The white master encourages his two children to abuse the mother and takes her milk in front of him. Sethe recounts her story, “then they know what it’s like to send your children off when your breasts are full...those boys came in there and took my milk... schoolteacher made one open up my back, and when it closed it made a tree. It grows there still.” (Morrison *Beloved* 19-20) The children did not take the milk only, but with the support of the schoolteacher abused the mother physically because she told their mothers of their horrible deeds. The act of cutting her back flesh is a way of crushing her dignity and forcing her to surrender. Slaveholders understand that constant physical torture will damage the psyche and tame the victim.

Slave codes allowed the enslavers to burn, kill, beat, execute and wipe as Douglass said, “Every body in the South, wants the privilege of wiping somebody else” (Brogan 280). The Africans did not accept slavery, but they were forced to live under its chains for generations. Slavery for blacks was defined by Brogan as, “a regime of sorrow, of degradation, of unremitting toil, dreadful personal insecurity and perpetual frustration” (281).

The master’s methods are shown to have devastating effects. For example, it is only when Sethe overhears school- teacher teaching the nephews-and she is the subject of the lesson that she fully comprehends her status as a slave. Schoolteacher’s educational method adopts the clarity of Manichean oppositions and scientific discourse (Krumholz 399). Slave mothers are obliged to raise their children by themselves without relying on fathers, because most of the time, the father is unknown or thrown away in large plantation working most of the time.

The slave mother becomes free when she has children. She is mentally freed, because at least she has someone of her own, a child that she can determine what is good and what is bad for him. Sethe would sacrifice everything to provide a smooth life better than the one she has experienced. Sethe’s love is greater than social and judicial restraints; it was deep, too deep to the point where she can sacrifice her own daughter rather than permitting her to live a similar life she has barely endured. Sethe takes all the love of the world and closes it with a locker saving it only for her children. She explains her love by saying, “Too thick, My love was too thick. What he know about it? Who in the world is he willing to die for? ... I have felt what it felt like nobody walking or stretched out is going to make you feel it too. Not you, not none of mine, and when I tell you you mine, I also mean I’m your. I wouldn’t draw breath without my children” (Morrison *Beloved* 239). Sethe goes with her love beyond boundaries, physical and moral.

Margaret Garner's justifies her infanticide by saying, "It was my own. Given me of God, to do the best a mother could in its behalf. I have done the best I could! I would have done more and better for the rest! I knew it was better for them to go home to God than go back to slavery" (May 35). She believes that her actions are guided by spiritual inspiration in rebellion with slavery, "To her it was a religion of slavery, More cruel than death" (35).

Lucy Buzacott compares Sethe's infanticide with Faulkner Novel *Requiem for a Nun*. She focuses on the fact that the 'black mother' is driven by "Black maternal grief, power, and love" (86); as a result, both Sethe and Nancy kill their beloved to protect them. Yet, Nancy in Faulkner's novel kills the white child whom she was nurturing to protect her from her biological mother. Buzacott claims that the image of the mammy is stereotyped in the south as the obedient happy servant who is made to serve but not feel. Mother love is reserved for whites only.

Time has no meaning in *Beloved*, the characters are caught between the traumatic past and their haunted memories in the present. The slave mother is the one who lost her being when she lost her children. The child for a slave mother is a proof of her existence but her killing is the destruction of her own life. As a result, Sethe does not care about time, she does not plan because her life has stopped at the moment she cut the throat of her daughter to save her. Sethe is "suspended between the nastiness of life and the meanness of the dead." (Morrison *Beloved* 3). She is suspended between two worlds, the living and the dead hoping to find what she has lost. The return of Beloved from her deadly world represents the never forgotten memories of mothers and daughters being cast from the realm of history and the world. As if beloved comes not only to haunt her loving murderer but also to search for truths that have been enveloped by the horrific history of slavery and incarnation.

Sethe's thick love permits her to kill her daughter whom she named Beloved. Sethe's life turned to tragedy and despair. However, she is convinced that he did what has to be done because her daughter's return to slavery would kill both the mother and the daughter. She

explains, “How if I hadn't killed her she would have died and that is something I could not bear to happen to her.” (Morrison *Beloved* 236). Through killing the daughter, Sethe rebels against the laws imposed by slavery. Lois Tyson argues that Sethe, “is coming to an awareness of her own psychological and political oppression and becoming capable of creating a new life and new choices for herself usually through a harsh experience of initiation but makes her ready for the change” (394). Her infanticide can be read as an act of rebellion against the horrors of Schoolteacher in specific and slavery in general.

Morrison does not judge or question the act of killing the daughter, but instead she leaves the judgement for the daughter herself. In an interview with Bill Moyers, Morrison explains that the act of killing is “the right thing to do, but she does not have the right to do it.” (Moyers 255). Sethe’s love exceeds motherly emotions since she sets herself as a deity controlling her daughter’s destiny.

Sethe’s childhood is overwhelmed with death. When she was nine years old, she saw a group of slaves being hanged and burned and among them was her mother whom she tried to kill when she was a child to protect her from the terror of slavery. In a way or another, history repeats itself; the child becomes a mother and commits the same act of protection.

The ghost of the past haunts the unspeakable memories of murder, pain, and guilt. *Beloved* is the physical reality that embodies what Krumholz calls,

The pain and the cure. As an embodiment of the repressed past, she acts as an unconscious imp, stealing away the volition of the characters, and as a psychoanalytic urge, she pries open suppressed memories and emotions. In a sense she is like an analyst, the object of transference and cathexis that draws out the past, while at the same time she is that past” (Krumholz 400).

When her baby girl comes back to her in the form of a ghost, Sethe tries to provide her with all the love she was deprived from. Holloway explains that, “Beloved’s existence is liminal. Between worlds, being neither “in,” nor “of” a past or a present, she is a confrontation of a killing history and a disabling present” (Holloway 51). Sethe recalls her desires as a child in order to determine her child’s needs. Chodorow explains that this process of recalling the emotions of childhood to reinforce the role of motherhood gives double identification to the mother (Chodorow204). Through this process, she can satisfy both her unfulfilled desires through providing them to her daughter, Beloved.

The repetition of the word “My” by all characters indicates the absence of possession. Due to the system of slavery, slaves could not own anything and anyone including themselves. Beloved haunts Sethe and claims for her ownership. Sethe does not reject her but rather fragmented herself to please her daughter. Ali refers to this process as psychological urge for tending to merge into the other” (1422). Beloved’s needs are like acceptable willing punishment that could release Sethe from a deep pain. She gives herself to her daughter by claiming her again as she happily expresses, “Beloved you are my sister. You are my daughter. You are my face. You are me I have found you again; you have come back to me. You are my beloved you are mine” (Morrison *Beloved* 216).

Beloved is the powerful corporeal ghost who creates matrilineal connection between Africa and America, Beloved stands for every African woman whose story will never be told. She is the haunting symbol of the many Beloveds—generations of mothers and daughters – haunted down and stolen from Africa; as such, she is unlike mortals, invulnerable to barriers of time, space and place. Among other things, Beloved is the embodiment of the white folk’s jungle, the psychological effects of slavery. Beloved thus represents not the single child but the pain and anguish of sixty million blacks who have been enslaved, tortured and perished (Khatana 106).

Sethe kills her daughter in front of her children who are waiting their turn. Killing their sister in front of them destroyed the motherly connection with their mother. What is understood as strong love for the mother seems to be a criminal act in the name of love for the children. The children live traumatic experiences that haunt them for the rest of their lives. They could not sleep like others because the intimate destroying hand will cut their throats. The mother could not help them to develop a solid selfhood, she rather slaughters their willingness to grow up and fight.

The older sons, Howard and Buglar, chooses to make plans and prepare for the war against their mother. They run away to fantasy following stories of ghost and witches to explain what could not be explained. In the world they know, mothers do not slaughter a kid in front of her other kids. They run away to magic where they can find the power to protect themselves. Yet, their magical world sends them Beloved, their own sister in a form of a ghost. Both turned thirteen, Buglar and Howard could decipher the signs of a growing ghost but could not guess who is the hunted as Morrison explains,

As soon as merely looking in a mirror shattered it (that was the signal for Buglar); as soon as two tiny hand prints appeared in the cake (that was it for Howard). Neither boy waited to see more; another kettleful of chickpeas smoking in a heap on the floor; soda crackers crumbled and strewn in a line next to the door sill (*Beloved* 03)

Believing herself a wholly protector, Sethe pushed her children out of the house. The first escape deprived them from their father, and the second protects them from their mother. They are left alone at the age of thirteen in a world where their blackness would slaughter and hang them daily.

Next in the line is Denver who for gender restraints could not join her brothers. She is the most damaged among her brothers. The ghost of her sister could not scare her as much as she is scared from her mother. She believes that the ghost will not harm her because, “I swallowed her blood right along with my mother’s milk.” (Morrison *Beloved* 242). *Beloved* renews the horrific deadly feelings in her sister Denver. The fear from the one who could not give anything but deadly love.

The notion of love as a way of protection is perceived from Denver as a weapon. She understands that love is the spell that kills her sister; as a result, she throws this spell upon herself and her mother. She loves her mother not because she is her mother, but because that love may prevent the repetition of the story as she explains, “I spent all my outside self loving Ma’am so she wouldn’t kill me.” (Morrison *Beloved* 245). It is a love generated from fear; as a result, she wishes the presence of a protective father.

Denver nights are bothered by two dreams, “exploding, and being swallowed.” (Morrison *Beloved* 157). Regarding Freud’s interpretation, the slaughtering scene she imagines every night overwhelms Denver. Her conscious psyche could not bear that pain because she is in a constant interaction with her sweet murder. She hides her love and her worries so her mother will not be able to know; as a result, her subconscious mind represents her hidden fears in the form of dreams.

The most depressing part for Denver is not the act of the slaughtering itself, but the process of waiting for it. This process speeds up with the presence of the ghost. Denver does not want to protect herself only, but also her sister. The ghostly presence of her daughter pulls out new power in Denver and strengthens her soul.

Denver favours stories about her birth during her mother’s escape from slavery and she was named after a white lady who helped her mother in the delivery day. She was born in the

river that divided between freedom and slavery. When Sethe slaughtered Beloved, Denver was rescued, but she went to jail with her mother. Denver lives a life of terror, both inside the prison and outside in 124 Bluestone. Schapiro explains that Denver is “Excluded from the Beloved-Sethe dyad, Denver is forced into the role of the outside other and assuming that role is her salvation” (206). Sethe and Beloved exclude Denver from their conversation because she does not belong to their past. She cannot fully understand the horror they both lived.

Denver comes to understand that she is the only one who can save her mother from the ghost of the sister. Through starting work with the Baldwin, Denver tries to confront Sethe with her past the day the schoolteacher came to take Beloved. When the mother notices that a white man is coming to take Denver, the memories flued again, but this time directed towards the man not the daughter. Despite her exclusion from her mother’s past, Denver succeeds in destroying the memory of the past for a better future.

Sethe and Baby Suggs are considered as Great mothers where they can give love and protection for children inside their African community as Rigney explains,

The Great Mother, the giver of both life and wisdom, who is *nommo*, the creative potential and the sacred aspect of nature itself. But only in freedom can Sethe celebrate her love for her children, her sense of herself as Greater Mother: ‘It felt good. Good and right. I was big... and deep and wide and when I stretched out my arms all my children could get in between. (qtd. Krumholz 397).

Sethe’s great love can be extended to other hungers for love. The two women in *Beloved* become Big Mothers due to the system of slavery that excluded fathers from the scene.

