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Trauma and Self-splitting in Toni Morrison's novel *The Bluest Eye*: A Psychoanalytic Reading

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Dedication

First of all I would like to thank my almighty God who gave me the strength and faith to write this thesis. Without Allah's mercy I would never accomplish this humble work.

I dedicate this humble research to my beloved family, my father, Youcef, and my mother, Noura, for their support, love, advice and guidance. I will always appreciate their unconditional support. I owe a debt of gratitude for them.

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Abstract

Trauma and self-splitting are among the most important themes discussed in the African American literature. They gain importance as they reflect the misery and the suffering of the black people in America and because they are related to the main issue of the black race which is identity. Toni Morrison is regarded as one of the best authors who intensively and deeply dealt with the issue of trauma and the dissociation of the African American personality, particularly in her novel *The Bluest Eye* (1970). This thesis aims at investigating the issue of trauma, that is primarily related to racism, from a psychological perspective and depicting its devastating impacts on the blacks' sense of self; where it leads to the dissociation of their personalities. This work accordingly, attempts to describe how Morrison seeks to raise the blacks' awareness about the danger of internalizing the ideal whites' stereotypes about love and beauty which are the source of their traumas, by showing the destructive effects of these stereotypes on their identities. Morrison chooses the events, the characters, the language and each aspect of her novel in a very careful way, in order to make her novel as strong and effective as possible. Its story goes around the black characters whose sense of self is totally damaged, because they cannot reconcile between their reality and a utopian vision white culture. Thus, their personalities are split up due to this contradiction, they can neither accept their blackness nor fake themselves and embrace the whites' standards.

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Introduction

Literature has always been a medium for authors to express themselves, their beliefs and the ideologies they acquire from their communities. While for the authors of the marginalized races, literature is the weapon through which they defend themselves and make their voices heard and the mirror that reflects their suffering. Black writers, in particular, are one example of these minorities who dropped in a disgusting ocean of humiliation, racial discrimination, feelings of inferiority, disdain and disrespect. Disdain and disrespect were the main reasons for all the traumas in their lives. These traumas engendered in their souls feelings of strong self-contempt and self-loathing and eventually split up their sense of self and deconstruct their identities.

During the twentieth century, trauma and self-splitting or dissociation are among the important themes discussed in Afro-American literature. Trauma is depicted as the source of all the black's psychological problems and self-dissociation is represented as one of those devastating effects of trauma. This dissertation will examine trauma from a psychological perspective and its destructive effects on the African Americans' sense of self in Toni Morrison's novel *The Bluest Eye* (1970).

Toni Morrison is one of the most notable black authors who is known for her defensive position on the black culture and for her criticism of the white racist ideas. Her focus is mainly on the theme of racism and its impacts on the black identity. *The Bluest Eye* is one of her literary works that perfectly represents the theme of trauma inflicted on the black race because of the racial discrimination and self-splitting as one of its dreadful effects.

The present dissertation will be divided into three chapters. The first chapter will offer a theoretical framework and discussion of the fundamental concepts that this research will investigate. Thus, it will describe the relationship between the psychoanalytic approach and literary criticism, which is a mutual relationship. On the one hand, literature is considered to

be the source of many psychological concepts such as the concept of ‘Oedipal complex’ which is taken from the Greek tragedy. On the other hand, the psychoanalytic approach is considered to be the foundation for literary criticism, since it provides critics with the needed theories that help them to conduct their analysis and to understand the hidden messages in the literary works. Then, the chapter will examine the two concepts of trauma and self-splitting from a psychological point of view. Trauma is described as the overwhelming and disturbing events that affect the individual’s psyche and lead to serious psychological problems such as self-splitting. The latter is defined as the mechanism of defense that helps the traumatized people to cope with their traumas.

The second chapter will deal with trauma and self-splitting as recurrent themes in American and African American literature of the twentieth century, because they are the result of the traumatizing social circumstances like racism and wars. This chapter will be divided into three sections, the first one will show how the social conditions affect literature and that they are the source of all the traumas. The second section will be devoted to show how the American literary writers focus on the themes of trauma and self-splitting by providing some of the literary works that deal with those themes. While the final section will be directed to show the emphasis of Afro-American writers on these two themes by providing some Afro-American literary works as examples.

The third chapter thereafter will analyse Toni Morrison’s novel *The Bluest Eye* in relation to the theme of trauma and self-dissociation. It offers a description of the most traumatizing experiences in the novel’s main characters who are blacks living in an extremely racist society and how these traumas eventually lead to the dissociation of their sense of self. It will also analyse Morrison’s point of view concerning these themes basing on the analysis of the main characters of the novel.

The present research aims at analysing the themes of trauma and self-splitting in Toni Morrison's novel *The Bluest Eye*. These are among the most important themes discussed in African American literature; they reflect the suffering of the blacks within a white dominated society and giving insights into one of the darkest episodes in the American history. It pictures the extent to which trauma, caused mainly by extreme racial stereotypes about the inferiority of the black race, engraved psychological scars in the blacks psyche leading to the distortion of their sense of self and making the options of insanity or the change to be oppressors themselves the only possible solutions.

Furthermore, this research aims to show that despite the numerous laws that were passed to ban slavery and later on racial discrimination, racism is still conquering people's minds. The fact that many blacks were healed to a given extent from the effects of trauma cannot prevent the scars of this trauma to linger in their minds and to be transferred from one generation to another. Nevertheless, the support and love of the family along with the person's satisfaction of his/her roots, no matter who he/she is and to which culture he/she belongs, is the only way to withstand this trauma and to protect him/herself from its devastating effects.

This research will rely on the psychoanalytic approach. The latter is relevant in the sense that, the research's main focus is on the psychological disorder, self-splitting or self-dissociation, that results from the profound psychological pressure embedded in the traumas that the African Americans went through because of the racial discrimination. The use of this approach helps in achieving the goal of this research, because it provides the basics upon which the analysis of the novel's characters is conducted by offering an effective explanation of these two main concepts of trauma and self-splitting. It helps in diagnosing the African American people and depicting how deep the effects of racism are on the blacks' psyche, especially on children who are the most delicate members of the community.

Chapter One: Understanding Trauma and Self-splitting Using the Psychoanalytic Approach

Psychoanalysis and literature are two complementary fields, each one of them serves as a foundation to the other. In both psychology and literature, trauma and self-splitting are considered as two interrelated concepts and often represented in cause and effect relationship. Trauma is portrayed as the source of all the destructive, bad and negative feelings that lead to the deconstruction of the individual's sense of self. This chapter aims to highlight the relationship between the psychoanalytic approach and literature. Also, it attempts to discuss trauma and self-shattered from psychological perspective. Thus, it is divided into three sections: the first one is devoted to examine the use of psychoanalytic approach in literature. The second one discusses the concept of trauma in details and to how it affects the person's identity, while the third section is directed to approach the concept of self-splitting or self-dissociation as a psychological disorder caused by trauma.

I.1. Psychoanalytic Approach in Relation to Literary Criticism

Psychoanalysis is an approach dedicated to solve the puzzle of the individual's inner problems and diseases and to cure them by shedding light on the mysterious and obscure regions of the psyche. Stéphane Michaud argues that "Psychoanalysis, born out of Freud's rigorous attempt at elucidating his own dreams, it is a universal instrument for understanding the human psyche, and a form of therapy" (2). This theory is founded by the well known physician and psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud (1956, 1939). Although it started as part of medicine and psychology, it has expanded and developed over time to become an important method used to help and facilitate the understanding of many other disciplines such as culture, philosophy, religion, and particularly literature.

Psychoanalysis had and still has a strong relationship with literature and plays a vital role in the literary domain. It is the tool through which we can explore and have a clear image

about the authors and the artists' psychic. In other words, it enables us to analyse their works and to understand their personalities, because the literary works are the reflection of the authors' feelings, thoughts, and beliefs. The relationship between psychoanalysis and literature is a relation of a mutual influence. On the one hand, the psychoanalytic approach is used as a tool to interpret and provide explanations to the mysteries of the literary works. Freud claims that "The information served by psychoanalysis emerged as a promising method for examining literature and also equally made itself attractive to a large number of critics" (Freud 189). On the other hand, literature is considered as a ground to prove the psychoanalytical concepts.

In addition, Stéphane Michaud asserts that "Literature also played a role at the point where Freud was reproached with the role he attributed to sexuality in the individual's psychic evolution. He took universal literature as testimony to truth of his insights, drawing support from great European writers, Sophocles and Virgil, Shakespeare, Goethe and Heine" (2-3). Freud does not only use literature as a testimony for his theory, he also borrows many of his psychoanalytical concepts from literature, such as the term 'Oedipus' that he borrowed from the ancient Greek tragedy to refer to the psychological complex that boys experience at a particular stage of their personality development where they become sexually attracted to their opposite sex parent and jealous and aggressive to the same sex parent.

In literary criticism psychoanalysis is the method that is used to analyze and interpret literary works; the psychoanalytic theory helps in investigating emotions, psychological problems such as childhood experiences, traumas, sexual conflicts... etc. Hence, the literary works in psychoanalytic literary criticism are considered as the mirror that reflects the author's psychological experiences and events which shape his/her personality. In other words, literature is an emotional experience that embodies the writers' psychological state. The major focus in the psychoanalytic literary criticism is on a number of psychoanalytical

concepts such as the conscious and the unconscious mind, the Oedipal complex, and the three components of human mind which are the id, the ego, and the superego. The use of such concepts in the literary field will guarantee a profound comprehension of the literary works.

Despite the fact that the Freudian psychoanalytic theory's essence turns around the idea of 'sexuality' as the driving power of the human's psyche and as the main reason for psychological disorders, there are many other ideas upon which Freud founded his theory. One of the key concepts that underlies Freud's theory and that are adopted by the psychoanalytic literary criticism is the conscious and unconscious mind. Freud theorizes that the human mind is composed of two parts: conscious part where awareness and thinking exist and unconscious part where all desires, motives, drives, memories, and fears that individuals are not aware of, are stored.

Brian Jarvis points out that the unconscious part of the mind is "the dark, inaccessible part of our personality"(2). Though it is the part that people cannot access, it strongly affects and shapes the individuals' personality, identity and behavior and it may cause psychological problems. From the moment of children's birth, their wishes and desires start to develop. During this period, they are governed by what Freud calls 'pleasure principle', their wishes or the "id". When they grow up, another two parts emerge to challenge the 'id' and set their limitations and constrains upon it, called 'ego' and 'superego'. These repressing powers represent the rational and logical conscious part of the mind, which push people to control their desires and to act according to the social morals. When the child's wishes are repressed by what Freud refers to as the 'reality principle' that is manifested in the superego's power, these wishes will be accumulated in the subconscious mind, which may cause mental illness. It is argued by Jarvis that:

Throughout infancy, psychoanalysis contends that we are governed by the "pleasure principle"... as the child develops, she/he has to learn to give up the desire... The

pleasure principle is repressed by what Freud termed the “reality principle”... Desires which have been denied reside in the unconscious and if too much sexual energy is repressed the subject can become mentally ill or “neurotic.” (2)

one of the most commonly suppressed childhood desires, is what Freud refers to as the ‘Oedipal complex’. It is when children wish to play the role of the parent of their own sex and to have the same effect on the parent of the other sex.

These psychological disorders can be cured only through the psychoanalytic tool that aims to evoke the unconscious mind and explore its hidden content. Here, patients are motivated to talk about their problems and their dreams, so that all their mental problems move out and are liberated from the unconscious, and look for an outlet in the conscious mind. Peter Barry states that “Freud believes that dream is an escape-hatch or safety-valve through which repressed desires, fears, or memories seek an outlet into the conscious mind” (99). This process is considered as the first step for mental cure. Freud believes that ‘dreams’ are the windows through which the psychoanalyst can get access to the unconscious mind, since they are the mirror that reflects the buried desires, and fears. Jarvis asserts that “For Freud, dreams were the ‘royal road’ to the unconscious”(2). That is to say, dreams are a mirror to the unconscious and in order to analyse the deep message that the unconscious carries, one should first understand the symbolic nature of the dream.

A dream is the imaginary demonstration of wishes and fears that have been repressed in the waking world. Jarvis states that “According to Freud, the dream offers a complex code of image and symbols that has to be deciphered. The dream has a ‘manifest content’ (what we remember and narrate when awake) and latent content (the secret meaning of these stories)” (3). In other words, the psychological problems and anxieties such as childhood traumas, sexual conflicts ...etc. are not articulated in a direct way, but are rather disguised. For example: dreams can have the form of symbols and images such as: displacement, whereby

anxiety is represented by another form, person or event, which is to a particular extent linked to it. Also, it may appear in the form of condensation, whereby several events, images or persons, are exemplified in one image in the dream.

Accordingly, psychoanalytic critics likened the literary text to a dream, in that; it is an escape from the conscious control. In other words, a literary text is an articulation of the author's unconscious desires and psychological conflicts. Moreover, both dreams and literary texts are the creation of the human mind and an echo of the soul's inner sounds. Thus, soul's conflicts, anxieties, and emotions are revealed in dreams in a merely literary way. For that, like dreams, literary works are a composition of concrete symbolic images of an abstract psychological status which have an explicit and an implicit meaning that need analysis to reveal the hidden message behind the words.

Edward Barry claims that "Dreams, just like literature, do not usually make explicit statements. Both tend to communicate obliquely or indirectly, avoiding direct or open statement, and representing meanings through concrete embodiments of time, place, or person" (98). Psychoanalytic theory becomes an integral part in literary criticism theory. As a matter of the fact, literary criticism theory and psychoanalytic approach share the same goal of interpreting the human's psyche and the psychoanalytic approach was proved to be the most effective tool that enables the critics to achieve this purpose.

