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# COMPLEX CHILDHOOD TRAUMA AND COPING MECHANISMS IN TONI MORRISON'S *THE BLUEST EYE* AND DOROTHY ALLISON'S *BASTARD OUT OF CAROLINA*

**YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ**

**HAZIRLAYAN**

**ECEN LALE NUR DÜLGER**

**TEZ DANIŞMANI**

**DR. ÖĞR. ÜYESİ SELEN AKTARİ SEVGİ**

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Danışmanın Unvanı/Adı, Soyadı: Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Selen Aktari Sevgi

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# ÖZET

**Ecen Lale Nur Dülger, Toni Morrison'ın *The Bluest* Eye ve Dorothy Allison'ın *Bastard Out of Carolina* Adlı Eserlerinde Karmaşık Çocukluk Çağı Travması ve Baş Etme Mekanizmaları, Başkent Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Amerikan Kültürü ve Edebiyatı Tezli Yüksek Lisans Programı, 2022.**

Travma, bir olaya veya deneyime karşı zihnin kalkanını kıran ve öznenin işleyişini alt üst eden psikolojik tepkidir. Travmatizasyon, tecavüz gibi tek bir olay üzerinden olabileceği gibi toplumda sınıfçılık, ırkçılık ve cinsel istismar gibi süregelen kronik bir durum nedeniyle de ortaya çıkabilir. 1980'de TSSB'nin ortaya çıkmasıyla birlikte, travmanın çalışma alanları tecavüz, çocuk istismarı ve özellikle kadınları ve batılı olmayan insanları içeren çeşitli diğer travmatik deneyimlere de yer vermiştir. Böylece travma, disiplin sınırlarını aşan bir kavram haline gelmiştir. Buradan hareketle tecavüz ve çocuk cinsel istismarı gibi tabu konular literatürde tartışılmaya başlanmıştır. Toni Morrison'ın *The Bluest Eye* (1970) ve Dorothy Allison'ın *Bastard Out of Carolina*'sı (1992), kahramanların çocuk cinsel istismarı ve diğer sosyal, kültürel ve politik faktörlerin neden olduğu karmaşık travmaları ele alır. Hem Morrison hem de Allison, travmalarının nedeni olarak roman kahramanları Pecola ve Bone'un yaşadığı utancı, annelerinin ihmalini ve babalarının cinsel istismarını gösteriyor. Vakalarının benzerliğine rağmen, baş etme mekanizmaları ve travmalarına verdikleri tepkiler birbirinden farklıdır. Buna göre, iyileşme ve toparlanma olasılığı aynı değildir. *The Bluest Eye*'da koyu tenli Afro-Amerikalı bir kız olan Pecola, deliliğe sığınır ve hayal dünyasında mavi gözlü olma nihai arzusuna ulaşır, karşılığında ataerkil düzenin bir parçası olmayı reddeder. İyileşemez; ancak, delilik bir zayıflık veya başarısızlık işareti değil, bir direniş ve hayatta kalma eylemidir. *Bastard Out of* Carolina'da ise Bone, fantezilerine mastürbasyon yaparak ve dini müzikler dinleyerek bedeni üzerindeki kontrolünü yeniden kazanarak kimliğini yeniden inşa etmeye çalışır ve lezbiyen bir kimlik kazanarak ataerkil ideolojinin baskıcı normlarına başkaldırır. Her iki karakter de travmatik deneyimleriyle uzlaşma olanağı sunar ve aşırı uç hayatta kalma yollarını kullanarak ataerkil topluma karşı hareket ederler.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** çocuk cinsel istismarı, delilik**,** fantezi, iyileşme, kimlik

# ABSTRACT

**Ecen Lale Nur Dülger, Complex Childhood Trauma and Coping Mechanisms in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* and Dorothy Allison's *Bastard Out of Carolina*, Başkent Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Amerikan Kültürü ve Edebiyatı Tezli Yüksek Lisans Programı, 2022.**

Trauma is the psychological response to an event or experience that breaks through the shield of the mind and overwhelms the functioning of the subject. Traumatization may occur through a single event such as rape but may also occur because of an ongoing chronic condition such as classism, racism and sexual abuse in society. With the advent of PTSD in 1980, the study areas of trauma expanded to rape, child abuse and various other traumatic experiences that especially involved women and non-western people. Thus, trauma has become a concept that transgresses disciplinary boundaries. Considering this, taboo topics such as rape and child sexual abuse started to be discussed in literature. Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970) and Dorothy Allison's *Bastard Out of Carolina* (1992) deal with the protagonists' complex traumas that are caused by child sexual abuse and other social, cultural and political factors. Both Morrison and Allison depict the shaming of their protagonists, Pecola and Bone, their mothers' negligence and their fathers' sexual abuse as the reasons for their traumas. Despite the similarity of their cases, their coping mechanisms and their responses to their traumas differ from each other. Accordingly, the possibility for healing and recovery is not alike. In *The Bluest Eye*, Pecola, who is a dark skinned African American girl, takes refuge in madness and realizes her ultimate wish of having blue eyes in her imaginary world, in turn, she refuses to become a part of the patriarchal order. She cannot heal; however, madness is not a sign of weakness or failure but an act of resistance and survival. In *Bastard Out of Carolina*, on the other hand, Bone tries to reconstruct her identity via regaining her control over her body by masturbating to her fantasies and listening to gospels, and revolts against the oppressive norms of patriarchal ideology by attaining a lesbian identity. Both characters present a possibility to reconcile with their traumatic experiences and act against the patriarchal society by using excessive ways of survival.


**Keywords:** Child sexual abuse, fantasy, healing, identity, madness

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS …………………………………………………………….. i**

**ÖZET ……………………………………………………………………………….. ii**

**ABSTRACT ………………………………………………………………………... iii**

**INTRODUCTION ………………………………………….……………….... 1**

**1. The Aim of the Study ………………………………………………………… 1**

**2. Theoretical Background ………………………………………………………... 6**

**CHAPTER 1. Childhood Trauma and Madness as a Coping Mechanism in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* ………………………………………………………………... 24**

**CHAPTER 2. Childhood Trauma and Fantasy as a Coping Mechanism in Dorothy Allison's *Bastard Out of Carolina* ……………………….......................................... 59**

**CONCLUSION …………………………………………………………………..... 95**

**REFERENCES …………………………………………………………………..... 102**

# INTRODUCTION

## 1. The Aim of the Study

This thesis aims to compare Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970) and Dorothy Allison's *Bastard Out of Carolina* (1992) in terms of the representations of the protagonists' complex traumas due to child sexual abuse and their trauma coping strategies. This study focuses on these novels because firstly they deal with similar issues from different perspectives and both novels present a panorama of the American society in which vulnerable and delicate groups such as children, women, ethnic and racial minorities, and economically disadvantaged communities are entrapped within severe living conditions without any moral or financial support. The protagonists, Pecola Breedlove, an eleven-year-old African American girl in *The Bluest Eye* and Bone Boatwright, a twelve-year-old girl of the rural American South in *Bastard Out of Carolina*, are both sexually abused by their fathers, frustrated by their mothers' indifferent attitudes to their sufferings, victimized by the traumatic past of their families, oppressed by the class distinction and economic circumstances of their societies and exploited by the dominant racial, political, and patriarchal ideologies. Secondly, Toni Morrison's depiction of trauma revolving around a social taboo, incest, has influenced Allison so much that she finds the courage to narrate her own traumatic experiences of being abused by her stepfather as a child in *Bastard Out of Carolina* and a chance to work through them via the therapeutic effect of writing about her own trauma by fictionalizing it (Bass, 2016).

Thus, the reason why these writers portray the trauma of child sexual abuse and incest can be explained by their personal, social and political concerns. Accordingly, this thesis argues that although Pecola and Bone are victimized by child sexual abuse and suffer from similar traumatic experiences in the patriarchal society, their trauma coping mechanisms act as disruptive forces against the male-dominated society. While Pecola takes refuge in madness and realizes her ultimate wish of having blue eyes in a dream world by rejecting her traumatic past and refusing to become a part of the patriarchal order, Bone regains her control over her body through sexual fantasies and revolts against the oppressive norms of patriarchal ideology by attaining a lesbian identity.

Both *The Bluest Eye* and *Bastard Out of Carolina* reveal the relation between the damage of trauma and the outside forces such as social, cultural and political factors that entrap the protagonists. Morrison depicts the shaming of being black, ugly and poor as the

forceful reasons that add to Pecola's trauma. Likewise, Allison shows how the shaming of Bone and her mother about Bone's illegitimate birth as well as their lower-class circumstances double the causes and effects of the trauma that she experiences. Besides, the characters suffer from sexual abuse, oppressive social structures and economic deprivation, and lack maternal support. Subsequently, their case is similar, yet their coping mechanisms for their traumas are different, and their responses to their trauma is unique. That being so, the possibility for recovery or healing, even survival, is not alike. Pecola, as a young black girl, cannot attempt to reclaim her identity because she has never had one due to her familial and communal circumstance. Therefore, in a community dominated by white oppression, she aspires to become a white woman symbolized by her craving for blue eyes. The distortion of reality, for Pecola, as well as a splitting of her self, in the end, create a "tolerable" place for her to come to terms with her trauma. She cannot heal herself, but she survives in her fantasy world. In this study, Pecola's madness symbolizes the strength to resist and survive, not failure or weakness. In contrast, as a young white woman, Bone copes with her trauma by trying to reconstruct her identity via reclaiming her body through sexual fantasies and masturbation, daydreaming, storytelling, and she benefits from the healing power of music by listening to gospels. Thus, both characters present a possibility to reconcile.

Toni Morrison (1931-2019) was raised by a Midwestern American family that "possessed an intense love of and appreciation for Black culture" (Augustyn, 2010, p. 61). She is the first African American to earn the Nobel Prize for literature and is one of the most recognized "American" as well as "African American" women writers in the world. In her works, she represents the African American historical experience and bases it on facts. She indicates that the lives of African Americans have been greatly challenged and altered by the American history from the development of slavery to the enactment of "the Black Codes, rigid notions of beauty and citizenship, Jim Crow laws and other de facto forms of discrimination". She emphasizes and reflects on the tragedy and transformation of African Americans by resorting to several basic narrative devices such as "parody and pastiche, semiotics and metaphors and allegory" to represent black life in America and "to teach untaught history to liberate Americans" (Moore and Billingsley, 2017, p. 228).

Her first novel, *The Bluest Eye* (1970) is about a black girl who is victimized and because of this gets obsessed with white standards of beauty and yearns for blue eyes (Augustyn, 2010, p. 62). Morrison questioned the reason why black people have accepted the dominant view of beauty. For the writing of *The Bluest Eye* which is about a black girl feeling ugly and praying for blue eyes due to her black community, Morrison was inspired

by her elementary school friend, as she stated in an interview with Emma Brockes in 2012. Her classmate confessed to her that she longed for the same dream of blue eyes, which, even as a twelve-year-old, shocked Morrison. This desire seemed to her like a form of violence, and she got confused about how her classmate could possibly prefer those blue eyes to her own dark eyes. In her "Afterword" in *The Bluest Eye*, she says, "I wanted to know how she got to that place." She continues:

> *The Bluest Eye* was my effort to say something about that; to say something about why she had not, or possibly ever would have, the experience of what she possessed and also why she prayed for so radical an alteration. Implicit in her desire was racial self-loathing. And twenty years later I was still wondering about how one learns that. Who told her? Who made her feel that it was better to be a freak than what she was? Who had looked at her and found her so wanting, so small a weight on the beauty scale? The novel pecks away at the gaze that condemned her. The reclamation of racial beauty in the sixties stirred these thoughts, made me thing about the necessity for the claim. The assertion of racial beauty was not a reaction to the self-mocking, humorous critique of cultural/racial foibles common in all groups, but against the damaging internalization of assumptions of immutable inferiority originating in an outside gaze. I focused, therefore, on how something as grotesque as the demonization of an entire race could take root inside the most delicate member of a society: a child; the most vulnerable member; a female. (1970, p. 206)

The purpose of Morrison in writing the novel was to "peck away at the gaze that condemns" Pecola's blackness as undesirable (Morrison, 1970, p. xi). Morrison criticizes "the racial self-loathing" seen in the community's valuing of lighter skin color hierarchy (Morrison, 1970, p. 206). Morrison, in a 2004 interview, explains that "in the mid-1960s most of what was being published by Black men was very powerful, aggressive, revolutionary fiction or non-fiction" (Bracken, 2020). "Black male authors", she states, "expressed opinions like 'Black is beautiful' and used phrases like 'Black queen'". For Morrison, people should not forget that "Black was not always beautiful". In her novel, she sheds light to the importance of acknowledging that the concept of beauty is hurtful and that self-loathing among African Americans has become a part of them (Bracken, 2020). Also, different from "the aggressive, assertive and male-centered works of the period" (Bracken, 2020), Morrison focuses on the most "delicate" member of society, who is both a child and female (Morrison, 1970, p. 206).

The narrative voice in the novel shifts between Claudia MacTeer and a third-person narrator. These different perspectives give the reader a close and personal account of Pecola's story for which she does not have a voice to tell, in a way, Claudia testifies for Pecola's trauma. At the same time, the third-person narration shows how Pecola's story is affected insidiously by family and society through the voices of other people such as her father and mother. When Claudia narrates, she often compares her own home life with that

of Pecola's, which, in turn, points to the difference between both characters, namely where one has a loving family, the other does not even really have a family. Besides, Claudia's voice is kind and warm towards Pecola, when compared to the third person's more objective narration.

Dorothy Allison was born in Greenville, South Carolina, in 1949 to a mother who was fourteen years old and was brought up surrounded by her large extended family. After her mother got married, she occasionally took refuge at her aunts' because of her abusive father. Allison had a violent and chaotic upbringing because of her poor economic conditions at home, and this has given her the inspiration to write. She is identified with working-class literature of the American South. In her works, she writes about white trash culture with its misrepresentations. Allison portrays the social status of poor white people that are called white trash and offers a possibility of changing society's stigmatization by having her characters strive for an identity in which this stigma does not have a derogatory meaning anymore (Parrondo, 2018, p. 104). She makes use of straightforward and colloquial language. She also adopts in her works narrative devices such as irony and sarcasm.

In the early 1970s, she was actively involved in the women's movement. She attributes her becoming a writer to feminism (Juncker, 2016). Today, Allison lives and writes in northern California. *Bastard Out of Carolina* (1992), which is her first novel, earned her national attention (Juncker, 2016). In the first-person narrative, her semi-autobiographical novel relates the story of Bone Boatwright's survival from her stepfather's sexual abuse. Allison asserts that Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, taught her to write about "incest" and to unflinchingly write the truth. For her, the power of the story is everything, making possible both social change and change of hearts (Appalachian Heritage Writer-in-Residence, 2020). In an interview she gave she states:

> Reading books that you fall into, the essential thing that happens is, it gives you permission. If you are a baby writer, it gives you permission to write stories as brave and large and engaging as the people whose work you have fallen in love with or really touched your heart. If you're not a writer, if you're just a human being working deadly hours and it seems to me that I was always reading on breaks when I was a waitress and reading underneath the desk when I was a receptionist and reading to not to be in the world that I was in and being invited into worlds that were so rich. That's what I think novels do for you and that's what reading novels did for me. It is not that simple. They talk about us as if it's simple, but it's not that simple and that made me want to write novels in which the people were complicated. And it gives you permission. I don't think I would have ever written *Bastard* if I hadn't read *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison. In fact, I know I wouldn't. It was like somebody cracked my world open when I read that book. (Bass, 2016)

Furthermore, Allison describes her first reading of *The Bluest Eye* as "a slap on the back from my mother's hand, as if a trusted, powerful voice were telling me, you know something about incest— something you fear, but had best start figuring it out. I began to figure things out in story" (*Trash*, 1988, p. xii). After she came across Morrison's story of a father who rapes his daughter, Allison began rummaging through her own experiences of being physically and sexually abused by her stepfather and her own shame at being a white trash. As she states in her short story collection, *Trash*:

> I had to change my life, take baby steps into a future I did not trust… Every evening I sat down with a yellow legal-size pad, writing out the story of my life. I wrote it all: everything I could remember, all the stories I had ever been told, the names, places, images, […] the dreams themselves, the people in my dreams. My stepfather, my uncles and cousins, my desperate aunts and their more desperate daughters. I wrote out my memories of the women. My terror and lust for my own kind… the hidden stories of my life that lay in disguise behind the mocking stories I did tell. (1988, p. 3)

She expressed that this endeavor of "writing it all down" had a purging effect and made her love herself for being able to confront them all (1988, p. 3). Furthermore, she explains her inspiration for *Bastard* as "I knew there was only one story that would haunt me until I understood how to tell it— the complicated, painful story of how my mama had, and had not, saved me as a girl" (*Skin*, 1994, p. 34). For Allison, writing becomes a strategy to deal with her traumatic past and allows her to incorporate her memories into a story, from which she begins her healing process.

In *Bastard*, Allison uses a first-person narrator, Bone, to tell her story of survival. When Bone relates her story years later after it happened, her voice reflects the wisdom of a grown woman. Through the employment of a first-person perspective, Allison is able to focus on Bone's voice and experiences as well as other issues in the novel such as "poverty, social stigma, and religion". In retrospect, Allison's narrative voice provides insights about Bone with a wiser Bone like the knowledge of the activities and dynamics of her extended family. Bone, as the narrator, gazes into the past, and tries to learn about the past in an attempt to heal herself.

In order to tackle with the protagonists' responses to trauma due to paternal rape, the theoretical framework of this thesis is mainly based on feminist approaches to trauma theory, particularly on Laura Brown and Maria Root's study on "insidious trauma", which explores the cumulative deterioration of the psychological state of an individual due to various societal oppressive structures. In addition to Brown and Root's model of insidious trauma, Cathy Caruth's theory of trauma, as is presented in her seminal works *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (1995) and *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, History* (1996), will be

used. As the pioneer of the trauma model, Caruth revisits Sigmund Freud's trauma theories with a poststructuralist approach and emphasizes how the traumatic experience damages the psyche and disrupts the linguistic process so that the traumatized person is unable to articulate her/his trauma. In order to understand how ethnic and racial minorities experience and express trauma and draw attention to how the dominant Western psychoanalytical approaches to trauma exclude the traumatic experiences of minority identities, this thesis will refer to Stef Craps's postcolonial approach to the representation of trauma in literature, as is presented in his *Postcolonial Witnessing: Trauma Out of Bounds* (2013). Finally, Judith Herman's study, *Trauma and Recovery* (1992), which discusses how vulnerable groups in societies survive trauma, will be employed to highlight the possibility of healing and to speak about the recovery processes of Pecola and Bone, and her intensive clinical study *Father-Daughter Incest* (1981), which offers insights into incest victims and other forms of sexual abuse, will be utilized.

## 2. Theoretical Background

Sigmund Freud defines trauma as "any excitations from outside which are powerful enough to break through the protective shield of the living vesicle" (p. 23) in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920). Therefore, trauma can be described as a single event distinguished by "the excessive intensity of the stimulus" compared to "what the ego can sustain" and which disrupts "the shield of the mind of the subject" (Mucci, 2013, p. 1).

After the Vietnam War, the issue of "trauma" had to be reviewed in a new way by different areas that were concerned with the human psyche. In 1980, the American Psychiatric Association officially recognized the long accepted, but often overlooked fact of "Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder" (PTSD), which was associated with "symptoms of shell shock, combat stress, delayed stress syndrome and traumatic neurosis", as well as "delayed responses to personal, social and natural disasters" (Caruth, 1995, p. 3). After this declaration, traumatic responses to rape, child abuse and various violent and abusive experiences have been studied within the sphere of PTSD (Caruth, 1995, p. 3). This expanding of areas called upon ways to explain, cure or to understand trauma by bringing different disciplines together (Caruth, 1995, p. 4). Trauma has become a concept that transgresses disciplinary boundaries, complicating the ways in which it can be understood and applied in various fields. Cathy Caruth highlights the transgressive potential of trauma by suggesting that "the phenomenon of trauma has seemed to become all inclusive, but it

has done so precisely because it brings us to the limits of our understanding" (1995, p. 4). This limit is related to the fact that trauma is concerned with the psyche, an aspect of humanity that is still being explored and debated.

Today, trauma is thought to be a traumatic climate or condition that persists over a period in which physical, psychological or sexual abuse might be carried out even without noticing explicit dramatic features, but its pathological effects can be serious (Mucci, 2013, p. 1). Trauma is regarded as to be more complicated with a more complex PTSD. Lenore Terr categorizes trauma into two: Type 1 traumas and Type 2 traumas. The former category refers to traumatization by a single event, and the latter one takes place over a long time and is a repeated kind of trauma as in the case of abuses, violence or incest and this kind of trauma is often due to the silence or ignorance of a family or community. Antonelle Correale states that "a traumatic experience is not necessarily a single experience capable of determining a destructuring of cognitive capacities according to a mechanism concentrated in time, yet in a wider sense the exposition to disturbing aspects of the signifying other" (2006, p. 135, as cited in Mucci, 2013, pp. 1-2). The individual's personal story is also important in determining the impact of the experience.

Likewise, social and collective concerns can be detected in the discourse of trauma. For example, Werner Bohleber points to the need for a social discourse that shapes history's traumatic consequences and the future generations. He explains trauma as "a brute fact that cannot be integrated into a context of meaning at the time of the experience as it tears the fabric of the psyche" (2007, p. 335, as cited in Mucci, 2013, p. 2). According to Jean Laplanche and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis's *Vocabulaire de la Psychanalyse* (1967), both the internal as well as the external worlds stimulate traumatic outcomes, because it is impossible to talk about traumatic events in a certain way without taking into account the subject's sensitivity (Mucci, 2013, pp. 2-3). Judith Herman elaborates on it: "Traumatic events overwhelm the ordinary systems of care that give people a sense of control, connection, and meaning. They confront human beings with the extremities of helplessness and terror, and evoke the responses of catastrophe" (1992, p. 33). Besides, she dwells on "the general numbing of responsiveness, the sense of disconnection or dissociation" that are caused by trauma and adds that, "a state of detached calm, in which terror, rage, and pain dissolve. Events continue to register in awareness, but it is as though these events have been disconnected from their ordinary meanings" (1992, p. 42).

The use of the term "complex trauma" is suggested by some authors for trauma that depends on a long-term relationship and that does not result from a single excessively

disturbing event. Besides, Bessel van der Kolk also introduced the concept of "complex PTSD" (Mucci, 2013, p. 37). Similarly, the term PTSD is found inadequate by others, and they suggest that it should be termed as "traumatic development" referring to threatening and overwhelming stable conditions from which the individual is not able to escape, and whose effects are repeated in various periods of time that are critical for individual development, such as the situation of the child in an abusive family. Herman also uses the term complex trauma for the trauma of individuals who have survived prolonged abuse, such as people kept for a long time in prisons, concentration camps and forced labor, or victims of incest (Mucci, 2013, p. 37). For her, the aspect of relationship is essential in victimization. She states that, "As long as the victim maintains any other human connection, the perpetrator's power is limited. It is for this reason that perpetrators seek to isolate their victims from any other source of information, material aid, or emotional support" (1992, p. 79).

Caruth made a powerful argument that has left a lasting impression on the interweaving of "questions of history, memory, experience and narrative", and created a foundation for Trauma Studies. She provides a description and explanation of trauma in her *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (1995). She first starts by describing post-traumatic stress disorder as,

> [T]here is a response sometimes, delayed, to an overwhelming event or events, which takes the form of repeated, intrusive hallucinations, dreams, thoughts or behaviors stemming from the event, along with numbing that may have begun during or after the experience, and possibly also increased arousal (and avoidance of it) stimuli recalling the event. (Caruth, 1995, p. 4)

She explains that the pathology of trauma (PTSD) cannot be entirely described by the traumatic experience itself, and she adds that not everyone is traumatized in the same way or attaches the same meaning to the event. Rather, Caruth insists that what defines the experience as traumatic is "the structure of its experience or reception" (1995, p. 4). In other words, as is stated by Caruth, "The event is not assimilated or experienced fully at the time, but only belatedly, in its repeated *possession* of the one who experiences it" (1995, p. 4) and thus, to characterize someone as traumatized means that the individual is "to be possessed by an image or event" (1995, p. 5). The symptoms cannot be purely described as "distortions of reality", "the lending of unconscious meaning to a reality" or as "repression" (1995, p. 5). The experience gets frozen in time and its traumatic effects cannot be represented by normal procedures of memory, and thus becomes unclaimed. The trauma of the event can be understood in its belatedness, what Caruth calls "latency", which is "the period during which

the effects of the experience are not apparent" (1995, p. 7), as the experience is repeated after it is forgotten, it is through forgetting that it is experienced for the first time (1995, p. 8). As such Caruth argues that the event is not really experienced when it first happened, it is later understood and known belatedly in connection with a place or time (1995, p. 8). In addition, she adds, "The impact of the traumatic event lies precisely in its belatedness, in its refusal to be simply located, in its insistent appearance outside the boundaries of any single place or time" (1995, p. 9). Caruth asserts that "trauma is not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual's past, but rather in the way its very unassimilated nature— the way it was precisely not known in the first instance— returns to haunt the survivor" (1996, p. 4). The event is just not accessible at the moment of its occurrence and there is a time of absence.

Hence, a traumatic event is understood in connection with absence. However, this absence does not inevitably lead to negative consequences. Trauma can open new alternatives for experience and new ways of understanding because the repetition of the event which is characteristic to traumatic belatedness forces the traumatized person to find new ways to survive the trauma (Marder, 2006, p. 3). As trauma is not sufficiently comprehended at the time of its occurrence, the person cannot recount it at will, rather the haunting or the possessive influence returns intrusively and the individual experiences it for the first time only in its belatedness (Whitehead, 2004, p. 5). Therefore, according to Caruth, trauma represents a profound crisis of history as "the traumatized… carry an impossible history within them" (1995, p. 5). This interruption of time or history draws on Sigmund Freud's concept of "Nachträglichkeit", which means "deferred action" or "afterwardsness". Nachträglichkeit refers to "the ways in which certain experiences, impressions and memory traces are revised at a later time in order to correspond with fresh experiences" (Whitehead, 2004, p. 6). This conception stimulates a reviewing of memory's causality and temporality (Whitehead, 2004, p. 6). Likewise, Shoshana Felman, with a similar understanding of trauma, has examined "questions of loss, listening, temporality and especially the problem of witnessing". She aimed at finding ways of "working through" trauma towards a solution through which the individual can make sense of the past as useful once again and claim back repressed experiences (Di-Capua, 2015, p. 4).

In addition to Caruth's definition of trauma, Kai T. Erikson in his essay titled "Notes On Trauma and Community" (1995) defines trauma as:

> Something alien breaks in on you, smashing through whatever barriers your mind has set up as a line of defense. It invades you, takes you over, becomes a dominating feature of your interior landscape– possesses you, and in the process threatens to drain you and leave you empty. (1995, p. 183)

For Erikson, thus, trauma is named and defined by its damage. Erikson also talks about individual and collective trauma. He, in his *Everything in Its Path* (1976), describes "individual trauma" as "a blow to the psyche which breaks through one's defenses so suddenly and with such brutal force that the person cannot react to it effectively" (p. 153). "Collective trauma", on the other hand, means "a blow to the basic tissues of social life which damages the bonds attaching people together and impairs the prevailing sense of communality" (p. 153). Different from individual trauma, Erikson says,

> [C]ollective trauma works its way slowly and even insidiously into the awareness of those who suffer from it. It is not sudden, even so, it is a shock all the same and a gradual realization that the community does not exist anymore as an effective source of support and that an essential part of the self has disappeared. The traumatized no longer exists as a connected pair or as linked cells in a larger communal body. (1976, pp. 153-54)

Similarly, a definition of collective trauma is given by Jeffrey C. Alexander as well. He refers to collective trauma as "the result of a sociocultural, narrative act of constructing traumatic experiences" (2004, p. 10).

According to Ron Eyerman, slavery as collective memory, which is a form of remembering a situation that has shaped the identity of a people, is also a different kind of collective trauma (2004, p. 60). Traumas that affect individuals and trauma that has become a cultural process are different from each other. Trauma as a cultural process is related to the development of collective identity and the formation of collective memory. In the post-Civil War era, the idea of a single African American identity developed, with the abolishment of slavery. Remembering being forced to serve and submit to the will of others led to the exercise of a collective identity. In this regard, slavery is hurtful in retrospect and constitutes a vital setting that could unite all African Americans. Slavery forms the roots of an emerging collective identity through the use of collective memory (2004, p. 60). Besides, to outline the development of the African American identity, Eyerman outlines cultural trauma as,

> [A] dramatic loss of identity and meaning, a tear in the social fabric, affecting a group of people who have achieved some degree of cohesion. In this sense, the trauma need not necessarily be felt by everyone in a group or have been directly experienced by any or all. While it may be necessary to establish some event or occurrence as the significant 'cause', its traumatic meaning must be established and accepted, a process which requires time, as well as mediation and representation. A cultural trauma must be understood, explained and made coherent through public reflection and discourse. (2004, p. 61)

On the other hand, for Michelle Balaev, the description of trauma as timeless, repetitive and contagious points to transhistorical trauma by forming binary relationships between individuals and groups (2012, p. 12). According to transhistorical trauma, as Balaev states, a powerful trauma that a group of people faced in the past can be encountered by an individual that lives many years later and that has the same qualities of the historical group like the nationality, race, gender or religion due to the pervasive and universal features of traumatic experiences and memories (2012, p. 13). In contrast, personal trauma could be transmitted to others who are of the same racial, ethnic or gender but who have not experienced the primary event. Nonetheless, they have similar social or biological traits so that the individual and the group's traumatic experience becomes one. This points to the fact that "narratives can re-create and abreact the traumatic experience" for those who were not present (Balaev, 2012, p. 13). Thus, the historical trauma is experienced firsthand by the witness. Historical trauma becomes the symbol and definition of "contemporary individual identity as well as racial or cultural identity" (Balaev, 2012, p. 13).