II. 4. Mrs. Mum in *The Bluest Eye*

Morrison presents the extreme negative in contrast to the extreme opposite. In both cases, the children living between the positive and the negative electric flow are the only survivors. In comparison to the primer world of “Dick and Jane”. Morrison constructed an opposite world, a destructed one where the racialized society plays a great role in cutting ties between family members.

The title represents a great ambiguity Mrs and Mum. The two terms combined together refer to the distance between the mother and her children. Mrs is an acronym for respect to people who are not in close relationship to the child. The word Mum raises the feeling of intimacy between the child and the mother. When a mother delivers a baby for the first time, she would wait desperately for her child to pronounce the first word “Mother”. The feeling of being a mum is so sweet and real, but combining Mrs with mum will affirm the distance between the two, especially from the child’s side.

The Bluest Eye’s society spots the light upon three mothers living in different situations. The three mothers are divided according to Morrison’s division of the prologue. Mrs. Geraldine, a coloured mother who sets herself aside with the Nobel whites with her son, presents the world of Dick and Jane, the perfect one. The second is the fighting world of Mrs. MacTeer and her two daughters Claudia and Frieda. The last, the most destructed world of Mrs. Breedlove and her kids Sammy and Pecola. The spot light will highlight on the relationship between those children and their mothers in addition to Pecola as being a teen mother for her father child. How these mothers help in the development or the destruction of their children’s selfhood in *The Bluest Eye*.

II. 4.1. Geraldine, the Copy

Geraldine represents the coloured mother who adapts white standards of life. She adjusts her life to the whites'; she is the kind of woman who has learnt at school how to behave properly, walk steadily, act consciously, look gorgeously, smell delight and act whitely, as Morrison explains, "They go to Land-grant colleges, normal schools, and learn how to do the white man's work with refinement... in short, how to get rid of the funkiness. The dreadful funkiness of passion, the funkiness of nature, the funkiness of the wide range of human emotions" (Morrison *TBE* 83).

These coloured women learn how to behave in order to live like whites. These schools teach them how to change their faces, not to wear masks, but rather to change it, get rid of the first basic signs that might direct anyone to call them coloured or blacks. They simply become nearly white. They become a perfect copy of white women. Harris explains that Geraldine's "Middle-classness makes her untouchable, closeted, disdainful of the very roots she has used to grow her new status. The individual components of the image are subsumed under the total representation, the "I am better than you because I have it made"" (Harris 69).

Geraldine's relationship with her husband and kid is more physical than emotional. Her education did not allow her to develop any affection to human race; instead, her emotional space is reserved for her black-blue eyed cut. Morrison explains, "Occasionally some living thing will engage her affections. A cat, perhaps, who will love her order, precision, and constancy; who will be as clean and quiet as she is (Morrison *TBE* 85).

Her relationship with her son is more formal, and based on physical duties. To meet her idealized behaviour standards with her son, Geraldine makes sure that he does not cry because, "He was always brushed, bathed, oiled, and shod. Geraldine did not talk to him, coo to him, or indulge him in kissing bouts, but she saw that every desire was fulfilled." (Morrison *TBE* 83).

The mother does not either give love, hug nor kiss; she considers those feelings as unnecessary and unworthy since the materialistic physical side is fulfilled.

Striving in an emotional gap, Junior could not develop appropriate affections to his mother. He hated her instead; and that hatred is generated from his mother affection to the cat instead of her own son. A reality in which even the cat is sure of as Morrison explains, “the cat will always know that he is first in her affections... as he [Junior] grow older, he learned how to direct his hatred of his mother to the cat, and spent some happy moments watching it suffer.” (Morrison *TBE* 86). He developed his own happy moments by hatred, hating the mother and the cat will affirm his existence. He does not have a sense of belonging; therefore, he is psychologically consumed by hatred.

Junior’s mother wants him to be an exact copy of Dick’s friend Mike. Mike is the version of the Dick and Jane primer where Mike himself is a copy of Dick. Through his mother’s education, Junior understands how to cross the line between coloured and black people. Avoiding them will not allow comparison, yet his mother makes it sure that “He wore white shirts and blue trousers; his hair was cut as close to his scalp as possible to avoid any suggestion of the wool, the part was etched into his hair by the barber. In winter his mother put Jergens lotion on his face to keep the skin from becoming ashen.” (Morrison *TBE* 87). By providing him with perfect distinguishable physical needs, Junior becomes aware that coloured children are nicer, cleaner, lighter and higher than the other coloured. His self-introduction to society is based upon racialized principles imposed by the coloured mother. He could not develop his own identification proper to him as a coloured child, but rather he is presented as a copy. Physical copy looks like a machine, deprived from emotional reactions.

Junior’s only reaction to the world is the moments of the others’ suffering indulged by hatred. His hatred for the cat and his mother developed to the hatred of neighbours and classmates. He reacts to the world by the only way he has developed, hatred. As a result, he

prefers games where he is the king, the bad king who makes other suffer. He is the king of the schoolyard, the king of the toilets, and the king of the street. He never misses a chance to share his hatred of the world. The only moment his pride is threatened is when he takes Pecola as a prisoner to torture her with the cat where Pecola's reaction to the cat shocked him. Instead of fear, Pecola admires the cat. Junior is afraid of the love people give to the cat. At this moment, they steal his only pleasure in torturing and hating.

Physical needs provided by Junior's mother could not help him develop his self-worthiness in the world. Deprived from love, Junior could only hate everyone around him, reacting in the only way he was educated; hatred produces aggression as a result of frustration. This frustration results in self-loathing and distortion which occurs according to Peach when, "The authentic black self is buried so deep in some of the characters that their perception of themselves amounts to self-hatred. This self-loathing is strongest in those characters who are farthest from their communities" (qtd. Zabialowicz and Palasinski 226). Junior is physically well nurtured, but psychologically destroyed.

II. 4.2. Mrs. Breedlove

Pauline childhood is different from her adulthood, she lived in a warm house, though it was crowded and never given a chance to express her feelings, she was satisfied to live with her eleven brothers and sisters inside the same family. She has an archless foot that prevented her from walking in a normal way. This foot caused her psychological weakness and was always left alone as Morrison says, "Her general feeling of separateness and unworthiness she blamed on her foot." (*TBE* 11). O'Reilly explains that, "Metaphorically, her physical deformity symbolizes Pauline's spiritual and physical alienation from her cultural groundings. Her

malformation also signifies her artistic nature: like Sula with her shifting birthmark and Pilate with her smooth stomach, Pauline is an artist without an art form. (*Toni* 52). From an early age, she does not have a direct sense of being at home, sweet home. It was always a house but never a home.

Pauline started praying for hands that can take her out to a new life, a home, and forever happiness. Cholly is that hands that takes care of her dreams as well as her foot. Yet, after marriage, she was introduced to real life in the North where the white majority lives. Pauline felt strange and fitting there was a nightmare for her. Quarrels for money raised between the couple, Pauline wanted to be more beautiful and Cholly wanted to drink more. Pauline was introduced to the white gaze without previous knowledge of its destructive forces. All she wanted is to be beautiful like the other white women so that they stop glancing at her like an alien. O'Reilly explains that it was hard for Pauline to cope with new people because she

loses what is called in *The Bluest Eye* funkiness: “the... funkiness of passion, the funkiness of nature, the funkiness of the wide range of emotions” (68). Disconnected from her motherline, Pauline has lost her funkiness and the ancient properties that would have grounded her in the values of her people and enabled her to resist interpellation (*Toni* 50).

Her lineless, disappointment and differences push her to develop a sense of shame, alienation, and self-hatred. The latter empowers her sense of weakness and alienation because of deformed foot that became a sign of subjugation.

Pauline sought refuge in a silver screen where whiteness have melted with blackness to create a New World as Morrison explains, “There the black-and-white images came together, making a magnificent whole—all projected through the ray of light from above and behind. It was really a simple pleasure, but she learned all there was to love and all there was to hate.”

(*TBE* 122). There, she could learn what she has missed in her infancy. Yet, there is someone to teach her how to be loved like Ginger Rogers¹⁰ and Jean Marlow, the superstar white actors she was acquainted with on the silver screen. She has learnt how to be like them, how she would make her hair to look like them.

After Cinema, Pauline's second refuge was her children; they settled things down after the first storm. Sammy came first, and the world smiled again. Pecola was the second, and Pauline wanted to direct all her love to her. She wanted to forget that idealized world and start new. She considered her coming baby as a friend as she explains, "I used to talk to it whilst it be still in the womb. Like good friends we was... I felted good about that baby" (*TBE* 124). At this stage, Pauline knows that love can heal her relationship with her family. Yet, the world becomes dull in the delivery day. The white doctors who tried to deliver her were very ignorant of her pain. They consider African American females as animals as they expressed, "these here women you don't have any trouble with. They deliver right away and with no pain. Just like horses." (Morrison *TBE* 124-125). The baby became also an animal, which was described as, "Big old healthy thing" (125). In addition to her deformed foot and broken tooth, the delivery of Pecola flued Pauline sense of alienation from her cinematic world. She did not find what she expected from movies as she was sure that her baby daughter is "ugly. Head full of pretty hair, but Lord she was ugly." (Morrison *TBE* 126).

Pauline Breedlove examines life the way she examines a movie. Her affection for the cinema and movies pushes her to name her own daughter Pecola after a heroine presented in a movie entitled the "Imitation of life". Pecola then becomes the walking copy of her mother cinematic world. A world that is more or less like Plato's cave In the Republic. The allegory of the cave in that of cinema, the one possessed by the darkness inside the cave could not see the

¹⁰ See Appendix 04 page 164

reality of the world, and even when it is clear, they deny its existence. Morrison represents the world of Pauline antithetically. The real is not reality, but rather the opposite. Fick explains that Pauline degraded from a “person” to become a “reflection” (Fick 26) in other words, an imitation of life rather than the real life. The sense of the real is functioning in another direction.

Her children could not see the cinematic world Pauline is living in; it is real to herself only. The children and the mother are living in the same house, yet in different worlds. Both Sammy and Pecola are left to real world where the society plays a nurturing role instead of their loving mother. Harris explains that, “the home life that should provide the basis of growth turns out to be a prison in which Sammy and Pecola are trapped along with their parents. Family to them is an abstraction, not something that has a tangible, healthy counterpart in the world. (Harris 70). By living in her own world, Pauline denied her real world; as a result, she hates it more and more. It becomes a nightmare or the Evil side in her own movie that she is obliged to fight. Her children are deprived from both affection and protection.

Mrs. Breedlove is the best example for a present alien mother. Mrs. Mum is the mother who is emotionally separated from her children; depriving them from their basic needs of love, warmth, and affection. Mrs. Breedlove is a present absent character, she is there but at the same time she is not. The mother, Mrs Pauline Breedlove was never called by her name or called mother neither by husband, nor by children. She was the untouchable mother who idealizes white beauty.

Pauline could not live in the storehouse anymore because it does not meet her dreams. She starts working in a white family where she finds her idealistic world. She becomes the queen of the house, the kitchen, and most importantly whiteness. Her house as Gillan expresses will not grant her full citizenship; therefore, she “Contents herself with occupying that space of her employers... Pauline feels what It’s like “To wear their white skin” (Gillan 167). To serve them is to serve the white ideals.

When Pecola comes to take the laundry bag from her mother, she meets the white daughter who is 'white' and massed the floor with berries, Pauline cried at her, "Crazy fool...my floor, mess. . . look what you... work. . . get on out. . . now that. . . crazy...my floor, my floor...my floor." (Morrison *TBE* 108). She becomes obsessed with the Fisher household as Kulkami expressed, "[s]he represents a self that exudes nothing but mania for all that is white, and a lovelessness for everything that is her own" (Kulkami 2).