The strong link between psychoanalytic approach and literature is not only manifested in the application of the Freudian theories to literature. It is rather Freud's interest in writers and literature that marked the beginning of this literary theory. His interest was directed mainly to those writers whose works are filled with symbols. Those works are usually difficult to understand and need an analysis in order to be grasped. Just like the unconscious region of the mind that encompasses human's repressed thoughts, desires, and anxieties which appear in dreams in disguised forms and only an analyst could understand their covered

meaning. Freud's interest in literature can be seen clearly in his remarkable literary criticism works such as his essay on 'The Relation of a Poet to Daydreaming' (1908) and 'The Uncanny' (1919), a psychoanalytic reading of E. T. A. Hoff-man's tale 'The Sandman' (Murfin 505).

It is only in 1909, when the psychoanalytic approach to literature was widely adopted. Freud's publication of 'The Relation of a Poet to Daydreaming' opened the door to many works held by several other critics as well as psychoanalysts such as Otto Rank's work *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero*. The book tackles the idea of artists' transformation of their own hidden desires into literary fiction. It also employs the 'Oedipal complex' idea in order to provide an explanation for the identical representation of heroes in literature. Another important work that was published in the same period is the essay written by Ernest Jones on Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, in which he also uses the Freudian concept of 'Oedipal complex'.

Furthermore, between 1909 and 1949, the number of critics, poets and novelists who believed in the importance and usefulness of the psychoanalytic approach for the interpretation and the deep comprehension of creative literary works and whose works were highly influenced by Freud and his concepts, increased dramatically. One may cite: Edmund Wilson, I. A. Richards, and Kenneth Burke, poets such as Robert Graves, W. H. Auden, and novelists like James Joyce, William Faulkner, and Toni Morrison among others (Murfin 506). However, a considerable number of other critics were not attracted to the Freudian approach; their interest was rather directed to other ideas. Some literary critics were influenced by Alfred Adler, whose ideas were based on the belief that literary works were the result of the author's complexes of inferiority. Others were influenced by Carl Gustav Jung whose theory, unlike Freudian theory that focused on sex, stressed the idea of 'collective unconscious.' He believes that literary works are not a manifestation of the author's own psychological

problems; they are the demonstration of wishes and anxieties of all human kind that are repressed by the appearance of civilization (Murfin 505).

Due to Freud's vision to the author's creative ability of writing as a mental disorder, psychoanalytic criticism especially before the 1950's focused on the analysis of authors who transformed their repressed desires and thoughts into literary fiction. Another area of interest was the process that may minimize the impact of the suppressed feelings and memories and keep them safe from anxieties and psychical illness. Marie Bonaparte's analysis to Edgar Allan Poe (1933) was an example of the analysis of the authors' psyche. Ross C. Murfin states that "Bonaparte found Poe to be so fixated on his mother, that his repressed longing emerges in his stories in images such as the white spot on a black cat's breast, said to represent mother's milk" (506).

However, after 1950, the focus of psychoanalytic critics was centered on the analysis of the characters of literary works, rather than the direct analysis of the author's psyche. For this new generation of critics, characters are a representation of the author's dual personality or the bad and the good aspects of his /her personality. Robert Rogers' book *A Psychoanalytic Study of the Double in Literature* (1970) is one of the psychoanalytic literary works that focuses on the analysis of characters. He believes that the authors' works are a merely manifestation of their own repressed emotions and thoughts, even if they are not aware that they are, in one way or another, expressing themselves while writing.

Those psychoanalytic critics rely heavily, in their analysis of literary works, on Freudian methods that were developed to analyze dreams. They make an analogy between works of literature and dreams. For them both have a hidden content which is revealed in the form of symbols and images. Hence, the understanding of the covered meaning in literary texts necessitates an analysis of those symbols and images. The method that Freud uses to psychoanalyse the ways whereby the unconscious hidden content is revealed in dreams is

based mainly on the two terms ‘condensation’ and ‘displacement’. In the former, many images and persons are represented in the dream in one single image or person. While in the latter, the desires and fears are displaced in the dream into another image that is linked to them in a particular way. Consequently, psychoanalytic critics deal with metaphors as condensations and with metonyms which are figures of speech that deepen on means of association, as displacements. In other words in their psychoanalysis, critics deal with the symbolic language used in literary works, including metaphors and metonyms, as condensations and displacements, in order to analyze how the author’s repressed thoughts and wishes can escape the control of the conscious part in a covered way in the form of linguistic symbols.

While the emphasis of many psychoanalytic critics was on the author’s psyche, another group of critics; however, concentrate on the psychology of the reader and text. One of those critics is Norman Holland who developed very influential theories that have a remarkable contribution in the foundation of a new school of literary criticism known as Reader-Response Criticism. Holland’s theories are more related to the reader. For him, the literary work should be created in a way that provokes the reader’s buried desires (Murfin 507).

Another well-known theorist, whose ideas added more to the psychoanalytic literary criticism, is Jacques Lacan. The latter did not only adopt Freud’s ideas concerning the Oedipal complex, more importantly; he extended and evolved these ideas (Murfin 509). He believes that the pre-oedipal stage defines the period during which the child regards the whole world as a unified coherent entity, while he is not yet aware that he is an independent entity from the world like his/her mother and all the other persons. Thereafter, before the child moves out of the pre-oedipal stage, he gets in what is known as the ‘Mirror stage’ (Murfin 510). It is the stage where the child does not only realize his independence from his mother and from the other people, but also his own feelings towards those people such as fear from

their hostility, and to feel pity for other persons...etc. He also becomes aware of his desires and eventually competes with others to satisfy these desires.

All of these evolutions led to the construction of the child's own self. The mirror stage is also known as the 'Imagery stage', this stage quickly ends to be followed by the Oedipal stage. At this stage, the child recognizes his independent self from his parents', and becomes aware of gender differences. Murfin explains that "this stage begins when the child, having come to view itself as self and the father and mother as separate selves, perceives gender and gender differences between its parents and between itself and one of its parents" (510). His recognition of his gender is strongly related to the language or the system through which he encounters the names of things, for example the child's presumption that a particular person is his father, based on the claim of his mother that this person is really his father.

Here at this stage the linguistic order is symbolic, because words are not what they should normally refer to, they are just substitutions for these things. The thing that will create a kind of confusion to the boys, this confusion can be manifested in the boy's sense of his 'maleness' and the restraints imposed by what Lacan called the "Law of the Father" which is "a law that prohibits direct desire for and communicative intimacy with what has been the boy's whole world (the mother)" (Murfin 510).

So, the psychoanalytic theory had and still has a profound effect and a significant role in the literary criticism. Most notably, it provides a clear image and an explanation for the way in which author's psychological problems and disorders are expressed in creative literary productions. Moreover, it supplies literary theorists and critics with crucial insights and ideas that help them psychoanalyse and understand the author's psyche, the psychology of the reader and the characters as well. Trauma and self-splitting are among the psychological disorders or experiences that are mostly experienced by the characters of the literary works of the twentieth century.

I.2. Trauma as a Psychological Concept

Trauma is a word that is often used by a large number of people to refer to the negative and stressful events that they experience in their daily life and which have a particular impact on them. However, the concept of trauma is more complex than that. It cannot be defined in the simplistic way relating it to ordinary stressful events one may encounter every day. Thus, high emphasis was placed upon this concept and many researches were devoted to the study of this psychological phenomenon aiming to offer a clear and exact explanation of it.

Trauma is originally a Greek word that means ‘wound’, this term is used at earlier ages to refer to the physical injuries only (Rentea). In other words, trauma refers mainly to all what hurt the person’s body and leave it vulnerable. However, as a result of the massive traumatic events that took place in the world, especially during the 20th century, such as: the two World Wars, the Vietnam War, and many other disasters that have left not only physical, but also profound psychological wounds on many people. The previous definition has proved to be inadequate, since it does not shed light on the psychological aspect. Therefore, the concept of trauma is no longer seen as a physical damage, it is rather a psychological wound in the person’s mind. Accordingly, a special attention has been paid to the concept of trauma in the psychological field, and several definitions were given to clarify the meaning of that concept.

According to the Canadian Center on Substance Abuse, trauma is the “...experience that overwhelms an individual’s capacity to cope... Whether it is experienced early in life...or later in life due to... events that are out of one’s control, trauma can be devastating. Experiences like these can interfere with a person’s sense of safety, self and self-efficacy, as well as the ability to regulate emotions and navigate relationships” (Canadian Center on Substance Abuse 1). Also, Cari Mechaels points out that trauma is experienced when a person “...is subjected to or witnesses physical or psychological injury or threat of injury”(1). However, L. Dell’Osso and A. Rossi in the fifth Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental

Disorders (DSM-5) designed by the American Psychiatric Association (APA) argue that trauma is when “the person experienced, witnessed, or was confronted with an event or events that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of self or others”; they add that trauma refers also to: “the person’s response involved intense fear, helplessness, or horror” (86). Moreover, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration [SAMHSA] states that “Individual trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual’s functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being” (6).

Generally speaking, all the above mentioned definitions consider trauma as the overwhelming, dreadful, negative events and extreme stress that overwhelm the person’s defense mechanism and system of adaptation that gives him/her a sense of control. These traumatic events can be physical or psychological such as: emotional, physical, or sexual abuse, assault, humiliation, witnessing death emotional neglect and abandonment, rape, terrorist attacks, natural disasters, war, a car accident, or serious emotional or physical injuries. The response to those painful, confusing and distressing events is manifested in uncomfortable feelings such as: acute fear, horror, powerlessness, helplessness and disorganized behaviors.

People who go through traumatic experiences seem to have a number of symptoms. These symptoms are included under three main categories: the first one is known as hyperarousal. This category reflects the traumatized people’s constant fear of re-experiencing the traumatic event in which they live with persistent expectations that danger or the traumatic events may return at any moment. Thus, when people feel as if they are always in danger they have extreme startle and aggressive response to the unexpected stimuli, especially those that are associated with the traumatic event. They have difficulty in controlling their emotions

because their feelings change suddenly when they are reminded of their traumas, also they have nightmares and suffer from amnesia and additionally they may have difficulty in the process of thinking and concentration (Carter 326-327).

The second category of the trauma's symptoms is intrusion. As its name indicates, it refers to the interruptions or intrusions of trauma that interrupt the normal course of the traumatized persons' life. Judith Herman states that traumatic events "arrest the course of normal development by its repetitive intrusion in the survivor's life" (37). It means that the traumatized people keep reliving the traumatic moment though it is done and over, as Herman puts it "it is as if time stops at the moment of trauma" (37). This category includes such symptoms as: flashbacks while persons are awake, nightmares during sleep and the tendency to avoid anything that may remind them of the painful experience (Carlson and Ruzek 2-3).

The third and final category called constriction which refers to the feelings of helplessness and powerlessness (Carter 327). The symptoms included in this category are mainly: the tendency of the traumatized people to surrender to the threatening situation. Also they try to disconnect and separate themselves from the traumatic memories by isolating those memories from their conscious. Moreover, they try to limit their daily life activities in order to have control over their lives and to have the ability to manage their fear, and they lose interest in things, hobbies and activities they used to enjoy doing before (Carlson and Ruzek 3-4).

There are other secondary symptoms the traumatized person may have such as: the depression which takes place when people isolate themselves from the society and avoid any interaction with others because of their intense fear to be reminded of their traumas. Also, people's view to the world and to themselves may be changed after the traumatic incident for example they believe that the world is not a safe place as they thought before, or they become unable to trust their abilities. Furthermore, they may become violent and aggressive because of their fears, the thing that will affect their relations with others, and they may develop a

strong feelings of guilt and self-blaming for what happened to them; the feelings that eventually destroy their self-esteem and develop negative feelings about the self, such as the feeling of being worthless. Also, they lose their trust in other people, particularly, if those people are the cause of their trauma. Additionally, people who encounter trauma may develop harming habits such as becoming alcoholic and drug addicted persons as a way to escape from bad feelings, this may cause serious health problems and may lead even to death (Carlson and Ruzek 5-6).

Accordingly, trauma may have profound impacts on people, and may lead to serious problems. However, these problems differ from one person to another depending on some factors such as the persons' ability to endure and cope with stress and pressure in their lives, the severity of the traumatic event, the kind of support they may receive from the surrounding environment, i.e. from family and friends and their ability to withstand the damaging effects of trauma. Some may recover after a short period of time, while others may find it difficult to resist these overwhelming events. Its effects then will last for a longer period of time and even for a life time resulting in serious psychological and/or physical problems. Hence, the traumatic experiences may affect people at different levels they affect their emotions, memory, their fundamental structure of the self, their relationships with other people, their body and much more significantly their psychological state of mind.

Emotions are the engine that directs people's actions as they act according to what they feel. For example, if they feel angry or frightened, they may become violent, while if they feel happy they may act kindly. It also makes their lives normal and stable, since it helps people to cope with and to react appropriately to daily life situations. However, when a traumatic event takes place, the persons' emotional engine will be hindered from functioning, therefore a huge amount of confusing emotions will overwhelm people. Thus, a set of destructive feelings such as guilt and shame will make their life fearful, unstable, and unbearable. Moreover, trauma

affects the persons' memory through the constant interruption of the painful traumatic memories in their life, the thing that makes them live in a constant tension. Also, it makes concentration and thinking difficult. Hence, it handicaps the processing of healing, since the traumatized persons who suffer from these intrusive memories tend to keep these memories out of their conscious in order not to be aware of them, while being aware of the trauma is the first step to healing (Barker 7-8).

Furthermore, traumatic experiences have devastating effects on both the persons' sense of self as well as on their relationship with other people. On the one hand, they impact their sense of self because they undermine their sense of control over themselves and their sense of worth. The events such as physical and emotional abuse and humiliation inflict feelings of powerlessness and inferiority on them; especially if they are children who are developing their sense of self. Traumatic experiences may also distort people's view of themselves, since their self-concept is constructed basing on negative feelings they receive from the gaze of their society which is the cause of those traumatic events. Dr Graham A Barker states that "One's self-concept mirrors how one is regarded by others. When primary carers treat a child in contradictory and inexplicable ways, her sense of self can become confused and impair her identity and behaviors throughout her lifetime" (8). On the other hand, they affect the traumatized persons' relationships with the other people since they destroy their assumptions about the external world, by regarding it as a hostile and unsecure place, while they used to regard it as safe and secure. Also, they destroy their trust in other people, because when the people whom they trust become the source of all the disturbing feelings of humiliation, abuse and disrespect they will not be able to trust these people anymore (Barker 8-9).

