

Psychoanalytic Reading of the Traumatized Women in Walker The Color Purple and Morrison The Bluest Eye Novels

Hagar Hassan Al-metwaly Abdul-wahab

Master student, Department of English, Faculty of Arts, Damietta University.

Abstract

This research illustrates the trauma that faces the female characters in the two novels: “The Color Purple” and “The Bluest Eye”. It reflects the psychoanalytic symptoms of the traumatized characters. Moreover, the different attitudes of the characters towards their traumas are shown. “The Color” is written by the Afro-American writer, Alice Walker. She won the Pulitzer Prize in 1983 for “The Color” which is written in epistolary form. It is about Celie, a young girl who gets raped by her stepfather. The novel reflects Celie’s suffering as it expresses how trauma changes her life. “The Bluest” is written by the Afro-American writer Toni Morrison. It is about Pecola, a young girl who gets raped by her father. Depicting the miserable life of Pecola, Morrison also reflects her status as a black girl in a white and black segregated society.

Keywords: Trauma, regression, projection, hallucination, racism and fear of intimacy.

Article history:

Received 16 December 2021

Received in revised form 3 January 2022

Accepted 5 March 2022

قراءة تحليلية نفسية للنساء المقهورات في روايتي وكر" اللون البنفسجي" ورواية موريسون" العيون الأكثر زرقة"

هاجر حسن المتولي عبد الوهاب

باحثة ماجستير – قسم اللغة الإنجليزية – كلية الآداب – جامعة دمياط.

المستخلص

يوضح هذا البحث الصدمة التي تواجه الشخصيات الأنثوية في روايتين "اللون البنفسجي" و"العين الزرقاء". إنه يعكس أعراض التحليل النفسي للشخصيات المصابة بالصدمة. علاوة على ذلك، يتم عرض المواقف المختلفة للشخصيات تجاه صدماتهم. اللون من تأليف الكاتبة الأفرو-أمريكية أليس والكر. التي فازت بجائزة Pulitzer Prize عام 1983 عن فيلم The Color الذي تمت كتابته في شكل رسالي. تدور أحداث الفيلم حول سيلبي، وهي فتاة صغيرة يغتصبها زوج أمها. تعكس الرواية معاناة سيلبي؛ لأنها تعبر عن تأثير الصدمة على حياتها. The Bluest من تأليف الكاتب الأفرو-أمريكي توني موريسون. تدور أحداث الفيلم حول Pecola وهي فتاة اغتصبها والدها. تصور الحياة البائسة لبيكولا، وتعكس موريسون أيضاً وضعها كفتاة سوداء في مجتمع أبيض وأسود منفصل.

الكلمات المفتاحية:

الصدمة، الإسقاط، الهلوسة، العنصرية والخوف من الألفة.

تاريخ المقالة:

تاريخ استلام المقالة: 16 ديسمبر 2021

تاريخ استلام النسخة النهائية: 3 يناير 2022

تاريخ قبول المقالة: 3 مارس 2022

The Color is about Celie, a young ugly black girl who was the victim of her stepfather twice. First, when he rapes her because her mother is sick. Second, when he marries her to Mr. Albert to get rid of her and seduces her sister's Nettie. Celie has two children from her stepfather, she thinks he kills the girl and sells the boy. Celie felt attracted to Mr. Albert's first beloved Shug, a pretty black singer. Nettie elopes from her father to her sister's house where she also leaves it because of Albert's seduce and deserts Celie for years. Celie eventually reunites with her children at the end of the novel.

The Bluest Eye, published in 1970, is Morrison's first novel. Morrison's works are praised for addressing the harsh consequences of racism in the United States. The novel takes place in Lorain, Ohio (Morrison's own hometown). It is about a young African-American girl named Pecola who grows up during the years following the Great Depression, in 1941. Due to her mannerisms and dark skin, Pecola is consistently regarded as "ugly". As a result, she develops an inferiority complex, which fuels her desire for having blue eyes, which she equates with whiteness. Pecola, eight years old girl lives with Mr. Wilson's family after her father burnt their home. Her father Cholly went to jail, her mother Pauline lives with the family where she works. Pecola wishes to have blue eyes as she thinks the blue eyes are the end of her problems. Frieda, ten years old and Claudia nine years old are Pecola's new friends they are the children of the Wilson family. The narrator tells the readers how the Breedlove family is ugly and how they feel they are ugly. Pecola is sad for being ugly and no one loves her even her classmates make fun of her. She thinks with her blue eyes everyone will love her and her problems will be ended and her life will turn to be good. Cholly raped his daughter thinking that it will make her happy. He thinks in this way he gives her the love she needs thus, Pecola becomes mad.

This research paper hypothesises that there are common traumatic points of interest dealing with trauma and its effect on the lives of the main female charactera in *The Color Purple* and *The Bluest Eye*. The aim of this research paper is

to investigate the common treatment of the idea of trauma in the two novels through a psychoanalytic reading.

Rape and incest are the main causes of trauma in the two novels. Maud Ellmann discusses how Levi-Strauss asserts that “every culture in any society forbidden the incest taboo, although the nearness in such relations is explained as they are relatives” (16). The culture of any society and religion forbid the incest crime. It is a crime that the law and religion hold abominable accountable.

Laura S. Brown argues that Maria Root is a feminist therapist colleague who was the first to coin the term “insidious trauma”. Root refers to traumatogenic effects of oppression which are overtly violent to the body and violent to the soul and the spirit. She suggests that “any women in any culture are under constant threat. Most women in North America realize that they may be raped at any time and at any place by anybody” (107). Celie is raped by her stepfather and Pecola is raped by her father.