Collins explains that playing the role of "the faithful, obedient, domestic servant who care for white children and their families better than her own" (72) is a way of reaching self-sufficiency though contributing to oppression and freedom limitation. The role of the servant for a white idealized family completed her weaknesses. In her book *Feminist thought*, Collins explains that,

The mammy symbolizes the dominant group's perceptions of the ideal black female relationship to elite white male power. Even though she may be loved and may wield considerable authority in her white "family", the mammy still knows her "place" as obedient servant. She has accepted her subordination (73).

This Controlling Mammy image has very destructive consequences on African-American women's lives, especially on their relationship with white people, with their men, and with other African-American women. The letter resulted in the destruction of Breedlove Family where love has escaped to hold a new white family. Pauline becomes a slave of her own dreamlike world where her 'Black' family does not exist.

Like her assaults on her husband, Mrs. Breedlove's attacks on Pecola are not done under the influence of alcohol: they are done under the influence of the white standards of physical beauty and Pauline's identification of "physical beauty with virtue" (Morrison *TBE* 97).

All she can teach her children—when she is at home at all and can bother with them—is fear: “fear of being clumsy, fear of being like their father fear of not being loved by God, fear of madness like Cholly’s mother.” all she can teach Pecola is “fear of growing up, fear of other people, fear of life” (102)

Her hatred of blackness makes her fear everything around her. Her kids are constant reminder of their father. She hates her kids because she hates their father’s projection in them. The child becomes a burden because s/he is a part of that suffering or the result of it. Because they are part of the hatred, they are objects to disgust and hatred as well. Therefore, the relationship between the mother and kids depends on her relationship with their father and vice versa.¹¹

Pauline gives love to those who can consider it, appreciate it, and handle it. She could not be recognized and compensated for her efforts in her house. In the Fisher household, she is respected, loved, and missed. There is always someone who notices her absence and appreciates her homeworks.

I. 4.3. Pecola, the Adolescent Mother

The earth, the society, the people, the family, the mother are not ready to welcome Pecola’s baby. All the MacTeer’s efforts to save her baby have gone with the wind. Claudia and Frieda want to save the baby in order to save the future as the baby symbolises the hope that comes from the ashes of this society. Pecola lost her baby and lost herself into madness.

¹¹ In this case, we have an Algerian mother who tortured her daughter until she killed her just because her physical appearance reminds her of her deceitful husband who could not provide a suitable living for them. This article is just an example of so many truths that are hidden in all societies not only the African American one. See Appendix 05 page 165.

The world is unnurturing and has grounded social, political, economic and physical implications for its children.

Through her pregnancy, Pecola not only receives physical violence but also psychic violence. The trauma that arose from being pregnant of her father's baby stroke her psyche. As Klotman expresses, "The baby comes too soon and dies, but Pecola has by this time retreated into herself into a kind of psychic death" (Klotman 124). Pecola quests blue eyes to make her family see her as a lovely kid, not just a thing walking around, yet her father's fatal act rushes her madness.

Mrs. Breedlove represents the failure of nature in containing the faults of human being. As it happens with Demeter¹², Pecola got pregnant by her father and miscarried the baby and got mad. Stephanie argues that the novel rejects the cyclicity of time as a healing force and rejects nature as a primal force that can nurture and rejuvenate (64). In an attempt to save the child, Claudia and Frieda planted Marigolds but the earth was itself unyielding. "Marigolds and sunflowers are gold, symbolic in alchemy of psychic and sacred wholeness." (Stephanie 64). When Pecola got mad, she went to the top of the town playing with the sun and the marigolds.

Pecola cannot establish a link between her childish dreams and her situation as a pregnant adolescent, especially her pregnancy from her father. Her family which is supposed to play the formative role could not provide her with a bridge to pass to the world of adults. Her mother who is the main teacher for motherhood, could not connect this notion to herself; therefore, she is not able to pass over to her daughter. When she discovers that Pecola is raped

¹² An ancient Greek goddess, Demeter is in charge of the earth's fertility and its seasons; she is a major face of the Earth Mother, and her bond with her daughter Persephone symbolizes loving, cosmic on-goingness, a feminine ground of being. (Stephanie 64).

by her father, she does not trust her and beat her whenever she comes across her. The mother denies all her daughter's sufferings, an act that is justified as maternal denial because of, "a traumatic event, like family rape, must have been too harrowing to ignore. The human mind, however, is quite adept at turning a blind eye to the information that is too inconceivable and frightening to pay attention to" (Tversky and Kahneman; qtd. Zebialowics and Palasinski 227).

Vickroy states that because Pecola's parents were "[traumatized children themselves, they continue the trauma by denying their own weakness in their abuse of parental power, by instilling their own fears of impotence, and by calling upon their children to fulfil their own unmet needs" (93). These unmet needs turned the Breedloves to abused parents through passing their trauma to their children.

Morrison uses a broken wind bird to symbolize Pecola's situation, she said, "she flailed her arms like a bird in an eternal, grotesquely futile effort to fly. Beating the air, a winged but grounded bird, intent on the blue void it could not reach-could not even see- but which filled the valleys of her mind" (Morrison *TBE* 170). Pecola is physically and mentally unable to live normally. Her womb like her wings could not stay strong to fight the tragic life she is living. Pecola was not taught how to resist; consequently, she has been silenced.

Children suffer from a disconnection from the society, adults and grownups do not consider them mature; as a result, they order rather than talk to them. The latter leads to a great distinction between the adult and childhood worlds where children are not yet mature and cannot be a helping hand but rather a burden.

Pauline's relationship with Pecola is especially tragic because it is a situation in which a mother and daughter exist in a patriarchal and racist environment which does not allow them the chance to construct a positive and subjective identity. However, instead of relying on each other as a source of strength, Pauline looks at her daughter and is

reminded of the “blackness” that consumes her existence while Pecola looks at Pauline and does not see “Mother” but rather a stranger named “Mrs. Breedlove.” Similar to her relationship with the prostitutes, Pecola’s relationship with her mother does not provide her with any positive means of becoming a strong, and self-loving adult female (Mahaffey 161).

Pecola has received no love and affections; therefore, she could not develop any sentiment of love and affection for her family or the world around. She expects the bad side of the society before it comes to her. Harris explains “Pauline not only denies them love, but she denies to them the opportunity to see love exhibited; therefore, if they should grow into marriage and children of their own, they will have no basis upon which to show love or nurturing.” (Harris 70). She internally believes to be the victim and expects all people to victimize her.

II. 4.4. Mrs. MacTeer

The MacTeer family lives in the second version of the Dick and Jane’s world. They are swimming between different tides, not drawn and not fully safe. Mrs. MacTeer succeeds in living in a neutral world. Her two daughters, Claudia and Frieda would call her Mum, the normal mum. In spite her difficult mood, and her poor life, she manages to give little of everything to her daughters. She along with the father gives protection, love, security, simply a healthy life where they could react to the world and protect themselves. Claudia’s illness encourages her to discover the secrets after her mother shouts and humiliation by explaining “when i think of autumn, I think of somebody with hands who does not want me to die... by and by I will not get sick; I will refuse to.” (Morrison *TBE* 12). She teaches them how to be resilient to nature itself, how to be strong in all life’ changing weathers.

The mother projects reality through her reactions to difficult situation. Having two girls striving for love and affection is a challenging task for her. Questions about love, marriage, man, and babies are recurrent. Their mother makes them see the world from their own perspectives and capacities as Claudia explains, “Misery coloured by the greens and blues in my mother’s voice took all of the grief out of the words and left me with the conviction that pain was not only endurable, it was sweet.” (Morrison *TBE* 26). Their innocent dreams about husbands and children are welcomed despite of painful consequences. Through songs, she introduces them to the world of suffering and pain; yet it has been always sweet, harsh but sweet for them as Claudia expresses,

[when]my mother was in a singing mood, it wasn’t so bad. She would sing about hard times, bad times, and somebody-done-gone-and-left-me times. But her voice was so sweet and her singing-eyes so melty I found myself longing for those hard times, yearning to be grown without “a thin di-i-ime to my name.” I looked forward to the delicious time when “my man” would leave me, when I would “hate to see that evening sun go down...” cause then I would know “my man has left this town. (Morrison *TBE* 25-26)

Through singing, the mother can say the unsayable, her own stories that are infolded with pain and trauma can be easily explained through songs. The Blues songs are a way to speak the trauma of the past and the present. In his essay, “Richard Wright’s Blues,” Ralph Ellison writes this:

Blues is an impulse to keep the painful details of and episodes of a brutal experience alive in one’s aching consciousness, to finger its jagged grain, and to transcend it, not by the consolation of philosophy but by squeezing from it a near-tragic, near-comic lyricism. (90) (qtd. Wong 63)

Florens used writing to reach her identity whereas Claudia and Frieda use Blues that is inherited by the mother. The mother does not only teach through songs, but also passes the heritage of African American history.

The song united the sisters with their mother. Her songs relaxed them; as a result, they sing for each other in difficult times and defend each other against verbal and physical humiliation imposed by the racialized society. Claudia explains that, “being a minority in both caste and class, we moved about anyway on the hem of life, struggling to consolidate our weakness and hang on, or to creep singly up into major folds of the garment. Our peripheral existence, however, was something we had learned to deal with – probably because it was abstract.” (Morrison *TBE* 07)

The mother love is not expressed directly it is presented through physical care as well time-to-time gifts, hugs, beatings, shouting and singing. Mrs. MacTeer provides white doll for her children in Christmas. White baby dolls are the dreams of every girl, yet, Claudia destroyed them. The act of destruction reveals much deeper self awareness and self development. Claudia understands that baby dolls cover existence and make her invisible; destroying them makes her free and acknowledges her own existence. The assertion of the self is achieved by eliminating the other. Instead of white dolls she wanted love, love that is surrounded by family, she wanted, “to sit on the low stool in big Mama’s Kitchen with my lap full of lilacs and listen to big papa play his violin for me alone” (Morrison *TBE* 22).

As she grows up, Claudia could not control her innocent reactions. She learns how to surrender positively to the white hegemony. The hate of Shirley Temple becomes love as she illustrates, “I learned much later to worship her, just as I learned to delight in cleanliness, knowing, even as I learned, that the change was adjustment without improvement.” (Morrison *TBE* 22). She knows deep inside her the reality, but she chooses to swim with the current tide.

Mrs. MacTeer Played the role of ‘the model’ African American mother who would fight her hard situation to fulfil her four mothering duties when the other mothers fail to accomplish. She preserves their lives and nurtures her two daughters adequately to face the dominant culture. When Claudia gets ill, her mother takes care of her, sings for her and even extends this caring for others. When Pecola was given to them to look to be cared for, she advises her daughters to take care of her, be nice, and share with her their home.

Frieda and Claudia are not vulnerable as Pecola; they try to fight and defend their own beauty that is invisible for the world. When Maureen accused them of ugliness, they start a scanning search to find some weaknesses that could defend their position as Morrison explains, “flaws to restore equilibrium” (*TBE* 63). The two girls find that Maureen (the perfect) has a dogteeth and is born with six fingers rather than five. African Americans’ search for flaws in the white counterparts is a way to stabilize their own selfhoods in the dominant culture. They are considered as ugly and full of faults; whereas, white are considered as perfect. These repeated images of ugliness would be stabilized in the minds of these children through repetition; therefore, be internalized and accepted as a form of truth. Claudia unlike Pecola is as Backes states,

A child experiences a sense of wholeness and internal compatibility, a relative lack of othering at the personal level. She learns and keeps the language of resistance. Finally, in relating the story to us, she has the words that bear witness, words that fail Pecola, who lapses into a silent, private, and internal conversation . . . The story Claudia tells is her foray against silence and invisibility, at the same time that it discusses the ineradicability of those conditions for most, including Pecola (152-153)

Claudia and Frieda's strong identity sparks from their mother's power to keep her identity intact in the middle of war against blackness. She teaches them and nurtures them to cope, to walk safe in the electric flow of life to avoid being smashed.

