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ISTANBUL AYDIN UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

FURY OR MADNESS! BURSTING THE SILENCE IN GAYL JONES AND TONI MORRISON'S SELECTED FICTION

P Hd THESIS

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Department Of English Language And Literature
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19/09/2019

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İSTANBUL AYDIN ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ
DOKTORA TEZ ONAY BELGESİ

Enstitümüz İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalı, İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Doktora Programı Y1314.620017 numaralı öğrencisi SALWA TARIQ FIZEE'nin "Fury or Madness Bursting the Silence in Gayl Jones and Toni Marrison's Selected Fiction" adlı doktora tez çalışması Enstitümüz Yönetim Kurulunun 28.08.2019 tarih ve 2019/21 sayılı kararı ile oluşturulan jüri tarafından oy çokluğu **ile Doktora tezi olarak** kabul **edilmiştir.**

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Tezin Savunulduğu Tarih : 19/09/2019

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Prof. Dr. Ragıp Kutay KARACA

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that all information in this thesis document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results, which are not original to this thesis.

Salwa Tariq FIZEE FIZEE

FOREWORD

No study of this nature and complexity can be accomplished without the help, support, and cooperation of many others. First, I would express my special gratefulness to Allah for letting me through all the difficulties. I have experienced His guidance day by day.

I would like to express my special appreciation and thanks to my supervisor Gillian M.E. Alban for being a tremendous mentor for me. Her efforts, though frustrating at times, were most effective in the development and completion of this study. Her confidence in my abilities, combined with her eternal patience, support and guidance helped to keep me grounded throughout this process. Her immense knowledge, motivation and patience have given me more power and spirit to excel in the research writing. Without her guidance and persistent help this dissertation would not have been possible.

Special recognition goes to my committee members: Dr. C. Günseli İşçi, Dr. Ferma Lekesizalin, and Dr. Öz Öktem for their directions and suggestions throughout the research process.

In addition, I would like to express the deepest appreciation to my colleague Dr. Zaid Ibrahim for his support, encouragement, directions. He provided me with valuable advises and many valuable sources since my MA degree. I would be thankful for him forever for giving me part of his precious time.

Finally, I want to thank all my friends and colleagues, who have supported me and believe in me. I would like to thank my family for their everlasting love and support. Words cannot express how grateful I am to my mother, for all of the sacrifices that she had made on my behalf. Her prayer for me was what sustained me thus far. I would also like to thank to my beloved husband for supporting me in everything and encouraging me throughout this experience. To my beloved daughter, I would like to express my thanks for being such a good and patient girl and always cheering me up.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis strives to illuminate specifically the issue of women's fury and madness. There will be an investigation of the reason behind their fury or madness throughout the analysis of a number of African American fictional texts. There is a focus on African American and African fiction, which shows the pain of black women and the double oppression of their communities. In African American literature, tracing the memories of slavery, racial problems and their negative impacts on female and their psyche, can be helpful to comprehend well the journey of fury, madness and trauma of these women. Indeed, studying fury, madness, and trauma may seem like an odd choice when studying African American literature.

Nevertheless, the motives of fury, madness, and trauma will be discussed in detail in selected fictional texts of two African American writers, Toni Morrison, and Gayl Jones. Morrison's *Beloved* and *The Bluest Eye*; Gayl Jones's *Corregidora*, *Eva's Man* and a short story from her collection *The White Rat*, will be the main texts to investigate these motives. Throughout the analysis of the chosen texts, there is a focus on some notions like voice, memory, and sexual interact to stimulate processes of healing and self-definition. There will be an exploration of trauma, silence, daughter-parents' relationships and resistance in order to reveal the protagonists' psyche. Throughout the psychological development of these female characters, there is an argument on how they can burst their silence and burst their fury.