In addition to the transhistorical trauma model, J. Brooks Bouson's *Quiet As It's Kept: Shame, Trauma, and Race in the Novels of Toni Morrison* (2000) can be given as a good example for transhistorical trauma that is about the racial identity formation in literature. In the work, it is argued that slavery and the practice of white racism throughout history created a "learned cultural shame" and it became a distinct trait of present-day black identity and collective African American experience. The employment of this trait by black people can be seen in Morrison's works and American culture (2000, p. 4). Bouson provides insights into Morrison's writing but keeps an essentialist language about trauma and racial identity in an attempt to link present violence and the misery of racial groups in America to the violence and subjugation that the same racial and cultural groups suffered centuries ago (Balaev, 2012, p. 14). Bouson sees trauma as a contagious and universally experienced phenomenon and argues that slavery's collective memories are intergenerationally passed on (2000, pp. 3-5). She claims that African Americans are deeply traumatized because of slavery in the past and these collective memories follow the descendants of slaves (Balaev, 2012, p. 14). These memories point to the trauma and shame that have been experienced by an individual's ancestors. This kind of transhistorical feature of trauma employs an essentialist concept of identity associated with the traditional model of trauma which argues that there is a universally shared response to traumatic experiences, therefore it indicates that individual identity is characterized by certain historical experiences of different groups (Balaev, 2012, p. 15). Likewise, the individual in fiction represents a single personal

traumatic experience that has been experienced by these groups of people. In order to explain the connections between individual and social experiences, the model of transhistorical trauma theory can be applied. In many respects, the individual points to a historical experience or event from which a large number of people have suffered the same violence as slavery or rape (Balaev, 2012, p. 17).

Caruth has set out some key ideas for what has been adopted into a set of theories of trauma studies. However, in her writings, she makes way to a series of slippages in which initial speculation is changed into certainty, which then becomes the basis for largely unsupported arguments (Gibbs, 2014, p. 8). To illustrate, with his concept of repression, Freud allows for trauma to be banished from consciousness intentionally and knowingly. It is not unconsciously erased from the mind as the dissociative model insists. In her *Unclaimed Experience*, Caruth quotes Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* in which he discusses how trauma sufferers might be more concerned with not thinking of traumatic memories (1996, p. 61). This statement clearly shows that not thinking of something acknowledges that there is an awareness of something not to think about, which suggests conscious repression. However, Caruth refers to it in terms of a memory that is unwillingly unavailable: "Trauma is suffered in the psyche precisely, it would seem, because it is not directly available to experience" (1996, p. 61). Despite errors such as this, the concept of belatedness sustains a persistent hold on trauma theory in the humanities (Gibbs, 2014, p. 10).

Caruth is also criticized by other trauma theorists on her belatedness. Richard McNally, for instance, points to the fact that earlier clinical writing on trauma has not insisted on a period of amnesia that follows the traumatic incident. In the original definitions of PTSD, he explains that a traumatic event was assumed to be too memorable, which is consistent with the scientific literature (2004, p. 8). Yet, in the revised version of DSM-III (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 3rd edition) and later in DSM-IV psychogenic amnesia was incorporated as a possible symptom and the idea of the repressed memory attained widespread support. This indicates that traumatic memory is distinctive about not remembering every event. That is to say, traumatic memories are not dissociated or repressed, rather if the trauma is violent enough the individual is more likely to remember it. In fact, individuals never forget the memories of trauma even if they want to (Suleiman, 2008, p. 279). McNally does not dismiss traumas like sexual abuse during childhood, yet he argues that such an abuse can always be remembered when it occurred after the age of two as before the age of two generally people do not really remember anything. He also admits

that individuals might not think about their traumatic experiences for many years but then unexpectedly they remember them due to an event that triggers their memories. However, this kind of forgetting is not similar to repressed or dissociated memory as they point to an inability to remember, even though ordinary memory and its lapses function to forget events in life (Suleiman, 2008, p. 280). Even so, failures of memory may happen as information has not been encoded to begin with, so that this situation connects ordinary and traumatic memory instead of distinguishing between them (Gibbs, 2014, p. 11). McNally goes further by stating that,

> An insistence on belatedness also depends in part upon a simplistic model of memory: Because the mind is not a video recorder, not every aspect of a traumatic experience will get encoded into memory: this is especially true when an event is rapidly unfolding as in an automobile accident or a sudden assault: Accordingly, failure to encode every aspect of a traumatic experience— including an 'important' one– must not be confused with an inability to recall an aspect that has been encoded. (2004, p. 9)

In other words, traumatic events might be unavailable because they were not coded to begin with, not due to memory's failure. This is different from the popular idea that traumatic memory is unique, though events in life are mostly insufficiently encoded into memory to permit accurate recall. Katherine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone argue that the apparent disruptions of traumatic memory might be common to all types of memory, "the characteristic features of traumatic memory— its elisions, interruptions and reinventions— need bear no specific relation to an event, but rather can be seen to characterize the workings of memory in general" (2003, p. 97).

Despite the critiques by trauma theorists like McNally, several others have tried to provide some support for the notion of dissociation as well as belatedness by appealing to neuroscience. The well-known one among these may be Bessel van der Kolk with his insistence on evidence of key elements like dissociation and belatedness that is provided through studies of brain patterns (Gibbs, 2014, p. 12). Van der Kolk proposes that "dissociation" happens as the trauma is occurring and elaborates that "trauma survivors report that they automatically are removed from the scene" and that "they look at it from a distance" or dissolve altogether. The other parts of their personality suffer and "store the overwhelming event". Later, the survivors are haunted by flashbacks and subsequently they become amnestic keeping dissociating their traumatic memory (1995, p. 168). The re-experience of trauma stimulates a dissociative reaction. On the other hand, Ann Kaplan points to recent and more extensive neuroscience that suggests in many instances that there is not any evidence of amnesia or belatedness. Rather, the individual is conscious of the

traumatic experience. In other words, “two circuits happen at the same time: a circuit… where the cortex is bypassed; and a circuit that includes the cortex, so that trauma finds its way into memory” (2005, p. 38). Neuroscience does not really distinguish between traumatic and regular memory, with events sometimes remembered and sometimes forgotten in both cases. As pointed out by Kaplan, research shows that it is possible for trauma to be in conscious memory (2005, p. 38). Caruth and others’ insistence on belatedness is too rigid, partial and exclusionary, because trauma and its features are more complex. How the traumatized person responds depends upon the specific situation, the person’s particular psychical history as well as formation and on the specific context of the event (Kaplan, 2005, p. 38).

Besides, the event’s context is a part that is overlooked in mainstream trauma studies. Trauma works in a much more complex way than Caruth’s model of trauma or definitions of PTSD. The notion of belatedness which proposes the blocking of access to traumatic memories due to amnesia, either temporarily or permanently, is not very common in the experiences of sufferers. In fact, the individual has memories, or at least partial memories of the traumatic event. Similarly, fantasies and desires or even wishes for things to be different may influence what can be remembered. The following events may lightly have an impact on memory (Kaplan, 2005, p. 42). Radstone also supports the claim that trauma is revised in the memory and may be affected by fantasies, and she adds that the memory of trauma is far more active contrary to the dissociation model’s claim:

> A memory becomes traumatic when it becomes associated with inadmissible meanings, wishes, fantasies that may include an identification with the aggressor. It is not an event, which is by its nature toxic to the mind, but what the mind later does to memory. (2007, p. 17)

Traumatic memory is not only present and active, but it might also involve fantasy identification with the perpetrator (Gibbs, 2014, p. 13).

In addition to the controversial view upon belatedness and dissociation, one further disagreement among trauma theorists is whether traumatic events are sudden, that is ‘punctual’, or whether they could be ‘insidious’, that is slow and gradual (Gibbs, 2014, p. 15). According to this view, ‘everyday’ chronic conditions could be potential causes of trauma, as opposed to the view that trauma is the result of a “sudden”, “single” and “overwhelming event”, which “is experienced too soon, too unexpectedly, to be fully known and is therefore not available to consciousness until it imposes itself again, repeatedly, in nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivor” (Caruth, 1996, p. 4). The idea of “belatedness” manifests itself through the sudden, single and overwhelming character of the

event. The cause of trauma becomes unavailable to consciousness and a single simple violent or original event remains behind traumatized behavior (Gibbs, 2014, p. 15). Laura Brown in her essay "Not Outside the Range" puts forward an important challenge to the notion that trauma is always the result of a 'single event'.

As a psychotherapist, Brown has dealt with many female trauma sufferers whose experiences were not "outside the range of human experience", according to DSM-III, and were, instead, seen as normal and ordinary traumatic events (Gibbs, 2014, p. 16). Nevertheless, for her, the women's experiences, although they have become a part of their daily life, were still traumatic. The definition of human and trauma were "narrow and constructed within the experiences and realities of dominant groups in cultures" (Brown, 1995, p. 102). Furthermore, the dominant group "writes the diagnostic manuals and informs the public discourse", on which people have built "their images of real trauma" (Brown, 1995, p. 102). Accordingly, traumas that are private, secret and insidious are not expressed under this category (Brown, 1995, p. 102). To oppose this event-based model she states that:

> [T]he range of human experience becomes the range of what is normal and usual in the lives of men of the dominant class; white, young, able-bodied, educated, middle-class, Christian men. Trauma is thus that disrupts these particular human lives, but no other. (1995, p. 101)

From this, Brown together with Maria Root develops the model of 'insidious trauma', which deviates from the punctual or event-based model of trauma. "Insidious trauma", she explains, "refers to the traumatogenic effects of oppression that are not necessarily overtly violent or threatening to bodily well-being at the given moment but that do violence to the soul and spirit" (Brown, 1995, p. 107). To give an example, she states that women who live in a culture which has a high rate of sexual assault and in which such behavior is thought to be usual and erotic by men are subjected to insidious trauma. The same is valid for each non-dominant group, as well: The African American who expects to be assaulted, the lesbian and gay person who walks in fear of getting hurt, and the disabled person who never knows when she/he will be dropped to the ground. All these people experience insidious trauma (Brown, 1995, p. 107). Indeed, Brown continues,

> [F]or girls and women, most traumas occur in secret. They happen in bed, where our fathers and stepfathers and uncles and older brothers molest us in the dead of night; behind the closed doors of marital relationships where men beat and sometimes rape their wives and lovers; in the back seats of cars, where women are forced into sex by their boyfriends, not knowing until years later that they can call this a rape; in the offices of physicians and therapists who sexually exploit patients, knowing that their status is likely to protect them. (1995, p. 101)

These events are not "unusual", they are "within the range of human experience". In the same way, Judith Herman supports Brown's view by stating that, "There is a spectrum of traumatic disorders, ranging from the effects of a single overwhelming event to the more complicated effects of prolonged and repeated abuse" (1992, p. 3). According to her, "rape, battery and other forms of sexual and domestic violence are so common that they cannot be described as 'outside the range' of ordinary experience" (1992, p. 33). Especially rape is described as an atrocity and "a crime of violence rather than a sexual act" (1992, p. 31).

In the late nineteenth century, Herman explains, studies of hysteria questioned the experience of sexual trauma. Violence was not seen as a normal part of women's both domestic and sexual lives. When Freud found out the truth during his investigations on hysteria, he had to retreat his claim of women's sexual abuse due to the reactions by patriarchal authorities. Herman comments on this as "In the protected environment of the consulting room, women had dared to speak of rape, but the learned men of science had not believed them. [W]omen spoke of rape and other women believed them" (p. 29, 1992). Women's real conditions had been hidden rendering the reality of sexual abuse invisible. With "the women's liberation movement" of the 1970s, it was acknowledged that women in domestic life delivered the most shared trauma symptoms (1992, p. 19). Sexual abuse against women and even children were recognized as common. A survey comprised of interviews guided by Diana Russell gave horrifying results: "One woman in four had been raped. One woman in three had been sexually abused in childhood" (Herman, p. 31, 1992). Russell found out that incest, which she called "the secret trauma", was pervasive in society.

Herman's *Trauma and Recovery* (1992) has helped deepen the meaning of trauma that is "everyday" as a human condition that affects both combat victims and rape victims, as well as people exposed to child abuse and incest. Herman showed how they all suffer from obstructive symptoms like "flashbacks, panic attacks, phobias as well as anxiety, depression and heightened emotions such as shame, guilt and self-loathing". Because of the daily weight of these symptoms, victims may find themselves in "a vicious cycle of dissociation and repetition" (Di-Capua, 2015, p. 2). Accordingly, the insidious trauma model has brought about an interdisciplinary approach to trauma studies.

Consequently, this feminist branch of trauma theory has challenged the punctual model of trauma in such a way that DSM-IV has taken much more account of post-traumatic conditions caused by insidious or chronic exposure to stress. Even so, Brown's argument hints at a slight western bias when she uses the words "white, young, able-bodied, educated, middle-class, Christian men". She does not mention western or American except by

implication and she overlooks the colonial experience, so she seems to support a more localized theory of trauma (Gibbs, 2014, p. 16). Nevertheless, seen as a key marker of the colonial experience, insidious trauma has been used in postcolonial trauma studies, as well. Stef Craps and Gert Buelens emphasize the link between postcolonial trauma and insidious trauma, "Routinely ignored or dismissed in trauma research, the chronic psychic suffering produced by the structural violence of racial, gender, sexual, class and other inequities has yet to be fully accounted for" (2008, pp. 3-4). Thus, the postcolonial experience also involves everyday traumatic experiences of inequality, oppression and racism, and insidious trauma remains relevant in the analysis of non-western trauma. Namely, the insidious trauma model helps trauma studies by also involving the different social, economic and political contexts of the individual's trauma.

Craps's *Postcolonial Witnessing* (2013) explains the postcolonial trauma in trauma theory. It is a comprehensive evaluation of the Eurocentric prejudice of trauma theory and points to constructing thoroughly "decolonized" trauma studies. Craps contends that trauma theory has been mostly insufficient to recognize the sufferings of non-Western others:

> They marginalize or ignore traumatic experiences of non-Western or minority cultures, they tend to take for granted the universal validity of definitions of trauma and recovery that have developed out of history of Western modernity, they often favor or even prescribe a modernist aesthetic of fragmentation and aporia as uniquely suited to the task of bearing witness to trauma, and they generally disregard the connections between metropolitan and non-Western or minority traumas. (2013, p. 2)

Once more, Craps criticizes trauma theory on sticking to the traditional model of trauma theory, which states that trauma is a result of "a single, extraordinary and catastrophic event" (2013, p. 31). He further goes on arguing that this model of trauma theory cannot be inevitably applied to non-Western and minority groups not even for Western groups (2013, p. 32). The act of racism, Craps continues, does not fit any classical models of trauma:

> Unlike structural trauma, racism is historically specific; yet, unlike historical trauma, it is not related to a particular event, with a before and after. Understanding racism as a historical trauma, which can be worked through, would be to obscure the fact that it continues to cause damage in the present. (2013, p. 32)

Hence, as stated by Sonya Andermahr, "racially based forms of trauma historically rooted in the global systems of slavery and colonialism pose a significant challenge to the Eurocentric model of trauma as a single overwhelming event" (2015, p. 2). Calling on Frantz Fanon and contemporary theories of insidious trauma and post-colonial syndrome, Craps proposes a model of trauma that highlights racialized trauma's normative, every day and

persistent nature. Craps urges that trauma studies be "decolonized" by acknowledging the universal contexts of traumatic experiences, the distinct types of traumatic suffering and the several forms it can be exemplified in literary texts (Andermahr, 2015, p. 2). Thus, this model, according to Craps takes into consideration the unique, social and historical "contexts" in which narratives of trauma are created and perceived. Thereby, this model is suitable for various ways of representation and confrontation which these contexts require (2013, p. 32). This type of trauma theory corrects the "marginalization of non-Western and minority traumas", challenges the supposedly globalized Western trauma descriptions and alternates aesthetics of trauma, and points to the connection between First and Third World traumas (Andermahr, 2015, p. 2). Furthermore, Craps stresses that movements to extend the range of trauma are justifiable and essential. Since PTSD was initially preoccupied practically only with the experiences of former army forces but since then it has extended to involve survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault with the support of people experienced with these issues. In this light, acknowledging the trauma of racism as a universal as well as valid traumatic experience is necessary (Craps, 2013, p. 27).

Similarly, Michael Rothberg (2008) calls on scholars to 'decolonize' trauma. He calls for an exploration of whether trauma offers a good framework for the legacy of violence in the colonial and post-colonial world (p. 225, as cited in Visser, 2015, p. 8). Hence, considering the subject matter as the racial and cultural kind of colonial difference, a postcolonial field of trauma studies to help the construction of new narratives should be aimed at. The writing and claiming of catastrophic experiences could offer a narrative that has a healing function and a better way to understand how violence forms traumatic subjectivity. Postcolonial critics suggest a relation to the past that is not therapeutic and is constructed for the purpose of survival rather than recovery (Di-Capua, 2015, p. 7).

In terms of post-colonial trauma studies, Caruth's Freudian model of trauma is criticized by Dominick LaCapra on the point that it defines the notion of melancholia and fragility as the inevitable characteristics of the post-traumatic phase that causes "lasting effects of weakened communal and individual identities" (2001, pp. xi-xiii, as cited in Visser, 2015, p. 11). LaCapra suggests "acting out" and "working through" as methods of coming to terms with the traumatic events, where "melancholia" could be a form of acting out, while working through could be regarded as "an articulatory practice" which helps the traumatized individual to "recall memories of something that happened to one back then while realizing that one is living here and now with openings to the future" (2001, p. 22, as cited in Visser, 2015, p. 11). Roger Luckhurst, on the other hand, criticizes Caruth on her

emphasis on the assertion of the damaging effects of trauma. In other words, memory, he continues, is put “entirely under the sign of post-traumatic melancholia” and “there is a kind of injunction to maintain the post-traumatic condition” (Luckhurst, 2010, p. 210, as cited in Visser, 2015, p. 11). With this so-called injunction, the outcome of colonial trauma is explained only with regard to “weakness, victimization and melancholia”, and thus, resistance and recovery are obscured (Visser, 2015, p. 11). In his book *Postcolonial Witnessing: Trauma Out of Bounds* (2013), Craps proposes that post-colonial studies should “make visible the creative and political” instead of “the pathological and negative” in trauma studies (2013, p. 127). Today, it is mostly agreed that the post-colonial cannot maintain the association of melancholia with the implications of compliance and passivity as the inevitable consequences of traumatization. Removing these implications is to accomplish a step forward in the attempt to decolonize trauma theory (Visser, 2015, p. 11).

In addition, Caruth’s claim about “the impossibility of exact knowing” does not oppose the idea that narratives are restorative, and that trauma victims could deal with their trauma. Literature is used for trauma’s presentation, re-presentation and dramatization without making claims to ultimate definitions. Similarly, post-colonial trauma narratives also show that after a traumatic wounding resilience and growth are possible (Visser, 2015, pp. 11-12). Nevertheless, it is notable, as well, that Caruth in her latest book on trauma, *Literature in the Ashes of History* (2013), gives up her insistence on “melancholia as the inevitable condition of trauma” and rather she proposes that “trauma calls for a turn to life” and “imperative to live” (2013, p. xi, as cited in Visser, 2015, p. 12). Her interest in turning to life and ultimate growth points to what she assumes as a challenge for trauma theory in the 21st century because she assumes “the disappearance of history as a site where we can recognize the persistence of a language, or a writing, that emerges precisely as the archival resources of meaning and tradition slip away” (Caruth, 2013, p. xi, as cited in Visser, 2015, p. 12). This statement, though a vague generalization, contradicts her previous idea on melancholia (Visser, 2015, p. 12). All in all, post-colonial critics reject the limited orientation of Caruth towards trauma.

Another worthwhile issue discussed is the approach towards “narrative”. It is a debatable issue because of Caruth’s notion that “trauma cannot be fully verbalized or understood”, so that there is no truthfulness or accuracy in narratives. Trauma narrative is “regarded as leading to increased indeterminacy” which denies the possibility of recovery or resolution. For her, narrative cannot have a therapeutic or recuperative value, which is important for other theories of trauma. It might be true that on account of the limits in human

expression, the basic and precise meaning of the traumatic event cannot be completely grasped or completely related in language; however, Caruth goes beyond this view and argues that verbal expression of the traumatic event becomes a block to understanding, and an act of betraying the traumatic memory (Visser, 2015, p. 13). In contrast, in the mid-1990s, this inexpressibility of trauma was opposed by Herman. She sees narratives as "an empowering an effective therapeutic method in the treatment of trauma victims" (1992, p. 177). As such, traumatic narratives support healing and recovery "as an organized, detailed, verbal account, oriented in time and historical content" (1992, p. 177). As a consequence, as argued by Herman, trauma narratives are therapeutic and enable psychic integration with the subsequent resolution of trauma. Moreover, Herman asserts that "remembering and telling the truth about terrible events are prerequisites… for the healing of individual victims. When the truth is finally recognized, survivors can begin their recovery" (1992, p. 1). "Remembering and telling the truth" are communicative ways of constructing a narrative of trauma without reenacting it. Thus, narratives contribute to the possibility for healing. For example, when the traumatized victim is able to confront and translate the "unspeakable" tragedy into "her" story can she finally visualize a future without violence (Horvitz, 2000, p. 40). In other words, the traumatic experience needs to be transferred in order to be known both by the person and others. Herman argues that trauma's effect on the individual could be altered through talking to another person (Balaev, 2012, p. 8). To recover, the individual must place the experience of the traumatic event into a story to be told to others because the memory of the traumatic event is recognized as a literal and stable account of experience that is placed in the part of the brain which can be set free by talking (Balaev, 2012, p. 8). Abreaction and narrative recall are the key to unlock the door to the frozen memory (Balaev, 2012, p. 9). Herman states that speech is acknowledged as "the solution to the problem of trauma" and a main quality that defines trauma. Silence, on the other hand, could intensify the trauma as the individual is highly vulnerable. Traumatized people need a community to recover. Their sense of self has been traumatized, and it can be restored in connection with others (Herman, 1992, p. 61).

According to Balaev, people display different responses to traumatic events. She explains that "the difficulty of speaking about a traumatic experience is not necessarily due to its unspeakable feature but variable factors, including individual, social, and cultural factors that influence the remembrance and narration of the experience" (2012, p. 10). The unspeakable quality of trauma as an inevitable response need not be taken as an undisputable fact or an inherent feature of trauma (Balaev, 2012, p. 10).

Like the novels that will be examined in this thesis, literary works act as the medium to articulate traumatic experiences that are either collective or personal, by which the witnessing and learning about the traumas of others can take place. In this sense, literature relates people to each other exceeding cultural boundaries because of shared traumatic experiences. Hence, historical witnessing takes place via literature in which the "dead" is connected with "the survivor" through traumatic experiences that they encounter and share inviting the reader to pay close attention to the suffering of the characters in these stories (Caruth, 1996, pp. 8-9). In addition, the intersection of trauma fiction and postcolonial fiction in literature will also present the stories and voices of the silenced or marginalized. Hence, it will point to former overlooked histories and provide the reviewing of historical representation (Whitehead, 2004, p. 82).

Trauma itself urges a strong need for narratives to heal or recover from traumatic experiences. In post-colonial literature, there are many instances that provide support for this claim. Telling the story of the trauma experience may lead to health. Narrativization of this experience gives insights into "the specifics of the colonial past as a pathway to the integration of the traumatic memory" (Visser, 2015, p. 15). With the pluralist trauma model, which is more inclusive and sensitive to culture, the reading of trauma becomes possible beyond the survivor narrative. Thus, the recovery narrative which focuses on the productive and affirming subjectivities as well as the interaction between reconciliation and resistance, emerges to show how the protagonists acquire alternative and challenging representations in the analysis of their traumatic experiences.

Generally, Balaev explains, most literary trauma scholars rely solely on "the traditional model" of trauma, which claims that trauma is not accurately encoded into memory, and the traumatic event will never be normally integrated into consciousness (2012, p. xiii). Hence, this causes a disintegrated sense of self and produces a kind of "memory with pathological symptoms" in which the event is frozen and cannot be represented (Balaev, 2012, p. xiii). The effects of the experience are only felt through recollection, never as a direct response to the event, and thus, the individual has to abreact the event to come close to knowing what happened. This model holds that the primary response to trauma is the abnormal division of consciousness. However, trauma in literature requires a pluralist approach of theory that uses different models of trauma and memory, which include not only dominant, but also non-dominant psychological concepts in order to account for its various representations. For a theoretical diversity the dominant model has to consist of alternative

theories to conceptually address the spectrum of traumatic imagery in literature (Balaev, 2012, p. xiii).

On the contrary, in a "pluralistic model", trauma is explained from various sources and is not limited to the discourse of the unrepresentable. Trauma is conceptualized to recognize pathological responses and does not exclude other responses. It describes the multidimensional functions and effects of a traumatic experience which stretches past "essentialist notions of identity, experience, and remembering" which is seen within the traditional model as it conceptualizes memory differently (Balaev, 2012, pp. xiii-xiv). Remembering, for the pluralistic model, is "a fluid and selective process of interpretation", unlike the traditional model's "literal, veridical recall" (Balaev, 2012, p. xiv). Therefore, remembering may be influenced by several internal as well as external factors such as "individual personality traits, family history, culture, geographic location, place, and historical period" that form the meaning of an experience. These contextual factors like "society, cultural values, landscapes" are interconnected and affect the process of remembering (Balaev, 2012, p. xiv). Therefore, the traumatic experience's meaning can be shaped by a remembering process which can change in time by the victim who constantly modifies memories in each moment of remembrance. If remembering a traumatic event is assumed to be "an imaginative process of recollection", it means that it creates itself continuously and is formed as much by social narratives as by the individual's character traits. Accordingly, understanding trauma requires contextual factors that affect the experience, and the act of remembering must be taken into consideration. If remembering is an active process of constructions then trauma cannot be seen as a fixed memory and unrepresentable experience (Balaev, 2012, p. xiv).

To sum up, this thesis will analyze the representations of trauma and the traumatized individuals in *The Bluest Eye* and *Bastard Out of Carolina* within the framework of the theories discussed above by focusing on the modes of dealing and the possibility for recovery from their traumatic events. It will highlight the traumatic experience itself and how the characters respond to it, and their possible symptoms to understand their trauma. This thesis will employ both traditional as well as pluralist models of trauma theories by emphasizing event-based, punctual kinds of trauma and context-based, pro-longed and insidious kinds of trauma, respectively. Moreover, the arguments presented in this thesis will be supported by the trauma theories of the aforementioned Caruth, Herman, Brown along with Root, and Craps and other theorists. These issues will be discussed in the following chapters titled "Chapter 1: Childhood Trauma and Madness as a Coping Mechanism in Toni Morrison's

*The Bluest Eye*" and "Chapter 2: Childhood Trauma and Fantasy as a Coping Mechanism in Dorothy Allison's *Bastard Out of Carolina*".

Chapter 1 focuses on Pecola Breedlove in *The Bluest Eye*, who is traumatized by her society and family that make her feel shameful, ugly and worthless. She is neglected by both of her parents and raped by her father, and thus, cast out. Morrison depicts the gradual traumatization process and the coping strategies of Pecola through her engagement with other people. She uses dissociation to cope with her trauma. In the end, Pecola loses her sanity for the sake of finding peace in her world. Although her madness does not lead to her recovery, it helps her to survive.

Chapter 2 deals with Bone Boatwright in *Bastard Out of Carolina*, who is labelled as a white trash bastard in South Carolina, and her traumatization caused by her classist, racist and sexist society. This chapter highlights her sexual abuse by her stepfather starting at the age of five until she turns twelve and her mother's inability to see these ongoing abuses by him. She copes with her trauma via masturbation, storytelling and listening to gospels. The novel reaches its climax in the end when she is raped by her stepfather and her mother abandons her. By attaining a lesbian identity through her Aunt Raylene, who will be there for her, and accepting her mother's abandonment, Bone is able to reconcile with her trauma. As a matter of fact, although Pecola and Bone share similar traumas from different perspectives, their coping mechanisms and responses are unique to themselves.

The conclusion comes to the argument that Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* and Allison's *Bastard Out of Carolina* expose the impacts of social, cultural, racial and gender issues on marginal people, especially women, and how these impacts are transferred to the next generation causing complex traumas for the female child protagonists, Pecola and Bone. Thus, both novels lay out the relationship of child sexual abuse with these outside forces. However, Pecola and Bone's coping mechanisms for their traumas act as disruptive forces against the patriarchal society, despite their victimization and suffering. As such, to save herself from the effects of her traumatic experiences Pecola loses her mind and acquires blue eyes along with an imaginary friend in her fantasy world, and thus, by becoming mad, she chooses an extreme form of survival and rebuffs the inclusion into the patriarchal order. On the other hand, Bone tries to retake control over her body via sexual and imaginative fantasies and goes against the patriarchal ideology by attaining a lesbian identity. Hence, both novels offer an alternative to the characters' traumatic condition.