They suffer from the traumatogenic effects; furthermore, they suffer from overtly violent physical and spiritual violence; consequently, it is not only their body that hurt, but also their soul and spirit. Body injury can be treated and cured, but the soul cannot be cured easily. Even if it is cured, it will take much more time than the body. Women in any culture feel afraid of being raped at any moment. They know it can happen to them at any time; it is an ‘unpredictably’ presupposed violation in most societies.

In *The Color*, Celie’s stepfather rapes her at the age of fourteen. The father who is the source of security is her rapist. The first time she was raped, she could not understand what had happened to her. She seemed still inclosed in the infantile stage during her teenage years. As Lacan argues that “the child passes through the pre-mirror stage. It is a stage that represents a period of time that the child experiences and knows his body in fragmented images and parts” (qtd.in Ragland-Sullivan 18). Such images “ranging from emasculation, lacerating, displacement, despoilment, engorgement and erupting open of the body have an active form in consisting of the human

identity of the subject and perception” (qtd. in Sullivan 19). Celie’s experience about her body starts with her rape which causes her different images such as self-lacerating. The images of these psychological disorders and displacement consist Celie’s identity.

Celie’s sexuality lays in the previous images she has a symbolic sexuality when she passes through immature hysterectomy Celie says; “I don’t bleed no more” (*The Color* 12). She lives in fear of consistent mutilating and this is represented in her fear of her step father’s scissors which he brings with him to her room. She says “[...] It got to the place where every time I saw him coming with the scissors and the comb and the stool, I start to cry” (*The Color* 65). Celie lives in displacement when she takes her mother’s place under her step father’s force. Celie says, “[...] She happy, cause he good to her now. But too sick to last long [...]” (*The Color* 8). Celie feels lacerating pain as her stepfather rapes her.

The image of erupting the open body appears in Celie’s birth scene she says; “my stomach start moving and then that little baby come out my pussy chewing on it fist [...]” (*The Color* 9). Celie gets injured and loses her virginity, which causes her physical and psychological damages.

After raping her, Celie’s stepfather tells her not to tell anybody “[...] tell nobody” (*The Color* 8). She is silent and hides her painful secret because of fear and shame. Cynthia Chase defines trauma as “an injury to the human being which happens because of physical harm. This physical harm causes trauma which makes the body and the soul uncomfortable” (qtd. in Cathy Caruth 56). Celie expresses her traumatic pain as she says, “[...] Then he push his thing inside my pussy. When that hurt, I cry. He start to choke me, saying You better shut up and git used to it” (*The Color* 8).

Caruth argues that “trauma is suffering that lasts for a while. The victim leaves the site where the violent action occurs, but the effects of the traumatic action still in the deepest mind and soul” (10). The above quotation refers to the continuous feeling of suffering, pain and disgust that the victim has as consequences of the traumatic action. Though the traumatized

person leaves the place where the traumatic action occurs, she /he still suffers and remembers.

His /her memory does not let him/ her release his soul. Although Celie leaves her parents' house, she still remembers her rape.

Loise Tyson defines "Regression as a former psychological state that one returns to temporarily. This state is not imagined but relived as the psychological state can be either a return to a pleasant or a painful experience" (15). The return to action in memory can be either a painful or a pleasant experience, and in Celie's case it is a painful regression as she tells Shug; "It hurt me, you know, I say. I was just going on fourteen[...] . I never even thought bout men having nothing down there so big. It scare me just to see it And the way it poke itself and grow [...]" (*The Color* 65). The patriarchal repression of Celie is asserted when her rapist silences her: "[Y]ou better not never tell nobody but God It'd kill your mammy" (*The Color* 8). Alphonso the rapist intimidates her in order to make sure he stays safe. He tells Albert that "She tell lies" (14).

Alphonso says so in order to make sure that no one believes her . when she speaks about her rape. He does not only rape her, but he also makes sure she will not speak, and if she speaks no one will believe her. This forced silence engraves her traumatic experience as her hurt feelings keep trapped inside her.

Women who get abused deal differently from women who are lucky to escape this horrible traumatic violation. Mark H. Thelen and others argue that recent studies have shown "abused women exhibited significantly higher levels of externalized self-sacrifice, silence [...] compared to non-abused women" (8). Women who get sexual abuse have a higher level of propensity than non -abused women for self-sacrifice. They prefer others to themselves. The study also concludes that abused women submit to silence most of the time if not all of it. Alphonso says to her "[...] You better shut up" [...]" (*The Color* 8). Celie's childhood innocence is taken away from her. It takes her long time to understand her new life. However, she does not know what to do and how to act.

Celie's rape is not the only trauma in her life. The loss of her children is her second trauma. She has two children, but her stepfather takes away her two children and intimidatingly she keeps silent. She loses a boy and a girl and she never knows anything about them. "Kilt it out there in the woods. Kill this one too [...]"(*The Color* 9). She thinks he has killed her children. After her stepfather's attack, Celie's life changes for ever. This man imposes on her a life of fear and silence. First, he rapes her. Next, he takes her children away from her.

Then, he prevents her from education. "The first time I got big Pa took me out of school. He never care that I love it" (*The Color* 15). He ignores her wishes to be educated. He never cares about her feeling or even her existence. Finally, he marries her to Alphonso.

Kai Erikson argues that "trauma causes the emotional and behavioral disorder. Such a disturbance is a result of stress or blow that affects the body" (184). Trauma is an aggressive physical and emotional shock that causes insane feelings, repressed sentiments and demeanors to the traumatized person. It arouses the state and conditions of mind that get the blow or the stress. After her rape, Celie becomes sexually drawn to women. She is not anymore interested in men who remind her of her trauma "[...]I didn't wink. I don't even look at mens. That's the truth. I look at women, tho, cause I'm not scared of them"(*The Color* 13).