II. 5. Conclusion

Mothers in Morrison's novels are very vulnerable to the constraints and racial borders set by the dominant culture. They struggle against the world around to make their children live better lives than theirs in a way or another. Most of them fail to fulfil the needs of their children. Minha Mae in *A Mercy* believes that the best thing for her daughter is to give her to Vaark in order to protect her from slavery and its dehumanizing effects. Though the mother's act saved the daughter from the brutality of slavery, it leads her to enslave herself and dives into a deep psychological trauma understood by the child as a fatal love. In *Beloved*, the mother chooses to slaughter her daughter rather than to let her come back to slavery. Her desperate maternal act breaks the mother and her remaining kids by allowing their memories to haunt them in a form of the dead child's ghost. The mother's thick love is expressed violently which leads to traumatic isolation from familial and communal ties. In *The Bluest Eye*, love is abandoned under the hegemony of the white gaze. Fulfilling physical needs is more common than emotional or psychological needs. African American children live in a materialistic artificial world that deprives them from their mother's help in their trip towards healthy selfhood.

Chapter Three

Fatherhood

III. 1. Introduction: Fatherhood Vs Manhood

I am an invisible man, I am a man of substance, of flesh and bone, fiber and liquids—and I might even be said to possess a mind. I am invisible, understand, simply because people refuse to see me. (Ellison *Encarta*)

Fatherhood in the American culture is multiracial. In order to understand fatherhood, one has to regard different aspects like race, religion, social aspects, and history. The Father is presented as breadwinner, the patriarch, the ruler, the biological father, the sociological father, the single father, but never the nurturer.

Some fathers refuse to nurture because they think that nurturing harasses their masculinity. Nurturing makes them less manly. This assumption comes from the belief that only women are allowed to show affection and declares their feelings. The father is engaged emotionally with his children as much as he becomes unmanly. The latter is due to the close relationship between mothering and nurturing; because nurturing is culturally retained to mothers, fathers are excluded.

Another assumption declares that fathers are less engaged with child caring than mothers are. The latter is due the lack of connection between the children or their mothers; it depends on the father's status inside the family. Koops and Tuckerman explain that, the level of a father's involvement is related to the relationship between both parents especially if they share the same household. (Koops and Tuckerman 24). In other words, the mother is the one who controls the relationship of the father with his children especially if he is allowed to be, “economic providing serving as a role model, protecting family members, and functioning as

an authority figure” (Koops and Tuckerman 24). Yet, these functions are questioned when confronted with the dominant assumption of abandonment and lack of connection.

Another reason of the lack of connection is the father’s absence from the household where he plays the role of breadwinner. The father spends more time working outside the house to provide a living for his family, especially, when mothers are having very young babies. The financial responsibilities prevent the father from fulfilling his nurturing duties. Consequently, mothers are close to their children and fathers are less engaged; therefore, less visible.

The role of breadwinner has changed when the role of the breadwinner shifted to include women especially with the increasing rate of joblessness. According to Koops, this shift in power from male-headed households to female-headed households is due to the decline in marriage rates, which is caused by joblessness and less economic opportunities. (Koops 30). Fathers prefer to leave the house when their primary function as breadwinner is not fulfilled.

Koops and Zuckerman present father parenting as a serial one whereas mother parenting as a linear one (Koops 21). Serial parenting father is the one who resides with his children, in all their lives in spite of having different children from different women. The relationship between the father and children is not linear, they can play the role of biological father, stepfather or just a sociological father helping other's children; as a result, fatherhood did not continue.

Fathers are generally less visible because of the mother’s over presence. Sometimes, the mother’s thick love overcomes the presence of the father and overlaps any possibility of interference in the process of child’s caring. To use Karen Czapanskiy’s terms, “fathers are treated as volunteers, while mothers are draftees (qtd. Dowd 7). The father’s duties are mainly reserved for economical life more than the emotional or the social one. He is the one who is supposed to finance the family with or without the help of the mother. In general, mothers take

care of their children more than fathers. The latter is asserted through educational and the dominant culture of the society. In colonial America, fathers were seen as primary and irreplaceable caregivers. According to both law and custom, fathers bore the ultimate responsibility for the care and well-being of their children. Blankenhorn also asserted that fathers were primarily responsible for the religious and moral education of their children. (13).

It is believed that fatherhood is very essential to men because it makes them less aggressive. Fatherhood as Dowd suggests, “civilizes men” (9). The role of father is as important as fathering. Fatherhood, according to Blankenhorn, “is society’s most important role for men. First, fatherhood, more than any other male activity, helps men to become good men...[S]econd, fatherhood privileges children [...]As a social role, the deepest purpose of fatherhood is to socialize men by obligating them to their children. More than any other cultural invention, fatherhood guides men away from violence by fastening their behavior to a fundamental social purpose” (Blankenhorn; qtd. Dowd 9). Blankenhorn also indicated that, “Fatherhood is a social role that obligates men to their biological offspring” (25). Popenoe stated that “To be a father, rather than merely to father means to give a child guidance, instruction, encouragement, care and love” (19).

Roid and Canfield’s (1994) provide seven dimensions of fathering including, “Commitment, knowing your child, consistency, protecting/providing, love of spouse, active listening, and spiritual equipping” (qtd. Jackson 11). “Commitment” is to take time and energy and assume responsibility for the child. “Knowing the child” in the sense that the father has to know to whom he is considered a father. “Consistency” is to be in regular contact with the child and provide his needs. These dimensions are very essential in order to achieve the last four.

Morrison tries to avoid having male protagonist characters in her fiction and especially father figure characters and if obliged, she visions him negatively, used for the destruction of the family. Morrison challenges her characters especially females to show their capacity to run

their lives and their families despite the absence of the father. The feminist spirit in Toni Morrison invites her to develop a fictional society that can survive without the existence of male characters especially fathers. Morrison paralyzed the father from disposing a positive aspect in family and society. The role of the father has diversified over years, Commercial literature has presented black fathers as, “deadbeat, deficient, lacking, uninvolved, uncaring, and absent” (Conner and White 206). . Historical and psychological factors help in empowering the wave of “absent father” in African American narratives specifically. The father becomes the invisible man, but invisible to whom?

Father is a symbol of protection and his invisibility meant lack of this protection. Morrison tries to challenge women’s characters as well as the society by dismissing the father. In most of Morrison’s writing, the father dies at the beginning of the children’s development or disappears during their infancy leaving the children with a big scar that haunts them for the rest of their lives. The memories and the dreams planted on the unconscious mind make the children hunger for their fathers’ heroic stories. Those fathers are invisible for the society yet their ghost is trying to protect or terrorize their children’s lives. In *A Mercy*, the father is unknown; therefore, no hopes and no expectations for his return. On the contrary, Morrison introduced a loving father for the children of *Beloved* and makes him disappear later to assert the child’s motivation to visualize life with him. The father does not exist, yet his imaginative picture is accustomed to the children’s mind; as a result, he becomes invisible.

III. 2. Absent Father in *A Mercy*

In spite of the fact that most of the first explorers and settlers were males, Morrison cannot project them as fathers in *A Mercy*. She chooses Jacob Vaark, the master who has six orphans in his service including his wife, the African free blacksmith, his two indentured

servants, and D'Ortega. She provides her narrative with one African girl, and her brother who are fatherless. On the other hand, Vaark's kids die one after the other before age five. Morrison gives the free African blacksmith a chance to nurture an orphan kid after the death of his father. Morrison deprives the Vaark's family from children who are willing to have them and are ready to provide an appropriate living for them. On the contrary, she gives the slave woman (Minha Mae) two children who gave her a reason for living.

Vaark's estate and wife needed children to reach their full potentials, they were like the farm "sustainable but not profitable" (Morrison *A Mercy* 102). He needed his own children, especially males to help him enlarge his estate because a daughter could not do what a boy can. Females are more vulnerable to oppression especially in the changing New World. He believed that, "what a man leaves behind is what a man is" (Morrison *A Mercy* 104). His sadness has increased when he lost his daughter.

To please his wife Rebekka and as an act of mercy, Jacob brought Florens to his farm. He wanted her to be a replaced daughter more than a slave, yet his wife could not accept her, because, "It insulted her. Nothing could replace the original and nothing should". (Morrison *A Mercy* 113). Despite the fact that biological children are irreplaceable, this statement can be read in two ways, if Rebekka is a racist (which is not the case in the beginning), she considers Florens as inferior, or of a lesser value to place her as a daughter. In the second view, one can understand that Rebekka wanted a child of her own, who could inherit the farm, rather than a slave. Vaark considers Florens as a replacement to please his wife without caring much about the girl herself. The absence of children kills Vaark's desire to be a good man. He wanted to provide a good farm for his children; in their absence, he is obsessed with extending his wealth.

When Vaark visits D'Ortega's house and sees his six children, his bitterness "was unworthy, the result of having himself no survivors –male or otherwise" (*A Mercy* 22). Jacob's

desire to build the gigantic new house that he does not need stumps from an internal need to fill the gap of his lost children.

Florens was born out of a rape act by an unknown male. Florens' mother could not tell if this male was a black or a white person. In the novel, this father is never given a voice nor spoken about except two times. The first time when Florens is asked about her family in the Widow's house asking for shelter in which she answers, "I do not know him" (Morrison *A Mercy* 126). Unlike her mother who projects her as dead, she declares a question mark about him. Here, the father fails to accomplish all his duties especially knowing his child. In all her childhood, she never asks about her father and no one asks her about him, as if it is a normal state to be fatherless in this New World.

Florens cries for shoes can be read as a crying for protection, mainly fatherly protection. Being barefoot is interpreted as being unprotected especially in a slave hold like D'Ortega's. Florens miserable life is the result of abundance, first from her father and then her mother. When she meets the blacksmith who looks as black as her, Florens wants to attract him because she thinks she feels safe with him as she declares, "Here I am not the one to throw out. No one steals my warmth and shoes because I am small" (Morrison *A Mercy* 161). Garrod explains that, "Adolescent girls have intensified anxiety, denial of feelings associated with fathers, persistent identification issues with the loss object (father), and a strong hunger for male attention" (qtd. Jackson 19).

African American males in general are used as slaves; therefore, they are thrown away from family kinship. Their objectification makes them machines giving their sperm to slave females in order to increase the stock. Their daily life centers on the plantation, which excludes thinking about having families of their own especially during the first years of slavery. These first slaves opened the wave of absent father in America, specifically the Absent African American father.

The freed African blacksmith had a chance to nurture a kid named Malaik after his father's death. Without a wife, the unnamed blacksmith has to take care of until he is taken to an orphanage. By allowing him to nurture, the blacksmith is deprived from a given name. Through nurturing the kid, the blacksmith could feel and practice his freedom that was not very common in the colonies; but a few slaves who work hard to free themselves. Florens accidentally injures the boy; consequently, he fired her from his life.

After her second literal abundance, Florens expresses, "I have no shoes. I have no kicking heart no home no tomorrow" (Morrison *A Mercy* 185). Florens related the shoes with protection in which she loses each time. Children of *A Mercy* are fatherless ruled by man instead of being nurtured by fathers.

African American fatherhood becomes under tight scrutiny with the legalization of slavery. African American males were not considered as human beings; therefore, the majority of slaves which were increasing were deprived from the feeling of family. Slavery also has emasculated the power of African American males; as a result, they could not meet any duties with their children as well as wives.