# CHAPTER 1
# CHILDHOOD TRAUMA AND MADNESS AS A COPING MECHANISM IN TONI MORRISON'S *THE BLUEST EYE*

Morrison states that she wrote *The Bluest Eye* to encourage African American people to resist the dominant ideology which privileges the white in every aspect of life. She says that when she started writing *The Bluest Eye*, she was "interested in something else"; "the far more tragic and disabling consequences of accepting rejection as legitimate, as self-evident. I knew that some victims of powerful self-loathing turn out to be dangerous, violent, reproducing the enemy who has humiliated them over and over" (Morrison, 1970, p. ix). The discrimination between the white and non-white others emphasizing the stereotypical color-based hierarchies based on physical appearance is promoted via ideological apparatuses, particularly the media. The promotion of the standards of beauty ideologically set as light skin color and lighter eye colors in American society is criticized by Morrison as is evident in the title she chooses for her novel: *The Bluest Eye*. In addition, Morrison, who is very much influenced by "the women's rights movement in the 1960s", which raised "rape" and "incest" as social issues rather than psychological ones, employs these themes in *The Bluest Ey*e in order to speak up about racial and family violence which are some of the major problems of the American society. Thus, Morrison challenges her readers by making them question their ideologically constructed perspectives and calls them forth to speak the unspeakable. In her Foreword to *The Bluest Eye*, she admits that a misreading might occur "by centering the weight of the novel's inquiry on so delicate and vulnerable a character [that] could smash her [Pecola] and lead readers into the comfort of pitying her rather than into an interrogation of themselves for the smashing" (Morrison, 1970, p. xii). Morrison tries to "peck away at the gaze that condemns Pecola as ugly" (1970, p. xi). Her solution to this possible aforementioned misreading is "to break the narrative into parts that have to be reassembled by the reader" (1970, p. 207). In this way, Morrison exposes the specific ways that affect the characters and Pecola, and how these marginalized people are given voices and representation in the literary sphere. Thereby, for instance, the novel relates the life stories of Pecola's parents from their eyes and reveals that they, too, are victims of racism and the socially established white standards. On the other hand, Claudia MacTeer as the narrator of the novel tries to elucidate the reasons that cause Pecola's trauma and her, finally, losing her sanity to save herself from reality.

*The Bluest Eye* (1970) is about Pecola Breedlove, a young African American woman, who suffers from traumatic experiences in a racist, class-conscious and sexist society. The novel presents the role that race, class, family structure and patriarchal oppression play in Pecola's life, and how they psychologically disturb and traumatize her. She lives in a racist community that perceives white norms as the ideal and thus, considers being white as the standard of beauty. Besides, Pecola and her parents as a family are marked abnormal, ugly and undesirable due to their dysfunctional family structure and dark black skin. Yet, they still try to live up to these established white norms so as to be accepted in their community. By using Pecola's story as the focal point, the novel examines the destructive effects of racism and shows racial discrimination as an important problem in the African American community.

The narrator of *The Bluest Eye*, Claudia MacTeer, is the youngest daughter of the MacTeers, who are an African American family that look after Pecola for a short time. The events are not presented in a linear form and the plotline is reversed. That is, the end of the novel is placed at the very beginning of the novel and what will happen to Pecola is already known:

> Quiet as it's kept, there were no marigolds in the fall of 1941. We thought, at the time, that it was because Pecola was having her father's baby that the marigolds did not grow. A little examination and much less melancholy would have proved to us that our seeds were not the only ones that did not sprout; nobody's did. For years I thought my sister was right: it was my fault. I had planted them too far down in the earth. It never occurred to either of us that the earth itself might have been unyielding. We had dropped our seeds in our own little plot of black dirt just as Pecola's father had dropped his seeds in his own plot of black dirt. What is clear now is that of all of that hope, fear, lust, love, and grief, nothing remains but Pecola and the unyielding earth. Cholly Breedlove is dead; our innocence too. The seed shriveled and died; her baby too. (Morrison, 1970, pp. 4-5)

According to Bloom, Claudia begins her narrative with the phrase "Quiet as it's kept" which is associated with the African tradition favoring "story, folklore and gossip" to transmit "the mystery and wisdom that informed and sustained community life" (2010, p. 29). In addition, this phrase is also used by black women to point to a secret that is to be revealed, and it is an invitation to join the tradition of listening to storytellers (2010, p. 29). Bloom states that,

> The reader immediately learns the essential facts of the story before the narrative actually begins— Pecola's rape by her father [Cholly], the ensuing pregnancy and death of the baby— and concludes, under Claudia's direction, that what follows will be an account of the sisters' failure to stop the unfolding horror and how they took their inadequate understanding of it into their adult lives with all its consequences and implications. (2010, p. 29)

In order to address the vulnerability of children in a racist and patriarchal society, Pecola's story should be articulated. Since she loses her sanity as a result of sequences of traumatic events which will be discussed in detail in the following pages, it will be Claudia's duty to reshape the past and put Pecola's trauma into representation. As Bloom says,

> Pecola's story is too important not to tell and that Pecola herself has been too damaged by life to recognize that she even has a story to tell. Before she is allowed to grow up, she has 'grown down' or regressed to a place where her shattered ego is fearfully and precariously living in delusions of its own making. (2010, p. 30)

The narrative voice is fragmented. There is the voice of Claudia as a little girl and Claudia as an adult looking back into the past, which functions as a third-person narrator relating the life stories of the Breedloves and the community around them. At certain points, there are first-person narrations of Cholly and Pauline. At the end of the novel, a dialogue of Pecola with her imaginary friend is presented. In this respect, the pieces of the story are put together through the different perspectives presented. The novel is divided into four main sections. Each section is named after the seasons of the year starting with autumn. However, the associated meanings of some seasons are not parallel to the events that happen in the story. For instance, the novel begins with "Autumn" in the 1940s, in Lorain, Ohio, a season when people get ready for winter and protect themselves from the cold. At this point, the Breedloves' house gets burned down by Cholly when he is drunk, and the family becomes homeless. This destructive event reveals how unstable Pecola's environment is. Pecola starts to live with the MacTeer family as a temporary foster child. The MacTeers live in an "old, cold and green" house, in which "at night a kerosene lamp lights one large room. The others are braced in darkness, peopled by roaches and mice" (Morrison, 1970, p. 8). The detail of the house suggests that they have a low economic status. However, in spite of their poor living conditions, they take in Pecola. Pecola makes friends with the MacTeer sisters Claudia and Frieda. From the beginning, it is clear that Pecola is not provided with a safe and friendly home by her parents. She does not have the security that a girl at her age should have. She is described as a quiet, awkward girl, who admires the famous Hollywood star, Shirley Temple, as the model of beauty like the rest of the African American community does. She consumes milk excessively in order to drink from the Shirley Temple cup, eats Mary Jane candies and longs for having blue eyes. She has internalized the racist ideology so much that she believes that being white is beautiful and that her own black skin signifies ugliness. She starts to menstruate at the MacTeers' house, which also subverts the image of autumn that symbolizes aging and death, as Pecola becomes a woman who is able to bear children, which

signifies regeneration. In the section titled "Winter", a new light-skinned girl, Maureen Peal, attends their school. Together with the boys at school, Maureen bullies Pecola because of her dark skin and her poor family background. This just stimulates Pecola's sense of worthlessness both as an African American woman and an individual. "Spring" brings fertility but ironically in the most traumatic and tragic way. Pecola is raped by her own father and gets pregnant at the age of twelve. Moreover, her mother, Pauline, neither protects nor supports her at this point. This chapter not only does reveal how Pecola is exposed to sexual violence, but also presents Cholly's as well as his wife Pauline's traumatic past. Their individual traumas have turned them into perpetrators and led them to ruin their own daughter. Finally, in "Summer", which is a season of renewal, joy and abundance, Pecola loses her baby and her sanity in delusion of realizing her wish of having blue eyes.

In this regard, trauma becomes "an event in the subject's life defined by its intensity, by the subject's incapacity to respond adequately to it, and the upheaval long-lasting effects that it brings about in the psychical organization" (Laplanche and Pontalis, 1973, p. 465). In short, trauma is "characterized by an influx of excitations that is excessive by the standard of the subject's tolerance and capacity to master such excitations and work them out physically" (Laplanche and Pontalis, 1973, p. 465). In this respect, Pecola's trauma of being psychologically and sexually abused depicts how a female child's identity is shattered and how she struggles in vain to have psychic wholeness in a hostile world. The two aspects that also make her disintegration more significant than that of others are her young age and her gender, which make her much more defenseless in the society. Besides, another reason behind Pecola's vulnerability is her black identity which renders her a marginal character in a racist society. Pecola has to cope with what she is seen as to acquire an autonomous identity outside the white Western discourse by which her community and she are ironically influenced (Ramirez, 2013, pp. 75-76). In *New Dimensions of Spirituality* (1987) Stephanie A. Demetrakopoulos states that,

> Pecola is obstructed and deflected from higher consciousness of the self because she is female. [She] is expunged from human society even before she has awakened to a consciousness of self. Pecola stands for the triple indemnity of the 'female black child': children, blacks, and females are devalued in American culture. (p. 34, as cited in Bloom, 2010, p. 40)

Assessing the history of trauma is imperative when considering the pre-trauma functioning of the people in *The Bluest Eye*. As such, the interactions between traumatized people and the world and their coping strategies have to be placed in context. Pecola's psychological trauma is determined by social oppression stemming from her patriarchal community and

her dysfunctional family dynamics. Thus, Morrison draws attention to the socially invisible psychic wounds of minorities in her novels. According to her, the traumatic effects of social oppression do not just, by definition, only violate or threaten the body, but have also a destructive effect on the psyche. Marginalized people like Pecola experience "insidious trauma", which is the ongoing, daily stress coming from oppression, due to the cruelty that is imposed upon them by the dominant group, usually white, but also by their own race. They start to internalize feelings of self-contempt and inferiority because of the dominant group, which then leads to institutional racism. Consequently, minority groups themselves become oppressors towards their own community, reproducing the values to which they fall victims (Ramirez, 2013, p. 76). Being in an oppressed social group means, as stated by Brown, being in a "constant lifetime risk of exposure to certain trauma" (1995, p. 108).

Given the fact that trauma may be defined by its specific context, it can be claimed that *The Bluest Eye* is about the destructive consequences of all kinds of discrimination that one can imagine: racism, class and gender. Accordingly, Root asserts that most of the experiences of trauma by women and those racially othered and financially disadvantaged are not exceptional or extraordinary events. Instead, lots of traumatic events that affect these groups are daily, current, cumulative and highly common (1992, p. 230). To illustrate, in the novel, although there are not many white character portrayals, the oppressive racist attitudes of the whites are given via implications. When Pecola goes to the store to buy some "Mary Jane candies", the white immigrant storekeeper Mr. Yacobowski with his blue eyes,

> [L]ooks toward her. Somewhere between retina and object, between vision and view, his eyes draw back, hesitate, and hover. At some fixed point in time and space he senses that he need not waste the effort of a glance. He does not see her, because for him there is nothing to see. She looks up at him and sees… the total absence of human recognition— the glazed separateness. (Morrison, 1970, p. 46)

He ignores her, which she first cannot understand, and then she attributes this to her blackness. As she "has seen interest, disgust, even anger in grown male eyes" (Morrison, 1970, 47), she assumes that "the distaste must be for her, her blackness" (Morrison, 1970, 47). He does not discriminate her verbally, but by his gaze he expresses it. In this context, not only race, but also the class factor emerges as a point to be discussed. Despite his immigrant working class status which also makes him a marginalized person in the mainstream society, Mr. Yacobowski feels himself superior to a little black girl because of his class and skin color. His interaction with Pecola portrays the insidious influence of the dynamics of class division in the society. In view of this aforementioned fact, identity based oppressions due to race and class are examples of micro-aggressions that come together and

cause traumatic experiences for marginalized people. As affirmed by Brown, "Discrimination, marginalization, exclusion and constriction of these groups" (1995, p. 108) are also examples of oppressive behavior and, thus, traumatic. People, like Pecola, are made to feel less because they are not a part of the dominant culture, and thus, excluded from the dominant group. After this event with the white storekeeper, Pecola shows symptoms of coping within herself. Herman asserts that, "The child [Pecola] trapped in an abusive environment is faced with formidable tasks of adaptation" (1992, p. 96). She feels both ashamed and angry,

> Anger stirs and wakes in her. Anger is better. There is a sense of being in anger. A reality and presence. An awareness of worth. It is a lovely surging. Her thoughts fall back to Mr. Yacobowski's eyes. The anger will not hold. The shame wells up again, its muddy rivulets seeping into her eyes. What to do before the tears come. (Morrison, 1970, p. 48)

She is angry because he treats her as if she was an abnormal being that does not deserve humane treatment. His obvious disgust towards blackness makes Pecola feel hatred towards her own black existence. Her identity is shattered by this seemingly superficial incident, which results in her belief of being inferior and her distaste for her blackness. Likewise, for Pecola, shame becomes an adaptive response to her helplessness, to her violated psyche and the indignity suffered by another person. However, Pecola cannot persist in her angry mood as emphasized in the quotation, and she surrenders to her shame. If she could have continued with her anger, that would have been a sign of her processing this traumatic event. Nonetheless, she finds the fault in her blackness, the blackness that is imposed upon her as something bad and inferior. She gives way to her cumulative trauma that, step by step, will come out of all these minor occasions.

The example at the store illustrates the negative attitudes of white people clearly, and how this affects Pecola's sense of self as well. As another defense mechanism, she remembers the newly bought Mary Jane candies:

> Each pale yellow wrapper has a picture on it. A picture of little Mary Jane, for whom the candy is named. Smiling white face. Blond hair in gentle disarray, blue eyes looking at her out of a world of clean comfort. The eyes are petulant, mischievous. To Pecola they are simply pretty. She eats the candy, and its sweetness is good. To eat the candy is somehow to eat the eyes, eat Mary Jane. Love Mary Jane. Be Mary Jane. Three pennies had bought her nine lovely orgasms with Mary Jane. (Morrison, 1970, p. 48)

Her response is to develop a desire for whiteness, which is the very thing that she is thought to be lacking, and in this example, it is blue eyes that are associated with it. The blue eyes that have despised her ironically become the eyes that make her feel stronger and self-

confident. In a way, she subverts the white gaze of the storekeeper and uses the candies as a powerful tool that brings her metaphorical satisfaction. However, the candies make her identify with the dominant white culture. She thinks that the Mary Jane candies make her stronger and more beautiful, because eating these candies means becoming Mary Jane herself. As a consequence, she can neutralize the phallocentric gaze of the storekeeper by acquiring beauty through imagining herself like Mary Jane. This also reveals that Pecola is not self-content, and she cannot identify with her ethnic identity.

In addition to the aforementioned example to show the micro-aggressions of trauma, not only white people, but also African Americans discriminate Pecola. Even little African American boys have adopted the discriminative attitude towards their own people. At school, they circle around Pecola and harass her and call out to her, "Black e mo. Black e mo. Yadaddsleepsnekked. Black e mo black e mo ya dadd sleeps nekked" (Morrison, 1970, p. 63). Their bullying Pecola like this and the implication of the fathers' sleeping naked have a sexual implication. Such an indirect and unaware reference to fathers' sexuality also foreshadows Pecola's sexual abuse by her father. Although they themselves are "black" and their own fathers might sleep naked, they still humiliate her. Besides, most importantly, Pecola does not have control over how her father behaves in the house. They even threaten her with physical violence, "You want a fat lip?" (Morrison, 1970, p. 64). They see no wrong in bullying a little girl whenever they get the opportunity. They call her names, insult her, and throw stones at her. However, it is not Pecola they are fighting against. They are actually expressing their learned self-loathing and helplessness by making her the scapegoat of their own black selves:

> It was their contempt for their own blackness that gave the first insult to its teeth. They seemed to have taken all of their smoothly cultivated ignorance, their exquisitely learned self-hatred, their elaborately designed hopelessness and sucked it all up into a fiery cone of scorn that had burned for ages in the hollows of their minds— cooled— and spilled over lips of outrage, consuming whatever was on its path. (Morrison, 1970, p. 63)

The boys have accepted the superiority of the dominant race and have alienated themselves from their own reality of being black. In this respect, the school represents a microcosm of the dominant white culture. As expressed by Brown, Pecola "must deal with the small violences to the spirit" (1995, p. 109), which she encounters in her daily life as these are the insidious distresses of being an African American little girl. Pecola does not defend herself against these abuses, she only cries and covers her face. According to Root, "[T]he repeated and chronic experience of traumatic events makes it difficult for the individual to believe in

anything but unique vulnerability" (1992, p. 244). Thereby, "repeated trauma in childhood invades and erodes the personality" (Herman, 1992, p. 96). Pecola shows acknowledgement of her helplessness and vulnerability when she prefers to keep quiet about the mistreatments she is subjected to.

Apart from the African American boys, Maureen Peal is also another girl at school who despises Pecola for her black skin and boasts about her own light-skin. Her feeling of superiority comes from the fact that her physical appearance complies with white definitions of beauty. Furthermore, her middle class gives her some power over other African Americans. Lighter skin and class become other bases for insidious trauma. In Claudia's words, Maureen is "a high-yellow dream child with long brown hair braided into two lynch ropes that hung down her back. She was rich, at least by our standards, as rich as the richest of the white girls, swaddled in comfort and care" (Morrison, 1970, p. 60). She is adored by white as well as black people due to her appearance and class. Maureen fascinates the entire school:

> When teachers called on her, they smiled encouragingly. Black boys didn't trip her in the halls; white boys didn't stone her, white girls didn't stuck their teeth when she was assigned to be their work partners; black girls stepped aside when she wanted to use the sink—. (Morrison, 1970, p. 60)

While Pecola sits alone at her desk due to her ugliness, Maureen's beauty brings her popularity. However, as an African American girl, she does not sympathize with Pecola when she hears the insults of the boys, but shouts: "I never saw my daddy naked! I am cute! And you are ugly! Black and ugly!" (Morrison, 1970, pp. 70-71). Blackness is again identified with ugliness. The dominant system, which the characters have adopted labels black people as ugly, and this leads to self-contempt among them. Pecola's black community uses her as their coping mechanism to reject and deny their blackness as a way to distance themselves from their black identities. As a victim, the silence of Pecola gives them the courage to pretend that their voices have some value in the patriarchal society even though they bear the marks of social negation themselves (Byerman, 1997, p. 137).

Tortured by almost everyone, Pecola never fights back. Her passivism can be compared to the "dandelions" in the novel. Pecola cannot understand the reason why people see them as ugly, and she wonders,

> [W]hy do people call them weeds? She thought they were pretty. Hunkie women in black babushkas go into the fields with baskets to pull them up. But they do not want the yellow heads. Maybe because they are so many, strong, and soon. (Morrison, 1970, p. 45)

Nevertheless, unlike the dandelions, Pecola does not have the strength to resist (Furman, 1999, p. 19). Since they are "many" and she is lonely, she does not have the strength to stand

against every person that mistreats her. Herman emphasizes the importance of action in traumatic situations, which is not seen in Pecola. She does not react to them. When there is no reaction, the human self-defense becomes overwhelmed and will alter its shape into dissociation (1992, p. 34). On the other hand, the dandelions can also be resembled to black solidarity, as they are called "weeds" like the African Americans that are othered. The dandelions are stronger together, but the African Americans are not together, and thus, they are vulnerable to Western ideological ideas and to racial trauma. The feeling of disempowerment gets complicated by the experience of powerlessness with respect to being othered, hence this creates the cumulative effect of trauma for Pecola.

Pecola is traumatized by becoming the cultural, racial and social other "who exists on the margins" of the community and by having others' definition of herself forced upon her (Hwangbo, 2004, p. 11). In her study of trauma, Susan Brison states that,

> The self is viewed as related to and constructed by others in an ongoing way, not only because others continue to shape and define us throughout our lifetimes, but also because our own sense of self is couched in descriptions whose meanings are a social phenomenon. (2002, p. 41)

The communications with others form Pecola's identity and self-perception. Herman states that, "All the psychological structures of the self—the image of the body, the internalized images of others, and the values and ideals that lend a person a sense of coherence and purpose— have been invaded and systematically broken down" (Herman, 1992, p. 93). Once she has internalized the adverse effects of subjugation, her inner world gets plagued by them. She loses her sense of autonomy, which causes helplessness and fear, and devastates her fundamental sense of self (Hwangbo, 2004, p. 23). She is a "contaminated identity" as Herman calls it, who is "preoccupied with shame, self-loathing, and a sense of failure" (p. 94, 1992). Moreover, this internalized self-image of herself makes her take part in the very system that oppresses her, namely internalized racism and self-contempt. This kind of trauma and isolation is associated with what Root describes as "a characteristic intrinsic to her identity which is different from what is valued by those in power encompassing a distinct threat to psychological safety, security, or survival" (1995, p. 10). Yet still her escape from suffering through an alternative world becomes her relief since she attempts to create a humane, hospitable private and safe haven.

As opposed to Pecola and other characters who have internalized self-hatred due to their race and social status that is strictly defined by the dominant ideology, the three prostitutes China, Poland and Miss Marie, who "live in the apartment above the Breedloves", do not let themselves be victimized and do not give in to the oppressive dominant system.

They see themselves in a realistic way, they know their place in the society and they are fine with it: “They did not belong to those generations of prostitutes created in novels, with great and generous hearts, dedicated, because of the horror of circumstance…” (Morrison, 1970, p. 51). As a consequence, Pecola tries to feel secure through marginalized individuals like these women, and she sees them as a means of coping to find warmth and friendship in their company. Still, the prostitutes help her define her own reality as they have defined their own reality of themselves and they do not care about what others think of them: “They were not young girls in whores’ clothing, or whores regretting their loss of innocence. They were whores in whores’ clothing, whores who had never been young and had no word for innocence” (Morrison, 1970, p. 55). They are portrayed as independent and confident, and in fact, free from the oppressive norms of their community because they do not feel shame for their occupation.

Besides, for Pecola there is only one place where she can find some sympathy and care, which is in these prostitutes’ house: “Three whores lived in the apartment above the Breedloves’ storefront. Pecola loved them and visited them. They did not despise her” (Morrison, 1970, pp. 48-49). The three prostitutes act as mother figures for Pecola. Therefore, she feels close to them because they treat her friendly and they are also regarded as the “Other”. The people that are defined as the others of the patriarchal society still support one another different from the characters that despise Pecola. However, they cannot heal Pecola’s traumatized self and protect her from abuse. Yet, as the “other”, they show themselves strong and outspoken. They have created their own strong female space and female-bonding:

> Neither were they the sloppy, inadequate whores who, unable to make a living at it alone, turn to drug consumption and traffic or pimps to help complete their scheme of self-destruction, avoiding suicide only to punish the memory of some absent father or to sustain the misery of some silent mother. These women hated men, all men, without shame, apology, or discrimination. They abused their visitors with a scorn grown mechanical from use. Black men, white men, Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, Jews, Poles, whatever— all were inadequate and weak, all came under their jaundiced eyes and were the recipients of their wrath. (Morrison, 1970, p. 54)

As is shown in these lines, they have a “disdain for societal expectations of respectable behavior” (Bloom, 2010, p. 24). Their friendliness and boldness provide Pecola with “a reliable source of human interaction” and “enables to ask questions about love and men”, which are the subjects of a growing interest in her (Bloom, 2010, p. 25). Her need for establishing a communication with them shows how lonely she is and how she lacks caring relationships in her life. In addition, children may develop close relationships with adult

women outside their families, which partly compensates for their disappointment with their mothers. Such relationships help them to endure the misery of their family life (Herman, 1981, p. 90). Owing to these prostitutes, Pecola can escape from her troubles at home and in the community. She takes refuge in their world, and they fill the void in her life by giving her gifts and taking her to the movies. They treat her as though she were one of them. They do not bully her or despise her like her friends do at school. When they converse about the issues of daily life, they also treat Pecola as if she were an adult.

Trauma has many layers that have to be peeled off to be understood. It is necessary to understand various factors that lead to Pecola's insidious trauma. Going to a store or the school even make her live traumatic experiences. Therefore, Pecola continuously questions the hostility that surrounds her. When she compares her life with her friends Claudia and Frieda MacTeer's lives, she realizes that their parents are different and that the two sisters, like the three prostitutes, spend their time together sharing every moment with each other while she does not have anybody. Other than that, the MacTeers do not seek happiness outside their family, and they are closely connected to each other. For example, Mrs. MacTeer is dedicated to her children and takes good care of them different from Pecola's mother, Pauline. When Claudia falls ill, Mrs. MacTeer takes care of her. Claudia feels that she is loved by her mother:

> And in the night, when my coughing was dry and tough, feet padded into the room, hands repined the flannel, readjusted the quilt, and rested a moment on my forehead. So when I think of autumn, I think of somebody with hands who does not want me to die. (Morrison, 1970, p. 10)

Mrs. MacTeer is devoted to her children. She makes her children feel safe in their "home", as the home, when there is adequate loving, provides protection from trauma by creating a strong self-esteem. She extends her care even to Pecola, when she has to live with them for a short time. Even when it means that she has to feed and look after another person in spite of their poverty, she does not let go of her maternal duties. Moreover, Pecola has her first menstruation when she is at the MacTeers, not at her own home. Mrs. MacTeer washes her, "The water gushed, and over its gushing we could hear the music of my mother's laughter" (Morrison, 1970, p. 30). The washing scene is completely different from the description of Pecola's mother Pauline bathing Pecola, "zinc tub, buckets of stove-heated water, flaky, stiff, grayish towels…" (1970, p. 125). Although poverty plays a role in people's lives, motherhood is not dependent on money. Mrs. MacTeer shows her motherly love to Pecola, although she is not her daughter. Pauline, on the other hand, is not even there when her daughter passes into womanhood through menstruation. As a consequence, Mrs. MacTeer

cannot understand why the Breedloves would not breed love and take responsibility for their children, she says,

> Folks just dump their children off on you and go on ‘bout they business. Ain’t nobody even *peeped* in here to see whether that child has a loaf of bread. That old trifling Cholly been out of jail *two* whole days and ain’t been here *yet* to see if his own child was ’live or dead. And that *mama* neither. What kind of something is that? (Morrison, 1970, p. 23)

In these lines, it is clear that Pecola’s parents are completely different from Claudia’s parents as they do not care about their daughter’s well-being or even her existence because they never visit her. In addition to Mrs. MacTeer’s love and care for her daughters, their father Mr. MacTeer also has an important role in their lives as a protective and strong father, who is completely the opposite of violent and abusive Cholly. For example, when Mr. MacTeer hears that Frieda has been sexually abused by their tenant Mr. Henry, he beats him (1970, p. 97), “throws an old tricycle” and “shoots at him” (1970, p. 98). Mr. MacTeer as a father protects his children and believes them when they tell him about their problems.

As is observed in the discussion above, Claudia’s life is portrayed with positivity in contrast to Pecola’s life. Unlike Pecola, Claudia knows that she is loved and valued. Therefore, she is raised in a constructive family environment and has solved her identity issues with support and acknowledgment. The presence of an alternative environment at home makes it easier for her to resist the outer racist community, unlike Pecola who does not have anybody to teach her how to counter this learned helplessness in a cruel society. Moreover, Claudia has more self-confidence. When the schoolboys bully her as well, she knows how to defend herself. She even tries to resist the assertion of white superiority by destroying dolls. In one scene during Christmas, she cannot understand what it is that makes dolls precious things to be given as gifts:

> I had only one desire: to dismember it. To see of what it was made of, 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 blue-eyed, yellow-haired, pink-skinned doll was what every girl child treasured. (Morrison, 1970, p. 18)

Although in the novel there are not many white characters, again whiteness itself is pervasive as one can see through the dolls. Throughout the novel, the products of mass culture such as white dolls, Mary Jane candies, Hollywood movies, Shirley Temple goods are used to emphasize the established white culture that prevent black self-identification. Thus, the effects of the standardized Western ideas of physical beauty, too, damage the perception of black people’s self-worth. Blackness becomes absence and invisibility. Claudia exposes the real absence at the heart of this powerful presence when she dismembers the white doll: “I

could not love it. But I could examine it to see what it was that all the world said was lovable. Break off the tiny fingers, bend the flat feet, loosen the hair, twist the head around…" (Morrison, 1970, p. 19). She literally deconstructs this emblem of white dominance (Byerman, 1997, p. 133). She rejects the racially biased standards of beauty and reacts to this established ideal, whereas Pecola embraces this dominant ideal because she thinks and has learned that it is the only way for her to get accepted. Claudia criticizes this view when she insists on Pecola's own beauty, "She was smiling, and since it was a rare thing to see on her, I was surprised at the pleasure it gave to me" (1970, p. 104). This reestablishes blackness as beautiful (Malmgren, 2000, p. 260).

Claudia understands that her own community sees themselves inferior in comparison to the white dominant culture. Nevertheless, she rejects seeing herself the way the community wants her to see herself. Moreover, she does not fall victim to the oppressions like Pecola does, even though they are both black, poor and young females. At this point, it can be said that Claudia's family has created a safe and secure life for her, where she feels protected and safe. On the contrary, Pecola is completely affected by her surroundings, and she has nobody to save her. She feels ashamed and wants to be invisible. Both react differently to the same event, Claudia responds with anger, while the latter does with shame and self-contempt. As Jill Matus states, "If anger helps to maintain distinctions between what belongs to the self and what must be kept outside it, shame disturbs those distinctions by distorting responsibility and encouraging self-blame" (1998, p. 45). By responding with shame, Pecola lets herself become the victim of her community. Evidently, family life or the lack of it, and the absence of parents, especially of a mother figure for a girl, play a major role in shaping a girl's life. Pecola loses her self-confidence and self-worth through micro-aggressions of oppression, discrimination, racism that, in the end, come together to form an effect so unbearable that she resorts to the splitting of her self at the end of the novel.

The novel portrays the two parallel lives that of two little girls, Pecola and Claudia which develop under similar conditions, but these lives are experienced in two opposite ways. The narrative is made complex through the use of Claudia's point of view. It is the adult Claudia who narrates all these events in flashback. This may indicate that while the adult Claudia has insights, the adult Pecola does not. Since Pecola has lost her sanity due to the traumatic experiences she has gone through, her perspective of the events is not much voiced in the novel. While Claudia is represented by her child and adult narrative perspectives in flashback, Pecola's inner world is presented by an omniscient narrator as she descends into madness. This intermingling of "voices with different perspectives from

varying time frames" serves as a necessity for understanding "the causes, influences and consequences of the various actions" the characters take and that lead to Pecola's trauma (Bloom, 2010, p. 39).