A traumatized victim has to speak about his trauma. He/she has to let out his suppressed feelings, how he/she feels when the trauma happens, the feeling after the trauma, and what occurs then. Dori Laub argues in order to "[...]to survive from an action, the victim has to speak to express about his deepest feeling, sorrow, repentance, hatred and so on"(qtd.in Caurth 10). Celie spends most of her time in pain because she has not let out her hurt feelings. The traumatized victim can be cured through speaking and listening. Speaking can be regarded as a clinical treatment. Laub argues:

[...]speaking can be used as a clinician, not to know too much To listen to the crisis of a trauma, that is, is not only to listen for the

event, but to hear in the testimony the survivors departure from it; the challenge of the therapeutic listener, in other words, is how to listen to departure (qtd. in Caurth10).

Listening to the victim speaking without caring about the plurality of the events is a curative. When a victim finds someone who wants to help and rescue him/her the victim's psychological state begins to change. Caring about the survivor's departure is a gate to the victim's survival. Celie gets cured when she talks out of pain. She finds someone who cares about her. She finds Shug the one with whom she can tell her every pain in her heart. Celie says:

[...] he want me to trim his hair. He bring the scissors and comb and brush and a stool. While I trim his hair he look at me funny.me funny. He a little nervous too, but I don't know why till he grab hold of me and cram me up tween his legs.I lay there

, quiet, listening to Shug breathe It hurt me, you know, I say. I was just going on fourteen.me funny. He a little nervous too, but I don't know why, till he down there so big. It scare me just to see it. And the way it poke itself and grow Shug so quiet I think she sleep. After he through, I say, he make me finish trimming his hair (*The Color* 65).

Celie in this quotation begins her treatment. She tells Shug how her rape happened. She tells her exactly how he enters her room. She describes to her how she feels.

Celie is, in addition, a victim of projection. Tyson defines projection as "ascribing our fear, problem, or guilty desire to someone else and then condemning him or her for it in order to deny that we have it ourselves" (15). Celie projects her own life on to Sofia. She tells Harpo to beat Sofia in order to obey him. She does not know why she does so. Still, in fact, she says and acts according to what she has only witnessed in her life. She does just like what has been

done to her Celie says to Harpo to “[...] Beat her. I say [...]” (*The Color* 29).

The poor socio- economic conditions of some women oppress them to be submissive to their male abusers, especially in the case of being physically abused by battering. In Celie’s case, she projects her experience of being beaten to Sofia “Freuds writes the patient acts and repeats his repressed desire without acknowledgment of him that he is repeating what happened before” (qtd. in Ellmann 8).

Celie repeats what has happened to her and still happens. She does not think that she imitates her life. She projects her case on Sofia’s without any compunctions, Celie only tells Harpo to act just like his father. Yet feeling a little sympathetic prevents her from sleeping. In a conversation between Celie and Sofia, Celie apologizes to Sofia. Sofia says, “You told Harpo to beat me”, Celie says, “[...]I didn’t mean it, I said [...] I say it cause I’m jealous of you. I say it cause you do what I can’t” (*The Color* 31). Celie is jealous of Sofia because Sofia is strong, and Celie is not. Celie says Sofia “[...] loves Harpo, she say. God knows I do. But she decides to “[...] kill him dead before I let him beat me” (*The Color* 31). Sofia does not accept her beating. She can kill her husband if he tries to do so.

The Color shows another case of rape and incest in the case of Mary Anges. She gets raped by her uncle celie says “ MyGod, say Odessa,and he your uncle.” (*The Color* 58). She cannot think of her uncle inflicting any pain against her, not to mention rape. “Her dress rip. Her hat missing and one of the heels come off her shoe, because she tries to look as a white lady and she is not one of them” (*The Color* 58). Her uncle rapes her. “He say if he was my uncle he wouldn’t do it to me. That be a sin” (*The Color* 58). Although he knows he is her uncle, he claims he is not. He tries not to blame himself for the crime he committed against his niece.

Mary's rape makes her stronger, not weaker. Some traumatic accidents help women to recognize their true values. Mary's rape makes her reject the treatment she receives from Harpo. Her trauma helps her to realize her true self. It makes her notice who she is; "Harpo say, I love you, Squeak [...] My name Mary Agnes" (*The Color* 58). She stands and asks all to call her by her real name. She starts to feel herself, and to refuse Harpo's marginalization of her character, she even decides to sing and starts her career.

Katharine Dalsimer asserts that "most girls feel regression when they are in their adolescence. Some of them recrudesced to preoedipal or pre-mirror stage imaginations of fission with the mother. Having a close friend is another option" (25-26). Both of these options are "often the key to help women to get out from the regression they got" (26). Shug Avery helps Mary Anger and Celie in changing their lives. Mary sings and starts a new life. Celie also starts her new life and business with Shug's help.

In *The Bluest*, Pecola experiences the trauma of incest. Pecola is raped by her father Cholly. Erikson mentions that trauma refers to an action, "which is violent and furious. This action injures one with an acute going". Erikson argues that it is a "blow to the body or to be more accurate to the tissues of the mind. It is an injury that is caused by something alien that breaks one. It enters into the body and soul and smashes them". It smashes all the barriers the mind set up as a defense technique. Erikson argues that "trauma is a violation against man's physical as well as psychological being. It ends by possessing hegemonizing man's whole psychological being" (183). Pecola's rape is like an injury that hurts her soul and body the third-person narrator says, "[...] She appeared to have fainted [...] 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" (*The Bluest* 163). She faints from the physical

pain and psychological shock she gets when she realizes what has happened to her.

described by Pecola's family is not a typical family, the Breedlove family is its imperfectness. According to Jerome Bump, Pecola's life with her parents was not ideal. "The shame of sexual abuse in that family is central, but so is the fear of ugliness, an emotion that is more pervasive in our culture [...]" (159). The sexual abuse in Pecola's family is focal. Pecola's rape on the hand by her father is abominal. Such a crime collects all the people in the city to the gravious news.