III. 3. The Invisible Father in *Beloved*

From being totally absent in *A Mercy* to invisibility in *Beloved*, the father during the 17th and 18th centuries is not capable of playing a visible role in the life of their children. Ali suggests that "Women writers struggle for artistic self definition and differentiate the effort at self-creation from those of her male counterpart. Women could do the research about females in a better way as compared to the male researches. As females are better equipped to interpret and

evaluate the experiences of the suppressed race of woman” (Ali 1420). *Beloved* positions the consequences of black invisibility in both the records of slavery.

Fathers suffer from the racialized world implemented by slavery. Due to their lack of experience in a life spent under the chains of a destructive white society, most of these fathers suffered when they were children so they choose either to disappear opening a new better door for their children rather than familiarising their destructive psyches to their own children. The invisibility of slaves is a common status for both men and women and not only reserved for fathers though their invisibility is more highlighted due to the significance of their absence.

Halle Suggs is considered as a good son before being a good husband. He is the only child who remains with his mother Babby Suggs for twenty years. He sacrificed his “Sabbaths” in work in order to pay her freedom and provide a decent life for his mother. Compared with Baby Suggs’ experience in Carolina, which left her with eight children by six fathers; the Garners of Sweet Home are less harsh. Those six fathers had run away, all of them, living their children behind with a slave mother who could not protect them from her masters. All eight children were sold, killed, or lost except Halle. Babby Suggs explains that “A man ain't nothing but a man,”...”But a son? Well now, that's somebody.” (Morrison *Beloved* 27). She negated the role of the husband (s) in her children’s development.

Halle was like a friend to his wife. When Sethe plans to run away; they arranged to meet in a specific place, but he does not show off. Sethe was afraid of being caught and could not wait for him. They all thought he is dead. After Paul D’s coming, he explains that he was there, but could meet her. He could not see his wife being abused in front of him and he could not do anything, because either he will be killed or imprisoned or accused of rebellion.

Sethe’s surprise has overcome her pain when she knew that her husband was,

watching, above me in the loft—hiding close by—the one place he thought no one would look for him, looking down on what I couldn't look at all. And not stopping them—looking and letting it happen ... There is also my husband squatting by the churn smearing the butter as well as its clabber all over his face because the milk they took is on his mind. And as far as he is concerned, the world may as well know it. (*Beloved* 70)

Sethe considers Halle as a son and a husband that she can rely on. She never imagined that the son who rescued his mother from slavery will be watching the master taking their children's milk and stay hidden. Sethe sank in sadness and shock. Morrison has silenced Halle's voice and his reaction is narrated only by others.

The power of silence is greater than noise. The daughter's greatest fear is in silence, the very heart of muteness. Waiting in silence for hands that would take off her soul pushes her to look for a more comfortable zone; the only available is the one which is reserved for her father. The dream of his return overcomes the fear possessed by the darkness of silence as Denver forces herself to believe, "the quiet let me dream my daddy better. I always knew he was coming." (Morrison *Beloved* 244) She never doubted his coming, rather than his return. He never comes to his mother's house that becomes his wife's and children's house.

She always finds excuses to pardon his absence, or at least help herself keeps bright thought about his absence. She kept all that thought a secret as she declares, "He was coming and it was a secret... I never let her know my daddy was coming for me." (Morrison *Beloved* 245). The father is not coming for the whole family but rather only for those who suffer most from his absence, the daughter and the grandmother. Fathers are deprived from parental emotions; as a result, they do not develop any close relationship with their children

The image of father is related to protection and security. Denver thinks her father's coming will prevent the rest of the family from the mother's murder. His absence allows the

mother to lose the area of control and allows her to kill on behalf of 'protection'. The child is aware that the notion of protection is more accurate to the father rather than with the mother. "Not having father to turn to has left negative traces in the girl's interaction with male figures. E. Mavis Hetherington states that studies, "found that adolescent girls from father-absent homes were uncomfortable and insecure with men and boys" (Chodorow 138). Denver isolates herself from the borders of her mother as well as the rest of the community. She does not have friends and prefers to wait for her father or the return of her brothers. Denver is not afraid of males as much as she is afraid of females.

Denver believes in the ability of fathers to protect their children, especially after her mother's sacrifice. When Paul D comes to the house, she thought he is her father. For the first time, Denver thinks her dreams come true and she would finally meet her invisible father. As an act of disappointment, Denver cries for the first time, crying for help as she screams, "I can't live here. I don't know where to go or what to do, but I can't live here. Nobody speaks to us. Nobody comes by. Boys don't like me. Girls don't either. "It's the house. People don't-" "It's not! It's not the house. It's us! And it's you!" (Morrison *Beloved* 17). She blames everything for her sadness and isolation but never blames her father.

When Paul D tells her, she looks like her father and starts talking about him with her mother, Denver understands that her father does not belong to her anymore. She knew she is dreaming in vain because she thinks, "Only those who knew him ("knew him well") could claim his absence for themselves" (Morrison *Beloved* 15).

Terrified and tired from imagining their infanticide, Howard and Buglar run away from home when they were thirteen (Morrison *Beloved* 3). In the middle of the Civil War, they have no place to go, neither relatives, nor a father. They run before any master changes his mind and takes them back to slavery. Paul D explains that, "If a Negro got legs he ought to use them. Sit down too long, somebody will figure out a way to tie them up" (Morrison *Beloved* 11). Children

do not only flee from their mother's cruel attention to kill them, but also from masters looking for young powerful slaves to serve them. These children who will become one day fathers as well exemplify the invisibility and the absence of father figure in African American society.

F. Douglass's autobiography stands as one of the most notable examples of the fugitive slaves' narratives that appeared in the North and were banned in the South. Eloquent stories of runaways to freedom exposed both the terrors of Southern slavery and the cruelties of Northern discrimination. His writing, his oratory and the examples of his life were effective instruments in bathing the myth that portrayed blacks as subhuman species. Human beings were practicing the Jungle law on their fellow men in the name of Racism and civilization. In his autobiography, Frederick Douglass expressed all the sufferings he endured when he was a slave in the plantation of Mr. Covey the overseer as the following,

If any one time of my life more than another, I was made to drink the bitterest drugs of slavery, that time was during the first six months of my stay with Mr. Covey. We were worked in all weathers. It was never too hot or too cold; it could never rain, blow, hail, or snow, too hard for us to work in the field. Work, work, work was scarcely more the order of the day than of the night. The longest days were too short for him, and the shortest nights were too long for him. I was somewhat unmanageable when I first went there, but a few months of this discipline tamed me. Mr. Covey succeeded in breaking me. I was broken in body, soul, and spirit. My natural elasticity was crushed, my intellect languished, the disposition to read departed, the cheerful spark that lingered about my eye died; the dark night of slavery closed in upon me; and behold a man transformed into a brute! (Douglass 62)

Douglass could express in his narrative what Halle could not express. Halle becomes a Brute because of slavery and chooses to live or die alone instead of seeing his children.

Songs are very important in African American slaves' lives, a ritual that heals their wounds. They used to sing during hard work in plantation. Through songs, they sing the unexplainable. Morrison explains that, "Black Americans were sustained and healed and nurtured by the translation of their experience into art, above all in music... the music is the mirror that gives me the necessary clarity" (qtd. Eckstein 271). Music reflects the trauma of the singers'. Paul D dreams of food and freedom and sings,

Little rice, little bean,

No meat in between.

Hard work ain't easy,

Dry bread ain't greasy. (Morrison *Beloved* 48)

Eckstein considers *Beloved* as "Jazzthetic" (272) declaring that the novel had been rarely seen as so. Yet Morrison uses Jazz through Paul D's voice. Paul D replaces the father, fires the ghost and he brings joy to 124 Bluestone. Paul D is not the father of Denver, but he helped her overcome her hard times.

III. 4. Mr. Dad, the Intimate Evil

The society of *The Bluest Eye* gives birth to a unique father different from that of *A Mercy* and *Beloved*. The father exists in the novel from the beginning up to the end. Yet, his existence is fatal. Since his childhood up to his adulthood, Cholly never stopped being picked up by the harsh reality of the struggling African American society. Cholly Breedlove represents two contradicting state of fatherhood to his family. Mr. Dad, the biological father who has not

run away or abandoned his children yet, at the same time, he is the intimate Evil. The evil is supposed to be directed from another force, an opposing one. However, connecting intimate with evil represents the evil that is coming from a close force inside the self and the family. Mr. Dad, the intimate evil, symbolizes Cholly Breedlove because he is the close strange father who brought nothing to his children but everything connected to Evil. His attentions might not be evil, yet the results are fatal.

Cholly has never known the feeling of fatherhood because his father did not know that he has a kid. After confronting his father, Cholly was rejected at a very young age. Abandoned by his mother and neglected by his father, Cholly did not develop a sense of being a child to someone. The society played a great role in raising him. Without knowledge of both being a child to a father and fatherhood, Cholly's relationship to his children is strange. Fatal deeds are the results; drunk father, beating father, he burns the house, beats the mother in front of the children. He does not care for his children, lives in a world of Alcohol which pushes him to rape his own daughter and the escape of his own son. Cholly's fatal deeds are projected through historical, social and psychological analysis.

In *The Bluest Eye*, the father is the Evil Antagonist, he is the bad omen that destroys the house and spreads darkness in the community. Children wish to kill their fathers, wish if they are invisible, beating them to kick away the bad side. Fathers draw a very traumatic painting full of lies, violence, destruction, murder, and rape leading the child to psychological disorder developing unforgettable and unforgivable traumatic experiences.

Historically speaking, the process of being "Mr. Dad" is not easy for Cholly Breedlove. His difficult childhood prevents him from developing a clear image of childhood, manhood, and fatherhood. Consequently, he was eager to know how it feels to be someone's child, a girl's man, and a child's father. At his childbirth, Cholly was abandoned by his mother which is described as "not right in the head", "wrapped him on a junk heap by the railroad" (Morrison

TBE 132). Three notions raised him; he was abandoned by his parents, thrown outside in a garbage and rescued by a heroic Aunt. This Aunt protected him, yet, she soon died leaving a lonely child in a dangerous society. This feeling of being free excited him to practice his freedom at the night of his Aunt's funeral, he had a sexual relationship with a girl when he was interrupted by two white men forcing him to continue his acts under their watch. This incident made Cholly angry, feeling helpless and frustrated. Cholly decided to control his hatred, directing it towards the black mate was better than directing it towards the white hunters as Morrison explained it "Such emotion would have destroyed him. They were big, white, armed men. He was small, black, helpless... He was, in time, to discover that hatred of white men- but not now." (Morrison *TBE* 150-151).

Cholly at a younger age knew the feelings of being a girl's man. Yet, discovering that at this age, under these circumstances, crushed his innocence and childhood. The feelings of being a father to Darlene's child whom he hated more than anything, was not the correct brave action to do. This situation pushed Cholly to think of his own father who has done the same, running away becomes a reasonable situation, "Cholly knew it was wrong to run out on a pregnant girl, and recalled, with sympathy, that his father had done just that" (Morrison *TBE* 151). History repeats itself: a father running away from a suspicion of having a child not even having one. He sat a journey of search to find the runaway father in order to cultivate his own way of fatherhood. The result was nothing but expected: Cholly was rejected for "a crop game" his father preferred. For the second time, Cholly's hopes for fatherly feelings that might be received by his own father or sent to his own suspected coming child are burned at the age of fourteen.