As Morrison states in her Afterword, "the novel is built upon a silence at its center: the void that is Pecola's unbeing" (Morrison, 1970, p. 211). The terror of being silenced comes from not having the possibility to engage in the processing of trauma, thereby Pecola gets trapped in silence without escape. The effects of this voicelessness of the wound are central to the nature of her trauma, as the silenced state makes up the backbone of the manifestations of wounding (Allport, 2009, p. 45). Morrison uses Pecola's trauma and voicelessness to show the devastating consequences of insidious trauma. Claudia as the narrator is able to give voice to the silenced and voiceless. Claudia highlights that as a child, she is silenced because "adults do not talk to us" children (Morrison, 1970, p. 8). Growing up means getting a voice, something that Pecola is not allowed to have. Claudia takes responsibility for what happened to Pecola and tries to make up for her betrayal of not saving her by speaking about her trauma through her story, as she emphasizes, "[W]e had failed her" (Morrison, 1970, p. 202). By witnessing Pecola's traumatic experiences, she is also affected by them as Caruth argues "trauma is never simply one's own" (1996, p. 24), and thus, it has a contagious quality. Still, Claudia's narration of Pecola's trauma suggests a glimmer of hope. Making trauma stories heard will facilitate the healing process, thereby, it becomes Claudia's duty to relate Pecola's story of trauma. Likewise, Demetrakopoulos expresses that, "there is a redemption in the fact that this story of incest has been told finally from a female point of view, told so well, and I believe for the first time in human history in this depth and completeness" (2010, p. 66). In this way, Claudia gives a presence to the absent, she makes the absent present, the invisible visible, and the unspeakable speakable.

Taking into consideration all the events of ill-treatment that Pecola is exposed to, it can be claimed that, in line with the discussions of postcolonial trauma theory which opposes Caruth's traditional model of trauma theory due to its focus on "a single traumatic event", rather than on a longer process of colonial trauma, Pecola's trauma is not to be interpreted as a result of a single event like that of incest rape only, which will be discussed soon. Her trauma is a result of being exposed to abuse, violence, racism and self-contempt. Thus, the model of "insidious trauma" renders trauma as more inclusive of experiences that pertain to race, gender and class. It highlights the intersections of race, gender, class and trauma in especially daily acts of violation that harm women and minorities. Hence, insidious trauma

assists in "understanding the impact of everyday racism, sexism… classism… and other forms of structural oppression" (Craps, 2013, p. 25).

On the other hand, by giving voice to those marginalized characters in the novel such as the Breedloves, who have been silenced due to their tragic experiences of shame, loss and systematic oppression by the white hegemonic society, Morrison is able to "speak the unspeakable", which corresponds to what Caruth argues, that "the traumatized carry an impossible history within them, or they become themselves the symptom of a history that they cannot entirely possess" (1995, p. 60). As trauma is hard to be verbalized and recognized, it is necessary to tell their traumatic stories to help them work through their traumas and learn to live forwards.

While the black community rejects Pecola, so too does her family despite the fact that they are also rejected and traumatized by the community, thus the transmission of transgenerational trauma takes place when they act out their disturbed psyches on their daughter. Morrison makes clear in her description of the Breedlove family life that poverty by itself is not the only reason that condemns them as outcast or abnormal in the community, but their own destructive self-concept of seeing themselves ugly and their dysfunctional family dynamics:

> The Breedloves did not live in a storefront because they were having temporary difficulty adjusting to the cutbacks at the plant. They lived there because they were poor and black, and they stayed there because they believed they were ugly. Although their poverty was traditional and stultifying, it was not unique. Bu their ugliness was unique. No one could have convinced them that they were not relentlessly and aggressively ugly. Except for the father, Cholly, whose ugliness (the result of despair, dissipation, and violence directed toward petty things and weak people) was behavior, the rest of the family— Mrs. Breedlove, Sammy Breedlove, and Pecola Breedlove— wore their ugliness, put it on, so to speak, although it did not belong to them. You looked at them and wondered why they were so ugly; you looked closely and could not find the source. Then you realized that it came from conviction, their conviction. (Morrison, 1970, pp. 36-37)

This quotation makes it clear that each member of the family has come to the conviction that they are ugly; however, their ugliness does not reflect reality: "You looked at them and wondered why they were so ugly; you looked closely and could not find the source" (1970, p. 37). They are influenced by the dominant culture's view of themselves, they do not see themselves from their own eyes. As a result, they affect each other. They "wear their ugliness" and get entangled in their suffering. Pecola is gradually traumatized by her parents. In consequence, she suffers daily at a young age. As stated by Root, insidious trauma "incurred by minority groups usually starts early in life before one grasps the full

psychological meaning of the maliciousness of the wounds… [T]he racism and poverty with which many children of color live cripples the minority-group child in body, mind, and spirit" (1992, pp. 240-241). In each of her narratives, Pecola is made to feel that she is worthless and has no function in the society. Du Bois describes this behavior of hers as follows: "It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity" (1903, pp. 13-14). She cannot value her blackness. Her only hope becomes to remark herself as a thing valued.

The Breedloves do not believe in their self-worth and cannot see their value as an individual. In line with postcolonial theory, Joy Degruy calls this kind of self-worth as "vacant esteem", a behavior of Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome. It is the view that "the individual has little or no worth", it is especially common in groups that feel or are made to feel inferior, "I am not who I think that I am, and I am not who you think I am. I am who I think that you think that I am" (Degruy, 2005, p. 22). Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome is a condition in which people experience "multigenerational trauma resulting from centuries of slavery" and continue to "experience oppression and institutionalized racism" to this day. Thus, vacant esteem results from multigenerational trauma together with continued oppression (Degruy, 2005, p. 161). Self-esteem is the conclusion concerning one's own worth, "the value to families, friends, community and the world at large" (Degruy, 2005, p. 163). To arrive to one's self-esteem, first one has to get the appraisals of their significant others in their lives, which is the family and secondly, life has to be meaningful (Degruy, 2005, p. 165). As a consequence, Pecola cannot have self-esteem as she is not given worth or value by others, especially not by her family, who should be the founder of her self-esteem. One's family influences through the ways they raise people to take their place in the community and society. If this influence creates only a disparaging and limiting identity, vacant esteem can be the result. If this kind of esteem gets to be "transmitted from generation to generation through the family, community and society", it will reflect itself in the behaviors of children (Degruy, 2005, p. 166). Pecola's family sees themselves as unworthy, thereby this instills the feeling of unworthiness in Pecola, as well. Thus, they do not treat her differently than what they feel themselves of deserving to be treated as. The Breedloves' negative self-image can be seen through the comments of the narrator:

> You looked at them and wondered why they were so ugly. They had looked about themselves and saw nothing to contradict the statement; saw, in fact, support for it leaning from every billboard, every movie, every glance. "Yes," they had said. "You are right." And they took the ugliness in their hands, threw it as a mantle over them, and went about the world with it. (Morrison, 1970, p. 37)

Considering her family, Pecola concludes that, "As long as she looked that way she did, as long as she was ugly, she would have to stay with the people. Somehow, she belonged to them" (Morrison, 1970, p. 43). She feels that she cannot change her condition and accepts that she belongs to them because she is ugly. According to Herman,

> When it is impossible to avoid the reality of the abuse, the child must construct some system of meaning that justifies it. Inevitably the child concludes that her innate badness is the cause. Simply by virtue of her existence on earth, she believes that she has driven the most powerful people in her world to do terrible things. (1992, pp. 103-105)

Children exposed to prolonged violence often ask themselves "Why me?", Pecola answers with her ugliness: "If she looked different, beautiful, maybe Cholly would be different, and Mrs. Breedlove too" (Morrison, 1970, p. 44). In her naïve psyche, she holds herself responsible for being despised by her family and community. In her opinion, if she changed and became beautiful, her parents would be different: they would say, "Why, look at pretty-eyed Pecola. We mustn't do bad things in front of those pretty eyes" (Morrison, 1970, p. 44). Her wish implies the feeling of helplessness and guilt. She blames herself for what happens in her home and thinks that she is both the reason and the solution to their troubles. Besides, as mentioned before, her harassment does not stay just at home, "her ugliness" also makes her disregarded or scorned at school by teachers and classmates alike. Hence, for the whole year, she prays to God to grant her blue eyes: "Thrown into the binding conviction that only a miracle could relieve her, she would never know her beauty: She would only see what there was to see: the eyes of other people" (Morrison, 1970, pp. 44-45).

The chronic domestic violence at home is traumatic for each member of a family. The daily life of the Breedloves starts with violence because Cholly comes home drunk, and Pauline is angry about it since she has to work and look after the family while he neglects his family. Thus, they fight in front of the children, which, in turn, affects them psychologically:

> She ran into the bedroom with a dishpan full of cold water and threw it on Cholly's face… Naked and ashen… grabbed his wife on the waist, and they hit the floor. Cholly picked her up and knocked her down with the back of his hand. She… began to hit at Cholly's thighs and groin. He put his foot in her chest… he struck her several times in the face… Sammy screamed 'Kill him! Kill him! Mrs. Breedlove looked at Sammy with surprise. (Morrison, 1970, pp. 41-42)

Pauline and Cholly exhibit a show of violence irrespective of their children's feelings creating the image of the home as a threatening place. Accordingly, Evelyn Jaffe Schreiber states that "the trauma results from a lacking protective function of the home, and treatment for trauma involves helping the ego to feel safe and secure" (2010, p. 8). Subsequently, Pecola must create a safe setting outside her home, where she can relate her traumatic experiences with the help of her community to move on. However, she finds herself in her own false reality because nobody helps and listens to her.

In addition to Pecola's observing her parents' daily domestic fight at home, her response to these violent events is in complete contrast to her brother Sammy's:

> There was a difference in the reaction of the children to these battles. Sammy cursed for a while, or left the house, or threw himself into the fray. He was known, by the time he was fourteen, to have run away from home no less than twenty-seven times. Once he got to Buffalo and stayed three months… Pecola, on the other hand, restricted by youth and sex, experimented with methods of endurance. Though the methods varied, the pain was as consistent as it was deep. She struggled between an overwhelming desire that one would kill the other, and a profound wish that she herself could die. (Morrison, 1970, p. 41)

As a young black girl, she cannot or will not run away from her troubles like her brother Sammy. Sammy is more privileged as a boy; he reacts more actively to what happens in his home. Even if he is traumatized, which is possible, he handles it better than Pecola via withdrawal and acting out through violence. Pecola does not have the same chances as a male individual does. Instead of dealing with the traumatic experiences of her home, she helplessly hides in bed and just wishes to die by sacrificing herself as a solution:

> "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. Now slowly, now with a rush. Only her tight, tight eyes were left. They were always left. Try as she might, she could never get her eyes to disappear. So what was the point? They were everything. Everything was there, in them. All of those pictures, all of those faces. She had long ago given up the idea of running away to see new pictures, new faces, as Sammy had so often done. (Morrison, 1970, p. 43)

Pecola stores the trauma that they act out (Schreiber, 2011, p. 74). She is subjected to continuous domestic violence between her parents, and she prays to God, "Please God… make me disappear" (Morrison, 1970, p. 43), in a desperate wish to make her body dissolve little by little. "Disappearance" is about feeling safe. As she "has given in" and accepted her condition, invisibility becomes for her the tool through which she protects herself from further harm caused by the hostile circumstances (Hwangbo, 2004, p. 53). Pecola's constant withdrawal is a way of saving herself when her environment threatens her. Both of her parents do not provide her with protection and nurturing. Because she cannot connect to

others, especially not to her parents, to feel safe, Pecola does not have anything to lose when she cuts her ties with the menacing world. Thus, she routinely "engages herself in a self-hypnotic practice of disappearing" (Hwangbo, 2004, p. 53). Since she needs but lacks what John Bowlby defines as the "secure base" which is about the attachment between children and their parents, and "healthy human development" (1988, p. iii), which allows for children's normal emotional as well as mental development, Pecola cannot develop enough self-assurance to resist harmful aggression (Hwangbo, 2004, p. 53). There is no one to comfort and protect her. Accordingly, Bowlby states,

> The availability of a responsive attachment figure remains the source of a person's feeling secure. All of us, from the cradle to the grave, are happiest when life is organized as a series of excursions, long or short, from the secure base provided by our attachment figure(s). (1988, p. 61)

Activation of survival behaviors, heightened sensitivity and hostility can be observed in response to such minor stressors at home (Root, 1992, p. 241). Pecola invents a mental strategy, which is a way to cope with her traumatic experiences and makes each of her body part disappear one by one, except for her eyes. Her wish to disappear is an indication of a traumatized state as it also symbolizes the wish to die. On the other hand, her eyes, which symbolize her watchfulness, impede her escape from her trauma; however, at the end of the novel, they serve her to deal with her trauma and become her eventual success.

In her study of childhood trauma, child psychotherapist Terr contends that children may change their psychic state after they repeatedly encounter violence and horror. Different from the child victims of a unique traumatic experience, children who are exposed to multiple traumatic events, learn to "step aside" from themselves when there is a traumatic experience to avoid the impact and then they dissociate from the event. Consequently, they develop "self-removal" through "massive denial, numbing and dissociation". Therefore, they cannot remember these traumatic events and if they do, their memory is prone to have "fragmentary spots" rather than being a whole (1994, p. 126, as cited in Hwangbo, 2004, p. 53). In the novel, Pecola's dissociative behaviors when she tries to disappear as a defense mechanism foretells her tragic condition that will happen to her after her rape by her father (Hwangbo, 2004, p. 54).

The description of the Breedlove family also highlights Kai Erikson's concept of "psychic erosion" with regard to insidious trauma. As Erikson argues, "trauma can ensue from a sustained battle against overwhelming adverse forces and chronic life conditions that erode the spirit… gradually" (1976, p. 90, as cited in Hwangbo, 2004, p. 42). The persistent exposure to oppression creates a psychological system of self-loathing and insecurity. For

the Breedloves, “it is each member’s insecurity and fear, not the bonds of love” that hold the family together (Hwangbo, 2004, pp. 35-36). The Breedloves suffer from prolonged periods of adversities and degradation, and this condition has such a profound effect on them that their relation as well as their love for each other gets shattered. The distortion of love among the family members leaves a mark on Pecola’s psychological development. Adrienne Rich underlines the significance of the love of the parents, especially the mother’s love, for their children who cope with extreme hostility at home and outside their homes. She states that “in order to fight for herself, she needs first to have been both loved and fought for” (1976, p. 125). For Pecola ‘love’ becomes an unknown and distant word, since she has never felt love from her family. Her mother will not even give the love and care she needs when she gets raped and impregnated. Consequently, she does not know what love is:

> What did love feel like? How do grown-ups act when they love each other? Into her eyes came the picture of Cholly and Mrs. Breedlove in bed. He making sounds as though he were in pain, as though something had him by the throat and wouldn’t let go. Terrible as his noises were, they were not nearly as bad as the noise at all from her mother. It was as though she was not even there. Maybe that was love. Choking sounds and silence. (Morrison, 1970, p. 55)

Pecola is not loved by her family. She is invisible to her own community and discriminated due to her race in white dominant society. Thus, “the fear of being unloved coincides with the struggle to find a place or imagined wholeness in the social order, to fit and to belong” (Schreiber, 2002, p. 82). Likewise, the healthy sexual experience is necessary for an adolescent to develop healthy relationships with others. However, Pecola’s sexual life is shattered right from the start by first her parents’ violent sexual relationship in the novel and then her incestuous rape by her father. As such, as stated by Herman, “An initial evaluation of the traumatized person includes a careful review of the important relationships in her life, assessing each as a potential source of protection, emotional support… and also as a potential source of danger” (1992, p. 162).

The detailed description of Pecola’s familial background in the novel, namely Cholly and Pauline, can be regarded as an attempt to understand the reasons behind Pecola’s trauma. In other words, this background information is in line with the claim that, “Reconstructing of the trauma story begins with a review of the patient’s earlier history before the trauma and the circumstances that led up to the event” (Herman, 1992, p. 176). Morrison also gives voice to the highly marginalized characters in the text and through these characters’ lenses the “insidious” side of Pecola’s trauma is presented, that is, “the specific traumatogenic effects of oppression with its psychological impacts on the individual” (Brown, 1995, p.

107). The individual stories of her parents' suffering told from their perspective are connected to a larger systemic and societal concern, that of racism. As such, insidious trauma may include the transgenerational transmission of unresolved trauma and the helplessness that it brings (Root, 1992, p. 241). In this way, individual and collective trauma are linked to each other. By giving other marginalized characters a voice, especially to Pecola's mother and father, Morrison presents the reasons why Pecola cannot fight against her traumatic experiences and thus starts to exist in her own fantasy world. In addition to Brown and Root's definition of trauma, Craps claims that trauma is as a result of experiencing "cumulative micro-aggressions". Each micro-aggression, he adds, can be "too small to be a traumatic stressor", yet when combined they have a powerful traumatic impact (2013, p. 26). For Pecola each abuse whether verbally, physically and psychologically because of her sex, race and class come together to bring her to that point where she cannot bear it anymore as everyone has a breaking point. Thus, the damage the marginalized groups receive leads to the development of "feelings of inferiority, inadequacy and self-hatred" (Craps, 2013, p. 30).

The dominance of white culture creates negative psychological impacts on black people, as is observed in the depiction of the black community and the Breedloves (Edis, 2019, p. 100). "The traumatic experience of slavery and white racist practices throughout history have produced a learned cultural shame" which has become "an inherent quality of black identity and of the collective African American experience" in Morrison's novel (Bouson, 2000, p. 4). In consequence, the notion of trauma, as Caruth argues, becomes a contagious phenomenon as the collective memories are intergenerationally transmitted. Cholly is also a complex character, who despite being accountable for his abuse of Pecola is also a victim of the society. He is racially as well as socially oppressed and traumatized. Thus, he becomes an unstable, resentful man who adds to his daughter's trauma.

Cholly is also presented as a character with childhood traumas, "When Cholly was four days old, his mother wrapped him in two blankets and one newspaper and placed him on a junk heap by the railroad" (Morrison, 1970, p. 130). He grows up without a father. He finds his father when he is grown up only to be rejected by him. Cholly is raised by his aunt Jimmy, who often beats him by whipping him, a violent act which foreshadows his violent behavior toward his wife and the hatred he feels for his own family. He also experiences a sexual trauma when, during his first sexual intercourse in the field, he is interrupted by white men laughing at them and forcing them to continue with their sex act:

> They were on top of each other in a moment. Their bodies began to make sense to him, and it was not as difficult as he had thought it would be. Just as he felt an explosion threaten, Darlene froze and cried out. He jerked around. There stood two white men. The men had long guns. "Get on wid it, nigger," said the flashlight one… "make it good." His body remained paralyzed. With a violence born of total helplessness… he hated her [Darlene] so much. (Morrison, 1970, pp. 145-146)

Cholly's encounter with the two white people might be his most traumatic experience, which destroys his self-esteem as he cannot protect his girlfriend and himself from these racist people. He remains silent in the face of male oppressive power and directs his hatred to women instead of men. These wounds stay with him and eventually make him the most abhorred person in the community. Even though there is a small part of his life when he feels happy which is upon meeting Pauline, this happiness does not last long when he starts to feel burdened by a family and a bitter wife:

> When he had met Pauline in Kentucky, she was hanging over a fence scratching herself with a broken foot. The neatness, the charm, the joy he awakened in her made him want to nest with her. He had yet to discover what destroyed that desire. But he did not dwell on it. Nothing interested him now. Only in drink was there some break. (Morrison, 1970, p. 158)

The trauma experience affects Cholly in a permanent way. He becomes a broken man. Besides, in general, he cannot recover from his trauma as long as he is treated as a castoff, an inferior and demonized thing by the racist as well as the classist gaze. His community has influenced his behaviors towards his family and others. Consequently, he comes to that point where he starts to care about nobody and nothing anymore:

> Cholly was free. Dangerously free. Free to feel whatever he felt- fear, guilt, shame, love, grief, pity. Free to be tender or violent, to whistle or weep […]. He was free to live his fantasies, and free even to die, the how and the when of which held no interest for him… Cholly was truly free. Abandoned in a junk heap by his mother, rejected for a crap game by his father, there was nothing more to lose. He was alone with his own perceptions and appetites, and they alone interested him. (Morrison, 1970, pp. 157-158)

As is stated above, he becomes freer and braver as he is isolated by the society. This is a negative form of freedom. His "freedom" emphasizes his submission and hopelessness over the fact that he has let his manhood and self-esteem crush to pieces. According to Erikson, one can say that Cholly, "experiences not only a changed sense of self and a changed way of relating to others but a changed worldview" (1995, p. 194). He does not have the concept of family and fatherhood, "Having no idea of how to raise children, and having never watched any parent raise himself, he could not even comprehend what such a relationship should be" (Morrison, 1970, p. 158). He does not know the real meaning of a successful relationship between a father and a child since he is also rejected by his own father. Besides,

he has not got anyone to explain his acts to, so he has nothing to lose making it easier for him to rape his own daughter later. He is not able to suppress his anger for his painful past and helplessness. He does not see any wrong in in this violent act because he has not been able to create an intimate father-daughter relationship. He cannot function as a father, law or authority within the social order. Even, the house that he provides for his family reflects his situation because it is an abandoned "store" (Byerman, 1997, p. 136).

Cholly remembers his own powerlessness when he sees Pecola in the kitchen. As van der Kolk and Onno van der Hart emphasize, "traumatic memories of the arousing events may return as physical sensations, horrific images or nightmares, behavioral reenactments, or a combination of these" (1995, p. 164). The past haunts his present actions and he is transferred back to that "somatic (bodily) state and reacts accordingly" (Vickroy, 1996, p. 95). He displaces and reenacts this traumatized self of emasculation and helplessness onto Pecola, who becomes "the scapegoat for his disgust for the female body as well as his own self-hatred and fear of emasculation" (Mermann-Jozwiak, 2001, p. 195). He shows his anger towards his past through sex. His troubled mind before he rapes his daughter is as the following:

> [H]e staggered home reeling drunk and saw his daughter in the kitchen. She was washing the dishes. Her small back hunched over the sink. Cholly saw her dimly and could not tell what he saw or what he felt. Then he became aware that he was uncomfortable; next he felt the discomfort dissolve into pleasure. The sequence of his emotions was revulsion, guilt, pity, then love. His revulsion was a reaction to her young, helpless, hopeless presence. Why did she have to look so whipped? She was a child— unburdened— why wasn't she happy? What could he do for her— ever? If he looked into her face, he would see those haunted, loving eyes. How dare she love him? What could his heavy arms and befuddled brain accomplish that would earn him his own respect, that would in turn allow him to accept her love? (Morrison, 1970, pp. 159-160)

About the rape, Lynn Orilla Scott claims that it happens in the father's chapter describing his past and present lives and is related completely from the father's point of view. "The reader views the father's act not as an assertion of power, but as the culmination of his tortured experiences with love and intimacy— experiences that in many ways parallel his daughter's" (2006, p. 88). "A rush of feeling washes over Cholly as he realizes how much his daughter needs and deserves" a father, yet he is impotent to offer her anything of use (Bloom, 2010, p. 55). Since he himself has not received love and affection from his parents, he cannot give any to Pecola, and thus, he repeats what is done to himself by not showing love to her. Vickroy states that "one way for him to rid himself of his fears is to project them onto Pecola, and in part he tries to destroy those fears by raping her" (1996, p. 95). In an

unconscious attempt, he tries to overcome the humiliation of his own sexuality due to his past pain. Accordingly, Herman states that,

> Long after the danger is past, traumatized people relive the event as though it were continually recurring in the present. They cannot resume the normal course of their lives, for the trauma repeatedly interrupts. It is as if time stops at the moment of trauma. The traumatic moment becomes encoded in an abnormal form of memory, which breaks spontaneously into consciousness, both as flashbacks during waking states and as traumatic nightmares during sleep. Small, seemingly insignificant reminders can also evoke these memories, which often return with all the vividness and emotional force of the original event. Thus, even normally safe environments may come to feel dangerous, for the survivor can never be assured that she will not encounter some reminder of the trauma. (1992, p. 37)

Cholly has no past and hope for the future. He, as a black individual, projects his suppressed anger and hatred onto his daughter, thus, in Freudian terms, his reenactment of his past trauma becomes "the return of the repressed". His repressed trauma, from which he has not healed, comes to his consciousness. Naturally, he is stuck in this vicious circle and becomes the oppressor of his own family and the abandoned man, who abandons his family. In the end, he rapes her:

> His hatred of her slimed in his stomach and threatened to become vomit. But just before the puke moved from anticipation to sensation, she shifted her weight and stood on one foot scratching the back of her calf with her toe…that was what Pauline was doing the first time he saw her in Kentucky. It was such a small and simple gesture, but it filled him then with a wondering softness. The tenderness welled up in him, and he sank to his knees, his eyes on the foot of his daughter. Pecola lost her balance… nibbled at the back of her leg. The rigidness of her shocked body, the silence of her stunned throat… the confused mixture of his memories of Pauline and the doing of a wild and forbidden thing excited him, and a bolt of desire ran down his genitals, giving it length, and softening the lips of his anus. He wanted to fuck her— tenderly. But the tenderness would not hold. The tightness of her vagina was more than he could bear… the gigantic thrust he made into her then provoked the only sound she made— a hollow suck of air in the back of her throat. (Morrison, 1970, pp. 160-161)

Cholly is also in a state of confusion, he is not able to distinguish his narcissistic and aggressive needs for passion from the tenderness that Pecola needs (Rachman and Klett, 2015, p. 89). Cholly feels conflicting emotions, tenderness and violence, simultaneously before he rapes his daughter. The rape takes place at home, the home which is assumed to be "a shelter of comfort" and safety; however, it becomes the opposite (Bloom, 2010, p. 74). The scene of the rape is stark and graphic. Cholly rapes Pecola in a moment of flashbacks of his repressed past. He does not see the terror that he has given his daughter, whom he is supposed to care for and show affection to. Thus, the protective bond between parent and child gets destroyed when incest takes place. Pecola is shocked and helplessly raped. She is

not able to say a word, just “a hollow suck of air”. None of the details that Morrison gives about Cholly that have provided empathy for him can effectively ease the injustice of the rape of his daughter (Bloom, 2010, pp. 50-51). He has been so much traumatized that relationships have become distorted forms of violence for him. He re-experiences the traumatic event as if it was happening now. It is worth addressing that Pecola is not the active voice in this rape scene, but her father’s thoughts are narrated. This choice of narrative points to the fact that “Pecola lacks full subjectivity”. Also, it enforces the view that Pecola as an individual is “so traumatized that she lacks a coherent sense of life altogether” that will lead to her fragmented self (Kimmell, 2021, p. 20).

The rape experience becomes the snapping point for Pecola, where she loses her stance, especially after she loses the baby by her father. Not only does Cholly become the rapist of Pecola’s body, but also, he inflicts on her psychological wounds by making her lose her reputation, integrity and dignity. Even God is not there for her anymore, as her prayers have come to nothing. The result is bitter and ironic. She takes refuge in her madness and thus, “she escapes to the deepest isolation of all” (Bakerman, 1981, p. 547), “The damage done was total. She spent her days, her tendril, sap-green days, walking up and down, up and down, her head jerking to the beat of a drummer so distant only she could hear” (Morrison, 1970, p. 202). Yet, still her madness excites scorn instead of sympathy (Bakerman, 1981, p. 548), Claudia narrates her condition as,

> We saw her sometimes. Frieda and I— after the baby came too soon and died. After the gossip and the slow waging of heads. She was so sad to see. Grown people looked away; children, those who were not frightened by her, laughed outright. (Morrison, 1970, p. 202)

Even when Pecola is at the lowest level, her people still scorn her. Thereby, she has no access to her social bonds and cannot get help to heal. Her struggle to avoid her real situation of condemnation in order to reach completeness and acceptance in her community through blue eyes, even if it is imaginary, becomes her only goal of what is left from her miserable life.

In terms of her response to her rape, the difficulty of speaking about it can be due to “variable factors including individual, social, and cultural” ones “which influence the narration of the experience” (Balaev, 2012, p. 10). Pecola’s lack of voice and silence could represent the place of powerlessness that she has occupied in her world. She does not have the voice to describe her rape, Cholly’s perspective is observed in the narration of her rape. Pecola faints after this traumatic incident. Bouson states that “Pecola’s fainting depicts not only the somatic reactions that occur in extreme states of shame— which include physiological responses such as ‘fainting, dizziness, rigidity of all the muscles’— but also

the physical and mental paralysis experienced by the trauma victim" (2000, p. 43). The experience of incestuous rape is best described as "symbolic murder" of Pecola's self. She endures the pain of the rape, but she cannot process the rape itself. Moreover, her mother's denial of this event imprisons her within a schizophrenic world. In her dialogue at the end of the novel, Pecola tells her friend, whom she has created in her mind, that "She didn't even believe me when I told her" (Morrison, 1970, p. 198). Pauline betrays her trust, even though she is the one who finds Pecola on the kitchen floor after she gets raped: "So when the child regained consciousness, she was lying on the kitchen floor under a heavy quilt, trying to connect the pain between her legs with the face of her mother looming over her" (Morrison, 1970, p. 161). As a child, Pecola does not know the meaning of sex and she cannot make sense of it, yet her mother knows it. Pecola has no one to believe her and she gradually loses touch with reality. Herman asserts that, "When the victim is already devalued (a woman, a child), she may find that the most traumatic events of her life take place outside the realm of socially validated reality. Her experience becomes unspeakable" (1992, p. 152). She cannot express herself either, when she is raped by her father for the second time. Such a representation indicates what Caruth sees as a typical characteristic of trauma that, "the event is not assimilated or experienced fully at the time" (1995, p. 4) and that "it cannot be fully witnessed as it occurs" (1995, p. 7). Thus, this situation evokes the Caruthian term of unclaimed experience, emphasizing Pecola's inability to respond emotionally to the experience in the first place. However, as Caruth indicates "her response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance…" of the second rape (1996, p. 11). Inspired by the Freudian term Nachträglichkeit to define belatedness or latency, Caruth states that Pecola has to live her sexual trauma twice as it is only thoroughly experienced in the second time. Now, she knows that what her father did to her is sex. Thus, Pecola is unable to work through her trauma. Freud in his "Seduction Theory" states that seduction, that is incestuous rape, is an act of cruelty and violence wounding the child in every aspect of her being. Pecola's "body is not ready for the adult act of intercourse", nor are "her emotions prepared" for this abrupt consequence of passion by the adult and the inevitable "feelings of guilt, shame and anxiety" (Masson, 1984). She is too weak to defend herself and too dependent on the care of her father. The burden of incest and betrayal interrupts her development, and her attachment to her parent is destroyed. This situation condemns her to live with a split self. She dissociates herself from her own being because her private space has been broken into. Her life is haunted by a dark cloud. Devalued, rejected and abused,

she thinks that the only safe place is within herself. Her alter ego in her head functions to keep at least a part of her self untouched by the outside world.