Claudia says "[...] Little by little we began to piece a story together, a secret, terrible, awful story. And it was only after two or three such vaguely overheard conversations that we realized that the story was about Pecola [...]" (*The Bluest* 203). Pecola is not the first person in her family who gets sexual abuse. Her father also gets sexually ashamed and abused. Truly the white does not violate him, but they force him to continue his sexual act in front of them. They do not rape him, but they rape his freedom.

The white people interrupted him during his relation with Darlen. It was his first time to have a sexual relationship, and the white people destroyed it. They forced him to continue at the gunpoint. The third – person narrator says "There stood two white men. One with a spirit lamp, the other with a flashlight [...] Cholly jumped, trying to kneel, stand, and get his pants up all in one motion. The men had long guns" (*The Bluest* 162). Due to his powerlessness, Cholly obeyed them and did what they wanted. He hated Darlen the poor black girl because she is black and humiliated like him.

According to James Mayo, Claudia is "relating to readers her sense of shame and guilt over the incestuous rape of eleven years old Pecola Breedlove" (232). Claudia the narrator feels ashamed to talk about Pecola's traumatic experience. Claudia wants to express the shameful experiences and feelings Pecola feels due to her rape. Cholly is Pecola's rapist father who never. However,

before he abuses her, he expresses his psychopathic love to her. He is the only one who the third- person narrator says Cholly “loved her enough to touch her, envelop her, give something of himself to her. But his touch was fatal, and something he gave her filled the matrix of her agony with death” (*The Bluest* 49).

Pecola’s traumatic life as Fonseca Lilian Dias mentions “reaches its peak when she is being raped by her father who ironically interprets his attitude as an act of love for his daughter, which contributes to her emotional disintegration” (5). Accordingly, the above quotation shows that Pecola’s father rapes her out of love. He believes that by having sexual contact with her he helps her. He thinks that he is doing his daughter a favour by forcing her to have sex with him. Evelyn Jaffe Schreiber argues that “Cholly’s rape to his daughter is a reenacts of his own “rape” in his sexual relation with Darlene literally Pecola absorbs his sexual trauma” (76).

Schreiber thinks that Cholly projects his own rape on his daughter. He rapes her because she is weak as when he was young when the white rape his manlihood during his first sexual affair.

Walker Jayne and others in their studies assert that the non -clinical samples indicate that rape victims suffer from many psychological problems such as depression, anger and other problems. This study asserts that:

[..]extended current research by investigating the effects of rape on a non-clinical sample of men recruited from the general population by media advertising. A total of 40 male rape victims were asked to provide details of their assaults, levels of psychological disturbance, long-term effects, and reporting issues. Results revealed that most assaults had been carried out using physical or violent force, in a variety of different circumstances. All of the victims reported some form of psychological disturbance as a result of being raped. Long-term effects included anxiety,

depression, increased feelings of anger and vulnerability, loss of self-image, emotional distancing, self-blame, and self-harming behaviors (2).

Cholly Beedlove suffers from depression in addition to losing his self- image. as a manThe traumatic accident which occurred in his life changed him and made him psychologicallydisordered.

People used to see him as an ugly person.

Morrison asserts that Cholly's ugliness is due to despair, dissipation and violence. These feelings are due to the white treatment of the black. Cholly is rejected by white when he was young. Morrison says that "[...] Cholly, whose ugliness (the result of despair, dissipation, and violence directed toward petty things and weak people) was behavior, the rest of the family [...]" (*The Bluest* 53)

The white people destroy his first sexual relation with Darlene. "[...] There was no mistake of being white; he could smell it" (*The Bluest* 147). White men do not cut his relation. They ask him to continue while they are watching. "Get on wid it, nigger," said the flash lightone" (*The Bluest* 148). Cholly hated Darlene since he could not master the power to hate white people who humiliated him. Cholly suffers from displacement , which Tyson defines it as " taking it out on someone or something less threatening than the person who caused our fear, hurt, frustration, or anger"(15).

He can hate Darlene since she is black and humiliated like him. She is not a source of danger as the white people. She is weaker than him, so he can project his humiliation onto her. He vents his anger over her because he cannot pour his anger on them. Schreiber argues that Cholly subconsciously "knows what will happen to him if he hates them or thinks to fight them. They will consume him or even burn him" (75).

Laura Doyle argues that Cholly becomes "undone by racialized gaze, precisely in his moment of entry into the

world of embraces, of sexuality”(202) resulting in the “racialized seizure of the intimate encounter”(203). Cholly thinks white do this to him because he is black as a subaltern black person incapable of defending himself: it is an act of racial emasculation.

According to Robert Park, “a marginal person tries to liberate himself from his own oppressed racial culture periphery in order to find a place in the new mainstream culture. The marginal man is between the two societies the black and the white societies”(qtd. in Portia. E. Adams 67). He seeks to join the white mainstream, but the white mainstream rejects him. Such a person has “low self-esteem [,] identity problems, spiritual instability, and malaise”(qtd. in Adams 67). Marginal people like Pecola, Cholly and Pauline try to find a place in the world where they live, but they fail. They live between two different societies. They try to find a place for themselves as equal American citizens.