The family name given to him "Breedlove" is contradicting Cholly's life. The verb and the noun could not work for his real estate. Breeding love is only a synecdoche, for there is no one to take the action of breeding, and no love to be bred. Being a child himself and at the age

of 14, the circumstances Cholly has gone through have deprived him from feelings and opened his freedom to new dangerous feelings as Morrison suggests, "...Cholly was free. Dangerously free. Free to feel whatever he felt – fear, guilt, shame, love, grief, pity. Free to be... He was free to live his fantasies or free even to die...those day, Cholly was truly free" (Morrison *TBE* 159-160). Cholly was deprived from the sense of belonging; the image of family was not drawn or fully seen in his mind as Wong explains, "Having lost all measures of relatedness to others, he was free to remake, or free to not make at all, his own ties to the world." (Wong 59). The latter pushed him to revenge from the world and the society, which has been the primary cause. The white supremacy and the struggling civil rights fighters, all these circumstances freed him at a very young age. Cholly's freedom was supported or rather justified by supernatural power, a conflicting white God and black devil.

Cholly's dangerous freedom is supported by his own vision of God. He visions God as "a nice old white man...and little blue eyes that looked sad when people died and mean when they were bad." (Morrison *TBE* 134). Cholly was not interested in that white God because he is not his type. He was fascinated with the other side that looked just like him, the black devil as he said, "it must be the devil who looks like that – holding the world in his hands, ready to dash it to the ground and spill the red guts so niggers could eat the sweet, warm insides...And now the strong, black devil was blotting out the sun and getting ready to split open the world." (Morrison *TBE* 134). The resemblance of the colour between the devil and Cholly excited him because he felt acquainted with his horrifying deeds. He is the one smashed by life; he is the nigger who was free to do whatever the devil can do. The super-ego was crushed because there is no religious restraints that would set red borders for his desires.

Cholly's freedom has lowered down after he married Pauline, the girl from the south. With her, he would have a family; he would be a husband, a house taker, and one day a father. Yet, the restrictions of marriage and the hard living conditions in the north hanged his freedom

more and more. Believing himself to be the product of the devil, Cholly sunk deeply in his self-hatred and disguise. Despite his attempts to survive and fight, he returns to the bottom of Blackness where his master lies forever.

Being deprived from a sense of family's care and kinship, he could not have a sense of belonging to his own family. In addition to that, the racialized society he is living in makes the gap of his poor estate wider. He is poor financially, physically and psychologically. The one who has nothing cannot afford anything even to his own blood. Cholly did not run away from his children, yet he introduces them to his own devil.

Cholly's hatred towards Darlene was directed again in his adulthood towards his wife and his children. Pauline becomes the centre of his hatred, "she was one of the few abhorrent things to him that he could touch and therefore hurt. He poured out on her the sum of all his inarticulate fury and aborted desires. Hating her, he could leave himself intact" (Morrison *TBE* 42). Cholly fails in loving his spouse.

Pauline being sunk in herself and family hatred does not allow Cholly to practice his hatred; therefore, fights and wars were being fought inside their poor house and in front of their poor children as Morrison explains, "Cholly and Mrs. Breedlove fought each other with a darkly brutal formalism... Tacitly they had agreed not to kill each other." (Morrison *TBE* 132). Their fights are the manifestation of crushed desires they throw upon each other in the sight of their children. They express their true feelings and meet their true selves. They throw the complexities of their lives, their memories, and their reality. Their fights become a relief for them.

Mr and Mrs Breedlove fights are like Sumo matches where each contestant tries to defeat the other. The children, Sammy and Pecola, are the audience that encourages sometimes and gives up at other times. Sammy, the eldest son, could not stay and watch all the battles, he

runs away from the house twenty seven times and when he witnesses the game he would scream, “Kill him- Kill him” (Morrison *TBE* 44). Pecola, on the other hand, attends all the fights, sometimes she shares Sammy’s screams and at other times she wishes if she herself would die or simply go away and disappear, she always closes her eyes and cries “Please God, Please make me disappear” (Morrison *TBE* 45).

With the raising aggression of the fights, Mr Breedlove burns the house and throws his family out. The act of burning the house reveals his psychological destruction’s state. Morrison through the voice of Mrs. MacTeer compares the difference between being put-out and being out-doors as the fact of being dead and death, as she illustrates,

To be slack enough to put oneself outdoors, or heartless enough to put one’s own kin outdoors, -that was criminal... If you are put out, you go somewhere else; if you are outdoors, there is no place to go... outdoors was the end of something, an irrevocable, physical fact, defining and complementing our metaphysical condition. ... Cholly Breedlove has catapulted himself beyond the reaches of human consideration. He had joined the animals; was indeed, an old dog, a snake, a ratty nigger. (Morrison *TBE* 17-18).

Cholly Breedlove has become a body, a black body, with neither mind, nor heart. The black devil has occupied them both. He dashes his family to the ground, a criminal act that destroyed all the Breedloves.

Morrison presents Mr. Breedlove as a drunken-man who causes family destruction. It is the man not the drunken man. She uses alcohol to justify his destructed soul and mind as Baum expresses, “Alcohol serves as an ‘excuse’ which is used by both the drinker and other family members in order to maintain an image of normally and non-deviancy to both themselves and their society” (Baum 04). BAUM considers Alcohol as a reason or a motive to pardon the

drunken for his poverty and the forces imposed by racism. The society in which Mr. Breedlove lives pushes him toward Alcohol in order to escape the harsh reality. Escape is itself a way to freedom. Alcohol provides a New World for him, a society in which there is nothing called rational mind which is capable of drawing limits and reminds him of his reality.

Cholly's freedom allows him to live in the "id" which is considered by Freud as "the house of the libido" (Freud 120) where everything illegal is legal. All wishes are realized. The Id is like Aladdin's magic lamp. Mr. Breedlove's wishes are realized by the "Id" and the only way to it is Alcohol. The subconscious buried desires are realized in the Id by Alcohol with the absence of a conscious mind; therefore, feelings such as guilt, fear, limited behaviours... and other rational feelings do not exist. The drunken is excused of doing unaccepted social behaviours that could harm himself, his family, and society. These behaviours are generally limited to desires that were not accepted at the level of the ego or highly rejected by the superego. In Mr. Breedlove's case, Alcohol is a way to run away from his past, his present, and his future. Nothing has worked in the real world. The bottle of Alcohol is like the magic lump of Aladdin; once he touches it, his wishes are realized. He drinks to escape the feeling of guilt from the status of the family, as he is considered as the one who protects and makes the family's conditions better, he is just making it the reverse. Actions like burning the house or engaging in furious fights with the wife are reactions to unfilled dreams.

The gap between the world Cholly is living in and the Id world he dreams of is so huge; therefore, aggressive reactions are predicted and maintained by the drunken. Baum excused the drunken for drinking as well as its consequences since it is imposed by social and subcultural conditions as she expressed it, "it is not Alcoholism itself that causes the spouse abuse and child neglect and abuse – although it is clear that Alcohol affects, and even facilitates, aggressive behavior in these areas and largely determines the reactions of society to the families" (Baum 16).

Morrison justifies Mr. Breedlove's rape to Pecola, his own daughter, as a form of relief, a form of showing love and affection. Yet his freedom, his dangerous freedom excites him to like the incestuous act as BAUM has expressed it, "The desire of her over comes him. Consumes by hatred and tenderness – unruly, unsorted emotions of a lifetime, freed by the alcohol he has drunk- Cholly gives his daughter the final blow which drives her into insanity." (Baum 162). His insanity drives him to love and be excited for raping his own daughter. Rape, as Jaffar-Agha concludes, "does not necessarily entail a violent, physical penetration of our bodily integrity. However, it must constitute a violent intrusion into our psyche—an intrusion that transforms us irrevocably and one from which we cannot return" (qtd. Walters 104). Pecola is raped twice: first, by the dominant culture's ideology of whiteness that denigrates Blackness and destroys her identity, and later, by her father.

Cholly knows that his daughter loves him in spite of all the brutality he caused for his family. He is handicapped against her love because he has never returned it back, and he will never do. The child's love of her father was unique in a way that buzzed him. Unfortunately, for Pecola, her father's knowledge was restricted to deep desires accelerated with his drunken free mind. The act of raping his own daughter is interpreted as an act of love as Claudia explains, "Cholly loved her. I'm sure he did. He, at any rate, was the one who loved her enough to touch her, envelop her, give something of himself to her. But his touch was fatal." (Morrison *TBE* 206). Cholly's rape of Pecola is fatal in the sense that he breaks her up soul and body. Morrison declares that,

Love is never any better than the lover. Wicked people love wickedly, violent people love violently, weak people love weakly, stupid people love stupidly, but the love of a free man is never safe. There is no gift for the beloved. The lover alone possesses his gift of love. The loved one is shorn, neutralized, frozen in the glare of the lover's inward eye. (*TBE* 206).

He loves her the way he loves himself, and the way he loves the world. Neither the oedipal complex nor Electra Complex of Freud theory can be implied in Pecola's case. Pecola is not attracted by her father's sexually, on the contrary, her father is attracted by her. The resemblance of Pecola's body with young Pauline awakens his desires for sexuality during adolescence before becoming a drunken lost man.

Pecola blames her ugliness and her black skin for her mother's ignorance and father's incest. The trauma of the father's abundance is interpreted as "A personal rejection of them [...]" many girls attribute this rejection to not being pretty enough, affectionate enough, athletic enough, or smart enough to engage the fathering regular contacts. (Kalter and Neil; qtd. Jackson 22). Pecola interprets the incest as an application of this rejection.

In fact, the hatred towards the black is developed on the conscious level where he could control, yet hating the whites is developed on a subconscious level where he could not control. This double hatred consumes him totally pushing him to hate himself, his wife, and his children. He denied a fact that hurts him, throws it deep inside the unconscious mind, and forget it. The seeds of hatred have grown up to be trees of hatred spreading their leaves in every living cell of his body and soul.

Mr. Breedlove turns to be a thing more than a man due to another form of slavery, mental slavery. The latter makes African Americans free physically, they can own themselves or more precisely their bodies, yet they are guided by the ruling race of society. They become objects of commercial and social stereotypes that define their borders and limits. Mr. Breedlove used this excuse to rebel-At the beginning of his life, he was a struggling man fighting for his presence in the world and celebrating his existence with a family. Yet, the society's oppressed rules turned him to abandon his fight and just go with the flow. In becoming thing, Mr. Breedlove burns his entire world.

Mr. Breedlove does not play the 'model' role in his son's experience with life. On the contrary, he hates him and through his violence pushes him to run away from the house. Harris, Furstenburg and Marmer explain that, "A man who had experienced a positive relationship with a father who cared and sacrificed for them are more likely to be responsible father themselves" (qtd. Jackson 14). Neither Cholly nor Sammy found role models in their lives. As a result, Sammy is not capable of developing his own self-authenticity.

Contrary to Breedlove, Mr. MacTeer is a silent character whose actions speak louder than his silence. Demeter describes him as, "the keeper of the fires that warm his family" (66). He is the breadwinner and the protector of his family. His love for his daughters is shown in a protective manner. When their relative wanted to abuse Frieda sexually, the father was outraged and wanted to shoot him. His strong protection makes him 'model' of his two daughters. He helps them feel safe; therefore, they can establish a strong Identity.

III. 5. Conclusion

As a feminist writer, Toni Morrison does not venture in narrating the male' stories in her novels. Males and especially African American fathers are silenced and spoken for. African American Fathers are less involved in the life of their children because of the brutality of slavery and its devastating consequences after abolition. Their absence is justified as their own failure to provide the family during hard times. With the rise of feminism, the voice of the father is more and more silenced.