As a consequence, by depicting father-daughter incest, Morrison dramatizes "the insidious trauma suffered by the Breedloves as a family, and how Cholly's sexual violation of Pecola cannot be isolated from the larger context of racism and domestic violence" (Grogan, 2011, p. 120). She does not separate "the single act of incest" from "the larger cycle of racist abuse". In so doing, no individual in the novel can be solely accused of what happened to Pecola. Morrison does not intend to blame anyone, rather she tries to "bear witness to the victims of systemic violence" (Grogan, 2011, p. 120). Not only her black community, but also Pecola's parents share the fault for her traumatic experiences. In short, the novel intertwines the protagonist's personal trauma with the cultural trauma of racism in her African American community.

In the case of incest and the mother-daughter relationship, Herman asserts that, "as for the mother's responsibility, maternal absence, literal or psychological, does seem to be a reality in many families where incest develops" (1981, p. 49) The absence of "a strong, competent and protective mother" leaves children more vulnerable to sexual abuse (Herman, 1981, p. 49), which is the situation for Pecola. To understand the reasons behind Pauline's negligence of her daughter after this kind of a traumatic event, her past and her relationship with Pecola need to be discussed, as well.

Pauline is not able to act as a compassionate mother to Pecola. Pauline feels distasteful towards her daughter, as she sees the reflection of her own self, namely the blackness and so ugliness, in Pecola. Pauline reflects her own dissatisfaction with her life on Pecola making her the scapegoat of her miseries. She does not take proper care of her. She passes onto her children her own distorted perception and self-loathing: "Into her son she beat a loud desire to run away, and into her daughter she beat a fear of growing up, fear of other people, fear of life" (Morrison, 1970, p. 126). She recalls Pecola when she was a baby though she was "a big healthy thing" (Morrison, 1970, p. 124), she concludes that her daughter is ugly. Pauline's disfigured foot as well as the loss of a front tooth led to her obsession with white Hollywood movies that have created a scale of beauty in her mind to cover her own self-contempt. These movies make her see her family as ugly and unworthy, since obviously she can never have material luxury or "beauty" like those movie stars:

> Probably the most destructive ideas in the history of human thought. Both originated in envy, thrived in insecurity, and ended in disillusion. In equating physical beauty with virtue, she stripped her mind, bound it, and collected self-contempt by the heap… She was never able, after her education in the movies, to look at a face and not assign it some category in the scale of absolute beauty, and the scale was one she absorbed in full from the silver screen. (Morrison, 1970, p. 120)

Her conception of herself is shaped by the movies. She attempts to live up to the standards of beauty by copying the clothes and make-up that she watches in the movies. However, she is also exposed to racist maltreatment because of her black female body. When she has her delivery of Pecola, the doctors at the hospital treat her as if she was an animal giving birth and they strip her of humanity:

> The old one [doctor] was learning the young ones about babies. 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. I moaned something awful. The pains wasn't as bad as I let on, but I had to let them people know having a baby was more than a bowel movement. I hurt just like them white women. (Morrison, 1970, pp. 122-123)

She gets hurt by the racist community. Consequently, she hides her self-hatred and keeps a sense of separateness by working for white people. She becomes an ideal servant in a white home. Therefore, she starts to neglect her children and her husband: "More and more she neglected her house, her children, her man." (Morrison, 1970, p. 125). Her desire to be like white people reduces her relationship with her family. She copes with her trauma by suppressing her identity and neglecting her family. Her escape from her own black self and culture passes down to Pecola.

As stated earlier, Pauline's relationship with her daughter Pecola is not that of a love and affection relationship: "Them [her children] she bent toward respectability, and in so doing taught them fear: fear of being clumsy, fear of being like their father, fear of not being loved by God, fear of madness like Cholly's mother's" (Morrison, 1970, p. 126). She has planted the seeds of fear and shame in Pecola. As Herman claims, "Traumatic events overwhelm the ordinary systems of care towards others that give people a sense of control, connection and meaning" (1992, p. 33). She cannot create an attachment to her child. To illustrate, at the Fishers, where Pauline works, while Pecola is waiting for her mother, she touches the hot berry cobbler dish and it falls on the floor. Upon this, her mother hits her and knocks her to the floor. Also, she scolds her, "Her words were hotter and darker than the smoking berries" (Morrison, 1970, p. 107). At the same time, she tries to soothe the Fishers' girl who starts to cry "with honey in her words" (Morrison, 1970, p. 107). Also, where Pecola calls her mother "Mrs. Breedlove", the Fishers' girl calls her "Polly". Pauline treats another

girl more compassionately than her own child. Her only purpose has become building a good relationship with her employers while she distances herself from her own family. Pauline's self-perception is completely marked "by her role as the ideal servant" and, as a result, she preserves this false identity even when her daughter gets hurt (Bloom, 2010, p. 50). Pecola has no mother to protect her and as she is not loved, she starts to think that she is unlovable. Therefore, she desires blue eyes to make her different and beautiful and so lovable by her mother. She is helplessly exposed to the racist patriarchal world that eventually destroys her perception.

As such, Pauline is also to be blamed for Pecola's rape by her father since she knows about it and tolerates it. Yet, she shows disbelief when Pecola tells her what happened. This shatters her trust to her parents and increases her suffering. Pauline's denial of her rape is what silences Pecola, which ultimately causes her self-destruction. According to Herman, the children who tell their mothers about their abuse regret it as they sense that there would come no protection. Hence, daughters bear the incest relationship in silence (1981, p. 90). The silence gets further compounded by Pecola's immature level of cognitive development, she needs her mother to help her understand and verbalize what has happened to her. She requires an explanation given with emotional support that Pauline is unable to do since she cannot give emotional support if she is in a state of denial (Rachman and Klett, 2015, p. 92). Pecola is left in a confused state. Because her sexual experience is traumatic, she splits it off, including the image of her as victimized, helpless and frightened (Rachman and Klett, 2015, p. 91). When her friend asks her about the second time and why she did not tell this to her mother, she responds, "She wouldn't have believed me then either. Then leave me alone about Cholly. I don't like to talk about dirty things" (Morrison, 2019, pp. 198-199). Pecola does not want to talk about what happened as it is too painful. If her mother had reacted to her rape, the second time could have been avoided. However, Pauline only adds to Pecola's pain.

Pecola creates an alter ego as self-defense to fight against the dangers to her being; however, she acquires a wrong self to adapt to wrong realities. Accordingly, Herman states that:

> People subjected to prolonged, repeated trauma develop an insidious, progressive form of post-traumatic stress disorder that invades and erodes the personality. While the victim of a single acute trauma may feel after the event that she is not "herself", the victim of chronic trauma may feel herself to be changed irrevocably, or she may lose the sense that she has any self at all. (Herman, 1992, p. 86)

For Pecola, it is not only her familial situation at home, but also her society that despises her and makes her feel uncomfortable, unlovable and ugly. Pecola's relationship with the outside world is flawed as her subjective self is dependent on others' recognition to define her self, which, in turn, leaves her marginalized and powerless. Pecola cannot create a positive self-image. She views herself from people's eyes, which is the "gaze of the other" in Lacanian terms. She remains invisible to herself until she can hallucinate a self (Morrison, 1970, p. 211). Rather than changing her relation to this system, she tries to change who she is to be inside the dominant discourse. Because to create a sense of self, she should have been loved and cared for by her family as her identity formation starts there. Accordingly, she strives for beauty through blue eyes: "Here was an ugly little black girl asking for beauty. A little black girl who wanted to rise up out of the pit of her blackness and see the world with blue eyes" (Morrison, 1970, p. 172). Her family and community have let her down so as to feel themselves better, and have projected their fears and insecurity on Pecola, who becomes the scapegoat for their sake:

> All of our waste which we dumped on her and which she absorbed. All of our beauty, which was hers first and which she gave to us. All of us— all who knew her— felt so wholesome after we cleaned ourselves on her. We were so beautiful when we stood astride her ugliness. Her simplicity decorated us, her guilt sanctified us, her pain made us glow with health, her awkwardness made us think we had a sense of humor. Her inarticulateness made us believe we were eloquent. And she let us, thereby deserved our contempt. We honed our egos on her, padded our characters with her frailty, and yawned in the fantasy of our strength. (Morrison, 1970, p. 203)

The community projects its own sense of devaluation, although they are "examples of the larger group's own abasement by white culture" (Vickroy, 1996, p. 95). They are accountable for the psychic death of Pecola. Geneva Cobb Moore concurs with this view, "Pecola… experiences a social death and then mental collapse because… she is cut off from the two essential bonds of family life and community" (2017, p. 13). The complexity of her individual experience along with her political, social context have insidiously affected her psyche. She gets stuck between her actual black self and her ideal white self. She is mentally forced to linger in this dilemma, and this brings about her self-splitting. She cannot endure the inhumane situations and consequently, they break her. As is stated by Herman, "Unbearable emotional reactions to traumatic events produce an altered state of consciousness", which Freud calls double consciousness (1992, p. 8). However, the loss of her sanity is an act of resistance to the unfair and terrible world she lives in. Accordingly, it is argued that traumatic symptoms may be alleviated when traumatic events are put into words. Nevertheless, since she has nobody to talk to, she cannot save herself by depending

on others. Pecola's wish for blue eyes is her desperate need to build a new self, which is unharmed by traumatic experiences, and a way to help her make sense of her trauma and keep living her life, "She… stepped over into madness, a madness which protected her from us" (Morrison, 1970, p. 204). Thus, her creating an imaginary world becomes a matter of dealing with her trauma for survival. Her rape by her own father and her mother's indifference to this incident are the last and hardest blows on her self to which she, in the end, responds by withdrawing into her fantasy world to avoid the overwhelming destruction of her body and soul. After all, her imaginary friend encourages her to talk about her rape. Her withdrawn fractured psyche can be seen in her chapter when she has a dialogue with her imaginary friend:

> *And Cholly could make anybody do anything.*
> He could not.
> *He made you, didn't he?*
> Shut up!
> *I was only teasing.*
> […]
> He just tried, see? He didn't do anything. You hear me?
> […]
> You always talk so dirty. Who told you about that, anyway?
> *You did.*
> I did not.
> *You did. You said he tried to do it to you when you were sleeping on the couch.*
> See there! You don't even know what you're talking about. It was when I was washing dishes.
> *Wee, I'm glad you didn't let him.*
> Yes.
> *Did you?*
> Did I what?
> *Let him.*
> Now who's crazy?
> *I am, I guess.*
> You sure are. (Morrison, 1970, p. 97)

In her conversation, Vickroy argues that "her obsessive but ineffectual questioning of herself and what happened with her father" (1996, p. 99) exhibit the dissociation common in victims of traumatic experiences. Her other voice continues to question the rape pointing to the "desperate need to be believed, to understand" but still to "forget and deny" what happened (Vickroy, 1996, p. 100). She still has trouble accepting what happened to her even when she talks to her imaginary friend because her trauma still carries the impossibility of telling and

thus, this leads to her silence. According to Herman, “the ordinary response to atrocities is to banish them from consciousness” (1992, p. 1). But atrocities cannot be buried, denial does not work. Pecola has to remember and tell the truth about the terrible events to restore the social order and to heal. She still cannot create an account of her experiences, yet Laurence J. Kirmayer states that, when the cost of memory seems unbearable for the self, “the individual still may construct a virtual space where… story can be narrated”. This virtual space is “asocial” and “closes in on itself through the conviction that no telling will ever be possible”. Dissociation is this hiding of memory in a virtual space “to remain silent, or to speak the unspeakable only with a voice one can disown” (1996, p. 195). When her imaginary friend asks her questions about her rape, she tries to avoid the questions or contradicts herself. Thus, she is not able to heal, since to be able to heal she must tell her story and have witnesses. According to Brison, to construct a narrative of the self, there should be both the words with which to tell the traumatic events and listeners who are capable and eager to hear. Remaking a self after the traumatic event shows that the self is dependent on others and explains the reason for the difficulty of survivors’ recovery when “people are not willing to listen” to what the other has to say (1999, p. 46). Consequently, by taking into account the societal dynamics that do not let Pecola speak and leave her voiceless, she willfully chooses “silence”, which is a “coping mechanism, a conscious choice deserving of respect” (Craps, 2014, p. 55), as a positive means of dealing with her traumatized self and thus, she resorts to madness to cut her ties with the outside world. Thereby, silence “is… put forward as a valid way of surviving the suffering” through madness (Craps, 2014, p. 55). Pecola’s story becomes “the unbearable aftermath, the knowledge, and nothing to be done but to endure it” (Craps, 2014, p. 56).

At the end, Pecola assumes that she has her long-wished blue eyes and that Soaphead has given them to her, which shows her psychic disintegration, and because she thinks that others can see her eyes, she interprets their reactions as jealousy for her eyes: “He [Soaphead] really did a good job. Everybody’s jealous. Every time I look at somebody, they look off. They all try to pretend they don’t see them. Isn’t that funny? You are the only one who tells me how pretty they are” (Morrison, 1970, pp. 193-194). Vickroy adds that “her own negative reflection in others’ eyes has been the continual source of her pain, and her main wish is that her reflection be desirable” (1996, p. 100). In her world, she endows herself with blue eyes to repair her broken self and distorted self-image. Her narrative with her self at the end of the novel is to make sense of her traumatic victimization. In this way, she turns the gaze of her community into stares of jealousy for her blue eyes. Likewise, she tries to alter her rape

experience through word plays and denial as is seen in the dialogue mentioned earlier. However, Pecola has not created an unrealistic environment; her friend behaves like a real friend. When Pecola annoys her, the friend complains, “You don’t have to be so smarty when you talk to me” (Morrison, 1970, p. 191), or when Pecola worries, “But suppose my eyes aren’t blue enough?” (Morrison, 1970, p. 201), the friend assures her of her acceptability in society. In these conversations, Pecola and her friend tease each other, quarrel and then make up. This shows that she needs a friend after she has been isolated by everyone, and this imaginary friend helps her cope with the lack of a friend. Her fantasy world also helps her keep some connection with Pauline when she interprets her mother’s cruelty and emotional distance toward her as a reaction to Cholly’s departure: “Why wouldn’t she see me? Maybe she doesn’t feel too good since Cholly’s gone” (Morrison, 1970, p. 196). By distorting the reality in which she cannot live and assimilate herself as they do not accept her, “she resumes her life narrative in her own way and is able to maintain some kind of continuity in her life” (Hwangbo, 2004, pp. 66-67). Yet still her way of coping highlights the cumulative effects of much victimization and discloses the futility of attempting a recovery:

> The damage done was total. Elbows bent, hands on shoulders, she flailed her arms like a bird in an eternal, grotesquely futile effort to fly. Beating the air, a winged but grounded bird, intent on the blue void it could not reach— could not even see— but which filled the valleys of the mind. (Morrison, 1970, p. 202)

She is entrapped in her trauma. In Pecola’s world the apparently hierarchical distinction of having blue eyes is not there to serve to oppress and control, but to serve her self. Neither domineering nor destructive, her self-deception is different than that of other characters. Her fantasy provides her love, beauty and understanding. Protected in her world, she lives more, since she does not need to walk with a kind of hunching of the shoulders anymore (Eichelberger, 1999, p. 85). She changes herself in the hope that she would become a valued member of her black community.

In *The Bluest Eye*, the community has an important role in the healing process of the trauma victim. If Pecola does not have the proper means and is not encircled by people who protect her, she will not talk. Tal affirms that,

> If a trauma victim perceives herself as suffering alone, and has no sense of belonging to a community of victims, she will remain silent, imagining that her pain has no relevance to the larger society. She will likely come to believe that she has, in some way, brought her suffering upon herself. The internalization of blame for the evils that befall one is difficult to escape even when the notion of community exists. (1996, p. 124)

If the people of a certain group call themselves as a community, connected by their shared plight, then the urge to bear witness will be present. But it is not possible to escape "when one feels no connection with a community of victims" (Tal, 1996, p. 124). It is essential that a group of people who share the same suffering or experience recognize the pain that the victim is going through to make sense of the traumatic experience or work through it. Pecola has no one to whom she can entrust her traumatic experience, and no one who would console her soul. Her family and her community make her feel invisible and alone although they could acknowledge the plight that she is going through as they are not far away from such traumatic experiences themselves. They can see familiarity in what is happening to Pecola. Pecola cannot reclaim her own space neither at home nor in her community.

To sum up, the novel testifies to the traumatic experiences of black people by making Pecola the focal point and observes the insidious trauma of paternal incest. Incest is not the only reason for Pecola's gradual fading, the effects of racism, sexism and classism are other reasons of her trauma. What makes those effects powerful and forceful is their insidious and cumulative characteristics, which points to their progressive and aggressive effect. Yet, after the sexual attack by her father, she is wounded psychologically and physically. Her reputation, dignity and integrity are diminished which creates a condition that is hard to overcome. Her rape creates lack of confidence, loss of self-esteem and sense of helplessness. In consequence, Pecola tries to forge a new self by obtaining blue eyes that is not harmed by her traumatic experiences. In order to alter her condition to make it more comprehensible for her to continue with her life even after her rape by her father Cholly and her giving birth to their baby that does not survive, she gives up on her sanity. She is not provided with the necessary protection and affection by her mother Pauline that she needs after her traumatic experiences. She cannot share her traumatic experiences with anyone, which would have helped her. The psychological pain and the lack of a language to explain her experiences as well as her inability for meaning making complicate the expression of her wound, which results in her being without a language to express these things. As a result, her experience becomes unspeakable. She does not tell her story and her version of her story is not heard. In other words, she has never had the chance to heal herself by relieving her inner troubles by recounting her trauma. Silence becomes her response to her trauma, which is the most tragic aspect of traumatization. Hence, she cannot restitute her shattered self. Yet, Morrison "talks back" to "the oppressive, victimizing forces against and within African American communities" via *The Bluest Eye*. Through this, she reestablishes "the denied dignity and respect to victims" like Pecola and "creates a possible narrative space for the healing and

restoration of the self" (Hwangbo, 2004, p. 70). Her reaction to all this is by completely withdrawing herself from reality and creating a subjective reality where she feels safer with her blue eyes. She needs her imagination in order to cope with her trauma when reality becomes too hard to bear. This time she uses silence as a positive way of coping with her trauma and her excessive way of survival becomes madness. Her fantasy is able to separate her from how others treat her, and, in this way, it succeeds in protecting her from suffering. According to Hyman, Pecola is to be considered as "a symbol whose aim is to create the world that will applaud her", which will give her "a cathartic relief from a destructive society", and "a world that will take her out" of her victimization (2009, p. 263). Her voice "incarnates freedom even if the voice is blue eyes woven in the eyes of a black girl" whose insanity provides her "the sacrificial iconoclast of an implosively tragic community whose axial revolves around the artificial idea that whiteness is a passage to freedom", "a whiteness that encourages its children to live outside of their own visions, their own eyes, in order to survive" (2009, p. 263). Yet, a nine-year-old girl would not have understood that this freedom through whiteness is actually an illusion. Thus, she cannot be thought of as a tragic individual, but a survivor who though left alone, pulls herself up by her own efforts.

# CHAPTER 2
# CHILDHOOD TRAUMA AND FANTASY AS A COPING MECHANISM IN DOROTHY ALLISON'S *BASTARD OUT OF CAROLINA*

In the 1980s, a new generation of writers, who were born to poverty-stricken families, started to write about the real condition of the American South from a new perspective. Among those contemporary southern writers Dorothy Allison attracted the attention of readers. Allison uncovers "the reality of the cultural myth of the South never been told before" through not only her fiction, but also other non-fiction works like her essays. In this respect, she is acknowledged as being among the first writers to reveal the class issue, especially the working class, in southern literature with a new perspective toward the poor white people called white trash (Parrondo, 2018, p. 106). She discusses the socio-economic situation of poor white people and proposes a different view to the stigmatization of the society through her characters who pursue identities which do not mark them as derogatory (Parrondo, 2018, p. 104). By acknowledging the psychological as well as physical damage done through shaming, violence and sexual abuse by the white society, Allison is able to expose and denounce "the invisibility of inferior classes such as white trash". Her novel *Bastard Out of Carolina* (1992) "draws the reader closer to the social juncture of white trash in an attempt to humanize the white trash identity" and replace the prevailing stereotyped image of it with sincere characteristics which tell the harsh reality about "economic inequality" and thus, traumatic experiences (Parrondo, 2018, pp. 107). Thereby, Allison presents the reality of southern white poverty in her novel through the perspective of her young protagonist Ruth Anne Boatwright, nicknamed Bone, to point out the social stereotyping and stigmatizing of white poverty (Parrondo, 2018, pp. 107-108).

Allison herself grew up in a southern, economically disadvantaged family. In her collection of essays *Skin: Talking about Sex, Class and Literature* (1994), she provides "an accurate image of her people and herself: she is her mama's daughter, brought up with a feeling of unity and loyalty to her tribe, but with a sense of low self-esteem" due to her social category (Parrondo, 2018, pp. 107). She is sexually abused by her stepfather for six years from the age of five until the age of eleven and is physically abused for another five years by him. The act of writing has allowed her to reclaim her family's pride and attest to her abuse. Allison describes her semi-autobiographical work *Bastard Out of Carolina* as "a

healing experience “(Cvetkovich, 2003, p. 107). She points to the importance of fiction for relating disgraceful and harsh truths. By making use of the power of literature, she states that no one will forget the true stories despite the fact that it will be hard to read because of the dark and threatening parts of people’s lives. Yet, “the impact of reality” is the best that literature could be asked of (Cvetkovich, 2003, p. 107). Allison demonstrates how an imaginative work that bears a connection to the reality of incest and sexual assault can be more healing than the telling of the event itself. Her novel *Bastard Out of Carolina* has a therapeutic value for her as by writing her experiences she is able to act out her anger or shame from time to time and work through her trauma. Thus, one of the main aims of her writing about traumatic events is to articulate the unbearable emotional crisis that becomes unspeakable for her. It becomes a mechanism through which she can dream a better and different life to pursue, like Bone, who tries to survive her paternal sexual abuse by creating stories. In addition, in *Bastard Out of Carolina*, Allison indicates that the trauma of incest and sexual abuse “resides as much in secrecy as in sexual abuse” for the survivor, since not talking about the abuse “creates psychic wounds that far exceed” the effects of the event itself (Cvetkovich, 2003, p. 115). At the same time, breaking the silence about the abuse has to be acknowledged as “an ongoing process and performance”, because it is not “a punctual event” (Cvetkovich, 2003, p. 115). Subsequently, Allison foregrounds the trauma that women, especially young ones, experience such as incest, abuse, sexism and classism in the American South. Her female child protagonist Bone endures, in secret, physical, psychological and sexual abuse from her stepfather. She is considered white trash, as a consequence, her socio-economic status as well as her gender affect her while she is shaping her identity. Allison criticizes the damaging stereotypes and hidden abuses that affect her. Bone becomes a product of her society, and her stepfather even uses her status to justify his abuse of her. In the novel, silence disables her to express her pain, thereby without the language to tell her story, she faces her trauma alone. However, her body reacts to her trauma and helps her deal with her pain. Also, her narrativization of her own abuse story is the attempt to heal from her trauma.

In her semiautobiographical work, Allison prefers a female child as the narrator who looks back on her memory. Through a child narrator’s relating of the detailed traumatic experiences of abuse by the stepfather, Allison is able to access her own wounded self, as well. Herman reinforces this statement by asserting that, “Remembering and telling the truth about terrible events are prerequisites… for the healing of individual victims” (1992, p. 1). Hence, narrative offers a possibility to heal. Additionally, to give a direct contact to the abuse

itself, she uses a child's voice rather than an adult one. Bone is the same age as her when she suffered from her own abuse. Bone's story is a powerful form of trauma discourse, because she relates her story of sexual abuse by her stepfather and tries to make sense of it all, when she understands this abuse, it unlocks her identity and other causes of her trauma. After all, as Root states,

> Traumas represent destruction of basic organizing principles by which we come to know self, others, and the environment; traumas wound deeply in a way that challenges the meaning of life. Healing from the wounds of such an experience requires a restitution of order and meaning in one's life. (1992, p. 229)

To relate Bone's trauma, *Bastard Out of Carolina* uses a first-person narrative. The first-person point of view inhabits a more direct identification with the protagonist, Bone, different from *The Bluest Eye* which lacks the immediacy of a first-person narrator of Pecola herself. Thus, as Susan Brison emphasizes, narratives of trauma have a reassigning potential and, in this way, "narrative memory is not passively endured", but rather, "an act on the part of the narrator" defusing traumatic memory to give shape to the traumatic event. Therefore, it helps Bone to remake a self when she has control over her memory (1999, p. 40). Then, Bone can move from victim to author by becoming the creator of her story. Likewise, Allison's novel is a survivor discourse and therefore, it points to the necessity to break the silence and tell the story of abuse.

Allison uses the storytelling technique of rupture of narrative, in which she divides the novel into a section of chapters which divert from the main line of the story. However, these chapters still center on Bone's self-formation as a period when she has a break from the abusive home of Glen and spends time at her aunts'. For example, in Chapter 9, she stays at her Aunt Ruth's place, where she feels compassion and care. Similarly, in Chapter 10, still at Aunt Ruth's, she starts to take an interest in gospel music. These give her time to figure out her traumatic experiences at the hands of her stepfather Glen. In Chapter 12, she is sent to her Aunt Raylene, who will teach her to have a stronger personality by accepting oneself the way one is.

Allison's *Bastard Out of Carolina* begins in the mid-1950s in Greenville, South Carolina. It is the story of a young girl Ruth Anne Boatwright, also known as "Bone". Although Bone is the illegitimate daughter of Anney Boatwright, who is fifteen, and born into a family labelled as "white trash", she is a happy and cheerful child. However, her mother is disturbed by the disgrace of illegitimacy stamped on Bone in their small Southern community, and thus, she is set on to change it. After a short marriage, her husband tragically

dies leaving her with a second daughter, Reese. Anney is introduced to Glen Waddell at the diner where she is working as a waitress to look after her family. Anney eventually surrenders to Glen's temptations because he comes from a wealthy family. She thinks that their relationship will provide a better life for her daughters. Before they get married, Anney is presumed to be pregnant, although Glen has unpredictable rage moments and is cruel toward Bone. Two misfortunes happen the night Anney goes into labor; she gives birth to a son who is born dead, and Bone is sexually molested by Glen in the parking lot. Over the next few years, because Glen cannot keep a job, he becomes more brutal towards his stepdaughter Bone and beats her all the time. Anney is aware of these abuses, and she rather ignores them or blames Bone for them. The story reaches its climax in a graphic sexual assault at the end of novel, during which Anney literally watches the rape of her daughter. In the end, although she gets mad at Glen and leaves him for a while, she returns to him. She gives the custody of Bone to her sister Raylene.

Bone's trauma is multifaceted. It is not a single event as Caruth puts forth, rather, in Brown's definition, the effects of trauma can be seen in daily life through a series of events (1995, p. 108). Like Pecola's trauma, Bone's is not just a personal one, but one with the long-term effects of social oppression, physical and psychological abuse as is observed in the aforementioned summary of the novel. She is abused by her stepfather, experiences her mother's indifference toward her suffering by her stepfather, and she is seen as white trash as well as a bastard by the Southern community. Her trauma makes it imperative to be analyzed context specific to understand the complexity of it.

According to David Becker (2001), "Trauma can only be understood with reference to the specific contexts in which it occurs, including cultural norms, political context, the nature of the event, the organization of the community, and so forth" (p. 1, as cited in Kaplan, 2005, p. 39). Hence, Bone's multidimensional portrayal of her trauma has to be analyzed according to the social and economic circumstances of her in the American South as well. Likewise, Becker also maintains that instead of speaking about trauma only, the traumatic situation should be taken into consideration because "one is not just looking at an individual who has suffered, but at what surrounds that person's suffering" such as his or her environment, including "specific institutions, the state of her community, its politics". Therefore, Becker suggests that "in each different social context people should create their own definition of trauma within a framework, in which the basic focus is not so much on the symptoms of a person but on the sequential development of the traumatic situation" (2001, p. 7 as cited in Kaplan, 2005, p. 39). In this regard, the novel will make use of both traditional

and pluralist models of trauma theories and will underline the insidious trauma concept. Insidious trauma is, as Root defines,

> [U]sually associated with the social status of an individual being devalued because a characteristic intrinsic to their identity is different from what is valued by those in power, for example, gender, color, sexual orientation, physical ability. As a result, it is present throughout a lifetime. (1992, p. 240)

Insidious trauma's effects may be cumulative (Root, 1992, p. 240). These effects threaten the well-being of individuals as these long-term institutionalized entities derogate the self-worth. As such, the nature of this kind of trauma makes it necessary to be understood in its details. Bone's trauma will be analyzed according to different contexts. For Bone, shame for who and what she is arises from her mother's defective and Glen's abusive parenting. She starts to perceive herself as "a dumb and ugly" white trash girl: "I had nothing to be proud of. Gawky, strong, ugly— why couldn't I be pretty? I was part of the trash down in the mud-stained cabins" (Allison, 1992, p. 206). She is traumatized in different ways, step by step due to her gender, class and social status in relation to what Root calls insidious trauma.