Cholly is a victim of social injustice. He passes through some painful events and no-body shows mercy to him. He is a victim of the racist white people. Cholly suffers from low self-esteem, which turns into self-hatred. White arrogant superiority and his black ignorance and inferiority cause him that feeling. Cholly suffers from repression which is as Tyson defines it. “The unhappy memory that one tries to forget but can’t because it is still in his mind whether he tries to forget it or not”(12-13). Although a racially oppressed and segregated person tries to find a place in the mainstream culture he lives in, the hegemonic and oppressive power rejects him. Cholly, Pecola’s father cannot forget what happened with him when he was young. The third-person narrator says “[...] Cholly, moving faster, looked at Darlene. He hated her. He almost wished he could do it—hard, long, and painfully, he hated her so much[...]”

(*The Bluest* 163). The ordeal he passes through is still in his mind. It affects him; it is the most exhausting experience, that he can never forget it. It has already destroyed

his life. It also makes him destroy his family lives' especially his daughter Pecola.

Cholly has no father or mother to live with. He does not know how to deal with his children. He does not know how a father acts with his children. He knows nothing about paternal love or concern. He does not know what a husband's or a father's responsibility is, growing up without father and mother makes him suffer. His deepest desire is to have a father and a mother. He suffers not only because of what white did to him but also because of his loss of parents. Cholly Breedlove is an output of a failed marriage. Aunt Jimmy says to Cholly that his father "wasn't nowhere around when you was born. Your mama didn't name you nothing. The nine days wasn't up before she throwed you on the junk heap"(*The Bluest* 133). Cholly's father manipulates his mother sexually then run away. He leaves her before she gives birth to Cholly who becomes a rejected child. He was four days when his mother threw him. The third- person narrator says "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. His Great Aunt Jimmy, who had seen her niece carrying a bundle out of the back door, rescued him"(*The Bluest* 103).

Cholly decides to search for his father. Although his meeting with his father does not last much time, it affects him very much. Cholly's hurt feelings for being a deserted child and the guilt of his partents leave him with repressed negative feelings. This quotation expresses cruelty of the only meeting between Cholly and his father:

What you want, boy?" "Uh. I mean ...is you Samson Fuller?

" Who sent you?" "Huh?" "You Melba's boy?" "No

sir, I'm ..." Cholly blinked. He could not remem ber his mother's name. Had he ever

known it? What could he say? Whose boy was he? He couldn't say, "I'm your boy. That sounded disrespectful. The man was impatient. Something wrong with your head? Who told you to come after me?" "Nobody." Cholly's hands were sweating. The man's eyes frightened him. "I just thought...I mean I was just wandering around, and, uh, my name is Cholly".... But Fuller had turned back to the game that was about to begin anew. He bent down to toss a bill on the ground and waited for a throw. When it was gone, he stood up and in a vexed and whiny voice shouted at Cholly "Tell that bitch she get her money" (*The Bluest* 170).

Cholly's father could not recognize Cholly and Cholly could not remember his mother's name to answer his father about his identity. Cholly's father continues his game as if Cholly does not exist. These horrible traumatic feelings he passes through cause the great failure of his marriage. Cholly fails to lead a normal marital life and his repressed feelings of ineptness and shame lead him to project his traumatic ailments on his own daughter. Cholly makes up for his lack of self-assuredness as a full-grown man by violating his own child.

Jill Matus asserts that *The Bluest*, "[...] bears witness not only to the trauma of the incest and rape that Pecola experiences, but to the trauma of pervasive racism" (47). Matus asserts that Pecola has two traumas, her first one is that she is a black-skinned girl. Her second trauma is her rape accident. Her black skin and her rape destroy her life.

Neither her society nor her family shows mercy to her. She lives her life in ignorance and oppressive disrespect.

No one tries to help her or give her a hand. No one tries to speak to her after her rape. Claudia and Frieda try to talk with her, but feeling guilty prevents them. They think they are guilty because they think they put the plant in an improper place. They think this plant will save Pecola's baby that's why they plant it. Claudia says "[...]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 [...]'"(*The Bluest* 20).

Thus, Pecola the sensitive pure young girl gets violated by her father, who is supposed to protect her from any aggression. The little girl is surprised at being menstruating for the first time and does not know how to act with this confusion; Claudia says "Suddenly Pecola bolted straight up, her eyes wide with terror. A whinnying sound came from her mouth" (*The Bluest* 27). She feels horror because of the new feeling she gets. She does not have enough time to realize what happens to her or what menstruation is. Then she gets raped by her father and becomes pregnant as a consequence. The gravest emotions of affliction and disorder sweep Pecola. As Schreiber argues Pecola is "raped and impregnant by her father"(66). He rapes her twice Pecola's imaginary friend says "That was horrible, wasn't it? Yes. The second time too? Yes. Really? The second time too?"(*The Bluest* 201).

The traumatized people scan the world they live in anxiously as Erikson argues "for signs of danger. Traumatized people act as if they are ordinary. They try to react normally to stimulate such sounds and images; nevertheless, a growing sense of anger [is] built up beneath their façade of calmness "(148). Traumatized people seek to "isolate themselves so no new harm attacks them. Above all, trauma includes a continual reliving of some harmful experience" (148).

Traumatized people live with “the traumatic experiences they pass through in daydreams and nightmares, flashbacks and hallucinations and in a mandatory seeking out of similar circumstances” (184). Pecola’s turbulent feelings affect her awareness as she begins to dissociate herself from her social surroundings by imagining a friend who comes to soothe her and tries to make her feel secure against the danger of her father. The imaginary friend says “And you don’t have to be afraid of Cholly coming at you anymore” (*The Bluest* 201).