However, this thesis is dealing with women anger, fury and madness in African American fiction; therefore, it is necessary to have a background of the African American female problems. These black women struggle to survive as human beings rather than animals. It also follows a phenomenological approach when it comes to investigating the ways in which each one of the protagonists deal with and respond to their individual and collective traumatic memories and stories. Finally, this thesis, in evaluating the different approaches used by each protagonist, brings into focus many of the ideas attached to Black Feminism, especially those related to the subject of voice, healing and self-definition. This thesis is not about man, it is about woman herself; She is the one who can say no even through castrating or killing. She is the one who can empower herself by using her power of fury. Fury is their way of accessing power. This thesis shows that these women are not going mad but furious. Sometimes they hurt themselves, sometimes they hurt others out of their monstrously anger. These women may turn to be furious, dangerous and monsters if they would not give the chance to breath.

Keywords: *Black Women, Slavery, Racism, Fury, Trauma, Bursting Silence*

ÖFKE VEYA DELILIK! GAYL JONES VE TONI'NIN SESSIZLIK PATLAMASI MORRISON'S KURGU SEÇIMI

ÖZET

Bu tez özellikle kadınların öfke ve delilik meselesini aydınlatmaya çalışmaktadır. Birkaç Afrikalı Amerikan kurgusal metnin analizi boyunca öfke veya deliliğin arkasındaki nedenlerin bir incelemesi yapılacaktır. Zenci kadınların acısını ve topluluklarının çifte baskısını gösteren Afrikalı Amerikan ve Afrika kurgularına odaklanmaktadır. Afrika kökenli Amerikalı literatüründe köleliğin hikayelerini, ırksal sorunları, kadın ve ruhları üzerindeki olumsuz etkilerini izleyerek bu kadınların öfke, delilik ve travma yolculuğunu iyi anlamak için yardımcı olabilir. Gerçekten de, öfke, delilik ve travma araştırması, Afrika kökenli Amerikalı edebiyatını okurken garip bir seçenek gibi görünebilir…

Bununla birlikte, öfke, delilik ve travma nedenleri, iki Afrikalı Amerikalı yazarın,

Toni Morrison ve Gayl Jones'un seçilmiş kurgu metinlerinde detaylı olarak tartışılacaktır. Morrison'ın Sevgili ve En Mavi Göz; Gayl Jones'un Corregidora'sı, Eva'nın Adam'ı ve Beyaz Fare adlı koleksiyonundan kısa bir hikaye, bu motifleri araştıran ana metinler olacak. Seçilen metinlerin analizi boyunca, şifa ve kendini tanımlama süreçlerini teşvik etmek için ses, hafıza ve cinsel etkileşim gibi bazı kavramlara odaklanmaktadır. Kahramanların ruhunu açığa vurmak için travma, sessizlik, kız anne-baba ilişkileri ve direnişin araştırılacak. Burada kadın karakterlerin psikolojik gelişimi boyunca, sessizliklerini ve öfkelerini nasıl patlatabilecekleri konusunda bir tartışması verilmektedir.

Bununla birlikte, bu tez, Afrikalı-Amerikalı kurgularında kadın öfke, öfke ve delilik ile ilgilidir; bu nedenle, Afrikalı-Amerikalı kadın sorunlarının bir geçmişine bakmak gerekmektedir. Bu zenci kadınlar hayvanlardan ziyade insanlar olarak hayatta kalmak için mücadele ediyor. Bununla birlikte, travma ve sessizliğin kahramanları her biri üzerindeki etki araştırılmaktadır. Ayrıca, kahramanların her birinin, bireysel ve kollektif travmatik hikayeleri ve hikayelerini ele alma ve bunlara yanıt verme yöntemlerini araştırmaya gelince, fenomenolojik bir yaklaşımı izlenilmektedir. Son olarak, bu tez, her kahraman tarafından kullanılan farklı yaklaşımların değerlendirilmesinde, Siyah Feminizm ekli düşüncelerin çoğunu, özellikle ses, şifa ve öz-tanım konusuyla ilgili olanlar üzerinde durmaktadır. Bu tez erkekle ilgili değil, kadının kendisiyle ilgili; Kasten ya da öldürerek bile hayır diyebilen kişi olmaktadır. Öfke gücünü kullanarak kendini güçlendirebilecek kişi olarak, öfke, iktidara ulaşma biçimleridir. Bu tez, bu kadınların delirmediklerini, öfkelenmediklerini gösteriyor. Bazen kendilerine zarar verir, bazen başkalarına canavarca kızgınlıklarından zarar verdiklerinden bahsetmektedir. Bu kadınlar nefes alma şansı vermezse öfkeli, tehlikeli ve canavarlar olabilmektedirler.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Öfke, Delilik, Travma, Sessizlik Patlamasa.*