Additionally, trauma affects the traumatized people's physical and psychological states, since the prolonged exposure to pressure and stress may lead to a large number of physical diseases such as: fatigue, headache, sexual dysfunction...etc. Being under extreme

and repeated traumas may also lead to many psychological disorders like: depression and dissociative disorder. Depression is a disorder that resulted from the persons' inability to withstand the oppression, the thing that pushes them to internalize and repress all the negative and bad feelings. While dissociative disorders are defensive mechanisms that separate the unity of the consciousness by dissociating persons from the painful thoughts, feelings, memories that resulted from particular traumatic events in order to protect them and help them to cope with traumatic situations. These dissociative disorders may include schizophrenia and Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) (Barker 10). Therefore, be it manifested in such forms of disorders as schizophrenia and DID, self-splitting is one of the devastating results of trauma.

I.3. Self-splitting or Self-shattered as a Psychological Disorder:

The notion of self has been defined differently by many philosophers and psychologists. However, the common point between all these definitions is that the self is a combination of thoughts, beliefs, conscious and unconscious parts, feelings...etc. Thus, this term refers to all features and traits that characterize someone and makes him/her quite different from other persons; it also refers to the person's ego, personality, and identity (Rose 146). Furthermore, the way in which the self is developed or constructed is claimed at earlier ages to be an inner process, which means that it is based merely on the thoughts and beliefs of the person him/herself, far from the external environment. recently, the idea of self formation is recognized by many psychologists and philosophers as a social process. In other words, the self can be formed by the surrounding social environment, since the person is highly influenced by other people with whom s/he is in constant interaction, from the moment of his/her birth till his/her death. Annette Baier states that persons are "Second persons... essentially successors, heirs to other persons who formed and cared about them" (qtd. in Brison 41).

Moreover, the self is characterized by its dynamic nature, as it changes and develops continuously. These changes are related to the experiences the person may go through in his/her life which in turn will influence the person's identity whether positively or negatively. Therefore, traumatic events are the major cause behind the destruction of not only the person's basic structure of the self or personality, but also the link that relates him/her with the community especially if it is the result of another human being's actions (Herman 51). They change the traumatized person's positive assumptions about the self and about the world because the person's positive sense of self is acquired from the society's gaze, which provides him/her with a sense of dignity, individuality and control over his/herself, and since the traumatic experiences break this sense of control and dignity when the person is injured physically or emotionally, the person positive view of him/herself and of the world is changed.

The person's old positive view of the self and of others will be replaced by a new one full of doubt, shame, guilt, fear of being hurt by others and fear of being in a state of helplessness. Thus, a feeling of distrust in him/herself and in others will damage the person's sense of self, make it difficult for him/her to establish relationships with other people and destroy his/her self esteem (International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies 2). This eventually leads to what is known as self-shattered or self-dissociation. Consequently, self-splitting or self-dissociation is one of the devastating impacts of trauma as stated by the Mood Disorders Association of Manitoba INC in the mental health dictionary "Persons who have been traumatized are at increased risk of developing trauma related psychiatric/psychological disorders which include...dissociative disorders" (No page).

Self-splitting is an unconscious mechanism of defense that protects the individual from the effects of the overwhelming events when the person's normal coping skills are unable to manage and to decrease the tension of the traumatic situations by splitting up the individual's

self or identity into two different parts, where one of them is favored and adopted, while the other is denied and refused. Usually, the adopted part is the part that includes feelings, thoughts, and beliefs that the person wants to maintain, while the denied one often involves all the annoying feelings (Fink 59). Ulman and Brothers stress the idea that traumatic events split the ego into two contradictory parts and they add that when the individual's self is shattered he or she refuses trauma through the detachment from the self or from reality (quoted in Fink 59).

Accordingly, self-splitting is manifested in some personality disorders such as: schizophrenia and Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID). The word schizophrenia literally means "split mind" and it refers to the split from reality. It is a chronic and often disabling brain disorder that makes people see the world and the surrounding environment differently and affects their emotions, thoughts and behavior. It affects the persons' emotions through reducing the persons' ability to express their feelings effectively and responding to the daily life situations appropriately. They do not show any facial expressions or they show the inappropriate expression, for example they may appear to be very sad in a situation where they are supposed to be happy.

Furthermore, it affects their thoughts where it fragments the people's way of thinking. For example, their thoughts are not connected logically, they cannot express their ideas in a sequential manner which make interaction with other people difficult and may even lead to isolation and withdrawal from society. Hence, it influences people's behavior, in that they lose their interest in all the activities in their lives and in life as a whole. They tend to be lonely and to act in a strange way, for instance, they may sit for hours without moving or making any sound (National Institute of Mental Health).

Moreover, people with schizophrenia may have a number of related symptoms which are divided into three main categories: positive symptoms, negative symptoms and cognitive

ones. The first one is called positive, because it adds something to the persons' normal behavior, thought and beliefs and not because it is good as its name indicates. This category includes such symptoms as: hallucinations which make the person hears voices, sees, smells, tastes or touches something that is not there in reality. People who suffer from hallucinations may usually find difficulty in distinguishing between what is real and what is not. Auditory hallucinations are the common type of hallucination. It is when people hear internal voices that emerged from their minds or external ones, when they imagine that someone is talking to them.

Delusion is another symptom involved under this category. It is when persons hold beliefs that they are not true such as believing that their thoughts and behaviors are controlled by an outside force, such believes are known as "delusions of reference" or believing that other people want to hurt them, cheat them or spy on them, these are known as "persecutory delusion" (National Institution of Mental Health). Thought disorders and movement disorders are two other positive symptoms. The former refers to abnormal ways of thinking and it takes different forms. For example, it may appear in the form of "disorganized thinking", it is when people are unable to express their ideas in an organized and logical way, or in the form of "word salad", when the persons talk in an incomprehensible way, such as using irrelevant words that make their ideas ambiguous. Also, it may be in the form of "thought blocking", when they stop talking suddenly while they are discussing a particular idea as if the idea is taken from their minds. While, the latter refers to the abnormal body movements, for example persons with movement disorders may stay in the same position for hours as if they are freezing (National Institute of Mental Health).

The second category of the symptoms of schizophrenia which is known as negative symptoms, refers to the disruptions that reduce the persons' normal ability to function; it affects the persons' emotions and behavior. For example persons with negative symptoms

may find difficulty in expressing their emotions, for instance their faces become expressionless and voices become toneless. Besides, they tend to avoid speaking and they may not be able to find pleasure in the fun activities and they may have difficulty in conducting everyday life activities. These symptoms are confusing for many people and they mistake schizophrenia with depression, since the person becomes too lazy and have no interest in life. The third category of symptoms of this disorder is known as the cognitive symptoms. It refers to memory problems that the schizophrenic person may suffer from, these symptoms are also difficult to be recognized because they need specific tests in order to be detected. People with these symptoms seem to have difficulty in comprehending, processing and memorizing information and difficulty in making decisions and they may lack concentration (National Institute of Mental Health).

The other personality disorder that manifests self-splitting, is ‘Dissociative Identity Disorder’ used to be known as ‘Multiple Personality Disorder’. It is a defense mechanism that helps people to cope with traumatic events by splitting the persons’ self or identity into two or more than two different personalities (Mental Health Association INC 1). It is mainly the result of the extreme and repeated traumas that usually occur during childhood such as: emotional, physical, sexual abuse. Mental Health Association states that:

DID/PID is developed during childhood (pre-age7) during this sensitive time that the individual’s personality is being formed. It is the result of: Ongoing and severe neglect and abuse (emotional, physical and/or sexual) Trauma (such as witnessing the death of a parent, war) Ritual/satanic abuse (the condition is deliberately included by cuts to produce compliance and amnesia). (1)

People with DID dissociate themselves from one identity, that is to say from particular thoughts, memories, feelings and actions to associate with another to protect themselves from full awareness of the effects of the traumatic, painful or violent events (Multiple Personality

Disorder no publisher). Hence, people with dissociative identity disorder may experience a number of symptoms such as depression, auditory and visual hallucination, slip disorders and tend to dissociate in order to avoid anything that may remind them of the traumatic events such as people, places and feelings that are related to the traumatic experiences (Mental Health Association 2).

To conclude, The solid foundation that psychoanalysis offers to literary critics by providing them with a full explanation to the individual's psychic, to help them to analyse the literary works, and to understand the authors, the readers and the characters' psychic. Thus, among the many psychological concepts that are highly discussed in the psychological field and that play a significant role in understanding literary works, particularly during the twentieth century, are trauma and self-splitting.

Chapter two: The Representation of Trauma and Self-splitting in the American and African American Literature

American and African American literature are thought to be the representation of social conditions. Two of the recurrent themes in American and black literature that perfectly depict their social reality during the twentieth century are trauma and self-splitting which are the result of various social circumstances such as racism, wars, terrorism...etc. Writers of that period tried to discuss such themes in their writings as they are part of the society, they feel the urge to tackle such social issues. This chapter will be divided into three sections. The first one will be devoted to highlight the strong influence of the traumatic social circumstances on American and African American literature and to explain the reasons behind those traumas. The second section will attempt to show how the theme of trauma and self-splitting is depicted in the American literature by providing some literary examples of different authors. While the third section will examine the extensive use of that theme in the African American literature, also by shedding light on a number of black writers' works.

II.1. Trauma and Self-splitting as Aspects of Modern Characters in Twentieth Century American and African American literature:

Literature has always been a reflection of human thoughts, feelings, and experiences such as traumatic events (Shubhanku 548). It is considered as a refuge where writers express themselves freely and pour out their emotions in their books wether willingly or unwillingly; these emotions and experiences are portrayed in the literary works in the form of symbols and metaphors. Moreover, as the history proved to be inadequate to reveal the humanistic side of the overwhelming events that include the human's emotions and feelings, literature, however, was believed to be the fertile field to examine and discover peoples' experiences.

Accordingly, a new genre of literature has emerged called 'trauma narratives' the aim behind these narratives is to reveal the traumatic experiences by means of describing what happened exactly, so that a clear understanding of the unspeakable and the incomprehensible will take place. In this respect, Laurie Vickroy states that "Trauma narratives go beyond presenting trauma as subject matter or character study. They internalize the rhythms, processes and uncertainties of traumatic experience within their underlying sensibilities and structures" (qtd in John and Richard 3). However, as the traumatic events cannot be revealed in the same exact way as they happen for the first time, a number of techniques and strategies are used by writers of trauma narratives in order to ensure a more effective and a better depiction of the horror of these events as well as the dreadful effects that such events may have on one's physical and psychological states. Accordingly, a number of techniques are used by the American and African American writers of the twentieth century whose literary works are predominated by the themes of trauma and the shattered self. These strategies or techniques include mainly: the fragmented narrative, non-chronological and non-linear narration, the jumps in the time from the present to the past and vice versa or what is known as flashbacks and flash-forwards, the narration in a repetitive manner (John and Richard 5).

During the twentieth century America was the scene for series of traumatic events including the two World Wars, the Cold War, the Holocaust, the terroristic attacks, and the Vietnam War along with many other horrible incidents. All of these traumatic experiences had profoundly affected almost all the aspects of life economically, politically, and socially. Literature was no exception, where such events along with the emergence of theories like the psychological theories brought the writers attention to the humanistic side of these events. Therefore, trauma was the special mark that distinguished and predominated literature during this century as the authors' main focus during this period was to detect the feelings and

thoughts and to delve into the engraved wounds resulting from the tragic events in order to voice the silenced pain, to describe those traumas, and to show their damaging impacts both on the physical as well as the psychological levels (Barry, Neves et.al 1). These devastating effects are manifested in harm and disorders like shattered selves or splitting personalities.

Therefore, trauma and self-splitting were the central themes in many American literary works at this period. When the American writers or the survivors who had ‘Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Symptoms’, attempted to transform their traumatic memories and their disillusionments into words so that the wounds of their souls may be healed as they liberate their repressed painful memories and express their feelings of helplessness, loneliness, and hopelessness. Moreover, they attempt through these literary narratives to convey their horrific experiences to the coming generations as a way of recording history. Thus, out of this wind of change in America, a special emphasis was put on these issues in the literary field. Consequently, a large number of literary figures who dealt largely with those themes emerged, some of them are: William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway, and Kurt Vonnegut...etc whose works are based on stories revolved around tragic experiences of the past which kept haunting the characters and eventually distorted their personalities and even led them to a state of insanity.

As matter of the fact that the African American writers and the American writers are in the same context, the African American literature like the American literature, was dramatically influenced by changes that touched America, not only by the events that took place during the twentieth century but more profoundly by the other experiences that dated back to slavery and the ‘civil war’, which inflicted deep wounds in the blacks’ psyche that still bleed until the recent years. Thus, in almost all the African American literary works one can feel the extent to which racism can destroy blacks’ identity especially those who

internalize the racist stereotypes created by the white society. Therefore, black writers emphasized these traumatic experiences and tried to expose readers to the devastating impacts of these events and how it destroys the blacks' sense of selfhood. Some of the prominent figures of the twentieth century whose works are mainly characterized by themes of trauma and self-splitting are: Toni Morrison in novels like *Beloved*, *Sula*, and *The Bluest Eye*, Maya Angelou in her novel *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, Alice Walker also with her very influential work *The Color Purple*, Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952) and Richard Wright among others. Their works are mainly about characters who cannot integrate in the present because they cannot get rid of their haunting traumatic past. Consequently, their personalities are shattered and they feel lost.