This psychological turbulence results in Pecola’s hallucination. By means of psychological escapism, Pecola creates an imaginary friend, who lauds her blue eyes. The eyes, which are given to her by Church. She escapes to Church and asks him to help her. Church says “Help you how? Tell me. Don’t be frightened “My eyes.” “What about your eyes “I want them blue” (*The Bluest* 174). Pecola seeks refuge in the church’s priest. She believes that he, as a holy man of God, he can make her life better. He convinces her that God hears what she wants. Leaving him with a victor’s smile, Pecola thinks she is safe now. She is safe from her father, mother and society. No one can harm her anymore. Not with her blue eyes.

Pecola depicts the psychological and physical case of the domestically abused girl. Morrison wants to assert that there are some families that harm their own children. The story of the Breedlove family sheds light on the families that abuse their daughters. Morrison sends a warning message to the world about the dangers lurking in domestic abuse and violence, especially in African American families, by the imaginative representation of the Breedloves.

Alessandra Coutinho Fernandis contends that Pecola Breedlove, Cholly Breedlove and Pauline Breedlove are “unanimously embodying the idea of identity loss. They are also representative figures of many of the Black Northern new comers quest at that time” (4). The

quotation above shows that the Breedloves family embodies the effort and quest of identity many of the blacks in that time suffer from. The idea of beauty is symbolically represented through Pecola's wish to have beautiful eyes according to the white society's beauty standards. This reveals how the blacks suffer self-degradation because of their non-white and non-European black features. The third-person narrator says:

[...]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 [...] (*The Bluest* 53).

Jerry Jake Williams defines ideal beauty as "an entity that is admired or possess features widely attributed to beauty in a particular culture, for perfection"(39). Ideal beauty is possessing the good features that are agreed upon according to the society's culture. So, if you are beautiful then you are socially accepted, and your identity is thus identifiable with beauty. Thus, from the society point of view, the family of Breedlove is not only ugly but also bad. Malin Pereira argues that female beauty is represented in the hair, face and color of the girl. The girl with straight and soft hair, white color and beautiful face is then a beautiful female (qtd. in Mona Mohamed Abu Fardeh xii). Females who do not have these qualities are ugly as Pecola and Pauline. Pereira adds that "beauty standards on which women base their judgment on are eventually connected to self-worth"(qtd. in Abu Fardeh xii). The standards of beauty which are related to the role of society are connected to the self-worth. When females feel they are beautiful, they feel they are worthy; their beauty gives them self-confidence and self-esteem.

Maureen Peal is a high yellow skin who knows she is beautiful which brags about her self-worth she says “[...] I am cute! And you ugly! Black and ugly black e mos. I am cute [...]” (*The Bluest* 73). Being black is a curse since racism attributes all ugliness and evil with blackness it also relates crimes, ignorance and selfishness to black people only because they are blacks. No one can choose his/ her colour, parents or country. The good qualities are not related to colours because there are many white people who have bad qualities same as black do. Beauty is not a matter of colour.

Shirley Anne Tate proposes that “everything that black women do to their bodies can be read as a sign of psychic dysfunction usually interpreted as self -hatred produced from internalizing racism”(56). The narrator emphasizes Pecola’s fascination with white Temples and blue eyes. The desire also indicates a sense of inferiority. She is the same as her mother has psychic dysfunction; morbidly known as self-hatred. Pauline tries to look like white women because she hates her black looks Pauline says, “I fixed my hair up like I’d seen hers on a magazine. Apart on the side, with one little curl on my forehead. It looked just like her. Well, almost just like. Anyway, I sat in that show with my haird one up that way and had a good time”(*The Bluest* 123). She also starts to assign faces she sees according to standards of beauty she knows from the movies. Morrison argues that:

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 (*The Bluest* 122).

Pauline tries to imitate the white actress, but she fails because she “[...]pulled atooth right out of my mouth” (*The Bluest* 123). The broken teeth make her dreams about beauty disappear.

Pecola Breedlove has the same belief as her mother: low self -esteem and lack of self-assurdness. In this

respect, Cormier-Hamilton points out many African-Americans still suffer from a dangerously low sense of self-esteem. "These feelings are originated in their internalization of the prejudices of white culture. Morrison's novel reflects this dangerous internalization of racist values and the cycle of self-hatred passed on from parents to children" (22). Being black is a curse that increases the black's sense of inferiority.

Same like her mother's belief, Pecola thinks that by having blue eyes her problems will end. She thinks that life would change for the better; that her parent will love her. She thinks with her beautiful face and blue eyes, they will have a happy life. They will not do her any harm when she gets the pretty eyes. She mentions to her imaginary friend's "We mustn't do bad things in front of those pretty eyes"(*The Bluest* 46). Fonseca Dias argues that Pecola "is the ultimate symbol of the black appearance, so rejected by white society" Morrison frequently repeats "how ugly she is, and that reinforces her desire to be beautiful, loved and accepted" (4). According to Vida De Voss Pecola "accepts the rejection of the dominant culture that treats her as Other"(125).

Pecola is the symbol of blackness. Morrison insists on referring to her as an ugly person. Her ugliness leads to her being socially rejected. Pecola's parents have destroyed Pecola's self-esteem and caused her eventual madness. "But their ugliness was unique"(*The Bluest* 38). They know they are ugly and they imbued this feeling unconsciously till they become sure there is no family uglier than them so, what is expected from a girl lives with such feeling.

According to B.Timothy Powell, due to Pecola's weakness and low self-esteem, she is easily influenced by the Dick and Jane model which "comes to symbolize the institutionalized ethnocentrism of the white logos, of how white values and standards are woven" (749). Toni Morrison uses the image of Dick and Jane in her novel to refer to the ideal of western culture, and ideal beauty;

“Here is the house it is green and white it has a red door it is very pretty here is the family mother father dick and jane live in the green-and-white house they are very happy see jane she has a red dress she wants to play who will play with jane see the cat it goes meow-meow come and play come play with jane” (*The Bluest* 19). Morrison asserts that the western culture with its ideals about beauty is the reason why Pecola and others like her suffer.