1. INTRODUCTION

"The black woman can justly be described as a 'slave of a slave".

Frances M. Beal, "Double Jeopardy"

In dealing with the issue of madness, there is an assumption that women are mad. Actually, the interesting thing that can be found during the analysis of the chosen texts in this thesis that these women are nothing but furious. Madness is one of the most important motifs in literature and it serves as a tool to create suspense and to explore the human psyche. To focus exclusively on fury, madness, and trauma may seem like an odd choice when studying African American literature. Specifically, this thesis will deal with African American and African fiction, showing black women's suffering and double oppression in their societies and in their psychiatric mental problems as a result. Hopefully, this analysis of these motifs will aid in the reconstruction of fragmented identities.

Actually, the issue of madness has become a popular area for feminist studies as women writers explore aspects of the feminine psyche and sexuality. Mental studies can be considered as a new way of thinking about women and their experiences and suffering. One must be introduced to how women in general experience madness to understand well the Africana women's journey of fury, madness, and trauma. As well, studying fury and madness motifs in African American literature can mostly be useful in tracing the memories of slavery, racial issues and violence and their bad effects on the psyches of black people, especially women. Also, it can reflect the cruel realism and can involve the loss of self -control as a result of a long journey of suffering for both African and African American women.

This project deals specifically with the motif of fury, madness, and trauma in selected fictional texts of two African American writers, Toni Morrison, and

Gayl Jones. The issues of madness and fury will be discussed in detail through the analysis of Morrison's *Beloved* and *The Bluest Eye* and Gayl Jones's *Corregidora*, *Eva's Man* and a short story from her collection *The White Rat*. The thesis will focus on the way these women characters face universal or psychic forces and whether they are in touch with their deepened reality. Do they survive? Do they destroy? Do female character's madness or traumatic experience illustrate a strong sense of resistance and power? Do they burst out a sense of anger against the violence imposed on them by patriarchal and racist systems? Do the oppressed conditions affect these women psychologically and emotionally? Furthermore, there will be a discussion on why these female characters experience the state of madness, hysteria, psychiatric traumas, anger, fury and depression and how they can deal with these experiences.

Indeed, for more than two thousand years madness has a strong association with women and with female corporeality with its variety of types: insanity, hysteria, breakdown and mental instability, as a result of traumatic or psychiatric experience; i.e., women have been labelled as being mad. Therefore, one of the main targets of female criticism since the early 1970s had been the representation of mad women in cultural, literary, and medical texts. Beside madness, some of these feminists have criticized such representations because they refuse to connect mental instability with the female physical problems. Some consider woman madness as a consequence of patriarchal oppression.

The motif of madness and fury in African American women's literature bespeaks a need for a reinvention and remembering of identities that have been fragmented due to multiple systems in society that oppress black women. Including the perspective of ‘writing madness’ in African American literature means seeing their literature from a different angle, through the lens of writers who have luffed up the surface of realist representation and have explored such issues and styles. Moreover, the interest in madness in African and African American literature has revived an interest in hysteria as a psychic trauma. In fact, slavery had a negative impact upon African American women; i.e., the brutality of slavery has damaged these women’s psyches and has caused a severe psychological and social shock and destruction to the minds of African American people in general and women in particular.