In *A Mercy*, Morrison deprived America from fathers by presenting them as absent and incapable of breeding a child. African American children grow in traumatic conditions that do not allow them to reach their potentials normally. In *Beloved*, Morrison introduces Hale Suggs as an African Father whose conditions in slavery disabled him from functioning as a present

father, yet he becomes an invisible father. Paul D, Halle's friend, tries to replace the father and fills his gap in order to provide a stable life not only for himself but also for his friend's traumatized family. In *The Bluest Eye*, Cholly Breedlove symbolizes the effects of racism on a destructed father whose evil destroys the family. Despite his presence, Cholly performs a bad role model to his children.

Fathers are indispensable in the lives of their children. They shape their identity and help them overcome the difficulties that are ahead of them. Fathers' love and affection are very important for both girls and boys. Morrison talks about the love inspired by "moral imagination" that is beyond race and colour kinship for the children of the world, as she states, "black men were going into shelters and spending time holding crack babies. Just holding them. Now I'm sure it does something for the baby, but I think what it does for that man to actually give up some time and hold a baby... but there are also these individuals who do care for children- the care takers, the lovers. That has to be the most glorious thing that is going on" (Moyers 267). The role of the father as a breadwinner is important, yet it can be secondary when protection and assimilation are missed.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The child is the product of his family and his society. Society will not change if its members do not change. A child is greatly vulnerable and can easily be broken and destroyed. Each member in the society will leave a stamp on the child, physically or psychologically. My thrust area in the novels of Toni Morrison is on the theme of childhood, a childhood that is shaped by the circumstances of society and the attachment of family.

Any society is developed by its members' past, present and their plans for the future. If anyone was missed or neglected, the society would fall apart. The American society is regarded and identified as a "melting pot" and later a "mosaic" in the sense that the society's members have different ethnic groups, yet everybody tries to adapt himself/herself to that pot. The road to reach that accommodation into the American society has been very hard and long for African Americans.

Struggles and attempts to develop and become better fitted in that melting pot have its traumatic past, a very struggling past that affected the present and still affecting the future in a positive as well as a negative sense. The most struggling colours in the mosaic were the white and the black ones. The white placing itself as the basic colour to all colours, a noble, a god like colour, whereas the other colours and especially the black one are considered as the opposing enemy. However, the black colour was brought by the willingness of white and sometimes is forced to be brought to help the whites' get brighter. The white colour would never shine without opposing the black colour. It is like a dark night with a beautiful shining moon. The moon is shining thanks to that black night.

The white colour represents the American society and the black colour represents the African American society. This binary opposition is developed by Derrida and adapted by African American writers in their literary works in order to expose their heritage and ceaseless struggles to the world. Their struggles were reflected in history as well as in literature. History was full of events that changed and dehumanized the lives of a whole race on one hand and

glorified and symbolized another race on the other hand. Africans were brought against their will to become objects to be used and thrown, they were not considered as human beings. The African American literary pioneers emerged from the dust of the Civil War and narrated their stories in autobiographies like Frederick Douglass, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and others. Their narratives were loud voices in the silenced world. Many took that road like Toni cade Bambara, Alice Walker and the representative, the noble prize winner, Toni Morrison. Through the projection of history, Morrison illuminates the history, the tradition and the culture of her community using Jazz, Blues, and Folklore in fiction.

In appendix number six page 166, I tried to summarize the whole dissertation in a graphic that explains the role of the society, the mother, and the father in the development or the destruction of the African American children's selfhood. The outside pot represents the society, the American society that is surrounded by black spots. These spots are African Americans but they are not recognized by the American society; as a result, they are not allowed to integrate. They are considered as objects to be used for the sake of serving the masters.

In the three novels, African American children are deprived from all these rights. In *A Mercy*, Florens is taught to read and write secretly, she is considered as an alien from another planet by religious figures. Florens has gone through traumatic experiences as far as her relationship with society is concerned. She was not able to identify herself with the rapid changing world. She could not relate her blackness to the notion of freedom until she was fully crushed by its triumphs and visions. When she finally understood herself and her power, the world she lived in was moving to a more severe system known as slavery that is based on racism. Florens was left silenced, screaming only through the lines she wrote inside a white burning house. Her voice has haunted time and reached the 21st century readers.

In *Beloved*, slavery crushed all attempts leading mother to murder her daughter in front of her brothers and sister who were waiting for their own turn. This memory haunted them for

the rest of their life. The slave-based society in *Beloved* also destroyed the children's selfhood. In *The Bluest Eye* slavery becomes mental, institutionalized by white hegemony. The latter leads to madness; therefore, self destruction except for those who stand together as a family to fight the white gaze.

Inside the pot, there is the mother, which is presented by a heart shocked by a white lightning. The latter represents the mother's love to her children. A love that is locked upon itself sometimes, frightened by white ideologies in other times, and broken by the system of racialized slavery in most of the time. The Mother always exists in the society whatever role she may play with or without the father's help. Caregiving is culturally reserved for the mother because she can express love more deliberately than the father can. In the selected novels, the mother's love takes three phases (Fatal, Thick, abandoned) and all of them lead to the destruction of African American children's selfhood. The only survived family is the MacTeers whose members function normally, a mother, a father, and children.

On the other hand, there is the father banned from life. That symbol represents the silenced father in Morrison's fiction and in the lives of the characters. It also represents the unwanted father who exists, yet he spreads evil and destroys the whole family. The father in *A Mercy* does not exist at all. Morrison makes the New World fatherless by depriving white parents from children. In the African enslaved family, the father's absence tortures both the child and the mother, yet, they cope to live without him, considering him a dead one. In *Beloved*, the father is invisible; he is alive through memories, who can protect himself and his family from the horror of slavery that diminishes his role as a provider and protector. His invisibility haunts the character and especially children who are waiting for his return. The father's invisibility stands as a hope for change in the middle of conflicts. In *The Bluest Eye*, the father is the one who destroys his children's selfhood. In spite of his existence, he is not wanted more

precisely his destroyed character is unwanted because he spreads his own destruction to his children and society.

The result of this combination is a child. A unique child as the letters represent, each letter is written in a different style. The child is unique in the sense that he/she is not normal. He/she is the product of a conflicting society with conflicting parents. The child, if not destroyed, is not normally developed. As a result, the children moved from physical trauma initiated by slavery to mental physical trauma institutionalized by slavery to mental slavery that is implemented by cultural marginalization.

Morrison tried to highlight the theme of childhood, but it was not really analysed by critics and readers. This research would be enlarged better with her latest novel *God Help the Child* (2015). It is an extension to the three selected novels because it covers the contemporary world. The novel is a clear statement on the importance of the theme of childhood in literature, especially the African American one. Children of today are the future of tomorrow. The children of *God Help the Child* are but the results of the children of *A Mercy*, *Beloved*, *The Bluest Eye*, and *Song of Solomon*. *Song of Solomon* as well is a very good extension to the theme of childhood. It is all about an African American child who sets his journey in the middle of the Civil Right Movements in order to search for a lost heritage in the middle of a world trying to get rid of its origins.

Beloved can also be comparatively studied in relation to Assia Djebar's *The Children of the New World* (1962). Both novels deal with childhood that is influenced and shaped by war, the Civil War in *Beloved* and the War of Independence in *The Children of the New World*. The theme of childhood can be examined in a global context especially between the one developed by An African American writer and an African Algerian writer.

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www.googleimages.com. Web. 12-03-2016

Journal in Arabic

بودالية سليمان. "10 سنوات لقاتلة ابنتها الرضیعة بالضرب والحرق بتيارت". الشروق اليومي. العدد 5012. الخميس 18-2016-02.

APPENDIXES



Appendix 01: *Inspired from Morning in the Tropics* (1877) (Morrison Cover page)

Appendix 02: From *Paradise Lost* By John Milton

Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,
Sing Heav'nly Muse, that on the secret top
Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire
That shepherd, who first taught the chosen seed,
In the beginning how the heav'ns and earth
Rose out of chaos: or if Sion hill
Delight thee more, and Siloa's brook that flowed
Fast by the oracle of God; I thence
Invoke thy aid to my advent'rous song,
That with no middle flight intends to soar
Above th' Aonian mount, while it pursues
Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.
And chiefly thou O Spirit, that dost prefer
Before all temples th' upright heart and pure,
Instruct me, for thou know'st; thou from the first
Wast present, and with mighty wings outspread
Dove-like sat'st brooding on the vast abyss
And mad'st it pregnant: what in me is dark
Illumine, what is low raise and support;
That to the highth of this great argument
I may assert Eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to men.

Say first, for heav'n hides nothing from thy view
Nor the deep tract of hell, say first what cause
Moved our grand parents in that happy state,
Favored of Heav'n so highly, to fall off
From their Creator, and transgress his will

For one restraint, lords of the world besides?
Who first seduced them to that foul revolt?
Th' infernal Serpent; he it was, whose guile
Stirred up with envy and revenge, deceived
The mother of mankind, what time his pride
Had cast him out from heav'n, with all his host
Of rebel angels, by whose aid aspiring
To set himself in glory above his peers,
He trusted to have equaled the Most High,
If he opposed; and with ambitious aim
Against the throne and monarchy of God
Raised impious war in heav'n and battle proud
With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Power
Hurl'd headlong flaming from th' ethereal sky
With hideous ruin and combustion down
To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
In adamant chains and penal fire,
Who durst defy th' Omnipotent to arms.
Nine times the space that measures day and night
To mortal men, he with his horrid crew
Lay vanquished, rolling in the fiery gulf
Confounded though immortal: but his doom
Reserved him to more wrath; for now the thought
Both of lost happiness and lasting pain
Torments him; round he throws his baleful eyes
That witnessed huge affliction and dismay
Mixed with obdurate pride and steadfast hate:
At once as far as angels ken he views
The dismal situation waste and wild,
A dungeon horrible, on all sides round
As one great furnace flamed, yet from those flames
No light, but rather darkness visible
Served only to discover sights of woe,
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace

And rest can never dwell, hope never comes
That comes to all; but torture without end
Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed
With ever-burning sulphur unconsumed:
Such place Eternal Justice had prepared
For those rebellious, here their prison ordained
In utter darkness, and their portion set
As far removed from God and light of heav'n
As from the center thrice to th' utmost pole.
O how unlike the place from whence they fell!
There the companions of his fall, o'erwhelmed
With floods and whirlwinds of tempestuous fire,
He soon discerns, and welt'ring by his side
One next himself in power, and next in crime,
Long after known in Palestine, and named
Beëlzebub. To whom th' Arch-Enemy,
And thence in heav'n called Satan, with bold words
Breaking the horrid silence thus began.

'If thou beest he; but O how fall'n! how changed
From him, who in the happy realms of light
Clothed with transcendent brightness didst outshine
Myriads though bright: if he whom mutual league,
United thoughts and counsels, equal hope
And hazard in the glorious enterprise,
Joined with me once, now misery hath joined
In equal ruin: into what pit thou seest
From what highth fall'n, so much the stronger proved
He with his thunder: and till then who knew
The force of those dire arms? Yet not for those,
Nor what the potent victor in his rage
Can else inflict, do I repent or change,
Though changed in outward luster, that fixed mind
And high disdain, from sense of injured merit,

That with the mightiest raised me to contend,
And to the fierce contention brought along
Innumerable force of Spirits armed
That durst dislike his reign, and me preferring,
His utmost power with adverse power opposed
In dubious battle on the plains of heav'n,
And shook his throne. What though the field be lost?
All is not lost; the unconquerable will,
And study of revenge, immortal hate,
And courage never to submit or yield:
And what is else not to be overcome?
That glory never shall his wrath or might
Extort from me. To bow and sue for grace
With suppliant knee, and deify his power
Who from the terror of this arm so late
Doubted his empire, that were low indeed,
That were an ignominy and shame beneath
This downfall; since by fate the strength of gods
And this empyreal substance cannot fail,
Since through experience of this great event
In arms not worse, in foresight much advanced,
We may with more successful hope resolve
To wage by force or guile eternal war
Irreconcilable, to our grand foe,
Who now triumphs, and in th' excess of joy
Sole reigning holds the tyranny of heav'n.'