Pecola becomes psychologically disturbed because of prevalent social ideologies about beauty. According to Anna Zebialowicz and Marek Palasinski, such glamorization “of the idol whose race is different to the adorer” can be connected to psychological and historical researches claiming that “African American children were convinced that it was not best to be black” (222). Black children are raised in a society that regards blacks as a source of danger and an embodiment of ugliness. Pecola used to eat the candy to be like Mary Jane. The omniscient narrator says “To eat the candy is somehow to eat the eyes, eat Mary Jane. [...] Be Mary Jane” (*The Bluest* 50).

Pecola thinks that if she eats white candy she will be pretty just like Mary Jane. Pecola forgets about the shop assistant’s aggressive treatment towards her while eating the candy. The candy makes her happy and forgets the anger. The third-person narrator says:

Anger is better. [...] Her thoughts fall back to Mr Yacobowski’s eyes, his phlegmy voice. The anger will not puppy is too easily surfeited [...] What to do before hold; the the tears come. She remembers the Mary Janes (*The Bluest* 50).

The third-person narrator expresses the racist attitude of the white assistant, he says “ [...] hesitates, not wanting to touch her hand [...] he reaches over and takes the pennies from her hand” (*The Bluest* 49-50). Pecola as Dias states that it is “scorned by [...] the owner of a market where she buys candies, by everyone” (4). He does not like to touch her hand. He feels disgusted to touch her hand. He does not want to touch her as if she is a contagious disease.

In elementary schools, a child knows and learns the basic of his life Powell argues that:

a child's mind is shaped and built elementary school it is a place where he/she learns the basics of a society As a result, these kinds of children's books [...] clearly embody [...] the ideal of Western culture, which is to say white culture (750).

In elementary school, Pecola learns the white standards of life. She learns about the social differences between whites and blacks, and places herself into the imposed category of inferiority and disgusting ugliness. According to Adams, "Morrison uses in her imaginative creativity images that expose how children like Pecola get destroyed. Pecola like many other children has low-self-esteem"(79). Mead argues that "the individual experiences himself as [an object] [...] not directly, but only indirectly from the particular standpoints of other individual members of the same social group, or from the generalized standpoint of the social group as a whole to which he belongs" (qtd. in Adams 67). Thus, Morrison wants to reflect the standards of beauty according to the general racist society around her. perspective on children. Pecola gets her experiences from the Psychologists assert that the individual has his experience in an indirect way from the society where she/he lives in. Lacan argues that:

Symbolic order which consist of the society ideologies such as the beliefs, values, and biases of the society. It's also the system of the government, law, educational practices, religious tents, and the likes as Lacan says the desire is always the desire of the other (qtd. in Tyson 31).

The desire is the desire of the social ideologies. It is what the society believes and values that control individual treatment with others. It also controls his acceptance of himself and of the others.

Pecola sees herself as an ugly girl because she is not white. Pecola is influenced, as Radka Nosková argues, by "the white models of beauty since her early childhood" (27). Living with the MacTeers exposes her to the

influence of the white. Living with white people deepens her sense of inferiority. As a consequence, Pecola acts in a childish manner in hope that her simple-minded attempt to change her skin achieves any success. For instance, she drinks “[...] vast quantities of milk out of the Shirley Temple cup [...] in hopes of becoming Shirley Temple” (*The Bluest* 27). Pecola adores beauty and anything related to it. Pecola drinks such quantities not to quench her thirst, but to quench her hankering after beauty. Both Pecola and Frieda are fans of white beauty. Pecola and Frieda “[...] had a loving conversation about how cute Shirley Temple was [...]” (*The Bluest* 19). Accordingly, this conversation reflects how the children admire white beauty.

Pecola dreams of having blue eyes in order to change her life and to become beautiful. She makes belief that she has blue eyes in order to gain a fake feeling of respect. Pecola becomes psychologically obsessed with the idea of having blue eyes. She becomes totally isolated in her make-belief world with her blue eyes and her imaginary friend. According to Fardosa Abdallah, the conversation between Pecola and Church indirectly decry the influence of racism and “the destructive power of white cultural values such as beauty and family, and how they breed self-hatred” (30). Pecola says, “I can’t go to school no more. And I thought maybe you could help me. Help you how? Tell me. My eyes. What about your eyes. I want them blue” (*The Bluest* 174).

Pecola hates herself because of the ill-treatment she gets from the racist society. She cannot go to school because her teachers and her peers scorn her. As Jane S. Bakerman points out Pecola, “runs away to the profound isolation of all in her way in searching on the beauty” (547). She seeks refuge in Church as her last resort so, she believes by going to Church her dream would become true. In her way to cope with the cultural standers around her, Pecola asks Soaphead Church to give her blue eyes. Nosková argues that Church feels sympathy towards her. Church pretends to speak with God. She asks him to give her the blue eyes she wants. Pecola

believes in him and that she will get her blue eyes the next day. She thinks that Church has given her blue eyes church says “I, I have caused a miracle. I gave her the eyes. I gave her the blue, blue, two blue eyes. Cobalt blue [...] Noone else will see her blue eyes. But she will live happily ever after”(The Bluest 182). Pecola’s psychopathic belief in having blue eyes verges an insanity.

According to Young Carliss, “Pecola’s consecration to whiteness becomes more stringent for her. Pecola thinks if she has blue eyes, people around her will see her” (61). In this essence, both parents have actually destroyed the girl’s self-esteem and led her to madness. Thus, Pecola’s parents projected their inner ugliness on their daughter and turned her into an insane person. Pecola is a victim of her racist society that hates and devalues her black skin as well as she is the victim of her psychopathic parents who inflict their psychological ailments onto her.