The themes of trauma and self-splitting are exhibited in particular forms, trauma is depicted in the overwhelming incidents that the characters confront in their lives, such as: the death of loved one, sexual insults, emotional neglect, physical torture, witnessing incident of murder or fatal car accidents. It is also depicted in the reactions and feelings of the characters that emerge from these traumatic events such as: worry, fear, hurt, anger, revenge....etc. Trauma is frequently depicted through nightmares, hallucinations, and flashbacks...etc. The theme of self shattered is manifested in the damaging results of those complex and incomprehensible emotions that take place as a reaction to these traumatic events, like when the characters of the literary works for example end up in a state of insanity.

II.2. Trauma and Self-splitting in American Literature: Some Examples

One of the American literary works that deals with the themes of trauma and self-splitting is Leslie Marmon Silko's novel *Ceremony* (1977). In this novel Silko tries to exhibit how the traumatic events and the horror of the Second World War caused devastating effects on people, especially those who participated in the war and personally witnessed every

terrifying event and confronted death, and to show how these traumatic experiences keep haunting those people and imprisoning them in the past preventing them from living the present.

Ceremony tells the story of a former soldier called Tayo who participated in the Second World War and who was deeply affected by what he witnessed in the battlefield. His psychological state has deteriorated which prevented him from living a normal and calm life in the present. The novel is divided into three parts through which Silko describes the traumas that Tayo encounters, and the extent to which these traumas affect his life and finally how Tayo can overcome his tormenting memories and cure himself. As a matter of fact, when Tayo was a soldier in the battlefields of the Second World War, he experienced the most traumatizing and disturbing events in his life. These events changed his life completely and drove him into an endless cycle of pain and suffering. Some of the overwhelming events that played a great role in the deconstruction of his psyche were when he was ordered to shoot a group of Japanese soldiers within whom he noticed a soldier who looked like his uncle Josiah “So Tayo stood there with nausea, while they fired at the soldiers, and he watched his uncle fall...and even after Rocky started shaking him ...telling him to stop crying, it was *still* Josiah lying there” (Silko 8) Moreover, he saw how his cousin and best friend Rocky were murdered by a Japanese soldier. These two events made him lose his mind and entered into a long period of muteness and he ended up in the hospital receiving mental treatments by the army doctors who realized from his symptoms that it was a battle fatigue. They treated him by injecting him with drugs in order to help him forget his painful memories. After a period of time Tayo get out of his muteness and started speaking, though he used the third person while speaking about himself. For that and despite the fact that his cure is failed since his way of speaking seemed abnormal, the doctors diagnosed him as cured. (Rogers 112-113)

Although Tayo was released from the army hospital and returned to live with his family and the doctors' confirmed that he was cured from his Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, his disturbing memories continued to torture him and to prevent him from living his present time normally. As a result he was unable to distinguish between the past and the present "Years and months had become weak, and people could push against them and wander back and forth in time" (18) Since these memories kept appearing constantly in his dreams in the form of nightmares and hallucinations, "Tayo didn't sleep well that night... even after he lay still again, calling up humid dreams of black night and loud voices rolling him over and over again like debris caught in a flood" (Silko 5) These hallucinations led the protagonist to live in a permanent fear. He feared "the sinews connected behind his eyes [will] slip loose and spin his eyes to the interior of his skull where the scenes waited for him" (Silko 9) In addition to these traumas, Tayo started blaming himself for the long period of drought because he thought that he was the cause of that drought. The reason is that he imagined that when he was in the war he cursed the rain and prayed in order to stop it from falling forever so that his cousin's wound, which would lead later on to his death, would be healed. This self-blaming added a new burden on Tayo and worsened his psychological state and destroyed his sense of the self rendering his personality fragile. Consequently and due to his inability to bear this reality, Tayo took refuge in alcohol in an attempt to forget his pain. (Rogers 113-119)

Accordingly, Tayo's family felt the urge to find a way to help him getting out of this devastating cycle of the painful memories; for that they asked for the help of a traditional doctor called Ku'oosh but unfortunately he couldn't cure him, so they send him to another doctor called Betonie who succeeded in curing Tayo. This doctor interpreted Tayo's traumatic experiences and reassured that he was not an exceptional case and that the traumatic events that he experienced during the Second World War were haunting the entire society of Native

Americans, who stuck to their traditions and didn't accept the changes of the modern days. Thus Betonie explained to him that the only way to the cure was to cope with and to accept the changes that happened in the world, especially the terrifying war that took place in the modern days. Gradually with the help of the doctor Betonie, and with the love of his Antie and his grandmother, Tayo was healed. His view to the world changed, his self-blame disappeared and his shattered self was rebuilt again. (Rogers 119-120)

The theme of trauma is also tackled in William Faulkner's novel *The Sound and the Fury* (1929). This work is not only a reflection of the collective trauma that is a result of the First World War's horror events manifested in a general sense of uncertainty, but it is also a depiction of the writer's own anxieties, traumas and disappointments about the social and political conditions he lived in. This novel is divided into four chapters; each chapter describes the decline of one of the members of the Compson family. The family composed of an alcoholic father Mr. Compson and selfish mother Mrs. Compson and four children: Benjamin (Benjy), Quentin, Jason, and the only girl called Candace (Caddy).

The Sound and the Fury tells the story of the two Compson brothers Benjy and Quentin and their obsessive relationship with their sister Caddy it describes how their haunting memories full of traumatic events and tragedies, related to the loss of their beloved sister, destroy their lives and eventually lead to the fall and the dispersion of the whole family. The story opens with the youngest brother Benjy who is mentally-handicapped remembering his past and how he gradually loses his sister whom she used to be the center of his life, since she is the only person in the family who loves him and who fills the void that his non caring mother left by taking care of him. He remembers when she lost her virginity and got pregnant with an illegitimate child. She was obliged to marry another man in order to cover up her sin, which is the truth that her husband couldn't bear when he discovered it and pushed him to

divorce her. For that reason Caddy was rejected and disowned from the Compsons family and this was the end of Benjy's special relationship with his sister forever; this affects him severely and leaves him emotionally shattered. Consequently by losing Caddy who was the essence of Benjy's life, Benjy loses his will to live and takes a refuge in his memories. (Whitfield 4-15)

Quentin, like Benjy, is extremely obsessed with his sister, for that he finds it difficult to accept his sister's sexual maturity, her illegitimate pregnancy, her marriage and the idea of being far from the only person who used to take care of him when he was a child. His close relationship with Caddy makes what happened to her and the changes that took place in his life unbearable for him. Thus as an attempt from Quentin to prevent his sister from changing into woman and getting marriage and to protect his family from falling apart, he lies to his father saying that he is the one with whom Caddy has sexual relationship but this does not work. Consequently, the profound damage done to his psyche out of these traumas in addition to the haunting memories of his lovely sister push Quentin to commit suicide by throwing himself in the river as an attempt to escape his painful reality. (Whitfield 16-29)

Furthermore, after the horrific incident of Quentin's suicide, another series of traumatic incidents take place in Compson's family that will completely destroy its union. When Miss Quentin, Caddy's daughter, who lived with the Compsons family and never met her mother, runs away with her boyfriend after taking all the money that her mother used to send her, but her cruel uncle Jason steals. After a period of time Mr. Compson dies because of alcohol, meanwhile Mrs. Compson also dies and this gives the materialistic brutal brother Jason the opportunity to sell the Compson's house and gain some money; so he takes his brother Benjy to an asylum and then sells the house, this marks the complete destruction of the Compson's family. Hence, the traumatic experiences that the Compson family went through did not only

shatter their personalities, but also destroy the whole family some died because they couldn't withstand these traumas such as the parents and their son Quentin; while others ended up in loneliness like Caddy or foolishness such as Benjy or with an obscure future like Miss Quentin and her uncle Jason. (Whitfield 30-40)

Another literary work where the themes of trauma and self-splitting were discussed is Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-five* (1969). In this novel Vonnegut tries to articulate his personal traumatic war experiences that resulted from what he witnessed, especially the Dresden bombing through the character of Billy who could not get rid of his traumatic war memories, and keeps reliving the traumatic past through a series of flashbacks "... Billy closed his eyes. When he opened them, he was back in World War two again. His head was on the wounded rabbit's shoulder." (29)

Billy has gone to sleep a senile widower and awakened on his wedding day. He has walked through a door in 1955 and come out of another in 1941. He has gone back through that door to find himself in 1963. He has seen his birth and death many times, he says, and pays random visits to all the events in between. He says. Billy is spastic in time, has no control over where he is going next, and the trips aren't necessarily fun. He is in a constant state of stage of fright, he says, because he never knows what part of his life he is going to have to act in next. (29)

Billy's traumas are not solely due to the war experiences, they are also the result of the overwhelming and fearful events he encountered in his childhood. One of these dreadful incidents took place at earlier age when his father sentenced him to death by throwing him in a swimming pool though he couldn't swim. Another incident is when he fell into the Grand Canyon, in addition to what he experienced in the Carlsbad Caverns where all the lights are turned off by the guides and Billy is left in a total darkness. These traumas that the protagonist

went through in his childhood intensified his fears. After this unstable childhood, another series of traumas launched in Billy's life after joining the army. He is shocked by the news of his father's death. After this painful event Billy is sent to the war as an assistant of an unarmed chaplains which are to be captured then in the Bulge battle. Since then Billy entered another journey of suffering where he witnessed many tragic events. After, being captured Billy is deported to a POW camp the place where he experienced all feelings of deprivation. He is then sent to Dresden city, short after his arrival the city is bombed and is totally destroyed; and a huge number of people are killed. The day after the bombing and within this atmosphere that is filled by the smell of death Billy is asked to carry bodies of dead people from the rubble. As a result of these experiences Billy undergoes a severe nervous breakdown that needs a serious treatment in the mental hospital. (Newton 4-6)

Shortly after Billy's service in the army ends; he makes a very good amount of money and comfortable life. However, this comfort could not do anything to help him forget or escape his painful memories, for that reason Billy keeps receiving shock treatments in a mental hospital. Despite Billy's attempts to liberate himself from the shackles of the bad memories and the painful past by checking himself in the mental hospital, he could not cover up because his life is full of tragic events. While he is still under the effects of past traumas a number of other horrible events take place in his life, where he survives a plane crash that kills all people and leaves Billy as the only survivor with a dangerous head injuries "Everybody was killed but Billy" (29) this incident along with the death of the protagonist's wife in a car accident while she was in her way to visit in the hospital and the incident where Billy is shot to death by a former paranoid soldier called Paul Lazzaro, had been the watershed in Billy's psychological life which broke his nervous down and killed his passion of living in such atrocious world "He was unenthusiastic about living"(52). (Vonnegut 91)

So, the character's inability to forget his painful past indicates how strong the effects of trauma are, as it may deconstruct the person's personality leading to splitting identity. Thus, self-splitting or shattered identity is also another important theme in this novel and is also embodied in Billy's character, whose personality is shattered due to the cruel catastrophes he experienced including his difficult childhood, the death of his wife, and the horrible events he witnessed in the war. This shattered identity can be reflected in Billy's eagerness to escape his reality to live in an imaginary world called "Tralfamadore" where he can find only good things, this is an attempt from him to find shelter where he can hide and escape the painful memories. However, Billy's schizophrenic state of mind and shattered personality eventually lead him to insanity. (Vonnegut 92-93)

Linda Barry's novel *Cruddy* (1999) is another literary work that deals with the themes of trauma and self splitting. The story of this novel is told by a sixteen year old girl called Roberta Rohbeson who describes the cruel world she lives in; her tragic life with a brutal father and an abusive mother in a troubled house and the terrible journey she was forced to go through with her father. Roberta's story is a series of traumatic events that engraved deep injuries in her psychic and lead to the destruction of her personality to the point that she takes refuge in drugs in order to escape her horrific life, worse than that she preferred death over living because of her painful reality as she planned to kill herself.

Roberta's suffering is mainly due to her parents, the two persons who are supposed to be her protectors but unfortunately they are anything but parents. She has a non-caring mother and a selfish greedy father. When she is eleven years old she is obliged by her mother to go on a homicidal road trip with her alcoholic, murderous father in search of money. During this violent trip she experienced the most traumatizing and terrible events, as she witnesses vicious murders and corpses of murdered people, she is sexually abused, and part of her finger

is cut off, worse than this she is forced by her father to shave her hair and to pretend that she is a mute, mongoloid boy called Clyde to attract people's attention and to gain their pity and sympathy. This journey ends in a fatal disaster where numerous murders in a nuclear test zone including Roberta's murder of her father took place. She is found with her dog walking in the Nevada desert and she looks like a walking dead because she is the only survivor and she is completely covered with blood "the authorities found a child calmly walking in the boiling desert, covered in blood...she could not give the authorities any information about why she was the only survivor and everyone else was laying around in hacked-up pieces" (Barry 13) to be returned later on to her home. However, Roberta's suffering doesn't end here because her life is changed radically after all these horrible events. After Roberta is found, she is returned to her mother who never cares or worries about her, she rather takes advantage from Roberta's story to be under the spotlight of media; bitter than that she is forced by her mother to suppress her story and never speak about it. (Davies 26-29)

All of these miserable, traumatizing incidents destroyed her personality, changed her view to the world and reinforced her desire to escape her disgusting, hostile reality in any way. These radical distractions of Roberta's sense of selfhood can be seen clearly in her way of thinking and her behaviors. For example throughout the novel she keeps calling her father "the father" instead of "my father" also she fights with her mother and sister almost all the time, the acts that depict her lack of feeling of belonging to a family due to the traumas that were inflicted on her. What is worse is that she abandons her school and becomes a drug addicted and joins a group of friends with whom she takes drugs and to whom she tells her story for the first time. In one of their adventures where they took the road back to the desert where the major traumatizing experiences she witnessed took place, two of her friends are lost after falling into the river, and the rest return to their home town ill and too weak because of

the drugs, what is more is that they stayed in the same hospital where one of their friend's brother committed suicide. The story ends up with Roberta's suicide, though it is not clearly depicted in the novel whether she really died or not. It can be understood from the novel's prologue where Roberta states that she would be dead when readers hold her book. Also it can be understood from her sister's words at the end of the novel which indicate that Roberta is lost and they don't know where she is and whether she is alive or dead "I hate you Roberta!!! Where are you??" (Davies 29-36)

So, all of these traumatic experiences that Roberta underwent in her life and that she could not bear did not only leave deep scars in her psychic, but also disfigured her personality and shattered her sense of the self, feelings that eventually lead to her death.