In *Bastard Out of Carolina*, the narrative opens with Bone's tale about her own birth. From the beginning, Bone has been stigmatized as born to an unwed, underprivileged white woman, who has a car accident and is unconscious when Bone is born. Bone is considered as invisible, as a consequence, she is not given social recognition by the authorities and her patriarchal community, since her father is literally unknown and her mother is figuratively not present at her birth. Invisibility leads to a feeling of worthlessness for Bone's mother Anney, who suffers under Bone's label,

> Mama hated to be called trash, hated the memory of every day she'd ever spent bent over other people's peanuts and strawberry plants while they stood tall and looked at her like she was a rock on the ground. The stamp on that birth certificate burned her like the stamp she knew they'd tried to put on her. *No good, lazy, shiftless*. (Allison, 1992, p. 3)

The image of a rock supports "the idea of invisibility and worthlessness", even though she struggles hard to get rid of this stigma by the society. Through the story, Allison points to the social categories of the white class systems such as "white trash" which make these people stereotyped as dangerous, corrupt, drunken and poor. In addition, they are devalued and treated as invisible, thereby, Allison highlights that this kind of categorization can make people feel ashamed, hateful and worthless (Parrondo, 2017, p. 108). The characters have to

struggle because of their social and economic status. Anney experiences much of the same inequitable treatment as "the other" like Pecola and her family do as African American people. The term "white trash" creates a class-defined Other, instead of a racial Other. Hence, Anney constantly seeks to overcome her shameful identity by trying to change Bone's illegitimate status as she does not want her to suffer from the same stigmas she has had to face all her life in such a patriarchal society. However, she has already given her daughter Bone negative childhood experiences because of these oppressive circumstances. Bone learns her mother's social shame and feels self-contempt toward who she is. Thus, the "bastard" label discredits her and shapes her identity that is still forming. She internalizes her mother's shame for being a white trash. This makes her more vulnerable to the shame of sexual abuse that is to come later.

Vetta L. S.Thompson defines stigmatization as that "reflects the tastes and opinions of the dominant group, it reinforces that group's idealized self-description as neutral, normal, legitimate and identifiable by denigrating the characteristics of the less powerful groups" (Thompson, 1997, p. 31, as cited in Bouson, 2009, p. 37). Even so, there is a difference between the motif of white trash and poor white. While "poor" implies an economic description, "trash" is "more general, implying debasement in all categories whether economic, sexual, moral or intellectual" and it is a term used especially in the South (Reynolds, 1993, p. 365, as cited in Carter, 2013, p. 3). It is like the distinction between the good poor and bad poor. Thus, the term "white trash" is "a classist slur and a racial epithet" marking out certain white people as "a breed apart", and it is "the most visible and clearly marked form of whiteness" (Wray and Newitz, 1997, as cited in Bouson, 2001, p. 101). Obviously, this categorization has to be taken into consideration when analyzing the novel, as the place, Carolina, is interwoven into the text which is also part of the title of Allison's novel (Carter, 2013, p. 4). Shame and self-concept issues are the effects of this stigmatization for Bone and her mother that, in turn, also add to their traumas. Moreover, according to Bouson, the stigma such as shame can be contagious and affect not only the stigmatized person but also those associated with that person, like the family. To illustrate, as mentioned earlier, Anney is marked as a socially unwanted woman and abjected other due to both her disgraced Boatwright family background and her illegitimate daughter, and because of her stigma, as such, she ends up affecting her daughter Bone (Bouson, 2009, p. 38).

On the other hand, the term "Bastard" combines in itself a sexual as well as an economic judgment "which is imposed on the child as a legal identity" (Gilmore, 2001, pp. 55-56). It belongs to the nexus of economics, reproduction and sexual violence from which

cultural meanings of incest develop. Bone and Anney's "shaming around illegitimacy" makes way for the trauma of paternal incest that the novel unfolds. Since Anney is exposed to shaming around class, she tragically makes a mistake by marrying a man, partly due to legitimacy for her children that she cannot give them alone as a woman (Gilmore, 2001, pp. 55-56). Bone, whose name brings to mind "the biblical threat of patriarchal property", "bone of my bones", will be sexually abused by her stepfather Glen, who asserts his ownership of Bone when he says, "You're mine now, an't just Boatwrights" (Allison, 1992, p. 52). The abuse starts when Bone is still five years old, and it will continue with added beatings until she is twelve (Gilmore, 2001, p. 56). Leigh Gilmore argues that as the "law of the father" Glen molests, beats and brutally rapes Bone, but still holds his place in the family. In his abuse is his legality. He "functions as the incest agent of the symbolic order that depends on the separation of mother and child". Thereby, the paternal order demands that the mother should not be able to save Bone (2001, p. 56). Anney cannot hinder Bone's abuses and rape in view of this system. In addition, as Moira Baker argues, incest is not only attributed to the class system but also to "a gender system that produces male subjects who assume ownership rights over female subjects" that accept the dominant culture's discourses shaping "femininity, sexuality and the family" (2000, p. 128). Consequently, through his marriage to Anney, he gets the chance to sexually abuse Bone.

In *Bastard Out of Carolina*, Allison emphasizes that although social categorizations such as white trash may "make people feel invisible, ashamed and hateful", such people are not actually what they are perceived to be (Parrondo, 2017, p. 111). Accordingly, Allison states in her Afterword: "I made her [Bone] a child full of hope as well as despair; and while I worked carefully at all the ways she learned to hate herself, I also made it plain that she was not hateful in any way" (Allison, 1992, p. 314). As such, a critique of dominant social categorization is paramount to understand Bone's psyche and her traumatization throughout the novel as it determines her self-perception and social esteem.

In the first-person narration told in retrospect by Bone, Allison points to trauma in the form of father-daughter incest to highlight different issues such as sexism and classism leading to Bone's trauma. Likewise, like Cholly and Pauline in *The Bluest Eye*, Bone's mother Anney and her stepfather Glen are also vulnerable figures that try to deal with their own shattered self-esteem; however, at the cost of Bone's psychological and physical health. People responsible for her well-being are the ones ultimately giving the most pain to her. Thus, Anney and Glen's relation to Bone's trauma should be examined as well.

In the novel, Bone carries the transgenerational trauma of her mother, Anney. She experiences the identity-based oppression that incorporates her mother's. Like in *The Bluest Eye* in which the white value system is internalized, in *Bastard Out of Carolina* Anney internalizes the capitalist patriarchal system of her Southern community, which leads to tragic results. If the Breedloves make Pecola feel insecure and doubtful, in the same way, Anney "breeds suffering and uncertainty" into Bone (Grogan, 2011, p. 160). Anney cannot see how she is controlled by shame for the stigma of being a white trash as well as a bastard mother, and how, in turn, she affects Bone, who looks up to her mother and loves her with her whole heart. She only accepts to marry Glen as she believes that he could be a father for her daughters and a husband who would look after them, "He'd make a good daddy, she imagined, a steady man. I need a husband, she thought. Yeah, and a car and a home and a hundred thousand dollars" (Allison, 1992, p. 13). Anney thinks that "she needs him like a starving woman needs meat between her teeth" (Allison, 1992, p. 41). She wants the love of a man as she always loses the ones in her life, such as Bone's biological father and Reese's father. In addition, this marriage would validate her social status as well as Bone's because she will only be recognized in relation to a man. She dismisses the disapproving comments of her family about Glen. However, after Glen has shown up in their family, there is no room for Bone's and her relationship anymore. As Baker states, "Ironically, the marriage intended to protect Bone from class prejudice associated with illegitimacy exposes her to emotional, physical, and sexual abuse at the hands of her stepfather" (2000, p. 126). Contrary to her wishes, Anney becomes the cause for her daughter's trauma.

Her mother's choices show that distinct types of class and gender can cause invisibility and shame, as the majority of many poor white people is comprised of women. They "remain trapped in the poverty they are born and for some, it is hard to break the cycle of poverty and abuse" (Isenberg, 2016, as cited in Parrondo, 2017, p. 111). However, it is still harder to understand why a mother would leave her "abused" child. As a result, Anney adds to Bone's traumatization because she is the one who brings Glen into their lives. Although Anney thinks that when Glen, who is from a middle-class family, comes into the picture her sorrows about her economic as well as her class status will change, it does not change her condition of invisibility and shame. On the contrary, the difference between the two families, namely the Boatwrights and the Waddells, highlights their differences for the worse:

> It was not only Daddy Glen's brothers being lawyers and dentists instead of mechanics and roofers that made them so different from Boatwrights. In Daddy Glen's family women stayed at home. His own mama had never held a job in her life, and Daryl and James both spoke badly of women who would leave their children to "work outside the home." His father, Bodine Waddell, owned the Sunshine Dairy and regularly hired and fired men like my mother's brothers, something he never let us forget. (Allison, 1992, p. 98)

There is an obvious existing class difference between the Boatwrights and Waddells. The Waddells have well-paid jobs while the Boatwrights work to make ends meet. However, Glen seems to be the black sheep and disgrace in his family by disappointing them because he marries down and does menial, low-paying jobs. He cannot hold a successful job like his brothers: "Skinny, nervous little Glen Waddell didn't seem like he would amount to much, driving a truck for the furnace works, and shaking a little every time he tried to look a man in the eye" (Allison, 1992, p. 10). He becomes invisible to his family and gets scorned by them, "his father had delivered his lecture on all the things Glen had done wrong in his long life of failure and disappointment" (Allison, 1992, p. 99). On the other hand, Glen is a failure to Anney and her daughters, as well. She still has to work as hard as she had done before she got married to Glen despite the fact that in the Waddell family no woman is supposed to work. Even, in the novel, he cannot feed his family and it comes to that point where Anney goes out to prostitute herself for the sake of her daughters and tells him, "I was never gonna have my kids know what it was like. Never was gonna have them hungry or cold or scared. Never, you hear me? Never" (Allison, 1992, p. 73). After all, in delusion of his middle class status she married him, and soon she realizes that his class does not protect him from the psychological abuse of his own father and it does not help her either. In addition to all, he cannot have a child, as his son dies during childbirth and Anney is unable to give him other children. Then, he cannot buy a burial site for the dead baby and that "seemed to be the thing that finally broke his grief and turned it into rage. His face was swollen with crying and gray with no sleep" (Allison, 1992, p. 49). A child, especially a son, would have given him some masculine authority in a patriarchal society. Nevertheless, interestingly the death of his son juxtaposes with the moment he sexually abuses Bone in the parking lot for the first time. Bone narrates his abuse as: "I wasn't used to him touching me, so I hugged my blanket and held still… It made me afraid, his big hand between my legs and his eyes glittering in the dim light… He was hurting me, hurting me!" (Allison, 1992, pp. 46-47). While in *The Bluest Eye* Pecola's sexual abuse is described by her father Cholly, in this novel it is Bone who narrates it. Sex soothes Glen when he feels insufficient or stressed. Thereby, he projects such

feelings onto Bone as a defense mechanism. These details of Anney and Glen are given to exhibit the psychological conditions of the people that surround Bone.

In this context, Glen wants to make up for how his father perceives him because he is a failure in the patriarchal society and what he himself perceives to be his own insufficiency. In time, Bone realizes that Glen's lack of confidence comes from his not being able to live up to the expectations of his father. Her mother Anney tells Bone, "Your daddy wants his daddy to be proud of him. It about breaks my heart" (Allison, 1992, p. 99). To illustrate, Glen becomes unsure of himself like a little boy when he is around his family. He wants both to be appreciated and loved by his father: "Glen's always trying to please him [his father], and that old man takes every chance he gets to make Glen look like a fool. It just eats Glen up, eats him up" (Allison, 1992, p. 207). Because of this, his damaged self-esteem takes his anger and pain out on Bone, like Cholly who takes out his anger towards his past onto his family. In other words, he turns to a young girl to reassert his masculinity to define his male power and acts out his anger to repress his wretched self. He tries to induce in her the sense of helplessness that he cannot escape himself. She becomes his scapegoat. However, she accepts this humiliation when she says, "I knew that it was nothing I had done that made him beat me. It was just me, the fact of my life, who I was in his eyes and mine. I was evil" (Allison, 1992, p. 110). Thus, he first abuses her sexually like in the parking lot and then continues physically with his beatings, as Bone cannot fight back. Bone becomes Glen's target throughout the novel since she is weaker than him and as a child the most vulnerable person. Her inability to take action and her helplessness during his abuses will be part of her trauma as they will disrupt her sense of control (Herman, 1992, p. 33).

Moreover, Glen's motives for choosing a Boatwright woman like Anney have also to do with his feeling of inferiority. Since the Boatwright men are tough and feared people, he wants to be like them:

> Earle Boatwright was everything Glen had ever wanted to be— specially since his older brothers laughed at him for his hot temper, bad memory, and general uselessness. He would have her, he told himself. He would marry Black Earle's baby sister, marry the whole Boatwright legend, shame his daddy and shock his brothers. He would carry a knife in his pocket and kill any man who dared to touch her. (Allison, 1992, pp. 12-13)

Nonetheless, Glen lacks the qualities that the Boatwright men have such as love for their family, warmth, loyalty and concern for their children. Furthermore, marriage gives a man the authority and the ownership of the female individuals of the household in a patriarchal society, which again could boost his self-esteem by giving him a sense of being the superior

one. And last but not least, marrying down is kind of rebelling against his father's authority. Hence, Glen is also a victim of patriarchal society, and he is also psychologically abused by his father. He fails as a Waddell, husband and father. Consequently, he becomes a sadistic oppressor himself and projects his wretched aggression on someone weaker than him like Bone.

In addition to his sadism towards Bone, Glen displays symptoms of "narcissistic rage" defined by Heinz Kohut as a distinct form of human aggression. "The need for revenge, for righting wrong, for undoing a hurt by whatever means" are the distinct qualities of narcissistic rage (1972, p. 380, as cited in Lin, 2006, p. 4). First, Glen's masculinity is crashed by his father as stated in the previous paragraph. When his father is around,

> He broke out in a sweat and his eyes kept flickering back to his daddy's face as if he had to keep watching. He would pull at his pants like a little boy and drop his head if anyone asked him a question. (Allison, 1992, p. 99)

Glen is controlled by his explosive inner rage which is caused by the humiliation of his father: "The berserker rage that would come on him was just a shade off the power of the Boatwrights' famous binges…Tire irons and pastry racks, pitchforks and mop handles, things got bent or broken around Daddy Glen" (Allison, 1992, p. 100). This kind of rage takes revenge as its only end. Marrying Anney and joining her family is one revenge attack to his father. Anney replaces the loss of paternal affection which he could not get from his father. His abuse of Bone, according to Lin, is the result of his competing with her for Anney's attention, who has replaced the father figure (2006, p. 6). Consequently, with his fragile masculine pride, he projects his rage onto his stepdaughter Bone: "Every time his daddy spoke harshly to him, every time he couldn't pay the bills, every time Mama was too tired to flatter or tease him out of his moods, Daddy Glen's eyes would turn to me, and my blood would turn to ice" (Allison, 1992, p. 233). Not shown love by his father and textually lacking mother, Glen is mentally locked in "a state of eternal childhood" where the mother is only desired. He displays insatiable yearning for his "mother", Anney. He becomes possessive due to his regressive dependency needs. That he cannot produce a child of his own also reinforces his image as a child-man. He is a traumatic individual who is not able to develop a healthy sense of self (Lin, 2006, p. 7). From the Freudian perspective Glen's narcissistic rage and thus, his sadistic acts allow him to fulfil his aspiration of becoming omnipotent because his defense mechanism is overwhelmed by his wounded ego, and he has been traumatized. Glen chooses Bone as his victim because he sees in her his own humiliated self. Like him, Bone does not have a father, they are both the black sheep in their families

because of their status, and both of them yearn for the mother's love. In consequence, Glen is suppressing "his own weak and inferior self" by hurting Bone as she embodies this debased self that he wants to get rid of (Lin, 2006, p. 8).

On the other hand, Bone does understand that Glen suffers as well. However, she also later realizes that he does not have the right to harass her. Bone says to herself, "I don't care if his daddy does treat him bad. I don't care why he's so mean. He's hateful" (Allison, 1992, p. 209). The novel uses a developmental narrative showing how the consciousness and narrative voice of Bone are shaped. On account of her reaction when she is first abused in the parking lot while they are waiting for Glen's baby to be born, she cannot understand what exactly happens to herself, "wondering if I had dreamed that whole early morning scene. I kept squeezing my thighs together, feeling the soreness, and trying to imagine how I could have bruised myself if it had been a dream" (Allison, 1992, p. 48). Vickroy explains that "in a traumatic experience the past remains unresolved and lingering, because it is not processed in the way normal information is: either cognitively and emotionally" (1996, p. 99). The possibility to think of his abuse seems awkward to Bone, but her body tells something else. However, she is also not mature enough to understand sexuality. According to Caruth's argument her reaction is because her "traumatic event is experienced too unexpectedly to be fully known and is not available to consciousness" (1995, p. 6). She cannot get rid of this haunting image (Caruth, 1995, p. 4). The novel unfolds the external reasons of the father-daughter incest relationship with its psychic effects. Glen's abuse of her has been sexually, physically and most importantly psychologically. Even though, Bone is able to break away from his fangs, it will be at the cost of losing her mother Anney.

Glen's relationship with his father is given to exhibit his own traumatized self and how this affects his relationship with Anney and her daughters, especially Bone. Still, it is hard to explain why incest occurs. Herman describes incest as follows, "An understanding of incest also rests on basic assumptions about the power of parents and the needs of children. It is regarded as axiomatic that parents have more power than children" (1981, p. 3), like in the case of Glen. She continues,

> [Y]oung children are dependent on their parents or other caring adults for survival. It is further assumed that children need the unconditional protection and nurturance of their parents for healthy development. Parents may find many rewards in the raising of children, but they cannot expect their own needs for… sex to be fulfilled by their children. When a parent compels a child to fulfill his sexual needs, that is incest. (1981, pp. 3-4)

Glen’s marriage to Anney gives him the opportunity to satisfy his sexual and egoistic needs via Bone. Incest has a destructive impact on Bone, who sees herself worthless and ugly changing her perception of herself. As Herman states, the relationship between father and daughter is one of the most unequal relationships one can imagine. Thus, the bond between parent and child gets destroyed (1981, p. 4). The absence of an affectionate father who could give her a sense of security affects Bone deeply. By dwelling on her condition of being marginalized as a bastard white trash and her abuse by her stepfather, she visualizes her life as a fatherless daughter. She wonders about her biological father with these lines:

> ‘Do I look like my daddy?’ I asked… It wasn’t even that I was so insistent on knowing anything about my missing father. I wouldn’t have minded a lie. I just wanted the story Mama would have told. What was the thing she wouldn’t tell me, the first thing, the place where she had made herself different from all her brothers and sisters and shut her mouth on her life? (Allison, 1992, p. 31)

In order to cope with her trauma and keep self-cohesion as well as an affectionate tie to the parent, Bone displays adaptive strategies (Rachman and Klett, 2015, p. 93). She wants to know about her real identity and why it is hidden from her. She feels that she is different from the rest of her family, which may be as a result of her traumatic experiences with Glen that she is trying to work through. The more she is abused, the more she thinks about her identity and her biological father. Root asserts that the subjective experience of traumata and resolution are influenced by previous experiences and the stage of psychological development. The repeated experience of Bone’s trauma as a child makes it difficult for her “to believe in anything, but unique vulnerability” (1992, p. 244). This feeling of paternal absence is even projected onto her abusive stepfather when she seeks for an empathetic father in him, which in turn, displays the dilemma she is in:

> The worst thing in the world was the way I felt when I wanted us to be like the families in the books in the library, when I just wanted Daddy Glen to love me like the father in *Robinson Crusoe*. It must have been like what he felt when he stood around his daddy’s house, his head hanging down… Love would make me beautiful; a father’s love would purify my heart, turn my bitter soul sweet, and lighten my Cherokee eyes. If he loved me, if he only loved me. Why didn’t he love me? (Allison, 1992, p. 209)

Bone is left in a confused and emotionally disrupted state. Her abuse by Glen instills the feeling of lack and the need for a protective and loving father in her life. The male figure in her family is the one who abuses her, but he could also be the one to protect her. Fathers have an important place in shaping girls’ lives during their development. Bone is fully aware of the need for a loving father, her desire for a father outweighs her hatred for Glen. She comes to that point where she even wants her abusive father to love her. She gives all the

positive attributes to what a father could give her; beauty, becoming a better person. She cannot understand why Glen treats her badly. This situation eats her up psychologically and damages her sense of her identity as well as her voice of authority and strength. As a result, she uses her fantasies as a defense mechanism, like the *Robinson Crusoe* story, to make up for the lack of a father figure in her life.

On the other hand, in the case of father-daughter incest, Herman adds, maternal absence seems to be a fact in families, as well. The absence of "a strong, competent and protective mother" leaves Bone "more vulnerable to sexual abuse" (Herman, 1981, p. 49). Bone gets exposed to her stepfather's maltreatment, because her mother is not there to stop him, like Pecola's mother Pauline, who does not believe her daughter about the rape and therefore, allows for another one: "It hit me and I screamed. Daddy Glen swung his belt again. I screamed for Mama" (Allison, 1992, p. 106). Anney seems to embrace Glen's possessiveness, thereby victimizing her daughter by not standing by her side (Grogan, 2011, p. 161). To illustrate, for the routine beatings of Bone in the bathroom, Anney does not question Glen's motives, but instead she asks Bone, "Oh, girl. Baby, what did you do? What did you do?" (Allison, 1992, p. 107). To which Bone thinks to herself:

> What had I done? I had run in the house. What was she asking? I wanted her to go on talking and understand without me saying anything. I wanted her to love me enough to leave him, to pack us up and take us away from him, to kill him if need be. I held on to her until she put me to bed, held on to her and whimpered then. I held on to her until I fell into a drugged, miserable sleep. (Allison, 1992, p. 107)

Speech is here "identified as both the solution to the problem of traumatic pathology and a main feature that, when it is lacking, defines trauma" (Balaev, 2012, p. 9). She cannot speak to her mother about Glen as her situation does not allow it. Contrary to Caruth's view of trauma's unspeakability "due to the intrinsic quality of trauma" that defies representation, Balaev argues that the inability to speak depends on "variable factors, including individual, social, and cultural factors that influence the remembrance and narration of the experience". The "unspeakable quality of trauma" need not be accepted as a reality or an inherent quality of a traumatic experience (2012, p. 10). She cannot talk about her traumatic experiences with Glen as her mother does not show any understanding, even about petty events, in which she is not at fault like in the aforementioned example. According to Herman, children cannot tell their mothers about the abuse by their fathers and if they do they regret it as they observe that the mother cannot help them. Hence, "most of the daughters bore the incestuous relationship in silence, biding their time…" (1981, p. 90). As trauma affects the

organizations that determine the limits of meaning making, women cannot express their stories of abuse as the language is the dominant culture's language. The individual's experience becomes unspeakable because Bone is already devalued and will find that her traumatic experience "takes place outside the realm of the socially validated reality" (Allport, 2009, p. 42). It is not that Bone cannot really grasp what is done to her, as opposed to Caruth's view that the traumatic experience is not wholly possessed, but it is more the unspeakable side of her trauma that she cannot tell anyone as the circumstances for her are not suitable, even available.

Exposed to constant abuses by Glen, Bone is not truly given the chance to be a child. She tries to save her mother by not telling her about her abuses by Glen. She does not want her mother to get sad since she needs him in her life to feel loved and worthy by the eyes of the society, hence she becomes the protecting child, instead of the protected one. She suffers her pain alone hoping to spare her mother:

> One day, maybe months from now, there'd be something I'd done that would make it all seem justified. Then Daddy Glen would take me into the bathroom again, crying that it hurt him more than it could ever hurt me. But this face would tell the truth, his hands on my body. He would show me just how much he hurt when Mama left him in that parking lot, and then when he beat me, we would both know why. But Mama wouldn't know. More terrified of hurting her than of anything that might happen to me, I would work as hard as he did to make sure she never knew. (Allison, 1992, p. 118)

Her relationship with her mother is not the same as before, after Glen has entered their lives. It appears that even if Bone was able to express the horrible truth, her mother would not be ready to learn about it, even though she should have known it by now. Consequently, Bone has to keep quiet about Glen, and faces her unspeakable abuses alone. Because of her chronic abuse, she will protect herself by resorting to her fantasies. Furthermore, in situations of terror, children seek for comfort and protection. When this cry is not answered by the people they go to, the sense of trust and safety is shattered (Herman, 1992, p. 52). She cannot sleep at first because her mother is unable to see her suffering. Herman states that the reasons for not protecting her are intangible to Bone, who sees it as a sign of indifference and even betrayal. She thinks that her mother should have known, as stated by Bone in the above extract, "understand without me saying anything"; if she cared enough, she would have found out and intervened. Bone feels that she has been abandoned by her mother and this affects her more than the abuse itself (1992, pp. 100-101). Later, in the novel, Glen tells lies about what really happened and Anney believes him again:

> I lay still, listening to Daddy Glen's lies, wondering if he thought he was telling the truth. The sound of Mama crying grew softer, faded. Then there was a sigh and the creak of their bed as he comforted Mama and she comforted him. (Allison, 1992, p. 108)

In other words, Glen makes use of tactics that make his control possible. Although Anney ascertains Bone that she loves her, her attraction to Glen ends up in her having sex with him after he beat Bone, and Anney was not able to stop him. Bone thinks that her mother should know what she is suffering as she witnessed it; however, she just gets disappointed.

Glen's entrance into the family stirs a competition for Anney's attention, which is described by Katrina Irving as a heterosexual order within which Glen induces Bone to position herself as subordinate to his authority. Irving argues that Bone rebels against induction into the heterosexual order by refusing "to renege on her desire for the mother and rejects her designated position within the oedipal triangle" which causes her to stick to her preoedipal desire (1998, p. 99). Her desire for the mother shows that she might be in the mirror stage. The desire of the mother is seen when Bone wants to be the object of her mother's affections. She is disturbed by her mother's love for Glen. Bone depends on her mother for living, she needs her as her caretaker. For her, her mother is an object of desire.

An insight into Anney's compulsory reasons for staying with Glen in the hyper-masculine American South is necessary. Anney herself has displayed many symptoms of trauma, such as silence, dissociation and denial throughout the novel. She isolates herself out of shame and her identity is deteriorated in the same way as Bone's. Subsequently, Allison portrays the complex perspectives of an incestuous family that lives under oppressive circumstances (Vickroy, 2002, pp. 161-162). The system makes her value a husband more than her own child as the child cannot feed, replace a man or give a future alone in this system. In the discussion of traumas with "instances of prolonged, repeated trauma" and captivity, Herman argues as follows:

> Domestic captivity of women and children is often unseen. A man's home is his castle; rarely is it understood that the same home may be a prison for women and children. In the domestic captivity, physical barriers to escape are rare. The barriers to escape are generally invisible. They are nonetheless extremely powerful. Children are rendered captive by their condition of dependency. Women are rendered captive by economic, social, psychological, and legal subordination, as well as by physical force. Captivity, which brings the victim into prolonged contact with the perpetrator, creates a special type of relationship, one of coercive control. The perpetrator becomes the most powerful person in the life of the victim, and the psychology of the victim is shaped by the actions and beliefs of the perpetrator. (1992, pp. 74-75)

Glen is a captor in the sense that he abuses Bone for almost six years, which causes a prolonged and repeated trauma for her. Especially, after he loses his own son at childbirth,

he becomes obsessed with patriarchal independence and declares that "We don't need nobody else. We'll do just fine on our own" (Allison, 1992, p. 50). Moreover, Glen's making the family move all the time due to supposedly economic reasons is an indicator of the impulse to isolate his victims, namely Bone and Anney, from their friends and family to hide and pursue his abuse of Bone (Carter, 2013, p. 6). As long as they maintain human connection, Glen's power would be limited. For this reason, Glen seeks to isolate his victims, according to Herman's argument, "from any other source of information, material aid, or emotional support" (1992, p. 79). Thus, it might be justifiable for Anney to stay with her captor as she is dependent on him. Inevitably, in the absence of contact, she will come to perceive the world from Glen's eyes and will neglect Bone. However, Bone cannot understand the circumstances of her mother the way her mother does, as she is still a child.

In addition, her mother also hides from her Boatwright family her own family secret of Glen beating Bone brutally and routinely, thereby she, in a way, takes part in Glen's abuse. Anney also proves to be fatal for Bone. Horvitz states that "silence, fear, obsession and trauma narratively structure" the novel and the text is haunted by "more than Glen's viciousness" (1998, p. 255). Herman elaborates on Anney's behavior as that the abused child, Bone, is isolated both "from other family members and the social world". Bone observes that "not only the most powerful adult in her intimate world is dangerous to her, but also that the other adults responsible for her care do not protect her", like Glen (1992, p. 100). However, Bone's aunts and uncles would intervene if they just knew. In the novel, after Aunt Ruth's funeral, when Raylene shockingly discovers Bone's body "striped all the way down to her knees" as she was beaten by "that son of a bitch bloody, like a dog" (Allison, 1992, p. 245), Raylene immediately calls her brothers, who act fast and beat Glen up. The only explanation Anney can give is:

> I'm so ashamed. I couldn't stop him, and then. I don't know. He loves her. He does. He loves us all. Sometimes I hate myself, but I love him. I've just wanted it to be alright. For so long, I've just hoped and prayed, dreamed and pretended. (Allison, 1992, pp. 246-247)

Anney will not protect Bone as she is lost in her passion for him. Even then Raylene's actions foreshadow that she will be the one who will be there for Bone in the future, not Anney, when she says: "An't nobody gonna hurt you. I swear to you, an't nobody ever gonna hurt you again. I'd kill him" (Allison, 1992, p. 245). It is clear that, by prioritizing her own needs, maybe because of her social circumstances, Anney is actually harming Bone by not leaving Glen. Bone's love for her mother is the only reason that she keeps quiet about it all. Their relationship is founded on silence. She identifies with her mother in silence, so she fears that

if she breaks this agreed silence then her relationship will get hurt. Only if Bone gives up on her mother, can she find peace and her voice.