Pecola lives in alienation. She can neither live with her own people nor with the white ones. Social alienation refers to the individual’s estrangement from society. Abdalla argues that “The Bluest deals with internalized racism. Pecola’s character represents the internalized racism in the novel” (7). Robin Nicole Johnson argues that internalized racism gives coloured people the opportunity to “view their racial group or themselves from the white’s lens point of view. Although they are from the same race, they believe they are superior to others. There are also beliefs of one’s inferiority” (18). Internalized racism is often depicted in the novel as a feeling accompanied by an internalized self-hatred and internalized meaning of white beauty as standards for African American women.

This research explains in detail the trauma that Pecola in *The Bluest Eye* and Celie in *The Color Purple* suffer from due to their rape. This research concludes that the traumatic female characters share the same feeling as Pecola and Celie. Walker and Morrison indicate in their novels that the traumatic females have the same feeling and suffering as Celie

and pecola who have many psychological effects such as regression, projection and, hallucination as a result of their rape.

References:

- 1- Adams, Portia. E. "Understanding the Different Realities, Experience, and Use of Self-Esteem Between Black and White Adolescent Girls". *Journal of Black Psychology* 36.3 (2010): 255-76.
- 2- Bump, Jerome. "Racism and appearance in the Bluest Eye: a template for an ethical emotive criticism." *College Literature* (2010): 147-170.
- 3- Brown, Laura S. "Not Out Side the Range One Feminist Perspective of Psychic Trama" Caruth, cathy (edit), *Trauma Exploration in Meaning*. Baltimore and London, *The Johns Hopkins University Press*, 1995, 100-112.
- 4- Caruth, Cathy. "Explorations in memory." *Baltimore/London* (1995).
- 5- Carliss Young, Courtney. "Color Commentary: On Its 40th Birthday, Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye Still Resonates." *Bitch Magazine: Feminist Response to Pop Culture: 20 Years Anniversary Issue*, 61-63.
- 6- Dias, Lilian Fonseca. "The Female Condition in Morrison's The Bluest Eye From Childhood to Adulthood." <http://pos-graduacao.uepb.edu.br/ppgli/?wpfb_dl=75>.2 September 2016.
- 7- Doyle, Laura. "Bodies inside/out: Violation and resistance from the prison cell to The Bluest Eye." *Feminist Interpretations of Mauric Merleau-Ponty* (2006): 183-208e.
- 8- De Voss, Vida. *Identity as ethical responsibility: Amanifesto for social change in Toni Morrison's fiction*. Diss. University of Namibia, 2017.
- 9- Ellmann, Maud. Introduction. *Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism*. By Maud Ellmann(edit). London and New York: Longman publishing, 1994. Equiano,

- Olaudah. *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa. Bottom Of The Hill Publis*, 2011.
- 10- Erikson, Kai. *Every thing in Its Path*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1976.
- 12- Fernandes, Alessandra Coutinho. "Mother-daughter relationships and the search for identity in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, Suland Beloved." (1996).
- 13- Dalsimer, Katharine. *Female Adolescence: Psychoanalytic Reflections on Literature*. New Haven: *Yale UP*, 1986.
- 14- Johnson, Robin Nicole. *The psychology of racism: How internalized racism, academic self-concept, and campus racial climate impact the academic experiences and achievement of African American undergraduates*. Diss. University of California, Los Angeles, 2008.
- 15- Thelen, Mark H., Michelle D. Sherman, and Tiffany S. Borst. "Fear of intimacy and attachment among rape survivors." *Behavior Modification* 22.1 (1998): 108-11
- 16- Matus, Jill L. *Toni Morrison*. Manchester University Press, 1998.
- 17- Mayo, James. "Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*." *Explicator* 60. 4 (2002): 231-234.
- 18- Mona Mohamed Abu Fardeh . *Racial Violence, Internalized Racism, and Beauty Standards in Toni Morrison's A Mercy, Jazz , and The Bluest Eye* MA thesis. Hashemite University, 2015. Proquest Dissertation and theses.
- 19- Powell, Timothy B. "Toni Morrison: The Struggle to Depict the Black Figure on the White Page." *Black American Literature Forum*. Vol. 24. No. 4. St. Louis University, 1990.
- 20- Nosková, Radka. "Women's Revolt against Social Stereotypes in Toni Morrison's Novels." *Masaryk University Faculty of Arts Department of English*

- and American Studies*. Bachelor's Diploma Thesis. 2011.
<https://is.muni.cz/th/261412/ff_b/Noskova_thesis.pdf>. 2 September 2016.
- 21- Ragland-Sullivan, Ellie. "Jacques Lacan and the Philosophy of Psychoanalysis". Urbana U of Illinois P,1986.
- 22- Schreiber, Evelyn Jaffe. "Inherited and Generational Trauma: Coming of Age in *The Bluest Eye*, *Sula*, and *Song of Solomon*." *Race Trauma, and Home in the Novels of Toni Morrison* (2010): 65-106.
- 23- Tyson, Lois. *Critical Theory Today: A User-friendly Guide*, 2nd. London: Routledge, Taylor and Francis, 2006.
- 24- Tate, Shirley Anne. *Black beauty: Aesthetics, stylization, politics*. Ashgate Routledge, 2016.
- 25- Tucker, Lindsey. "Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*: Emergent Woman, Emergent Text." *Black American Literature Forum*. Vol. 22. No. 1. St. Louis University, 1988.
- 26- Walker, Jayne, John Archer, and Michelle Davies. "Effects of rape on men: A descriptive analysis." *Archives of sexual behavior* 34.1 (2005): 69-80.