II.3. Trauma and Self-splitting in African American Literature: Some Examples

Trauma and self-shattered are among the very important themes that are widely tackled in African American literature. One of the literary works that dealt with those themes is Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1969). It is an autobiography that holds traumas and all the bad experiences Angelou went through during her life that led to the destruction of her personality.

Her callous life starts when she was abandoned by her parents at an early age; they sent her with her older brother, Bailey, to Arkansas in South America to live with their grandmother. This was the first displacement for Maya that opened the door for the suffering of the contentious displacements. As a little girl and at a very delicate period of her life, when she is supposed to construct her identity and her self-image; she lived away from her parents as a consequence she lacks their tenderness, the absence of her parents made her feel rejected particularly when she remembered how they sent her and her brother alone with only a note

written on their wrists that was addressed to any person who is concerned “...wearing tags on our wrists which instructed— ‘To Whom It May Concerned’ ”(7).

Furthermore, the total absence of her parents who did not contact her from the moment of her arrival to Arkansas not only confirmed Maya’s feeling of rejection but also convinced her that they are dead “...I had been confined that they were both dead” (56). Since she did not see them or even hear anything from them for years, this deepened her pain, as she spent most of the time crying for not knowing how her mother looked like. Thus she kept trying to create an image of her mother in her mind “I could cry anytime I wanted by picturing my mother (I didn’t quite know what she looked like) lying in her coffin. Her hair which was black...The face was brown like a big O, and since I couldn’t feel in the features I printed M O T H E R across the O, and tears would fall down my cheeks like warm milk” (56). However, when Maya realized that her mother was alive after receiving a gift from her, she became completely depressed and she started wondering about the reasons that may make a mother leave her little children. Even worse she started blaming herself about the fault that she and her brother made so that their parents abandoned them. This was the first hit that severely shook Maya’s psychological state (Khaled 31-33).

Moreover, racism and the social rejection that Maya endured in the South deepened her psychological injury and broke her self-confidence. As a black girl who lives in an extremely racist society that restricted the standards of beauty to the white skin, fair hair and the blue eyes, Maya’s hatred to herself increased as she did not possess neither the white skin nor the blue eyes. She internalized those stereotypes about her ugly blackness and developed a desire of being white girl in order to be attractive and accepted. She stated “...one day I would woke out of my black ugly dream, and my real hair, which was long and blond, would take the place of the kinky mass that momma wouldn’t let me straighten? My light blue eyes were

going to hypnotize them” (4). One of the events that highly affected Maya’s little mind and perfectly depicted the cruddy racist Southern society is when Maya went with her grandmother to a white dentist to get rid of the terrible toothache and he refused to touch Maya saying that he would touch a dog’s mouth rather than a dirty nigger’s mouth. The painful, humiliating words of the white racist dentist broke her soul; therefore little Maya lost the sense of self and her black identity and intensified her feeling of inferiority and her psychological state worsened (Khaled 34-6)

However, the traumatic experience that ruined Angelou’s personality and shattered her identity was the sexual abuse that she experienced at the age of eight years old from her mother’s lover who raped her and threatened her that if she would tell anyone about what he did, her brother would be killed; this pushed her to repress her sorrow and bury her secret deep inside her heart. Hence, when this event became a heavy burden that little Maya couldn’t carry anymore she revealed the secret by telling her brother about the rape. When this news was spread among the family members, her mother’s lover was imprisoned and after few days he was killed by Maya’s uncles because he was released without any punishment. After this trauma Angelou’s personality was totally destroyed and she entered into a long period of muteness because she considered herself the responsible for all what happened “He was gone, and a man was dead because I lied”(93). “The only thing I could do was to stop talking to people”(93). However, despite Maya’s psychological illness and the destruction of her personality she was one of the lucky persons who could recover from the effects of all traumas that she witnessed in her life by the help of her family and through literature which was a refuge for her and a way to gain the sense of her self (Khaled 37-40).

The Color Purple (1982) is another African American literary work that focuses on the issues of trauma and the shattered identity. Alice Walker in this novel reveals the life of Celie

the protagonist that is full of traumatic stories, which have a dreadful effect on her's personality. This story turns around the horrible life of a black girl called Celie, it is revealed in an epistolary form in that it is told through the letters Celie writes constantly to God and to her younger sister Nettie.

Celie was only fourteen years old when she experienced a series of overwhelming traumatic events that changed her view of herself and the world. Her miserable life started with a shocking event of repeated rape by her stepfather, Alphonso, who didn't only abuse her sexually but also assaulted her and silenced her by telling her that she should not tell anyone about what he did and that the only one she could tell is God. As a result she repressed her pain within herself deep down. Moreover, as Celie was the old daughter who lost her mother and found herself responsible for her younger sister Nettie, she was obliged to protect her sister from Alphonso's sexual desires for that she sacrificed and submitted herself to his sexual desires in order to please him and to draw his attention away from her little sister. Thus, she did all what he asked her to do, and even she wore the clothes of her dead mother to look like her "You gonna do what your mommy wouldn't" (1). As a result of this sexual abuse, Celie gave birth to two children whom she would never see again for almost all of her life because she didn't know or hear anything about them from the moment when her stepfather took them away from her. She assumed that he killed them. Moreover, Celie's suffering doesn't end here, she rather confronted more difficult and traumatic events than that. For example, when Alphonso married another woman, he started to look for a way to get rid of Celie that is why he forced her to marry a merciless man who believed that the only way to keep a women under his control was by treating her violently. Thus, he abuses her both physically and psychologically by beating her, insulting her, and calling her with inappropriate names like describing her as ugly. Hence, neither her husband whom she never

dare to call with his name out of her fears nor his wild children treat her as a human being, she was humiliated and mistreated by all of them. Thus, Celie's marriage was not a refuge for her from what she had endured in Alphonso's house; her situation is rather worse than before (Clarke 1).

Furthermore, after moving with Nettie to her husband's home, Celie confronts the most traumatizing events in her life that kill her will to live, when she loses her little sister who finds no solution but to run away from home in order to protect herself from the sexual advances of Celie's husband. This incident inflicted a deep harm in Celie's psyche because her relation with her sister Nettie was a strong one since Nettie was the only person in Celie's life who always cares about her, loves her, and makes her feel that she has a value in this world. Hence, the pain that resulted from the absence of Nettie is heightened later on because Mr. ___ hides the letters that Nettie sent to Celie, so Celie did not hear anything about her sister for several years and she did not receive any letter from her though she did her best to fulfill her vow and to keep in touch by sending her letters constantly to tell her about her experiences in Africa, as a result, Celie becomes almost certain of the death of her sister. This kills her deep inside to the point that she accepts all the abuse and exploitation of her husband and she does not want to make any reaction to defend herself. All of these overwhelming traumas in addition to many other painful experiences had left constant scars in Celie's psyche and left her with a vulnerable personality characterized by self-dispersion, self-hatred, and a sense of powerlessness in which she lost the sense of pain and she accepted any humiliation or abuse to the point that her self-confidence is destroyed and she lost her passion in living (Clarke 1).

However, with the love and help of Mr. ___'s lover Shug Avery, the strong woman who never accepted any abuse or humiliation, Celie gathered the courage and strength that she

needs to stand up to the mistreatment of any person and to change her miserable life. One of the scenes that demonstrates the radical change in Celie's personality is when she determined to leave her husband's home though he prevented her, she responds to his threats by saying that "It's time to leave you and enter into the creation. And your dead body is just the welcome mat I need" (Walker 207). This was a defining moment in Celie's life because she broke the cycle of her pitiful life and liberated herself from the shackles of control and oppression. Eventually, Celie's psychological injuries recovered from the effects of the traumas that she confronted, and her life changed completely to be better than before where she rebuilds a strong, independent personality and she becomes an autonomous, successful woman who respects and loves herself and who makes her own decisions "I'm pore, I'm black, I may be ugly and can't cook... but I'm here."(179) (Dailey 2).

Trauma and self-splitting are also among the predominant themes in Toni Morrison's novels *Beloved* (1987) is one of these novels that are full of traumas and tragic events which split the characters' identity. The essence of this novel, like most of Morrison's novels, is to show the brutality and the cruelty African Americans endure in the inhuman, racist white society and to reveal the extent to which these unbearable traumatic events affect the blacks' psychological state and destroy their sense of the self and to show how this makes some of them see in death the safe refuge that will rescue them from the torment they are living, accordingly they kill themselves and prefer death over their lives.

Beloved tells the tragedies that a thirteen years old girl named Sethe confronts in her life and how these tragedies affect her psychological state. She is a former slave who did not know her parents and did not remember anything about them, thus she had never experienced the parents' tenderness. Hence, as a slave, Sethe, lives in a plantation called 'Sweet Home' owned by white racist family where she get married with Hall who is also a slave and gives

birth to three children; a daughter called Beloved and two other boys whose names are Howard, and Buglar. In this plantation Sethe experienced the most traumatizing and cruel events, one of them is when Sethe is assaulted by the owner's nephews who suck milk from her breasts and when she is tortured mercilessly by them as she reports what happened to the owner's wife. Because of this traumatizing incident and out of her fear that her children will be sold and live the miserable life she is living; Sethe manages and determines to escape the plantation to a safe place, so that she saves herself and her children's life. Accordingly, she takes the first step to escape by sending her children to Cincinnati where her mother-in-law lives, after that Sethe flees and succeeded to escape unlike the other slaves who are hanged and others are imprisoned for their unsuccessful attempt to escape the plantation. In her way to join her mother-in-law and her children and to breathe the smell of freedom, Sethe gives birth to her fourth child whom she named Denver. However, after a short period of time from her arrival to Cincinnati, the plantation owner who is known as the schoolteacher and one of his nephews arrive to the place where Sethe lives with the help of a slave catcher to recapture her with her children and return them back to the Sweet Home plantation, so to show her resistance and refusal to go back to the life of slavery and to protect her children from living the same fate, Sethe kills her eldest daughter Beloved and threatens them to kill the other three children if they try to take them back to slavery (Finck 98). The event of killing her own daughter caused Sethe a great wound engraved in her psychic and distorted her self-image and her view to the whole world. Moreover, immediately after the horrific moment of her daughter's murder Sethe is taken to the jail and sentenced to death, however due to the efforts that are made by the abolitionists Sethe is released from the prison after three months only and from that moment on Sethe is haunted by the ghost of her dead daughter and by the traumatic memories, and she faces more difficult situations and incidents that weaken her through time both psychologically and physically, as she lives in solitude with her children.

Years later, her mother-in-law dies and her death is another hit to Sethe's soul that weakens and worsens her psychological state, because Baby Suggs or her mother-in-law was the only source of hope for her as she always tries to embrace Sethe's pain, to smooth her scars and to comfort her. Moreover, the presence of Beloved's spirit makes the house's atmosphere unsupportable and pushes Sethe's sons to leave the house, thus she lives with her only daughter in an unbearable solitude (Field 3-4).

Hence, a short period later when Sethe meets Paul D a former slave whom she knew in the 'Sweet Home' plantation and her relationship with him started to develop, a young woman named Beloved enters their life and ruined everything, she destroys Sethe's relationship with Paul by seducing him, destructs Sethe's normal life, and affects her personality in a very dangerous way. As Sethe believes that this woman is just another body holds the soul of her dead daughter Beloved, she withdraws completely from the outside world and her major concern becomes restricted in pleasing Beloved; thus her relationship with this woman becomes an abnormal and obsessive one. Eventually Sethe's physical as well as psychological state is worsened and she lost the sense of life. However, with the help of Denver and some of her neighbors and later on the help of Paul D after his return to Sethe, enables her to break the shackles of Beloved's control and to change the negative view about herself, to regain the self-respect and to rebuild her shattered personality (Sirkka 6-19).

To sum up the theme of trauma and self-splitting that characterized the American literature in general and the African American literature in particular, is the result of the hostile atmosphere that characterized the twentieth century America. Thus, the main focus of many American and Black authors during this period was to reveal the damaging impact of the traumatic event on their psyches. Among these writers Toni Morrison, Maya Angelou, Alice Walker, Linda Barry, William Faulkner and Marmon Silko. They deal with the theme of

trauma and self-splitting by using disturbed and psychologically damaged characters who suffer from extreme repeated traumas.

Chapter Three: Trauma and Self-splitting in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*

The Bluest Eye is one of Toni Morrison's greatest works, it is published in 1970. The story of this novel is inspired by the weird desire of Morrison's classmate, who yearns to have blue eyes. This desire draws Morrison's attention to the extent to which the whites' racist ideas are infused in the blacks' souls. Therefore, she feels the urge to show the danger of the internalization of such ideas by writing *The Bluest Eye*. This novel is characterized by its strong and rich language and its daring subjects as well. Throughout the story, Morrison tries to remove the curtain and reveal what is hidden about the African Americans suffering in the white racist society, by exposing the readers to a story which is full of tragic and traumatic events that destroy the characters both physically and psychologically, and leave them with a fragmented selves and shattered identities. This chapter will analyse the characters's traumatic experiences and their split selves in Toni Morrisons *The Bluest Eye*. Also it will attempt to show the message Morrison tries to convey through this work by providing a glimpse about her personality and her beliefs.