Likewise, as for the reasons of Anney's choices Allison points to the lack of freedom in a patriarchal society as she cannot expose the family secret that of child abuse and an abusive stepfather. She cannot stay a single mother in a patriarchal society where respect is not rewarded to those women. Bone learns that there exists an "unequal power dynamics" in which men have certain liberties, while women are seen old after the age of twenty-five (Grogan, 2011, p. 162). Bone points to this difference between women and men in her family when she says,

> My aunts treated my uncles like overgrown boys— rambunctious teenagers whose antics were more to be joked about than worried over— and they seemed to think of themselves that way too. They looked young, even Nevil, who'd had his teeth knocked out, while the aunts— Ruth, Raylene, Alma, and even Mama— seemed old, worn-down, and slow, born to mother, nurse, and clean up after the men. What men did was just what men did. (Allison, 1992, p. 23)

Bone understands that women in her family are "born to be worked to death, used up and thrown away" (1992, p. 206). Consequently, Allison shows how women epitomize their hardships.

Bone's sense of self is affected by her surroundings. Traumatic events as Herman explains, "call into question basic human relationships" like the family (Herman, 1992, p. 51). These events "shatter the construction of the self that is formed and sustained in relation to others". They violate the "belief system" of the victim and put him/her into "a state of existential crisis" (Herman, 1992, p. 51). In the novel, Bone says, "I was nobody special. I was just a girl, scared and angry… I wanted to be already dead, cold and gone. Everything was hopeless. He [Glen] looked at me and I was ashamed of myself" (Allison, 1992, p. 209). Thus, not only do these traumatic experiences affect her "psychological structures", but also "the systems of attachment and meaning" which connect her to others. They destroy the positive self-value (Herman, 1992, p. 51). She feels abandoned, worthless and alone.

In the novel, Bone recalls how her stepfather Glen has instilled in her a sense of self-contempt and shame. He says, "act like you piss rose water and honey. Think you're too good to be straightened out. Your mama has spoiled you. She don't know what a lazy, stubborn girl you are, but I do… turning out like your useless cousins" (Allison, 1992, p. 209). That damages her psyche deeply. Glen deprives her of symbolic importance. He consciously tries to control her self-consciousness. She starts to suspect that she deserves the abuse that he inflicts on her, "I took to watching myself in mirrors to see what other people

saw, to puzzle out just what showed them who I really was" (Allison, 1992, p. 205). Amber Hollibaugh states that Bone's feelings are typical for children, who are victimized and continues, "That is incest's cruelest irony, that a child begins to believe that what is happening to her is her own fault, that there is something intrinsic to her being which is so vile that she has brought it on herself" (1992, p. 15). Bone acknowledges the impact of the verbal abuse beside other abuses by him and yet she recounts her reactive rage and anger when she says, "I would get so angry at daddy Glen I would grind my teeth" (Allison, 1992, p. 209). She uses anger as her defense mechanism to thwart off the attack on her ego. Then, she would remind herself of what a diligent person she is for Aunt Raylene, and that she gets high grades at school even though she has to change schools a lot. She says, "I was not dirty, not stupid, and if I was poor, whose fault was that?" (Allison, 1992, p. 209). Anger is what saves her as it reminds her of her self-worth by opening her eyes and ridding her self from shame. Previously, she would find the fault in herself, but now she questions it.

The prolonged abuse of Glen has disturbed Bone's psyche causing her to "dream of long fingers, hands that reached around doorframes and crept over the edge of the mattress" (Allison, 1992, pp. 70) and "great soft strangling clouds lying like fogbanks" (Allison, 1992, pp. 78). Vickroy states that "past experiences result in fixed ideas which create repetitive… activities around attempted recreations of the event" (1996, p. 99). Thus, the traumatic experience "continues to elude the subject who lives in its grip and unwittingly undergoes its ceaseless repetitions and reenactments" (Felman & Laub, 1992, p. 69). Her abuse is continuous making her subject to insidious trauma. Just as she cannot control and stop him in real life, neither can she control her dreams. As she "loses control of her body during the day" when he abuses her, she is followed by "uncontrollable memories" of him at night (Grué, 2013, p. 85). Caruth points to Freud's argument in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* that victims of trauma are subject to "a pattern of suffering" that he terms "repetition compulsion" (1996, p. 1). Caruth explains that the experience of trauma "imposes itself again, repeatedly, in the nightmares and repetitive actions" against the will (1996, p. 4). Bone's dreams are reflections of the repetition compulsion since she thinks about it all the time and cannot understand it. Thereby, "the painful repetition… can only be understood as the absolute inability of her mind to avoid an unpleasurable event that has not been given psychic meaning in any way... In trauma… the outside has gone inside without mediation" (Caruth, 1996, p. 59).

Trauma, as described by Laplanche and Pontalis is "an event in the subject's life defined by its intensity, by the subject's incapacity to respond adequately to it, and by the

upheaval and long-lasting effects that it brings about in the psychical organization" (1973, p. 465). However, Kaplan states that it is possible for trauma to be in conscious memory. Caruth and others' insistence on "belatedness is too rigid, partial and exclusionary", as things are more complicated. How the traumatized person reacts is determined by the exclusive situation, the person's "specific psychic history and formation and on the context for the event" (2005, p. 38). Bone is aware of her trauma, though she cannot say it aloud to anyone. She blames herself for what is happening and for what she cannot explain why it is happening, "I was evil, of course I was. I admitted it to myself, locked my fingers into fists, and shut my eyes to everything I did not understand" (Allison, 1992, p. 110). Herman describes this as, "She believes that she has driven the most powerful people in her world to do horrible things" (1992, p. 105). Thus, she believes in "the inner sense of badness" (Herman, 1992, p. 105). Bone states, "It was my fault, everything. I had deserved that beating" (Allison, 1992, p. 249). She feels helpless and bound in her situation. She starts to have bruises and broken bones that no one can understand and that she never explains. Her shame is so much that she cannot even say 'yes' when her Aunt Ruth asks her openly if Glen ever touched her. Bone states,

> To say anything would mean trying to tell her everything, to describe those times when he held me tight to his belly and called me sweet names I did not want to hear. I remained silent, stubborn, resentful, and collected my bruises as if they were unavoidable. (Allison, 1992, p. 111)

According to Herman, "it is no accident that incest occurs most often precisely in the relationship where the female is most powerless. The actual sexual encounter may be brutal or tender, painful or pleasurable; but it is always, inevitably, destructive to the child" (1981, p. 4). This sense of powerlessness urges her to care for herself through "self-injurious" and "self-destructive" acts like her daydreams and fantasies as a way to cry out her inner suffering, different from Pecola in *The Bluest Eye* who does nothing to soothe her pain. Her body and mind seek to process her sexual trauma.

Bone starts to fantasize about her mother which is different from her violent fantasies about Glen. She looks back at the time when she is five or younger and leaning on her mother's hips, when everything seemed safe and when her mother seemed to love her: "I dreamed I was a baby again, five or younger, leaning against Mama's hip, her hands on my shoulder. She was talking, her voice above me like a whisper between stars. Everything was dim and safe" (Allison, 1992, p. 253). This solace makes it beautiful for her to masturbate: "When I put my hand down between my legs, it was not a sin. It was like a murmur, like music, like a prayer in the dark" (Allison, 1992, p. 253). Her fantasy reflects and reenacts

her post-traumatic syndrome and the need for the love of her mother. Caruth states post-traumatic stress disorder as "a response to an overwhelming event which takes the form of repeated, intrusive hallucinations, dreams, thoughts or behaviors stemming from the event… increased arousal to (and avoidance of) stimuli recalling the event" (1995, p. 4). This time her sexual act is not about violence or shame. Sex becomes something positive, with which she tries to overcome the negative connotation that Glen has given to it. One can also say that Bone laments the loss of her mother, which may refer to Freud's definition of melancholia, which "is regularly the reaction to the loss of a loved person" (1917, p. 243). She longs for the safe relationship that she used to have with Anney, thus, she shows symptoms of melancholia. Even though it is painful, melancholia becomes also a way of coping with traumatic experiences as it reconciles Bone with her current situation.

Bone's traumatic dreams and fantasies, as Roberta Culbertson argues, become the site where she can recover the bodily response to her trauma that she cannot clearly process and verbalize, and where she can face the truth of her experience. She may not process this truth cognitively; however, her body knows and speaks it. Violation leads to a splitting of the experience into separate parts of the mind and there are memories of both the event and the body's response to that event (1995, p. 181). Bone's fantasies, in fact, symbolize her sensorial knowledge of the abuses. In Freudian terms, her repression of these experiences is just showing up through her fantasies to verbalize her sexual trauma. On the other hand, Horvitz suggests that for "female trauma victims, powerlessness becomes eroticized" and then "ingrained within the victim's self-identity" (2000, p. 21). Trauma changes her sense of self as she is also struggling to take in and face what has happened and is still happening. Masturbation becomes a way of facing the past and present for Bone. Incest abuse is a sexual violation, thereby in order to come to terms with it, it has to occur on a sexual level this means that repossessing the sexually violated body has to be by repossessing her sexuality. By taking control over her body, she reclaims what was hers to begin with. The body becomes a site of survival. Therefore, sexuality will open up alternative ways to recover a sense of self. Though Bone is ashamed by her abuse, later she will also masturbate to this shame thinking that 'sex' is powerful, "[I]t was something like sex, something powerful" (Allison, 1992, p. 109). Her child body becomes the reflection of her shattered mind as well as the tool to fix it.

Bone starts to masturbate to violent fantasies before she is ten. She first imagines that she is tied up and put in a haystack,

> The daydream was about struggling to get free while the fire burned hotter and closer. I am not sure if I came when the fire reached me or after I had imagined escaping it. But I came. I orgasmed on my hand to the dream of fire. (Allison, 1992, p. 63)

She comes either by getting burned or by being able to escape, which points to her conflicting emotions of damnation and pleasure because of her sexual trauma. Later, she fantasizes that people are watching as witnesses while Glen is beating her:

> I didn't daydream about fire anymore. Now I imagined people watching while Daddy Glen beat me… Someone had to watch— some girl I admired who barely knew I existed… Sometimes a whole group of them would be trapped into watching. They couldn't help or get away. They had to watch. In my imagination I was proud and defiant…Those who watched admired me and hated him. I pictured that way and put my hands between my legs. My fantasies got more violent and more complicated as Daddy Glen continued to beat me with the same two or three belts he'd set aside for me. (Allison, 1992, p. 112)

Likewise, according to Ying-chiao Lin, Bone's traumatic symptoms of physical and sexual abuse find their self-destructive and masochistic expression in her fantasies in which she develops a sexual desire for being watched by people while being beaten, and then masturbates to this fantasy. This perverse desire is an indication of Bone's compulsive "reenactments of violence" that function to confront "the inescapable violence" she has endured for a long time. Through the reenactments of her trauma, Bone is momentarily released from her torturing molestation (2006, p. 12). As is stated by Herman, the "emotional state cannot be terminated by ordinary means of self- soothing. Abused children discover at some point that the feeling can be most effectively terminated by a major jolt to the body" (1992, p. 11). Lin adds that "The compulsion of autoerotic pleasure thus allows her also to move from mastered object to the state of mastering narrative subject" (2006, p. 12). Besides, in this way, Bone reclaims confidence in herself and can eventually "analyze, reconstruct, understand her abuser's sadomasochistic behavior pattern" (Lin, 2006, p. 12). Although she is more ashamed of masturbating and having "shuddering orgasms" while fantasizing that she is being beaten than for being beaten by Glen in real life and thinks that she lives in a world of shame, her fantasies are the only place where she is able to defy Glen: "It was only in my fantasies with people watching me that I was able to defy Glen… I loved those fantasies, even though I was sure they were a terrible thing. They had to be; they were self-centered" (Allison, 1992, p. 113). As she cannot stop him, she takes pride in defeating him in her imagination. In her dreams she is not ashamed, but special and triumphant, "In them, I was very special. I was triumphant, important" (Allison, 1992, p. 113). In short, masturbation becomes therapeutic, and it enables her to work through her trauma by

claiming back her body. In addition, her fantasies are a possible escape for her in which pain and pleasure combine to give her a temporary resolution. The body serves as the means to understand her traumatic experience and its effects and thus, Bone regains control over her physical and mental perception (Di-Prete, 2006, p. 114).

Elizabeth Waites argues that child abuse has an impact on character development, thus a child can develop a scapegoat identity into her personality and punish herself (1993, p. 68). In the novel, her fantasy of people watching her while Glen is beating her illustrates this scapegoat identity. By having witnesses, she shows herself as the scapegoat of Glen's temper and the need to be seen. On the one hand, for Herman, Bone as an abused child may try to salvage a positive identity by picturing herself as a martyr. She is the one who must suffer to keep the family intact. Her sacrifice makes her feel special (1992, p. 106). On the other hand, according to Rachel Walerstein, by making people watch her, Bone shows her refusal to submit to shame's objectification as she looks at them in person. Furthermore, shame transforms into interest, in other words, Bone becomes interesting to others in her fantasy. Her fantasy of being destroyed by fire is in line with the joy of surviving that destruction. Also, orgasming on her own hands shows that she is the one in control, not Glen's "gorilla hands", "monkey paws", although she cannot erase her traumatic experiences inscribed upon her body and mind, she can use them for her sake to take pleasure from them. Hence, these fantasies depict her attempts to begin anew a joyful interest in herself (2016, p. 175).

The revenge fantasy, Herman states, "is often a mirror image of the traumatic memory, in which the roles of perpetrator and victim are reversed. The revenge fantasy is one form of the wish for catharsis" (1992, p. 189). The victim thinks that she can avoid "the terror, shame and pain of the trauma" by fighting against the perpetrator (1992, p. 189). By using her revenge fantasy as a coping mechanism, Bone says,

> I could be dangerous. Let Daddy Glen yell at Mama again, let him hurt her, let him hurt me. If I had a razor, I would surely cut his throat in the dead of night, then run away to live naked and alone in the western hills like someone in a Zane Grey novel. All I had to do was grow a little, grow into myself. (Allison, 1992, p. 208)

The desire for revenge is also as a result of feeling helplessness: "Everything felt hopeless" (Allison, 1992, p. 209). The victim, Herman continues "imagines that revenge is the only way to restore her own sense of power" and forcing the perpetrator to know the harm that he has done. However, they can make the victim feel like a monster, since revenge cannot compensate for the harm that has been done (Herman, 1992, p. 189). The huge issue for

incest survivors becomes to learn to possess sex, and Bone's masturbation throughout the narrative points to the fact that the body has to be involved in the healing process (Grogan, 2011, p. 171). Hence, Bone gets actively involved in her coping with her trauma and healing from it through her body.

Accordingly, traumatized people, Herman states, may "relive the moment of trauma not only in their thoughts and dreams, but also in their actions... Sometimes people reenact the traumatic moment with a fantasy of changing the outcome of the dangerous encounter" (1992, p. 39). In order to negate the traumatic event, they may even risk further harm. Sometimes people do the reenactments consciously (1992, p. 39). To illustrate, during the funeral of her beloved Aunt Ruth, who has passed away, Bone gets drunk to forget for a while her traumatic life at home and the bloody beating that she has just got from Glen before the funeral. Butch asks her whether she is trying to get drunk, upon which she answers, "You think I can?" (Allison, 1992, p. 242). She later states that she likes it to be numb: "It was kind of interesting being drunk. I liked the numb part" (Allison, 1992, p. 243). Herman explains that "traumatized people who cannot spontaneously dissociate may attempt to produce… numbing effects by using alcohol" (1992, p. 43), which Bone does to soothe the pain of her aunt's loss as well as the pain of having Glen in their life. Different kinds of pain come together at this moment. Yet, Herman continues that sometimes "people find themselves reenacting some aspect of the trauma scene in disguised form, without realizing what they are doing. Not all reenactments are dangerous" (1992, p. 40). Moreover, some of them are "adaptive". The traumatized people may be able to "integrate experiences into their lives in a contained, even socially useful manner" (1992, p. 40). Bone claims authority over her body. In this way, she turns something that has been labelled as bad into something positive and that makes her feel good (LaCapra, 2001, p. 143). Also, it allows Bone to engage with her trauma.

In addition to revenge fantasies, Bone tries to cope with her trauma by telling stories. At her Aunt Alma's, when she works with her relatives in the garden, she would make up stories in her head and tell them to her cousins:

> My cousins loved my stories— especially the ones that featured bloodsuckers who consumed only the freshly butchered bodies of newborn babies, green-faced dwarfs promising untold riches to children who would bring them the hearts of four and forty grown men. Grey told me that I had "a very interesting mind for a girl". My stories were full of boys and girls gruesomely raped and murdered. (Allison, 1992, p. 119)

The violence in her stories contains the mark of her trauma as her stories are about abuse, rape and murder. She likes to tell stories because she feels important as people fix their eyes on her face. It gives her a sense of power in a moment in which she does not have any resistance and is helpless as well as a sense of comfort where she is not the victim. In a way, storytelling becomes an act of coping and survival for Bone, which in turn helps her healing process. Her stories help for comprehension through telling, which points to Freud's "talking cure" as a means of recovery. Similarly, in the novel, when she breaks her collarbone because of Glen's beatings, she imagines a scenario where she forgives him and then dies. These stories turn her from a victim into a powerful narrator that helps her cope with her trauma as it reshapes her identity. Van der Kolk and van der Hart affirm that "by imagining these alternative scenarios, many patients are able to soften the intrusive power of the original, unmitigated horror. Memory is everything. Once flexibility is introduced, the traumatic memory starts losing its power over current experience" (1995, p. 178). In a way, she turns the abuse upside down by reestablishing control over herself through her stories. Bone's imagination has the potential power of healing her. All these stories equally support Herman's view that the ironic behavior of self-victimization by the traumatized show that, "Self-injury is intended not to kill but rather to relieve unbearable emotional pain and many survivors regard it, paradoxically, as a form of self-preservation" (1992, p. 109). In a similar way, according to Vickroy, masochism functions as a defense mechanism: "Any sense of control, even if it is self-abusing or ineffectual, is necessary to building a perception of an integrated identity. The ego must avoid feelings of total helplessness, or a sense of self will disappear" (2002, p. 156). Allison elucidates in her interview with Carolyn E. Megan that, "[Storytelling] becomes a technique whereby [Bone] retains a sense of power in a situation where she has none" (1994, p.72, as cited in Grué, 2013, p. 90). She tries to dissociate from her trauma by changing roles to preserve her identity. However, this also points to the fact that, Bone cannot stop the repetitions of the memory of her abuse, thus, she has to find a way to live with it and as such, Caruth explains, "her life is governed by the destructive repetition of trauma" (1996, p. 63). Simulations as well as her alternative stories of the sexual abuse help her recover.

At the same time, she goes beyond fictionalization after she finds "a hook" and uses it calling it "a talisman against the dark and anything that waited in the dark", and it makes her feel "magically older, stronger, almost dangerous" (Allison, 1992, p. 194). The hook that is "used to pull bodies out of car wrecks" according to Aunt Raylene (1992, p. 186), is transformed into something positive as it makes her feel strong and secure again, "I was

locked away and safe" (Allison, 1992, p. 193), and thwarts the impact of violence (Grué, 2013, p. 91). However, as the hook suggests, it is also a phallic symbol, which gives Bone power like when she uses it to break into Woolworth making this scene a figurative rape to compensate for her powerlessness against Glen. The hook transforms her into someone like Glen, who uses terror (Di Prete, 2006, p. 11). In the novel, Bone sets "the imagined body against the real body in its vulnerability" and this shows that Bone gains empowerment to form for herself a representative language that reinvents her sexual abuse (Di Prete, 2006, p. 18). Bone's fictionalizing her life is what enables her to survive. Even her mother notices some change in Bone when she says, "'You've changed Bone.' I'd say you were even a little taller. You hold your head up more. I can even see your eyes now and then" (Allison, 1992, pp. 194-195). Her fantasies and her body become the means of self-empowerment.

Even so, Bone's sister Reese also begins to masturbate at a young age. Like Bone, she masturbates during the day or at night, and even in company with violent fantasies while playing, she "played out her own stories in the woods… She seemed to be pretending to fight off imaginary attackers. Then she dropped to the ground and pretended to be wrestling… she kept shouting 'No! No!' The haughty expression on her face was replaced by mock terror…like the heroine in an adventure movie" (Allison, 1992, p. 176). By watching her, Bone imagines herself beaten and tied to "a tree, gagged and left to starve". Bone observes her during those moments and thinks to herself whether she likes it as much as she does; however, she would never talk about it to her. Given the fact that Bone uses masturbation and fantasy as a medium of survival, it brings to mind whether Reese is not also a victim of Glen though it is not mentioned in the text. Reese seems to be the unacknowledged incest victim by the reader, family and sister alike. Her trauma could be considered in Caruth's terms as unspeakable, inexpressible and not accessible to her.

About fantasies and trauma Lynda Hart (1998) states that: "Whereas the sexual abuse survivor is most clearly recognizable to others through dissociative symptomologies, the practitioner acts out these scenes in ways that repeat, reorganize, and integrate them into her present. Dissociation is replaced by consciousness of associations" (p. 77). Bone acts out her trauma by engaging with her body throughout the novel by fantasies of fire, beatings, sticks and hooks, including storytelling. She makes use of the power of her fantasy to gain authority over her healing process. First defeated by her father, she later conquers him. At the same time, listening to gospel music and singing to it become a way to purify Bone's soul against the harm she has to endure by Glen. This can be another kind of coping mechanism to her trauma at home. Herman argues that to salvage a more positive identity, abused children

may “interpret their victimization within a divine purpose” to preserve their sense of value (1992, p. 106). She is first introduced to gospel at her sick Aunt Ruth’s house. When she listens to it, she states:

> My insides felt as if they had melted, and I could taste the wind in my mouth. The sweet gospel music poured through me in a piercing young boy’s voice, and made all my nastiness, all my jealousy and hatred, swell in my heart. The world was too big for me, the music too strong. I knew I was the most disgusting person on earth. I didn’t deserve to live another day. How could I live with myself how could God stand me? Was this why Jesus wouldn’t speak to my heart? The music washed over me. *Softly and tenderly*, Jesus is calling. The music was a river trying to wash me clean. (Allison, 1992, pp. 235-236)

Gospel music makes her both hate herself and then clean herself, it makes her feel worse and ashamed but then helps her pour her sorrow out and be glorified by religion. It makes her internal contradiction visible to her: her self-hatred’s antithetical relation to the love and admiration she fantasizes receiving along with the joy she feels because of it (Walerstein, 2016, p. 177). The belief to something supreme may give her strength and hope to overcome or at least deal with her trauma when nobody is there for her to consult to, “I wanted a miracle in my life. I wanted to be a gospel singer and be loved by the whole wide world” (Allison, 1992, p. 141). Besides, getting absorbed by the sound of the gospel music helps her face herself and cry out her soul. The music acts as a mirror reflecting as well as voicing her soul. Gospel music with religion in general enables Bone to enter a site where both identification of the self with the world and projection of the self can occur (Friedel, 2005, p. 40, as cited in Walerstein, 2016, p. 178). Similarly, Paula Rawlins adds that “While the immediate impact of these feelings may seem minimal, Bone’s ability to access these emotions for short periods of time… serves as a testament to children’s emotional and mental drive to survive trauma experienced at home” (2017, p. 122). Yet, Bone’s reflection on herself provides her with “long-term” effects to undo her negative emotions (Rawlins, 2017, p. 123). Consequently, Bone’s “obsession with gospel music, her wild sexual fantasies, strange tales of violence and avid reading” (King, 2000, p. 124), as she reads a lot, reflect her trauma coping strategies to reshape her life anew.

Allison saves the rape scene for the end as a narrative technique to create suspense and she states that, “We become Bone. Because the actual rape does not occur until the end of the novel, we, like her, stay on the edge, each time expecting it to happen” (Gwin, 1997, p. 434). *Bastard Out of Carolina* derives its power from its ability not only to reveal the horror of incestuous violence, but also to make the reader keep reading by sustaining narrative suspense about the act of rape (Gwin, 1997, p. 436). Glen’s final assault on Bone,

namely the rape, is predictable; however, it is also the open rebellion of Bone and her boldly challenging him, where she clearly goes against him by not keeping silent anymore. Glen's confusion, perversity, violence and hopelessness are seen in the detailed rape scene, which consists of twelve pages. It starts as the following:

> "You're gonna have to tell her you want us all to be together again."
>
> "No," I whispered. "I don't want to live with you no more. Mama can go home to you. I told her she could, but I can't. I won't." (Allison, 1992, p. 281)
>
> "You're not even thirteen years old, girl. You don't say what you do. I'm your daddy. I say what you do."
>
> "No." I said it louder. "I'd rather die than go back to living with you."
>
> "You would?"
>
> "I don't want to talk. I want you to leave"… "I'll tell Mama," I said desperately.
>
> He lifted me so that my feet came off the floor. I had always felt like it was my fault, but now it didn't matter. I wouldn't hold still anymore. (Allison, 1992, p. 282)
>
> "But it's you, you're the one gets in the way. You make me crazy and you make her ashamed, ashamed of you and ashamed of loving me. It an't right her leaving me because of you." (Allison, 1992, p. 283)

As a twelve-year old girl Bone cannot fight against him physically since he is much stronger than her. Bone tries to resist him hard and does not subjugate. She gets beaten and then raped. In this scene, Allison highlights the inherent weakness of him and the courage of Bone, which she has been subduing for a long time. Bell Hooks (1989) describes this courage as "talking back", which means "speaking as an equal to an authority figure". It also means "daring to disagree" (p. 22). Whereas "silence is often seen as the sexist 'right speech of womanhood'", which is "the sign of woman's submission to patriarchal authority" (Hooks, 1989, p. 23). Bone is able to break her silence against Glen and she gains her voice as an act of resistance. She starts to establish her identity, which makes it possible for her to reject Glen. In this confrontation scene, Glen reacts out of control and forgets that this is a child standing in front of him. The rape scene is described in a clearly graphic way:

> "You think you're so grown-up. You think you're so big and bad, saying no to me. Let's see how big you are, how grown!" He ripped my panties off me like they were paper (Allison, 1992, p. 284). I felt like he was tearing me apart, my ass slapping against the floor with every thrust, burning and tearing and bruising. His hips drove his sex into me like a sword. Blood and juice, his sweat and mine, my blood, all over my neck and all down my thighs, the sticky stink of him between my burning legs. How had it all happened so fast? (Allison, 1992, pp. 285-286)

While he penetrates her, he blames her even into seducing her, "You little cunt. I should have done this a long time ago. You've always wanted it" (Allison, 1992, pp. 284-285). There is no doubt that this scene between Bone and Glen is "a struggle for power" and proves Glen's impotence and lack of control through his insults at her. It is the first time that Bone

resists him in real life rather than in her fantasies. Furthermore, as opposed to the common Caruthian view of trauma theory's claim of "not being there", Bone is clearly able to describe her rape to the reader in the scene and is definitely "there" during her traumatic experience.

Bone has an internal monologue after her rape in which the novel reaches its climax, and this helps understand her unspeakably traumatized soul. To illustrate, she says: "Pain. My shoulder, my knees, my thighs, my face— everything hurt but none of it mattered. It was all far off" (Allison, 1992, pp. 286-7). Even though Bone has just got raped, she is still primarily preoccupied with the anxiety of how her mother will respond to her sexual assault:

> Would she think I wanted him to do that? Would she think I asked for it? What would he tell her? I had to tell her that I had fought him, that I had never wanted him to touch me, never. I could not talk, could not think. For a moment then I wanted to be dead already, not to have to look into Mama's face ever again, and not his. (1992, p. 287)

Such worries prevent her from speaking out her trauma. Herman explains that "incest victims both long and fear to reveal their secret" (1981, p. 129). Even though Anney enters the room, just in time to see Glen on top of her daughter, Bone soon learns that her mother is not going to make her responsible for the rape, yet she will not entirely blame Glen, either.

However, although Anney first attacks Glen, later she overlooks Bone's violated body and turns to Glen. The image of her mother holding Glen like a child that needs to be soothed after the rape will haunt Bone as a traumatic memory. Glen begs her not to leave him and hits his head to the car over and over again, saying, "Kill me, Anney. Go on. I can't live without you. I won't" (Allison, 1992, p. 290). Herman explains this as,

> The incestuous father has immense difficulty imagining how life can be bearable if he loses control over his wife and children and sexual access to his daughter. He cannot be expected to give up his accustomed power and privileges without a fight. If he meets with determined resistance from his wife and daughter, his distress will be extreme. Desertion, suicidal gestures, and homicidal threats are not uncommon during this time. (1981, p. 144)

Like Pauline in *The Bluest Eye*, there is not the comforting mother after the rape of the daughter; on the contrary, there is a mother who does not do anything about it. Confronted with this act of insult to her injury by her mother, Bone cannot look at this scene between her mother and Glen without shaking out of disappointment and betrayal:

> I hated her now for the way she held him, the way she stood there crying over him. Could she love me and still hold him like that? I wanted everything to stop, the world to end, anything, but not lie bleeding while she held him and cried. (Allison, 1992, p. 291)

Her world and her illusion of a mother who loves her are violated. She remains silent and starts to question whether she really needs her mother's love if her mother does not have some love for her reserved:

> My mouth closed over the shout I would not let go. I'd said I could never hate her, but I hated her now for the way she held him, the way she stood crying over him. Could she love me and still hold him like that. I let my head fall back. I did not want to see this. I wanted Travis' shotgun or my sharp killing hook. I wanted everything to stop, the world to end, anything, but not to lie bleeding while she held him and cried. I looked up into the white sky going gray. The first stars would come out as the sky darkened. I wanted to see that, the darkness and the stars. I heard a roar far off, a wave of night and despair waiting for me, and followed it out into the darkness. (Allison, 1992, p. 291)

In a heart-wrenching testimony, Bone says that she never wants to "look into her Mama's face ever again, and not his" (Allison, 1992, p. 287), as she feels betrayed by both her mother and Glen. Yet, more importantly her mother's betrayal is the most injurious to her (Carter, 2013, p. 10). Bone is abused, broken, and finally violently penetrated by Daddy Glen, but when she says, "My mama had abandoned me, and that was the only thing that mattered" (1992, p. 302), she affirms her most heart-breaking trauma and thus, facing the reality that her mother has abandoned her. The rape becomes the turning point not only of Bone, but also her mother's.