However, madness is a term that is applied in different branches of life, and one of these branches is literature. Madness in literature can be defined according to three major types: “mad writer, mad character, and the application of psychological terms to literary madness” (Rieger 1994, p.5). The idea of “mad writers” is suggested by some classical writers like Plato, who states that the creative works of writers are nothing but a result of their own madness, irrationality, or insanity. For example, Virginia Woolf, Ezra Pound, Sylvia Plath, Ernest Hemingway and Robert Lowell who were known for their suffering of mental problems. Most of their best works were created in their moments of depression (Ibid, p.6).

Aside from that, mental problems can be experienced after traumatic events. In psychological terms, trauma can be defined as a severe and very painful experience a person endures that have wounding emotional effects and which might sometimes lead to mental disorder. This kind of acute experience can depersonalize the sufferer and her relationship with her surrounding environment. In fact, one defining feature of trauma is the uncontrollable duplication of the horrible events both to be entirely experienced by the survivor or to be consolidated in her memories of the past. This uncontrollable revival of such painful memories can only be overcome when the trauma victim is able to recount this traumatic event in a way that she can control, i,e; when “the story can be told, the person can look back at what happened” (Freed 2011, p.409). ‘Mad characters’ are created by writers in order to reflect the impact that cultural values have on individual lives. The third direction of writing literal madness is the most important one for this project. It is the approach that is used to explain madness in literature in psychological terms (Ibid, pp.7, 9).

In her book, *The Madness of Women*, feminist critic Jane M. Ussher, studies women’s madness, hysteria, and depression. She discusses the reasons behind labelling a woman as a mad creature focussing on the victims of sexual violence and their mental disintegration. Shoshana Felman, in her book *What Does A Women Want*, argues that madness is one literary representation of feminine specificity. She writes: “what the narcissistic economy of the masculine universal equivalent tries to eliminate, under the label ‘madness’, is nothing more than feminine (special) difference (that differentiates women from men)”

(Ussher 2011, p.35). Elaine Showalter's book *The Female Malady* and Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *Madwoman in The Attic* are also in-depth studies of women's madness with reference to mad women in literature.

Hysteria is another way of thinking about feminine difference. Actually, the word hysteria is a Greek word, that means "uterus," and is used because it was believed that hysteria is particularly a disease of women only. Marta Caminero Santangelo articulates that a hysterical woman is speaking out with her body in ways that she was unable to do with her mouth. This could be seen as a subconscious attempt to fight oppressive gender expectations. However, Caminero-Santangelo states that a woman suffers from hysteria as a result of the tension she tolerates in man-dominated cultures. Santangelo writes: "Hysteria is not…the incarnation of the revolt of women forced to silence but rather a declaration of defeat, the realization that there is no other way out. Hysteria is a cry when the woman sees that she is efficiently gagged and chained to her feminine role" (Santangelo 1996, p.71). How can women represent themselves outside stereotypical roles which the man portrays in his writings? This question leads women writers to seek always to find a way of narration that enables them to express the deep feelings of their female characters.

Trauma has nevertheless become a dominant paradigm in cultural studies. Trauma theory "has increasingly impacted on literary studies, and a new literary genre, the trauma novel has been constructed" (Visser 2011, p.271). Irene Visser suggests that trauma theory focuses on the post traumatic stage rather than the actual traumatic event, PTSD and its many symptoms. The emphasis can be on assertion of trauma's devastating effects. Visser states that PTSD is a problematic concept and it can provide a basic framework to understand the symptoms of trauma. She suggests that trauma refers "not so much to the traumatic event as to the traumatic after math, the post-traumatic stage. Trauma thus denotes the recurrence or repetition of the 'stressor' event through memory, dreams, narrative and/or various symptoms known under the definition of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)" (Ibid).