This novel tackles the issue of trauma that the African American people endured during the twentieth century in America. That is mainly the result of the socially created stereotypes about the supremacy of the white people and the inferiority of the black race. Besides, the devastating effect of these traumas on the blacks, especially on the most delicate and vulnerable portion of the black society which is children, where they split up the Blacks' sense of self and result in a psychological disintegration. The critic Barbara Christian stresses this idea saying that:

In *The Bluest Eye* the central theme is the effect of the standardized western ideas of physical beauty and romantic love not only on the black women...but also on the black community's perception of its worth ...For in internalizing the west's

standards of beauty, the black community automatically disqualified itself as the possessor of its own cultural standard. (qtd in Bloom 34)

The story of this novel turns around a little black girl called Pecola Breedlove, who wants to change the colour of her eyes into blue in order to reach one of the standards of the white beauty. Therefore she will be accepted and loved by the whole society. However, her inability to realize this illogical desire in reality leads her to madness.

In the story of *The Bluest Eye*, Toni Morrison brings to light the destructive impacts of the trauma caused by the whites' culture on the African Americans psyche through the Breedloves family. The family falls apart as a result of the deep consumption of the whites' culture and the strong belief in their inferiority. The Breedloves are members of the Black community who yearn to build a strong and ideal self-image that fits the standards of the main stream culture which represents for them the ideal model through which they define and recognize themselves. However, nothing in their reality corresponds to the whites' standards and helps them to maintain their dreams and affirm themselves as independent individuals. Therefore, they stuck in the contradiction between their reality and the ideal image created by the whites which leads to a splitted sense of the self (Ramirez 76).

Pecola is the youngest girl of the Breedlove family, an unstable family composed of a non-caring mother called, Pauline, an alcoholic father named, Cholly and a brother whose name is Sam. She is an eleven years old black and poor girl who endures devastating traumatic events. These traumas are solely due to the strong convictions that Pecola shares with her family about beauty and love. They are strongly convinced that they are ugly and believe that beauty and love are related only to the white skin, the blue eyes and the golden hair (Maleki 73). Since she does not have these characteristics and her black skin, flat nose, and curly hair do not confirm to those standards, Pecola is rejected, humiliated, neglected and abused by her

family and her community. As a result, she develops a strong sense of self-hatred and destroys her relation with her family and the external world. In other words, the trauma Pecola encounters in her life destroy not only the basic structure of herself, but also the link that relates her to the external world. In this context, Judith Herman states that “traumatic events have primary effects not only on the psychological structures of the self, but also on the systems of attachment and meaning that link individual and community” (51).

During her short life, Pecola Breedlove went through many traumas; she is abused by almost all people she has contact with especially her parents. Her relation with her mother Pauline is not a mother-daughter relationship it is rather a relation of an oppressor and oppressed. When she gave birth to Pecola, she was disappointed because her baby is too ugly and does not respond to her expectations. That is to say Pecola’s physical appearance does not fit the standards of the ideal beauty her mother and the whole world agree on. When Pauline saw her for the first time she described her as ugly “I knowed she was ugly. Head full of pretty hair, but Lord she was ugly”(Morrison 126). By stressing the idea of beauty and ugliness concerning her daughter, Pauline reflects her deepest dissatisfaction with Pecola, which is mainly due to her self-hatred and because she reminds her of herself and of the suffering that she encounters as a black and ugly woman in an extremely racist society that sanctifies the white beauty. For that reason Pauline can not have the normal feelings of tenderness and love every mother has when she sees and embraces her new baby for the first time. This rejection and disdain that fill Pauline’s heart toward her daughter, explains why she does not even call her by her name but rather refers to her as a thing “...the baby come. Big old healthy thing. She looked different from what I thought” (Morrison 125).

As a consequence to Pauline’s dissatisfaction of her own daughter, she despises her, and feels ashamed of her. Even, she abuses Pecola and never feels guilty for that. She tries her

best to comfort and give all what she has from love and tenderness to the white daughter of the Fisher's family, the family that she works for (Hwangbo 40). While Pecola hears the white girl call Mr. Breedlove 'Polly', she never dares to call her mother the same way, instead she calls her Mrs. Breedlove. Pecola has never felt that she has a mother, all what she feels toward her mother is fear, since the only thing she learns from her mother is to have fear "fear of growing up, fear of other people, fear of life" (Morrison 128). This breaks Pecola's heart and fractures her psyche.

Another incident that weakened Pecola's state of mind is when she accidentally dropped the blueberry pie on the floor. The incident that provoked Polly's anger because the little white-skinned girl was frightened by this scene and started crying. As a result Mrs. Breedlove furiously attacks Pecola and pays little attention to her suffering because of the hot blueberry juice that splashed on her "...with the back of her hand knocked her to the floor. Pecola slid in the pie juice, one leg folding under her. Mrs. Breedlove yanked her up by the arm, slapped her again" (Morrison 109). Then, she pours on Pecola a heap of insulting words which are more painful than the burns on her legs; she calls Pecola crazy and fool and she drove her out of the house, and hurries to soothe the little white girl "Hush, baby, hush. Come here...Don't cry no more." (Morrison 109).

Furthermore, when Pecola is raped by her own father and she tries to tell her mother about what happens, seeking her mother's protection, Pauline refused to believe her and she beat her instead. This incident breaks Pecola's trust in her mother and created a terrible sense of loneliness inside her. Consequently, when her father Cholly rapes her for the second time; the only thing she does is repressing her pain deep down, the physical and the emotional pain of being betrayed by all people around her, except her two friends Freida and Claudia MacTeer. This event deepens her psychological wounds and breaks down the only link

relating her to the real world and pushes her into madness. Pecola's distrust in her mother and in the whole world is apparent in her dialogue with her imaginary friend:

I did tell her!

She didn't even believe me when I told her

So that's why you didn't tell her about the second time?

She wouldn't have believed me then neither. (Morrison 200)

Hence, as she grows up a little bit and becomes somehow aware of what is going on in her family, Pecola finds herself in a totally aggressive and violent atmosphere characterized by a constant verbal as well as physical fightings between her drunken father and strict mother. As it is described by the narrator of the story :

She ran into the bedroom with a dishpan full of coldwater and threw it in Cholly's face. He sat up, choking and spitting. Naked and ashen, he leaped from the bed, and with a flying tackle, grabbed his wife around the waist, and they hit the floor. Cholly picked her up and knocked her down with the back of his hand. She fell in a sitting position... She had not let go of the dishpan, and began to hit at Cholly's thighs and groin with it. He put his foot in her chest, and she dropped the pan. Dropping to his knee, he struck her several times in the face, and she might have succumbed early had he not hit his hand against the metal bed frame when his wife ducked. Mrs. Breedlove took advantage of this momentary suspension of blows and slipped out of his reach... having snatched up the round, flat stove lid, ran tippy-toe to Cholly as he was pulling himself up from his knees, and struck him two blows, knocking him right back into the senselessness out of which she had provoked him. Panting, she threw a quilt over him and let him lie.

(Morrison 59)

These deadly battles are the most frightening thing in Pecola's rough life that cause her a deep pain from which she cannot escape. Because, unlike her brother Summy who has the choice to leave the house till the fight is over, Pecola as a child and as a female cannot do the same. As a result, she finds another way to somehow avoid living in such hostile environment where she closes her eyes, tauts the muscles of her stomach, holds her breath and covers her head with the quilt and then she starts imagining that she begins to vanish. This horrible feeling develops in her a profound wish; she keeps praying and asking God to make her die or disappear so that she will not witness her parents brutal fights and put an end to her miserable life.

Please, God," she whispered into the palm of her hand. "Please make me disappear."

She squeezed her eyes shut. Little parts of her body faded away... Her fingers

went...then her arms disappeared... Her feet now... The legs all at once. It was

hardest above the thighs... Her stomach ...too, went away. Then her chest, her neck.

The face was hard, too. Almost done, almost. Only her tight, tight eyes were left they

were always left. (Morrison 45)

Similar to Pauline, Pecola's father too acts out of his self-loathing by directing this hatred towards her. Cholly has never been the ideal father for Pecola, because he is incapable of being neither the protector who defends and protects her from what the outside hostile world inflicted on her nor of being the haven which helps her to heal her psychological injuries by providing the needed love and security. He is rather the source of the major traumas that destroy little Pecola's psyche and consume her sanity and lead her to a state of madness. The only image drawn in Pecola's mind about her father is the drunken man who mercilessly burned down the family's house and put them outdoors. An act that can be done only by a person who lost his humanity and his mind as well, as it is described in Claudia's words:

Outdoors, we knew, was the real terror of life...To be put outdoors by a landlord was...an aspect of life over which you had no control...But to be slack enough to put one's own kin outdoors—that was criminal...Cholly Breedlove then had catapulted himself beyond the reaches of human considerations. He had joined the animals ; was, indeed, an old dog, a snake, a ratty nigger. (Morrison 17-18)

What is more, is that Cholly's cruelty goes beyond all the expectations in hurting his own little daughter. He rapes her twice in a brutal way and impregnates her of his baby putting an end to her innocence as a newly grown woman and forcing her to be a mature woman who soon will bear the responsibility of motherhood, though she is only an eleven years old girl. By doing this, Cholly confirms her move into the world of madness.

Similar to the Breedloves family, the whole society where Pecola lives participates in reinforcing Pecola's journey to insanity and self-dissociation. She is repeatedly humiliated, bullied, abused, and oppressed by all people, the whites and the blacks as well. The latter have absorbed the whites' racial norms and have turned into oppressors projecting their internalized discriminating values on people upon whom they have control like children and women in particular. Mr. Yacobowski is a racist white man who treats Pecola with disgust and humiliates her when she goes to buy candy from his store, he avoids looking at Pecola "because for him there is nothing to see" (Morrison 48). This brutal treatment makes her feel invisible and when she gives him money he hesitates to take them from her hand because he does not want to touch her black hands "She holds the money toward him. He hesitates, not wanting to touch her hand" (Morrison 49). This humiliation Pecola experienced boosts her feeling of inferiority which increases her self-contempt.

Moreover, at school Pecola is the means of entertainment for all of her classmates who mocked and teased her whenever they have the opportunity. For them Pecola is the symbol of

ugliness. In the classroom she sits alone in a double desk, while no one in her class sits alone and she is treated in a very bad way by her teachers who, like her classmates, avoid calling for Pecola or even looking at her. One day when Pecola was in her way home from school, a group of boys surrounded her and started teasing her by calling her “Black e mo” (Morrison 65). They insulted her by saying that her father sleeps naked and laughing at her, while she was in the center of the circle hiding her face with her hands and crying. When Claudia and Frieda arrived and rescued her they were with Maureen Peal; the adorable white and rich girl who fascinates all the boys, girls and teachers. Maureen pretended to sympathize with Pecola and wanted to be her friend, but after a short period of time she changed and started insulting Pecola calling her ugly and Black, Pecola “seemed to fold into herself, like a pleated wing” (Morrison 73). Her psychological state is worsened more and more as she is insulted for matters over which she has no control, “the color of the skin and speculations on the sleeping habits of an adult” (Morrison 65).

Junior and his mother Geraldine are two other persons who abuse Pecola and make her live more traumas. One day Junior is bored and he notices Pecola passing before his house, he always sees her alone, so he decides to lure her into his house in order to make fun of her and entertain himself. As Pecola enters the house he starts tormenting the cat of his mother and then he throws it on her face. The cat scratches her face and this is so funny for Junior who is “laughing and running around the room clutching his stomach delightedly” (Morrison 90). Pecola then tries to get out of the house, but he prevents her saying that she is his prisoner. After that, he kills the cat and when his mother returns he blames Pecola for the death of the cat. Consequently, Geraldine gets mad at Pecola and she starts shouting on her and insulting her “ ‘Get out,’ ” ... “you nasty little black bitch.” (92) Soaphead church is also another

character in this story who abuses Pecola when he used her to kill the dog which he considered as a heavy burden placed upon him.

Being subject to all the types of traumas where she is emotionally neglected and deprived of the tenderness and love of her parents, sexually abused by her father, humiliated and tormented by the racist community and victimized and abused by her mother. Pecola becomes fully convinced of her ugliness and develops a strong feeling of self-loathing which bores in her an obsessive desire to have blue eyes. She believes that if her eyes' colour changes to blue she will be loved and accepted by her community and she will be able to change her reality and to see the world differently. Her constant prayers for her desire realized, demonstrates her attempt to find a way to put an end to her tragic life and to integrate into her family as well as her community. As it is stated by Morrison :

It had occurred to Pecola some time ago that if her eyes, those eyes that held the pictures, and knew the sights...were different, that is to say, beautiful, she herself would be different. If she looked beautiful, beautiful, may be Cholly would be different, and Mrs. Breedlove too. May they'd say, "Why, look at pretty-eyed Pecola. We musn't do bad things in front of those pretty eyes. (Morrison 46)

Pecola's fascination with the blue eyes increased as she is exposed to more traumatic events, she does her best to achieve her desire. She drinks three quarters of milk just to enjoy gazing at Shirley Temple's blue eyes that decorate the cup of milk "We knew she fond of the Shirley Temple cup and took every opportunity to drink milk out of it just to handle and see sweet Shirley's face" (Morrison 23). Also, she loves eating candy of Mary Jane the white-skinned and the blue-eyed girl. By doing so, she acquires a temporary satisfaction, she believes that by drinking milk and eating Mary Janes' candy she is somehow acquiring the white beauty, "To eat the candy is somehow to eat the eyes, eat Mary Jane. Love Mary Jane.

Be Mary Jane” (Morrison 50). Eventually, Pecola’s fascination with the blue eyes is replaced by an obsession because she believes that the blue eyes are the only way for her to escape her bitter reality. Pecola’s obsession with this standard of beauty determines her fate as described by Barbara Christian “Pecola’s destiny is ultimately determined by the myth of beauty and goodness one culture has foisted on another” (qtd in Maleki 74).