At the end of the novel, Bone is not able to produce an official statement about her rape to the deputy at the hospital; she does not testify to him about what happened. She responds with "silence" to his questions. She thinks to herself,

> I looked up into his wide, dark eyes. His voice was soft, almost lazy, his tone both polite and respectful. He made me wish I could talk, tell him what happened, what I though had happened. But it all seemed so complicated in my head, so long and difficult. How could I begin? Where would I begin? I thought of that moment in the parking lot so long ago, waiting to find out about Mama and his son. (Allison, 1992, p. 296)

For Bone all men look like "Daddy Glen in uniform" (Allison, 1992, p. 296), which Gilmore describes as "the same paternal privilege and imposition of male power makes them capable of the same mistreatment of her mother, and ultimately, of Bone" (2001, p. 57). Bone's confusion about where she could start her trauma story is because of the discrepancy between her experience that involves "generations of familial trauma and years of individual abuse" and the obvious plot that the deputy expects her to tell: "the story that would explain the bruises and blood documented by the hospital". Reducing her testimony to "the bare fact of the rape is to give up her identity to that narrow story and to the Law", as it would make her turn from a dangerous survivor that has fought against her abuse to a girl, hurt and alone (Harad, 2003, pp. 38-39). There is no language for her to tell what Glen did to her as that language itself is suppressed by the law that would define it as incest. Consequently, Bone refuses to talk about Glen's rape with reference to her mother's absence:

> My tongue swelled in my mouth. Mama, I almost whispered, but clamped my teeth together. I couldn't tell this man anything. He didn't care about me. No one cared about me. I didn't even care about myself anymore. I want my Mama. (Allison, 1992, p. 297)

She is still a child, who needs her mother. When Aunt Raylene arrives, the first thing that she realizes is that she is not her Mama as she has been her object of desire. Yet, when Raylene leans over her, she drops herself into her safe and strong arms. Raylene becomes the figure who provides her the feeling of safety. Later, Anney comes to show her love for Bone for the last time when she gives her the envelope which has her blank, unmarked and unstamped birth certificate. She attains legitimacy through disinheritance and now is also left without a mother after having no father (Grogan, 2011, p. 172). Her bastard stigma is officially gone and now a new future waits for her.

In Raylene's arms, she states that she "knows who she is going to be": "I was already who I was going to be… someone like her [Raylene], like Mama, a Boatwright woman" (Allison, 1992, p. 309). Gaining legitimacy tells her nothing about herself as she already very well knows who she is. It will not change that her mother has abandoned her and that she got raped by Glen. She knows the patriarchal order, but she also acknowledges the possible difference. She also recognizes her place in the Boatwright family. She takes a part from everyone to form a self for herself. She trusts Raylene's arms and her love, which suggests that lesbianism provide a different possible way for Bone. Raylene is someone who will show her not to build a life around men.

Recovery becomes based on Bone's empowerment and "the creation of new connections. Recovery can take place within the context of relationships" (Herman, 1992, p. 133). That way, "the survivor recreates the psychological faculties" that have been "damaged or deformed" by the traumatic event (Herman, 1992, p. 133). Bone tries to reconnect to her life through her Aunt Ruth first and then Aunt Raylene, who will take her custody. In the middle chapters, Bone's mother already entrusts her sister Raylene with Bone's care, different from Pecola who has nobody to care for her when she gets bullied by her people and raped by her father. Raylene becomes like a mother to her. Bone confesses that, "Raylene told Mama I was the kind of girl she liked, quiet and hardworking, and said she'd pay in kind for my help a couple of days a week. So I started spending all my time with Raylene" (Allison, 1992, p. 181). Raylene trusts Bone and opens her eyes, where she concludes that she does not want to live with Glen again. Raylene instills confidence in Bone. She becomes Bone's savior. Bone takes what she can from her aunts to make her self whole again. Empowerment means in this context that the survivor becomes the author of her own

recovery. Others can give "advice, support, assistance or care, but not cure". The survivor should control her recovery process, this will give a sense of autonomy on her life again (Herman, 1992, p. 133). Thus, she chooses not to return to Glen by her own will and, in this way, she is able to regain her life.

In terms of recovery, the "development of a lesbian identity" is also "an adaptive and positive way of coming to terms" with the traumatic event (Herman, 1981, p. 105). To understand Bone's sexuality, it is also important to acknowledge the role that her Aunt Raylene has on her. Aunt Raylene is different from the rest of the Boatwrights in that she does not stick to the patriarchal way of life like getting married and having kids, and is far away from everyone: "She was quieter, more private, living alone with her dogs and fishing lines, and seemingly happy that way" (Allison, 1992, p. 178), and she tells Bone,

> I know what I have to do and what I don't. You think about it, and you'll see that the biggest part of why I live the way I do is that out here I can do just about anything I damn well please. (Allison, 1992, p. 259)

She has also "worked for the carnival like a man cutting her hair and dressing in overalls". She called herself Ray, "and with her short, stocky build, big shoulders, and small breasts, I could easily see how no one had questioned her. It was astonishing to imagine running off like that, and I would think about it with wistful longing" (Allison, 1992, p. 179). She confesses to Bone that "she ran off to the carnival, but not for a man". Being different from her sisters is what makes her similar to Bone. Different from her other aunts, Aunt Raylene instills in Bone a kind of resistance to patriarchal values. "Lesbian existence includes the breaking of a taboo and the rejection of a compulsory way of life". Also, it is both a direct and an indirect "attack on male right of access to women" (Rich, 2003, p. 27). Thus, Raylene makes Bone question "the system that defines women as selfless wives who mother their husbands at the neglect of their children". Raylene's positive lesbianism may help Bone to fight Daddy Glen and "get out from under her his meanness" (Grogan, 2011, p. 172). In short, Raylene represents a safe space for Bone that is built around a shared worldview that prefers to "keep the trash down" and show Bone that one can live with both joy and shame (Walerstein, 2016, p. 179). In the novel, the lesbian theme is understated, but Allison drops hints about Bone's potential lesbianism. For example, Bone wishes to be a boy (Allison, 1992, p. 23), or they call her a strange-minded girl (1992, p. 27) or she has a man-type part (1992, p. 54), or when she wants to be stronger (1992, p. 109) or different (1992, p. 91). Her nickname "Bone" is also masculine.

The sexual identity of a person is influenced by psychological development as well as her condition in the society and people around her. It is a fluid process. In the psychosexual development, as argued by Freud, a girl passes the stage called penis envy, and this stage requires the movement of interest to the opposite sex parent, namely the father. Robert Bocock (2002) points to some outcomes that could happen in the failure of the phallic stage. He states that the "castration complex" is different in females, "The female acknowledges the fact of castration and with it the superiority of the male" and thus, "her inferiority" (p. 53). Yet, she protests against it and three lines of development occur. The first one causes "a general revulsion" with males, and the female feels "dissatisfied with her clitoris". She "gives up her phallic activity and with it her sexuality" along with her masculinity. In the second one, she may cling to her threatened masculinity in the hope of getting a penis. This masculinity complex might result in homosexuality. The last line would lead her to the normal female attitude, where her father becomes the object of attention and reaches the feminine form of the Oedipus complex (p. 53). When the female has the masculinity complex, she may feel rejected and confused. She will seek protection, and sometimes someone other than the mother figure will be there for her. Bone refuses to go back to Glen's violent household and instead, enters the lesbian space of resistance created by Aunt Raylene in her "safe space, out by the river where trash rises" and where resistance to sexist, elitist and heterosexist ideologies is possible (Baker, p. 26, 1998, as cited in Bouson, 2009, p. 50).

Bone's sexual identity develops in accordance with what Judith Butler states, "that gay and lesbian identities are not only structured in part by dominant heterosexual frames, but that they are not for that reason determined by them" (1993, p. 314, as cited in Irving 1998, p. 97), and "a marginalized identity does not precede, but is produced within and transversely, hegemonic structures" (1993, p. 314, as cited in Irving, 1998, p. 97). Accordingly, Bone's sexual identity "is produced by a patriarchal system that needs marginal subjects in order to demarcate… its own boundaries" (Irving, 1998, p. 97). In Bone's case, her illegitimate status as well as her class position her into a category. Allison is able to renounce an essentialist version of identity construction of Bone through her construction of her subjectivity in the novel. As the lesbian identity is positioned as negative by "patriarchal institutions", "embracing that position" is vital for recognizing such marginalized identities (Irving, 1998, p. 97). To illustrate, in the novel, Allison establishes the same sex desire of Bone via an imaginary or pre-oedipal fusion with her mother's body:

> She [Anney] always seemed to smell of buttery flour, salt, and fingernail polish— a delicate insinuating aroma of the familiar and the astringent. I would breathe deep and bite my lips to keep from moaning while my scalp ached and burned. I would have cut off my head before I let them cut off my hair and lost the unspeakable pleasure of being drawn up onto Mama's lap every evening. (Allison, 1992, pp. 30-31)

Bone is clearly yearning for her mother's body. In the novel, she observes her sister Reese masturbating "lying on the bed with a pair of her mama's panties over her face" (Allison, 1992, p. 175). Likewise, Bone has to compete with Glen for her mother's attention throughout the novel. However, she does not want to let go of her mother and thus, does not enter the oedipal state in this context. Yet still as Irving states, "her sexuality is formed within and against a socially constructed system" (1998, p. 99). Through Glen, Allison creates "a paternal figure whose rage at the symbolic", specifically "his failure of the phallus", is wrought upon his stepdaughter Bone's body (Irving, 1998, p. 99). The maintenance of the symbolic order is the responsibility of every man and domestic abuse is a tool for keeping this order. The ineffectual Glen forces Bone to see him as the name of the father (Irving, 1998, p. 99) when he says, "You're not even thirteen years old, girl. You don't say what you do. I'm your daddy. I say what you do" (Allison, 1992, p. 282). However, she rebels against him.

Bone's other interactions with legal institutions represent her queer subjectivity as her marginalized position, which does not yield to a patriarchal order. Like the lesbian subject who is a threat to patriarchal control, Bone as an illegitimate child and her mother as an unwed mother are also outside the socially constructed system. Bone attains a paradoxical position when she becomes authorized as legitimate in spite of her absence of a paternal figure and name. This contradicts the binary logic of a system that keeps a division between illegitimate and legitimate. Bone's victory in the novel becomes her resistance to the patriarchal order that is harming her and the absence of a paternal name on her birth certificate shows that she refuses to submit to the phallus. Yet, her mother's continual striving to change her birth certificate shows that she submits to patriarchal dictates and tries to re-subject Bone into this system as well (Irving, 1998, p. 101). Bone rejects her mother's heterosexual subordination and embraces Aunt Raylene's homosexual independence. Thereby, through the story of Bone, Allison's personal becomes political. In addition, by refusing to become a part of the patriarchal order and attaining a lesbian identity, Bone regains control over her life and reconciles with her trauma.

In the end, in order to save herself, Bone rejects her mother as she very well knows that her mother will never leave Glen. She accepts the loss of her mother and finds condolence in the arms of her Aunt Raylene. Bone develops close relationships with her aunts, which partly compensates for her disappointment with her mother. Through her "surrogate mothers", Bone is able to endure the misery of her family life (Herman, 1981, p. 90). The realization that, after all, it has not been her fault from the beginning, but that she has been the abused one and Glen is the abusive perpetrator signifies the moment of healing for her. What remains unspeakable is more the betrayal of her mother than Glen's abuse and rape.

To sum up, *Bastard Out of Carolina* intertwines the protagonist Bone's personal trauma of sexual abuse with the cultural trauma of white trash. Father-daughter incest is situated as part of the complex issues such as class and gender complicating her trauma. Bone and her mother suffer from insidious trauma in the sense that their trauma does not occur from just one experience, their traumas are comprised of various and small bits of experiences that they have to face. It is not only an incest story, rather it is the testimony of a young girl who narrates her story to trace her abuse. Likewise, the novel centers on a mother-daughter relationship dynamics and family politics through their personal and social perspectives. As a mother in the American South, Anney is affected by the gender and class conditions of her society which in turn have an impact on her mothering of Bone. However, different from the good mother concept or what is expected from a mother, she chooses her abuser and rapist husband Glen over her victimized daughter Bone. She sacrifices her relationship with her daughter due to her life choice. For the reasons of her choice can be given her class status as white trash, which gives her tremendous shame as an individual, as well as Bone's bastard status, which she desperately seeks to change throughout the novel as it also causes her immense shame. The bastard status goes hand in hand with the white trash stereotyping since white trash is referred to those seen as poor, lazy, shiftless, criminal, immoral and drunk people. Thus, it is as much a classist discrimination as it is a racist one as well. It is racist in the sense that it puts poor white people, living especially in the Southern States, in a less worthy white category as if it were a different race. This kind of psychological burden by Anney is transferred to Bone, who also feels ashamed because of her bastard status, yet different from Anney, she values her family despite the white trash stigma. When Glen, who is from a middle class family comes into their lives, their lives change to the worse, especially for Bone. She gets to be molested, abused and beaten by her stepfather Glen. It is not only bodily pain that she has to put up with also her mental health

worsens. On the one hand, she seeks love and care by her mother, who neglects her, on the other hand Glen's abuses do not stop and it comes to a point, which makes up the climax of the novel, where she gets brutally raped by Glen. Throughout her abuses, she successfully tries to deal with her trauma by way of masturbating using fantasies, telling stories and listening to gospel music. Trauma coping strategies for her can be listed as the interest in "gospel music and spirituality, escape through imagination and violent fantasies". In the end, she has to accept her mother's abandonment and Aunt Raylene as her substitute mother as she gets the custody for Bone. Anney lies to herself and refuses to bear witness to Bone's story throughout the novel. She knows that she will not be able to protect Bone from Glen, thus, she decides to abandon her. Bone regains her control over her body and revolts against the norms of the patriarchal society by attaining a lesbian identity via Raylene. Thereby, she presents a possibility to reconcile with her trauma, like Pecola does in *The Bluest Eye* by losing her sanity. In addition, she is not only a survivor of child sexual abuse, but also a survivor of her social stigma. Bone transforms herself from a victim to a survivor of child sexual abuse. She renames herself by writing her story to make stereotypical names such as "bastard", "poor white trash", and "ugly" seen in a new perspective (King, 2000, p. 136).

# CONCLUSION

In this study, Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* and Dorothy Allison's *Bastard Out of Carolina* have been analyzed in light of trauma theories which lay out the protagonists' complex traumas of child sexual abuse intertwined with cultural, racial, social and gender issues, and their coping strategies for these traumas along with the possibility to survive and recover from them. This thesis contends that despite being victims of child sexual abuse and suffering from identical traumatic experiences in this male-dominated culture, Pecola and Bone's trauma coping methods function as disruptive forces against the patriarchal system. Both novels challenge and offer an alternative to their victimized and marginalized condition by using different marginal strategies. Unlike Pecola, who seeks refuge in madness and realizes her wish for blue eyes in an imaginary world she has created by rejecting her traumatic past and refusing to become a part of the patriarchal order, Bone reclaims her control over her body through sexual and creative fantasies and rebels against patriarchal ideology's oppressive norms by assuming a lesbian identity. Both novels portray a panorama of the American society in which vulnerable groups such as children, women, racial minorities and poverty-stricken communities are entrapped in situations that they cannot change. As such, both traditional as well as pluralistic models of trauma have been adopted, specifically the insidious trauma model, which involves the context of marginal groups because Pecola and Bone's traumas are not only limited to the sexual violation of their fathers or their mothers' absence, but also connected with the abuse they experience in their everyday life such as racism, sexism and classism. Thus, their distinct traumas are situated in relation to their specific contexts. This conveys the awareness of the uniqueness of personal trauma which is in relation to larger social and cultural factors.

Through the representations of the protagonists' individual traumas of child sexual abuse, the novels testify to the traumatic experiences of black people and white trash people. Incest is not the only reason for the gradual dissolving of the characters' selves, the effects of racism, sexism and classism are other reasons that add to their trauma. Pecola is not strong enough to defend herself and too dependent on the care of her parents because she does not have a developed personality as she has not had the role models responsible for it. The burden of incest and betrayal by both parents just interrupts her development, and her attachment to her parents and community is destroyed. She experiences an identity crisis because she cannot define herself in the racist society she is born into. She finds an outlet

for herself by imagining that she has blue eyes and then loses her sanity. This situation condemns her to live with a double consciousness or split self. She dissociates herself from her own ethnic roots. However, her madness should not be seen as a failure, but a challenge to the racist system. Pecola, like Bone, cannot share her traumatic experiences with anyone because her community is not ready to hear her and help her. On the other hand, different from Bone, Pecola never fights back, she is passive to her traumatic experiences. Fighting back would have given her the strength to overcome her trauma, instead, she prefers silence along with shame as a response. She suffers from PTSD which is revealed through her low self-worth and low self-esteem, voicelessness, suicidal thoughts, depressive moods, denial and dissociation. In order to recover, social connection is important for both characters. She survives her trauma, but at the cost of losing her mind. Her social community does not support her in the process of working through her traumas. Thus, Claudia acts as a means to recount Pecola's trauma to the reader. Only by transmitting her unspeakable trauma can Pecola endeavor a way to heal from her trauma.

In *Bastard Out of Carolina*, the protagonist, Bone, is also the narrator. Therefore, it is the wounded character who tells her story to the reader from a first-person perspective. The use of the first-person point of view enables a closer insight into the mind of the trauma victim and her trauma. Similar to Pecola, Bone is also entrapped in a society where she is oppressed politically, socially and economically. Bone's traumatic circumstances worsen when Glen comes into the picture, who sexually abuses her for almost six years under the negligence of her mother. Bone's mother becomes the initial cause for her trauma. Although she seems to be there physically, she is not there emotionally. Bone's insidious trauma stems from the stepfather's sexual harassment of the daughter which is doubled with the class and gender difference in the patriarchal society. Like Pecola's parents, Bone's mother and stepfather are also vulnerable and traumatized figures who try to cope with their shattered self-esteem, yet at the cost of Bone's psychological and physical health. In both novels, the parents take their trauma out on their daughters. Bone's traumatic symptoms include her shame, anger, silence, self-blaming and masturbation. She shows almost the same symptoms as Pecola, but unlike her, she is not passive. For Bone, both her body and her mind become the arena where she fights with her trauma that of child abuse, whereas Pecola struggles with her trauma only in her head in a dissociated manner. In this sense, in both of the novels, the young daughters serve as the scapegoat of their family's trauma. The parents' shame, rage and low self-esteem are all transferred onto their daughters. Like Pecola, Bone also questions her identity and, in a way, goes through an identity crisis. However, unlike Pecola, she

accepts her white trash identity in the end, but gets out of the patriarchal system by becoming a lesbian. She attains a lesbian identity at the end of the novel by taking Aunt Raylene as the role model, who instills in her the power to question and challenge the patriarchal system that has put her into this traumatic condition. Even though, Bone cannot talk about her trauma to any of her relatives, they still care about her and show their concern when they find out that she has been beaten brutally by Glen. However, Pecola has nobody and therefore, it gets harder for her to deal with her trauma. Especially for children, social interaction becomes necessary for the healing process.

The novels demonstrate the impact of trauma on Pecola and Bone through a variety of representations by considering their distinct contexts. Mostly, the symptoms of trauma are interrelated with each other. In both novels traumatic experiences are attended by silence. Neither of the characters can reveal their traumas. As a despised figure in her community, Pecola cannot find a voice to talk about her pain and she is not even the narrator of her story. She is muted by both her family and her community due to their discriminatory and violent treatment towards her. Even if she befriends herself with her neighbor prostitutes and Claudia along with her sister Frieda, she does not talk about her experiences as her family has disturbed her too much that it is reflected on her psyche. The incapacity to relate her trauma leaves her without a language. As for Bone, her mother's blindness to her suffering, the love for her mother and the shame for what Glen does to her stop her from telling her trauma. For Bone it is not the lack of a language but the lack of listeners that hinders her from describing what has happened. Her mother is not ready to listen to her because she is blinded by her dependency on Glen and Bone knows this. Thus, Bone carries the burden of not being able to relate her trauma. In addition, one cannot ignore the fact that these two characters are still young girls that have no knowledge about sexuality. Hence, they have to figure out in their minds what is done to themselves by their fathers.

In addition to silence, the shame caused by their social status makes them vulnerable to the outside and cultural shame shapes their emotional lives. To begin with, they are already born with shame. They are both poor and perceived as the members of the lowest class in their societies. Pecola has a darker skin than the rest of her African American community, which attributes to this fact a derogatory meaning because of their being influenced by white ideals. As such, ironically darker skin is not liked by the people and adding to this, Pecola's family the Breedloves are so poor that they are not embraced by the society. Thus, Pecola's relationship with her community is flawed as her subjective self is dependent on others' recognition. On the other hand, Bone, though she is white, is seen as a

marginal figure in her community because she is white trash, which positions her at the lowest level among white people. Moreover, she is stigmatized as a bastard. Both characters feel shame for who they are, and this weakens their self-esteem, and this also adds to their traumatic experiences. So much is the power of shame that it induces self-loathing in the characters as well. Besides, the concept of beauty is also another issue that harms both characters. As much as their social class causes shame for who they are, not feeling beautiful enough for how they look becomes shameful and thus, traumatic for them as well. Pecola and Bone feel ugly due to the reactions of their communities, their social status and the abuse of their fathers. Pecola's obsession for beauty comes mostly for acceptance into the community and by her family. She comes to believe that her ugliness is the cause for her not being loved and for her parents' fights. Whereas Bone feels ugly because Glen makes her feel that way. By continuously abusing her, he disturbs her connection with her body and her sense of herself. As such, she feels ugly and has body shame because as he touches her, he steals her control over her body, and she thinks that he does not love her because she is ugly. Similarly, shame and silence also lead to invisibility for the characters. They want to disappear, even die as they think that they are evil because of who they are. They believe that they have brought upon all the misery onto themselves and their families, which in fact, just shows how affected they psyches are.

Dissociation is also employed as a coping mechanism against a traumatic experience. It is a kind of disconnection or numbness that dominates the victim's consciousness and behavior to integrate the traumatic experience. When Pecola talks to her imaginary friend, she first denies that she has been raped, she does not want to see her father's act as rape. In fact, her split mind suggests the strongest kind of dissociation since it is a voluntary suppression of a traumatic experience. On the other hand, Bone dissociates from traumatic situations through the power of her fantasies like when she is at the hospital and the doctor asks her questions, she just makes up scenarios in her head and does not react to the doctor. Dissociation functions as a defensive adaptation and alteration of the situation. It serves for the purpose of preserving the self.

Furthermore, anger can be defined as a reaction to an event that the ego cannot integrate. In both novels, anger is the common emotion most characters share in both novels. One can see Cholly and Glen's rage for their traumatic experiences in the way that they take it out on their daughters. Whenever they feel helpless, they resort to anger to overcome this feeling. Although Pecola seems to be angry when she is abused by the gaze of the storekeeper, she cannot hold on to this and she surrenders. Unlike Pecola, Bone is angry all

the time after she is abused by Glen or when people call her trash. She is not passive like Pecola. However, her anger can be destructive for her in her violent fantasies.

In both novels, the parents' traumatic past experiences have an immeasurable impact on Pecola and Bone. The parents have passed their traumas to their daughters indicating that trauma can be contagious. Cholly's trauma stems mostly from his tragic encounter with gunned white people who disrupt his first sexual experience with a girl. Not only do they disrupt him, but they also humiliate him making him feel helpless and angry at not being able to do something against these men. His manliness and ego get hurt. He carries his repressed trauma within himself. Thus, he cannot raise a harmonious family. It comes to that point where he cannot separate his trauma from current situation, and he rapes Pecola, who is already traumatized by her familial environment. Her trauma is doubled. As for Glen, his father always looks down on him and thus causes Glen to develop inferiority complex. Since he feels helpless and debased, he acts out these feeling by engaging with sex and violence. He takes them out on Bone, who symbolizes his humiliated self. Beating her means beating his inferior self. For both Cholly and Glen sex is used as a response for their threatened ego. Likewise, Pauline has internalized the white ideals because she was made to feel less in her youth due to her physical deformities. Her desire to be someone else is so much that she is blinded by the white culture and cannot show love to Pecola. From the day she is born, Pauline calls her ugly and cannot have a relationship with her daughter. Wherein Anney feels ashamed because of her white trash family background. She is disturbed by society's stigma. Moreover, her bearing a child without getting married disturbs her so much that she gets married to Glen in order to protect her from being called a bastard. However, unlike Pauline, she loves her daughter and cares about her.

The mothers' negligence of their daughters and their indifference to their suffering double the impact of the daughters' trauma while they have been abused by their fathers. It is an undeniable fact that in the raising of children both the mother and the father have a crucial role in their children's development. The mother is the first person one connects with and has always a different place. If this bond is destroyed, it will leave an unrecoverable wound in the child. As mentioned earlier, both mothers fight with who they are and thus, they affect their daughters. Nevertheless, their blindness to their daughters' trauma is what causes distinct outcomes for each child. Pecola's not being able to speak about her trauma after her father's raping her is also because of her mother's disbelief in her. She cannot comprehend what has been done to her as she does not know what sex is and her mother is neither there to explain this nor there to protect her. She leaves her daughter alone. Anney,

on the other hand, needs Glen to change her social status and without him she feels disempowered. Even if she is there to see his beatings and ultimate rape of Bone by him, she is unable to do something about it since her need for him outweighs her love for her daughter. She deceives herself by telling excuses for Glen's treatment of her daughter. She denies the truth that she very well sees and abandons her daughter in the end. Both mothers have disappointed their daughters because of different circumstances.

Besides, religion and spirituality can also be helpful when working through trauma because believing in something supreme may give hope for salvation to the victim. However, holding onto religious beliefs may indicate the helplessness of the victim as well. Both characters turn to God when they feel helpless. For instance, gospel music offers a possibility of transformation for Bone. Listening to gospel music and feeling closer to God help Bone deal with Glen's abuses as at these times she has a break from Glen by staying at her Aunt Ruth's house. In contrast, Pecola loses her faith in God after she is raped and left completely alone and trapped within her psyche. Before being raped by her father, she used to pray to God when her parents argued in front of her. However, feeling so much unprotected, she seems to believe that even God has abandoned her.

Fantasies become a site of creative reenactment of the traumatized selves in *The Bluest Eye* and *Bastard Out of Carolina*. Pecola is not able to process her trauma any longer and she splits her self as an adaptive way to survive her trauma. In her mind, she has an imaginary friend that is her other self, and she talks about her rape, which is not related by her in the novel until then. Through her inner dialogue, it is revealed that she has been raped not only once but twice by her father. As she has not been given a voice in her environment, she tries to find her own voice in her fantasy world. She recreates herself by assuming that she has blue eyes. This phantasm becomes a matter of survival for her, in the sense that, she is now able to forge a safe place for herself. Like Pecola, Bone also reforms her body through her fantasies. Since she cannot erase the traumatic experiences inflicted on her body, she reenacts her own trauma in order to overcome it. Repetition compulsion plays a positive role in her healing process as it allows her to change and transform her trauma in a way that she can work through it. She masturbates to her fantasies and thus, regains authority of her body. In addition to masturbation, she makes up stories in her fantasy world. Bone's desire for violence in her fantasy is a way to overcome and work out her trauma, like her stepfather who uses violence on her to act out and get over his wretched self. In her fantasies, she is triumphant against Glen and her triumph gives her self-confidence, making her stronger so that at the end of the novel before she is raped, she speaks back to Glen and does not yield

to him. Although she is raped, she has been successful in winning her self back, even if it is at the cost of losing her mother.

In conclusion, this thesis has analyzed the representations of trauma due to child abuse and showed how women are traumatized within multidimensional abuses within their families and societies. These novels bear witness to traumatic experiences and articulate the process of dealing with trauma and moving on from victimization to salvation. Both texts present the possibility to reconcile with traumatic experiences. As marginalized individuals, they use marginal selves to rebel against the normative patriarchal system. Morrison and Allison speak up for the women who are made invisible in the patriarchal society and underline the importance of communal support for these victims. They draw attention to the trauma of incest which has been covered by various institutionalized systems such as religion and family in the patriarchal society. Literature functions to present and represent trauma without claiming ultimate definitions. In that sense, literature becomes a tool to cure trauma victims and help them come to terms with their trauma. Narrative comes to have a therapeutic and recuperative value in trauma studies. The victims can work through and act out their traumas through creating stories, and thus, can transform their unspeakable traumas into representable ones. Literature is an imaginative site where witnessing and learning about traumatic experiences can take place. This is how literature connects people to one another by representing traumas and offering multi-dimensional ways to speak about them.

Some further research could be done on collective trauma due to both novels' emphasis on the effects of transgenerational trauma, and the issue of postcolonialism for *The Bluest Eye*, which this thesis does not specifically focus on. Similarly, *Bastard Out of Carolina* can be analyzed within a biographical context from the perspective of Allison since this novel is semiautobiographical, and corporeality, which is the study of the body in trauma as the character in the novel displays sadomasochistic behavior patterns.

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