So spake th' apostate angel, though in pain,
Vaunting aloud, but racked with deep despair:
And him thus answered soon his bold compeer.

'O Prince, O Chief of many thronèd Powers,
That led th' embattled Seraphim to war
Under thy conduct, and in dreadful deeds

Fearless, endangered heav'ns perpetual King;
And put to proof his high supremacy,
Whether upheld by strength, or chance, or fate;
Too well I see and rue the dire event,
That with sad overthrow and foul defeat
Hath lost us heav'n, and all this mighty host
In horrible destruction laid thus low,
As far as gods and heav'nly essences
Can perish: for the mind and spirit remains
Invincible, and vigor soon returns,
Though all our glory extinct, and happy state
Here swallowed up in endless misery.
But what if he our conqueror (whom I now
Of force believe almighty, since no less
Than such could have o'erpow'red such force as ours)
Have left us this our spirit and strength entire
Strongly to suffer and support our pains,
That we may so suffice his vengeful ire,
Or do him mightier service as his thralls
By right of war, whate'er his business be
Here in the heart of hell to work in fire,
Or do his errands in the gloomy deep;
What can it then avail though yet we feel
Strength undiminished, or eternal being
To undergo eternal punishment?'
Whereto with speedy words th' Arch-Fiend replied.

'Fall'n Cherub, to be weak is miserable
Doing or suffering: but of this be sure,
To do aught good never will be our task,
But ever to do ill our sole delight,
As being the contrary to his high will
Whom we resist. If then his providence
Out of our evil seek to bring forth good,

Our labor must be to pervert that end,
And out of good still to find means of evil;
Which ofttimes may succeed, so as perhaps
Shall grieve him, if I fail not, and disturb
His inmost counsels from their destined aim.
But see the angry victor hath recalled
His ministers of vengeance and pursuit
Back to the gates of heav'n: the sulphurous hail
Shot after us in storm, o'erblown hath laid
The fiery surge, that from the precipice
Of heav'n received us falling, and the thunder,
Winged with red lightning and impetuous rage,
Perhaps hath spent his shafts, and ceases now
To bellow through the vast and boundless deep.
Let us not slip th' occasion, whether scorn,
Or satiate fury yield it from our foe.
Seest thou yon dreary plain, forlorn and wild,
The seat of desolation, void of light,
Save what the glimmering of these livid flames
Casts pale and dreadful? Thither let us tend
From off the tossing of these fiery waves,
There rest, if any rest can harbor there,
And reassembling our afflicted powers,
Consult how we may henceforth most offend
Our enemy, our own loss how repair,
How overcome this dire calamity,
What reinforcement we may gain from hope,
If not what resolution from despair.'

Thus Satan talking to his nearest mate
With head uplift above the wave, and eyes
That sparkling blazed, his other parts besides
Prone on the flood, extended long and large
Lay floating many a rood, in bulk as huge

As whom the fables name of monstrous size,
Titanian, or Earth-born, that warred on Jove,
Briareos or Typhon, whom the den
By ancient Tarsus held, or that sea-beast
Leviathan, which God of all his works
Created hugest that swim th' ocean stream:
Him haply slumb'ring on the Norway foam
The pilot of some small night-foundered skiff,
Deeming some island, oft, as seamen tell,
With fixèd anchor in his scaly rind
Moors by his side under the lee, while night
Invests the sea, and wishèd morn delays:
So stretched out huge in length the Arch-Fiend lay
Chained on the burning lake, nor ever thence
Had ris'n or heaved his head, but that the will
And high permission of all-ruling Heaven
Left him at large to his own dark designs,
That with reiterated crimes he might
Heap on himself damnation, while he sought
Evil to others, and enraged might see
How all his malice served but to bring forth
Infinite goodness, grace and mercy shown
On man by him seduced, but on himself
Treble confusion, wrath and vengeance poured.
Forthwith upright he rears from off the pool
His mighty stature; on each hand the flames
Driv'n backward slope their pointing spires, and rolled
In billows, leave i' th' midst a horrid vale.
Then with expanded wings he steers his flight
Aloft, incumbent on the dusky air
That felt unusual weight, till on dry land
He lights, if it were land that ever burned
With solid, as the lake with liquid fire,
And such appeared in hue; as when the force

Of subterranean wind transports a hill
Torn from Pelorus, or the shattered side
Of thund'ring Etna, whose combustible
And fueled entrails thence conceiving fire,
Sublimed with mineral fury, aid the winds,
And leave a singèd bottom all involved
With stench and smoke: such resting found the sole
Of unblest feet. Him followed his next mate,
Both glorying to have scaped the Stygian flood
As gods, and by their own recovered strength,
Not by the sufferance of supernal power.

'Is this the region, this the soil, the clime,'
Said then the lost Archangel, 'this the seat
That we must change for heav'n, this mournful gloom
For that celestial light? Be it so, since he
Who now is sovran can dispose and bid
What shall be right: farthest from him is best
Whom reason hath equaled, force hath made supreme
Above his equals. Farwell happy fields
Where joy for ever dwells: hail horrors, hail
Infernal world, and thou profoundest hell
Receive thy new possessor: one who brings
A mind not to be changed by place or time.
The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a heav'n of hell, a hell of heav'n.
What matter where, if I be still the same,
And what I should be, all but less than he
Whom thunder hath made greater? Here at least
We shall be free; th' Almighty hath not built
Here for his envy, will not drive us hence:
Here we may reign secure, and in my choice
To reign is worth ambition though in hell:
Better to reign in hell, than serve in heav'n.

But wherefore let we then our faithful friends,
Th' associates and copartners of our loss
Lie thus astonished on th' oblivious pool,
And call them not to share with us their part
In this unhappy mansion, or once more
With rallied arms to try what may be yet
Regained in heav'n, or what more lost in hell?'

So Satan spake, and him Beëlzebub
Thus answered. 'Leader of those armies bright,
Which but th' Omnipotent none could have foiled,
If once they hear that voice, their liveliest pledge
Of hope in fears and dangers, heard so oft
In worst extremes, and on the perilous edge
Of battle when it raged, in all assaults
Their surest signal, they will soon resume
New courage and revive, though now they lie
Groveling and prostrate on yon lake of fire,
As we erewhile, astounded and amazed,
No wonder, fall'n such a pernicious highth.'

He scarce had ceased when the superior Fiend
Was moving toward the shore; his ponderous shield
Ethereal temper, massy, large and round,
Behind him cast; the broad circumference
Hung on his shoulders like the moon, whose orb
Through optic glass the Tuscan artist views
At evening from the top of Fesole,
Or in Valdarno, to descry new lands,
Rivers or mountains in her spotty globe.
His spear, to equal which the tallest pine
Hewn on Norwegian hills, to be the mast
Of some great ammiral, were but a wand,
He walked with to support uneasy steps

Over the burning marl, not like those steps
On heaven's azure; and the torrid clime
Smote on him sore besides, vaulted with fire;
Nathless he so endured, till on the beach
Of that inflamèd sea, he stood and called
His legions, angel forms, who lay entranced
Thick as autumnal leaves that strow the brooks
In Vallombrosa, where th' Etrurian shades
High overarched embow'r; or scattered sedge
Afloat, when with fierce winds Orion armed
Hath vexed the Red Sea coast, whose waves o'erthrew
Busiris and his Memphian chivalry,
While with perfidious hatred they pursued
The sojourners of Goshen, who beheld
From the safe shore their floating carcasses
And broken chariot wheels. So thick bestrown
Abject and lost lay these, covering the flood,
Under amazement of their hideous change.
He called so loud, that all the hollow deep
Of hell resounded. 'Princes, Potentates,
Warriors, the flow'r of heav'n, once yours, now lost,
If such astonishment as this can seize
Eternal Spirits: or have ye chos'n this place
After the toil of battle to repose
Your wearied virtue, for the ease you find
To slumber here, as in the vales of heav'n?
Or in this abject posture have ye sworn
To adore the conqueror? who now beholds
Cherub and Seraph rolling in the flood
With scattered arms and ensigns, till anon
His swift pursuers from heav'n gates discern
Th' advantage, and descending tread us down
Thus drooping, or with linkèd thunderbolts

Transfix us to the bottom of this gulf.

Awake, arise, or be for ever fall'n.'

Milton, John. *Paradise Lost*. Elledge, Scott, ed. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1993.



“One, two, three,” said Jane.

“Three new dolls for my birthday!

Three baby dolls that talk!

All for my birthday!

Now I have a big doll family.

Thank you, thank you, thank you.

This is a happy birthday.

A happy, happy birthday for me.”

Appendix 03: “Dick-and-Jane Primer” (Google images)



Rogers

Appendix 04: Ginger Rogers (Google images)

قتلتها لأنها تشبه زوجها الذي تبغضه ورفض تطليقها

10 سنوات لقاتلة ابنتها الرضيعة بالضرب والحرق بتيارت

أدانت محكمة الجنايات بمجلس قضاء تيارت أمس، بـ10 سنوات سجنا نافذا امرأة ثلاثينية قتلت ابنتها الرضيعة ذات العام والنصف من العمر بالتعذيب، حيث تؤكد الوقائع أنها ضربت جسدها بالأرض وحرقت يدها، وبعد أن أغمي عليها نقلتها إلى المستشفى بمساعدة جارين لها، حيث انتبه الطاقم الطبي إلى حروق وكدمات تؤكد تعرض الضحية إلى التعذيب، وقد كانت قد فارقت الحياة عند الفحص.

خلال المحاكمة، قالت الجانية أن ابنتها سقطت من على دراجة هوائية دفعها عليها والدها، وقد التمتست النيابة الإعدام نظرا لخطورة الوقائع، لكن معاممي الدفاع رأى أن ظروف السيدة ومشاكلها مع زوجها ورفض عائلتها لها بعد زواجها وراء ما تتصرف به.

يشار أن الجانية كانت تعيش رفقة زوجها في غرفة مستأجرة في حوش جماعي في حي حمداني عدة بمدينة تيارت بعد أن تزوجت بالرجل رغما عن والديه، كما ثبت من شهادة أحد الشهود أنها كانت تتركها لوحدها بعد غلق الباب وراءها ناهيك عن كثرة الضرب.



مجلس قضاء تيارت

بخصوص أنها رمت الصغيرة على الأرض كانت منقولة عن مكالماتها التي سمعها حين اتصلت بزوجها في الهاتف لتستعجله بالحضور، لتؤكد أن سبب حقدتها على البنت ناتج لكونها تشبه والدها الذي تكرهه وطلبت الطلاق منه عدة مرات، كما هددت بقتل الصبية عدة مرات.

■ سليمان بودالية

حسب قرار الإحالة فإن الإجراءات بدأت في حدود التاسعة والنصف مساء من يوم 11 نوفمبر 2015، حيث تحركت مصالح الأمن استجابة لما عاينه الطاقم الطبي من كدمات وحروق على جسد الرضيعة التي كانت جثة هامدة، حيث أن الجثة كانت عليها آثار الضرب والحرق والقُرص، ما تطلب إعلام وكيل الجمهورية.

وبالتحقيق مع المتهم، بررت أن الحرق كان بسبب لمس الفتاة لإناء ساخن، وأن الضرب كان بسيطا، لأن الفقيدة كانت تعبت بالأواني، وأن تصريحات الشهود