However, the traumatizing betrayals that are inflicted on her especially by her parents who are supposed to be her lovers, protectors and self ideals, split up Pecola’s sense of self and push her into a world of insanity. Pecola’s schizophrenic psyche is a defensive response to the cruel traumas she encounters; it protects her from a full awareness of the effects of those traumas. It is a mechanism that often characterizes the traumatized persons “She, however, stepped over into madness, a madness which protected her from us” (Morrison 206). Pecola’s schizophrenic state of mind is manifested in her delusions, hallucinations and withdrawal from the society. She holds the belief that she really has the blue eyes that all people are jealous of while she does not, and that she has a friend who is fascinated with her beautiful eyes.

Her delusional beliefs and hallucinations are depicted in her dialogue with her imaginary friend. Keith E. Byerman states that “After the trauma of being raped by her father, she loses all sense of reality, visits a self-styled conjure man, and believes that she has actually undergone the change in eye color that she so strongly and pathetically desired” (no page). Another symptom demonstrate Pecola’s fragmented self is her attempt to dissociate herself from the traumas that she went through, particularly the sexual abuse, and to avoid remembering them by denying what happened to her and insisting that she didn’t go through such brutal experiences. Thus, when her imaginary friend asked her about the rape, she disavows the incident:

He just tried, see?

He didn't do anything. You hear me?

I don't like that kind of talk. (Morrison 199)

Claudia's description to Pecola's fragmented self shows to which extent her psyche is destroyed "The damage done was fatal. She spent her days, her tendril, sap-green days, walking up and down... Elbows bent, hands on shoulders, she failed 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 the mind" (Morrison 204). Melissa Walker states that the only way for Pecola to escape her hostile world, can be achieved only by the denial of her real self and the adaptation of an unrealistic one, she states that Pecola like other blacks: "attempt to escape blackness by an unrealistic...self" (qtd in Maleki 74).

Pecola's mother experiences different forms of brutal traumatic events both physical and psychological like humiliation, rejection, and disdain. These traumas are mainly because of her deformed foot and ugliness. These two factors, that is to say her physical deformity and her conviction of her ugliness, make her life unbearable and push her to take refuge in a world of fantasy from her creation in order to be able to continue living in her miserable life. Pauline is the child of a big poor family composed of her father and her mother and ten other children. When she was two years old, Pauline stepped on a rusty nail which caused her a serious injury that deformed her foot and made her lame. As she grows up, she becomes more aware of her deformity and starts to believe that her foot is the reason behind her loneliness, since no one cares about her. This, develops an unbearable feeling of inferiority, worthlessness and self-contempt inside her. All these feelings characterize traumatized people. Morrison states that:

This deformity explained for her many things that would have been otherwise incomprehensible : why she alone of all children had no nickname ; why there were no funny jokes and anecdotes about funny things she had done...why she never felt at home anywhere, or that she belonged anywhere...Her general feeling of separateness and unworthiness she blamed on her foot. (Morrison 111)

When Pauline met Cholly and got married, she thought that her dreams about the loving man who would love her and take care of her are realized. Nevertheless, after a period of time she realized that this was only a dream that would never come true and that she entered a new series of traumatic experiences which would worsen her life as well as her psychological state. As she moved to the North with her husband, her feeling of loneliness increased because she was not welcomed by both whites and blacks who did not treat her kindly. She thought that the reason behind this bad treatment, was due to her ugliness and lameness and because she did not look like those beautiful women who were loved by all people. Eventually, she internalized the idea of the physical beauty, the idea that Morrison describes as one of “the most destructive ideas in the history of human thought.” that for her “originated in envy, thrived in insecurity, and ended in disillusion” (Morrison 122). Pauline believed that if she looked beautiful she would be loved and accepted by all people and that no one would notice her lameness. For that she started asking Cholly for money to buy some clothes, when he refused and changed his treatment to Pauline a series of battles between them started and never stopped which made her life bitter than before. Concerning this idea of the internalized beauty, Doreatha Drummond Mbalia agrees with Morrison on the danger of the idea of beauty on the black people in general and on the black female in particular. Mbalia states that “ African’s self-image is destroyed at an early age as a result of the ruling class’s...promotion of its own standard of beauty” (qtd in Bloom 43). Mbalia also argues that

this devastating idea of beauty is learned, each one in Morrison's novel learns it in different ways, she states that: "the concept of beauty is learned one...Pauline learns from the silver screen that every face must be assigned some category on the scale of absolute beauty"(qtd in Bloom 43).

Furthermore, as a result of Cholly's disinterest in her, Pauline's sense of self-loathing is increased and her internalization of the idea of beauty is deepened. She thinks that the only way to gain people's attention was by imitating those beautiful women who possess the society's ideal standards of beauty. However, this will be a tragic idea for her which will lead her to confront the reality she tries hard to dissociate herself from. For example, when she wears a high-heeled shoe as the other women do, her foot's deformity became more apparent, and when she starts imitating the white movie stars' way to fix their hair in order to look like them, she loses one of her front teeth after eating a hard candy which makes her look uglier and provokes Cholly's laughter when he sees her. This incident fractures Pauline's psyche and convinces her that her veil of ugliness will not disappear, because it is her reality, as her words indicate "a front tooth gone. Everything went then... I let my hair go back, plaited it up, and settled down to just being ugly" (Morrison 123).

Another experience which traumatized Pauline and engraved in her a great amount of hatred to herself and to all people of her race, even her husband and her children, is when she gets pregnant for the second time and goes to give birth to her new baby Pecola. In the hospital, an old racist doctor humiliates and insults her saying to his medical students that women like her, that is to say black women, deliver without any pain like animals then his students start laughing. While he treats the white women who are in the same room in a very nice way, "When he got to me he said now these here women you don't have any trouble with. They deliver right away and with no pain. Just like horses. The young ones smiled a

little” (Morrison 125). This affected her deeply and caused her a great pain. Thus, when the pain of the delivery increases, Pauline starts moaning like the white women; as an attempt to prove that she delivers in the same exact way any other white woman does and that she feels pain and that she is not like horses.

Though Pauline shows some resistance to the doctor’s sayings trying to prove the opposite, this incident has totally destroyed Pauline’s self-esteem and created in her a dangerous hatred to herself as well as to her Black race as a whole. For her, the reason behind all of these humiliations and disdain is her black skin that she will never be able to get rid of. Thus, she directs this amount of hatred to her new baby and her family; when she sees her baby she does not feel happy instead she starts looking for something that makes the baby different from her that is to say from her ugliness, something that makes her beautiful but unfortunately all what she can see is ugliness. After this incident and all the unsuccessful attempts that Pauline made to change her unbearable reality, she creates her own imaginary world where she can find only the good things that make her happy. She starts imagining that the big, clean, and beautiful house of the Fishers family, for whom she works, is hers. Also, she considers that the Fisher’s little white daughter is her daughter and she dissociates herself from all what may remind her of her traumas, thus she emotionally abandons her small family. For example she keeps working for sixteen hours a day just to spend more time in the clean and beautiful house and to avoid going back to her real family, as she points out referring to white people and white houses: “Them pictures gave me a lot of pleasure, but it made coming home hard, and looking at Cholly hard”(Morrison 123).

Accordingly, Pauline finds that the only way to avoid her traumas and to escape her brutal life is by dissociating herself from the places, the people and anything may remind her of her painful reality. Thus, she totally neglects her children, husband, and house because for

her, they are the manifestation of the source of her traumas which are ugliness, blackness and poverty. Pauline separates herself from this reality and from the old, worthless, disgusting self through fantasy by creating a world where she feels valued and that she has everything that make her happy. For her, this wonderful world is the Fisher's house and their little white girl, she enjoys working there and taking care of the little girl even if she works sixteen hour a day this makes her very happy especially when she hears their compliments about her work.

Morrison points out that:

It was her good fortune to find a permanent job in the home of a well-to-do family whose members were affectionate, appreciative, and generous... She becomes what is known as an ideal servant, for such a role filled practically all of her needs... Soon she stopped trying to keep her own house. The thing that she could afford to buy did not last, had no beauty or style, and were absorbed by the dingy storefront. More and more she neglected her house, her children, her man—they were like the afterthought one has just before sleep. (Morrison 127)

As a matter of fact, traumatized people who are exposed to a severe overwhelming events tend to develop a dissociative disorder as a mechanism that helps them to cope with their hostile reality, where their conscious is shattered and dissociated from all the bad feelings that they experienced to adopt more comfortable ones. They also tend to have such symptoms as the avoidance of the places, people and anything associated with their traumas. Pauline's self is dissociated since she totally ignored her previous life including her husband and children while she is trying hard to satisfy the Fishers' family in order to preserve her new life in the Fishers' house.

Similar to his wife Pauline and to his daughter Pecola, Cholly's life is full of traumatic experiences that determine his dissociative identity and his miserable life later on. Cholly is an

orphan boy who never saw his parents; his mother abandoned him when he was four days old she put him near the railroad, without the help of his Aunt Jimmy who rescued him, he would not be alive. While his father left his pregnant mother and ran away. Although, Aunt Jimmy took care of him, she could not fill the void that his parents left in his life, he was always thinking about them and had a strong desire to find them one day. Yet, whenever he had the desire to talk about them, he had not the strength to voice it out. The absence of his parents has profoundly affected his self-building and distorted his personality.

Moreover, when Cholly becomes a teenager, another overwhelming tragedy takes place in his life which is the death of his Aunt Jimmy; the only person he had in his life, who took care of him and loved him. He was shocked when he saw her lying dead on her bed and her mouth was open, this image lingers in his mind "Cholly stared back, unable to move, until a fly settled at the corner of her mouth. He fanned it away angrily, looked back at the eyes, and did its bidding" (Morrison 140). For him, the death of his Aunt was not only the loss of a loved person but also the loss of the stable life. Besides, it means for him loneliness and the unknown future, since she used to be the center of his life; she was the father, the mother and the whole family for him.

Accordingly, after the death of his Aunt and when he had not yet fully realized and accepted that she was no longer there, Cholly encountered another trauma that would destroy him psychologically, change his life and determine his decisions later on. It is when Cholly is sexually humiliated by two racist white men holding guns after discovering him with a girl called Darelen in an inappropriate situation. When they started laughing at Cholly and insulted him. In this state of total helplessness and fear Cholly could not defend neither himself nor the girl and he surrendered to the overwhelming situation. This incident destroyed his self-esteem.

There was no place for Cholly's eyes to go. They slid about furtively searching for shelter, while his body remained paralyzed. The flashlight man lifted his gun down from his shoulder, and Cholly heard the clonk of metal. He dropped back to his knees... With a violence born of total helplessness... He could do no more than make-believe. (Morrison 148)

Hence, the day after this horrific incident and out of his fear that Darlen may become pregnant, Cholly runs away from his town and goes to his unknown future. This humiliation affected his sense of manhood and castrated him psychologically, worse than that, it engraved in him a dangerous amount of violence and hatred both of himself and of others.

Furthermore, when Cholly left his town and decided to look for his father, he experienced another trauma that left deep scars on his psyche. It was his father's rejection. When Cholly arrived to Macon, the town where his father lived, he started asking about his father till he found him gambling with a group of people. At the beginning, he did not have the courage to talk to him and tell him that he was his son but later on he gathered his courage and talked with him. However, when Cholly started introducing himself to his father, whose name was Samson Fuller, he thought that he was one of his creditors; so he refused to listen to him and asked him to leave. The reaction of the father overwhelmed Cholly to the point that he could not prevent his tears from emerging and while trying not to cry; he defecated on himself like babies. At that moment Cholly collapsed and became overwhelmed by complex feelings of unworthiness, helplessness, and self-hatred. This event also deformed his way of thinking, his view to the world and his personality.

Accordingly, Cholly's life from his birth till the incident of the sexual humiliation is characterized only by the traumatic events and associated only with feelings of helplessness, inferiority, humiliation that destroyed his self-esteem, shattered his sense of self and changed

his personality. Thus, the internalization of such feelings turned Cholly himself into a violent and dangerous man who tries to dissociate himself from all the bad feelings that he experienced and to convince himself through his violent treatment to others that he is strong. Cholly's denial of the part of him that is disdained and humiliated, demonstrates his dissociative self since the traumatized people tend to separate themselves from all thoughts, feelings, and beliefs that are associated with the traumatic experiences and to hold that which contradict the old ones. Similar to his wife Pauline and his daughter Pecola, Cholly creates his own world of fantasy, the world that holds only feelings of power and freedom. Thus, he changed from the weak teenager who bears all the disturbing feeling and cannot defend himself against his oppressors to a dangerously free man who has nothing to fear Cholly was free. Dangerously free. Free to feel whatever he felt...Free to be tender or violent. Free to take a job, free to leave it. He could go to jail and not feel imprisoned. He is free to live his fantasies, and free even to die, the how and when of which held no interest for him" (Morrison 159). Thus he dissociates himself from his previous personality and develops a new one that is totally different from the old one.

Unlike all the blacks, who fully absorb the whites' culture and project it on their lives. Claudia MacTeer, the youngest girl of the MacTeer family and the narrator of the story, represents the only exception in the black society. She is totally satisfied and proud of her race and skin color though it does not fit the paradigms of the ideal beauty designed by the whites, as Claudia's words indicate "We felt comfortable in our skin, enjoying the news that our senses released to us, admired our dirt, cultivated our scars" (Morrison 74). Unlike Pecola who sees in withdrawal from society and submission to all the insults, her fate and the only way to escape the hostile reality, Claudia is a rebellious character in the novel who feel proud of her race and feels comfortable in her own skin and finds nothing fascinating in the whites'

culture, because she never measures her self-worth by the white skin and the blue eyes. Her rebellion is depicted through her aggressive reaction to all what represents the white beauty. She destroys the doll both adults and children conceive as the representation of ideal beauty. This is clear in her words:

I had only one desire: to dismember it. To see what it was made, to discover the dearness, to find the beauty, the desirability that had escaped me, but apparently only me. Adults, older girls, shops, magazines, newspapers, window signs_all the world had agreed that a blu-eyed, yellow-haired, pink-skinned doll was what every girl child treasured. (Morrison 20)

Furthermore, her desire to destroy the white dolls in order to discover the secret that makes all people amazed by their beauty is transferred to the little white girls like Maureen Peel, where she attacks them and insults them “The dismembering of dolls was not the true horror. The truly horrifying thing was the transference of the same impulses to little girls...To discover...What made people look at them and say, “Awwwww,”but not for me?” (Morrison 22). For example, while Pecola is enthralled by the picture of Shirley Temple, Claudia feels a profound “hatred for all the Shirley Temples of the world” (Morrison 19).

Like Pecola, Claudia encounters some extreme racist and humiliating situations, that are due to her cheap clothes, poverty and blackness like when she is insulted and described as black and ugly by the pink girl Maureen Peel. Yet she does not accept the assault and does not feel ashamed of her black skin, instead, she defends herself by attacking Maureen Peel each time she insults her. Conversely, Pecola who chose “to Fold into herself, like a pleated wing” (Morrison 73). Claudia’s positive self-image and strong identity is constructed by the love of her family which succeeded to confront all the social and economic bad conditions and the psychological tensions placed upon them by the racist society and build a normal strong

family according to the standards of the black culture. In contrast to the Breedloves family which failed to do so out of their strong belief in their inferiority, the belief that they transmit to their children which prevents Pecola from constructing a strong sense of self, and leads her to insanity. For example, while Cholly rapes his daughter, Mr. MacTeer beats Mr. Henry to death because he fondles his daughter Frieda, and while Mrs. MacTeer takes care of Claudia and Frieda especially when they are sick, Mrs. Breedlove totally neglects her daughter Pecola and takes care of the Fishers daughter.

Morrison was familiar from her childhood with issues of racial discrimination and also with the idea of resistance against the established white ideologies, since she grew up within a resisting family that disdain white people. However, she had no idea about how strong the effect of such ideas on the blacks psyche especially the most delicate ones, that is to say children, till she had a conversation with one of her classmates whose mind is colonized with these ideologies because she is totally convinced that beauty means blue eyes and she asked God to give her this standard of beauty in order to be beautiful. Only at this moment, Morrison felt how dangerous these ideas are on her culture and she thought that this was because of the lack of awareness and the blind obedience to the white culture, for that she wrote her first novel *The Bluest Eye* which is merely a way of resistance.

Through *The Bluest Eye*, Toni Morrison aims to shed light on the effects of the internalization of the white racist beliefs and standards particularly those related to the idea of beauty and love on the the black's self-image. These beliefs not only prevent them from constructing their self-esteem and create in them a sense of self-hatred, but also change them into oppressors who victimize people of their own race upon whom they have control. That is to say the most valnurable portion of their community who are women and mainly children.

Therefore, self-splitting and madness will be the normal reaction to such abnormal situation, Morrison points out that:

Some victims of powerful self-loathing turn out to be dangerous, violent, reproducing the enemy who has humiliated them over and over. Others surrender their identity melt into a structure that delivers the strong persona they lack. Most others, however, grow beyond it. But there are some who collapse... The death of self-esteem can occur quickly, easily in children, before their ego has "legs," so to speak. (Morrison x)

Moreover, Morrison attempts in this work to encourage the African American people to resist the hypnosis that the whites used to conquer their minds and control them through the use of such falsifying stereotypes. Accordingly, in a very clever way Morrison offers a hopeful message about the ways to confront the psychological pressures placed upon blacks due to these ideologies. She develops her story around two opposing families, the first one is that of the Breedloves which fully absorb the whites' paradigms and blindly accept their ideologies and stereotypes. Consequently, their sense of self is shattered and some of them end up in a state of insanity like Pecola. While the second one is that of the MacTeers' family which successfully resists these ideal beliefs and preserves their self-esteem despite their hostile reality, only because they do not define themselves according to the ideal image created by the whites and they do not see anything in that image referring to them. They do not feel deprived or inferior because they do not have the blue eyes and the white skin. They rather feel proud of their blackness and their rich culture. By doing so, she intends to say that beauty is not something restricted to the eye or the skin colour, it is something can be felt. She also aims to confirm that the only way to be beautiful and to be loved is to accept yourself as

you and to be proud of who you are. Otherwise ones self will be shattered between these contradictions and neither beauty nor love will be achieved.

Furthermore, the language that Morrison uses in this novel is another way through which she reinforces the message she wants to convey. As Morrison aims through this novel “to hit the raw nerve of racial self-contempt” (Morrison xii), she gives a great importance to the use of the African American vernacular throughout the novel. She uses expressions that are special to the black culture without providing the explanation such as the expression “Quiet as it’s kept” (Morrison 5) which is used when the black people want to tell secret to someone. By doing so, Morrison wants to convey the richness of the black culture in her words; as she indicates in the forward of this novel:

My choice of language (speakerly, aural, colloquial), my reliance for full comprehension on codes embedded in black culture, my effort to effect immediate coconspiracy and intimacy (without any distancing explanatory distancing, explanatory fabric), as well as my attempt to shape a silence while breaking it are attempts to transfigure the complexity and wealth of Black American culture into a language worthy of the culture. (Morrison xiii)

Moreover, she aims to show her fascination with her race and her culture and to prove not only the richness of the African American culture but also its supremacy, she says: “I am amazed by their currency, their tenacity. Hearing “civilized” languages debase humans, watching cultural exorcisms debase literature, seeing oneself preserved in the amber of disqualifying metaphors.” (Morrison xiii)

In this work, Morrison liberates herself from the traditional ways of writing to create a unique style through which she can express her beliefs and attitudes towards the issues she

tackles in this story. This is demonstrated in her use of the African American vernacular which depicts her attempt to maintain the black culture and to show her pride of her belonging to such culture, as well as her rejection of anything that may distort the black identity.

In other words, Morrison as a member of the black community, which is subjected to all the kinds of trauma from humiliation, abuse, to disdain, is deeply affected by what happened in her society. However, growing in a resisting family that believe in the superiority of the black race and the richness of the African American culture and that never felt deprived because of the lack of the white colour in their skin or the blue one in their eyes (Bloom 10). This helped Morrison to construct a strong sense of an independent self and a positive self-image, and enabled her to be like Claudia a rebellious member of her society who never submitted to the whites' ideal ideologies and who never defined herself according to the white measures of beauty and love. That is to say through the love and the support of her family Morrison constructed a strong identity and protected herself from the destructive ideas of beauty and love. She believes that "if you have the emotional strength and/or support from family and friends, the damage is reduced or erased"(Morrison ix).

To conclude with, Toni Morrison is considered as one of the best writers who dealt with the theme of trauma and self-splitting. Through *The Bluest Eye* she aims to offer an understanding to the blacks' shattered selves and the reasons that lead to the fragmentation of their identities. Traumas that emerged from the racist ideologies, stereotypes and beliefs are considered to be the primary source of all the psychological problems of the black race. This theme is purposefully represented through two main characters, hold two different identities, Pecola Breedlove and Claudia MacTeer. At the one hand, to show how dangerous the effects of trauma are on one's sense of self, and on the other hand, to provide the remedy or the way through which one's sense of self can be protected from these devastating impacts. The first

aim is achieved through the character of Pecola and the second one is explained through the character of Claudia.

Conclusion

The notions of the self or identity and trauma have always been a crucial subject in black literature, for that it reveals the psychological problems the African Americans suffer from due to their traumatic life within racist society. Traumas that are manifested in the whites' racial stereotypes are the chief cause that damaged the blacks' life in general and more profoundly their sense of self. The ideal racist image designed by the whites along with the stereotypes created about the black race were the source of the tension that torn up the African Americans' personalities.

As discussed in the first chapter, the individual's personality was a point of interest for both the psychoanalytic and literary fields. Both of them aim at understanding the human's psyche in order to analyse their personality and to get access to the hidden part of their identities. It helps in diagnosing the psychological disorders as well as the reasons behind those psychological problems and to increase the possibility of healing. As revealed in this chapter, this is one of the many common points between the psychoanalytic approach and the theory of literary criticism. Literature is the field of testimony and the source of many psychological concepts, while the psychoanalytic approach serves as the foundation upon which the literary criticism is conducted. Literary critics use the psychological findings in order to analyse literary works, the authors' psyche, and that of the readers as well.

Trauma and self-splitting are among the many aspects discussed in both literature and psychoanalysis, where self-splitting or self-dissociation is diagnosed as a psychological disorder that resulted from the traumatic experiences. As shown in this chapter, trauma, that represents all the overwhelming events, is considered the primary reason behind the split of the self. Self-splitting is manifested in two psychological disorders known as schizophrenia

and 'Dissociative Identity Disorder'. These disorders refer to the dissociation of the individual's identity as a defense mechanism to protect him/her from the effects of trauma.

As mentioned previously in the second chapter, trauma and self-splitting are the central themes in many literary works of American and African American literatures especially during the twentieth century. This period witnessed devastating events such as the two World Wars, the Vietnam War and the terroristic attacks. Literature during that period was used to reveal the psychological state of the American society and particularly the black community which suffer more from these tremendous events and mainly from racism as it is shown in the literary examples presented in this chapter. In American literature psychological complexes are solely due to the wars and the terroristic attacks, whereas in Afro-American literature psychological problems are mainly the consequence of racism.

As is shown in the third chapter, Toni Morrison's novel *The Bluest Eye* (1970) is one of the masterpieces of the African American literature that deals in depth with the themes of trauma and self-dissociation. This novel is considered as one of Morrison's best representations of the blacks' identity problems. It demonstrates the conditions that deconstruct the African Americans' sense of self and shows how the extreme traumatic experiences that the black endure due to the racial discrimination, affect the black characters' psyche and lead to severe psychological problems such as schizophrenia and dissociative identity disorder.

Moreover, through this work Morrison aims at showing the only way for the blacks to confront these traumas inflicted on them and to protect themselves from their damaging effects. Which is to believe in themselves, to be aware of the beauty that lies in their black skin, brown eyes and curly hair and to be proud of their rich black culture. Her view is depicted through the two main characters Pecola and Claudia. On the one hand, Pecola's sense of self is totally damaged due to the traumas she went through, in addition, to her strong belief in her

inferiority and the lack of the love and the support of her family. On the other hand, Claudia succeeds to protect herself from these traumas, because she is satisfied of her blackness, also because she grows up in a healthy atmosphere filled with love and support of her family. This novel is a form of resistance through which Morrison shows her pride of her culture.

To sum up, racism is thought to be the source of all the traumas that split up the black's sense of self. Accordingly, trauma and self-shattered are considered as important themes in African American literature. Toni Morrison's work provides a close and clear picture of the blacks' traumatic life and its impacts on the African Americans' especially the children's sense of self.

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ملخص

الصدمة وتفكك الذات هي من بين المواضيع المهمة التي نوقشت في الأدب الأمريكي الأفريقي. فهما يكتسبان أهمية لأنهما يعكسان بؤس ومعاناة السود في أمريكا ولأنهما مرتبطان بالقضية الأساسية للسود و هي الهوية. وتعتبر توني موريسون واحدة من أفضل الكتاب الذين تناولوا بشكل مكثف وعميق مسألة الصدمة وتفكك الشخصية الأمريكية الأفريقية، وخاصة في روايتها العين الاكثر زرقة (1970) وتهدف هذه الرسالة إلى التحقيق في قضية الصدمة، أن ترتبط أساسا بالعنصرية من منظور نفسي وتصور آثارها المدمرة على شعور السود بالذات؛ حيث يؤدي إلى تفكك شخصياتهم. ومن ثم يحاول هذا العمل وصف كيف تسعى موريسون إلى زيادة وعي السود بخطر استيعاب القوالب النمطية البيضاء عن الحب والجمال، التي هي مصدر صدماتهم، من خلال إظهار الآثار المدمرة لهذه القوالب النمطية على هوياتهم . موريسون تختار الأحداث والشخصيات واللغة وكل جانب من رواية لها بطريقة حذرة جدا، من أجل جعل روايتها قوية وفعالة قدر الإمكان. وتدور قصتها حول الشخصيات السوداء التي تضرر شعورها بالذات تماما، لا يمكن التوفيق بين واقعهم والرؤية المثالية للثقافة البيضاء. وبالتالي فإن شخصياتهم تنقسم بسبب هذا التناقض، فهي غير قادرة على تقبل كونها سوداء وفي نفس الوقت عاجزة على ايهام نفسها بالانتماء للثقافة البيضاء.

résumé

Le traumatisme et le dédoublement identitaire sont comptés parmi les thèmes les plus importants à discuter dans la littérature Afro-Américaine. Ils sont importants parce-qu'ils reflètent la misère et la souffrance du peuple noir d'Amérique et le concept de leur identité. Toni Morrison est considéré comme l'un des meilleurs auteurs évoquant le thème du traumatisme et de la personnalité Afro-Américaine dans ses écrits notamment dans sa nouvelle *The Bluest Eye* (1970) Cette dissertation vise à enquêter sur le problème traumatisme. Est principalement lié au racisme du point de vue psychologique et présentant ses effets dévastateurs sur noirs, ou cela conduit à la dissociation de leurs personnalités. Ce travail tente donc de décrire comment Morrison cherche à sensibiliser les noirs au danger d'intérioriser les stéréotypes blancs idéaux sur l'amour et la beauté, source de leurs traumatismes en montrant les effets destructeurs de ces stéréotypes sur leurs identités. Pour conséquence, Morrison choisit les événements, les personnages, la langue et chaque aspect de son roman de manière très prudente, afin de rendre son roman aussi fort et efficace que possible. L'histoire contourne les personnages noirs dont le sens de soi est totalement endommagé, car ils ne peuvent pas concilier entre leur réalité et celle de la culture utopique blanche. Ils ne peuvent ni accepter leur noirceur, ni se faire fausser et s'intégrer aux mesures des blancs.