Freud, the father of psychoanalysis, offers an important criticism of madness, hysteria and trauma in literature. In the late nineteenth century, Freud theorized many trauma concepts while working with hysterical patients. In his book

Introductory Lectures on Psych Analysis (1916-17), Freud suggests that the term 'trauma' "has no other sense than an economic one". It can be "an experience which within a short period of time presents the mind with an increase of stimulus too powerful to be dealt with or worked off in the normal way, and this must result in permanent disturbances of the manner in which the energy operates" (p.3353). Freud defines trauma as a wound that is inflicted upon body and "any excitations from outside which are powerful enough to break through the protective shield. It seems to me that the concept of trauma necessarily implies a connection of this kind with a breach in an otherwise efficacious barrier against stimuli" (Freud 1961, p.12, 23). This wound can affect the development of the individual's psych. What causes trauma, for Freud, is an unbearable shock that appears to work like a physical threat, but it is in fact a damage in the mind (Ibid, p.31).

Indeed, Freud makes a connection between trauma and hysteria. One of his beliefs is that most of the hysterical cases are victims of child sexual abuse that caused physical and psychological wound. He states that: "determining factors … of hysteria are one or more occurrence of premature sexual experience … in the earliest years of childhood" (Freud 1924, p.203). He believes that hysteria is not based upon one event but it is an accumulation of many events: "In the case of common hysteria it not frequently happens that, instead of a single, major trauma, we find a number of partial traumas forming a group of provoking causes" (Freud 1895, p.4).

Freud believes that "the traumatic neuroses gives a clear indication that a fixation to the moment of the traumatic accident lies at their root. [The] patients regularly repeat the traumatic situation in their dreams" (p.3352). A person maybe brought by a traumatic event to a situation that shatters the foundations of the person's life. The traumatized person normally abandons all interest in the present and future and persists absorbed in mental concentration upon the past (p.3353). For him, it is the traumatic repetition, rather than the meaningful distortions of neurosis that defines the individual's life. He states that: "dreams occurring in traumatic neuroses have the characteristics of repeatedly bringing the patient back into the situation of his accident, a situation from which he wakes up in another fright" (Freud 1961, p.13).

Actually, a key concept in trauma is memory. Freud's original idea is that it was not the event that was traumatic, but the fact that the recollections of them. In other words, Freud believes that the full impact of the original experience attacks the individual in the form of a memory, overwhelms the individual's ego defences and the subject becomes traumatised (Freud & Breuer 1895, p.7). Freud with Breuer believe that traumatic memories are too painful to be kept in the conscious mind. Instead, they are stored in the body and are expressed as physical symptoms and these memories also are held in the individual's unconscious part of the mind. They believe that "the traumatic experience is constantly forcing itself upon the patient and … the patient is … fixated to his trauma" (Ibid, p.2913). Freud also defines 'traumata' as the result of a situation where an individual has "suffered a shocking accident in which danger to life is involved" (Freud 1950, p.191). So, the same individual "develops a series of grave psychical and motor symptoms which can only be described to [the] shock or whatever else happened at the time of the accident" (p.23).

Freud believes that "the patient does not remember anything of what[she] has forgotten and repressed but acts it out. [she] reproduces it not as a memory, but as an action; [she] repeats it, without, of course, knowing that [she] is repeating it" (Freud 1950, p.150). He states that: "mankind as a whole passed through conflicts of a sexual aggressive nature, which left permanent traces, but which were for the most part warded off and forgotten, later after a long period of latency, they came to life again and created phenomena similar in structure and tendency to neurotic symptoms" (Freud 1939 , p.129). 'Latency' means a kind of mental period in which any traumatic event is forgotten in the unconscious mind. After a period of time, that 'latency' gains power and explodes as more powerful than it was at the time of the traumatic event (p.136). People who have experienced traumatic event in their past may repeat that event in their present with unconscious actions. 'Acting-out' or repeating the traumatic event is their way to recall that event.

Furthermore, Freud discusses that the individuals do not have only personal memories stored in the unconscious. They do not keep strictly to their own experiences, but also "[they] brought with [them] at birth, fragments of phylogenetic origin, an archaic heritage" (Freud 1939, pp.157, 159). He believes

that the individuals' reactions to trauma are part of their personal experiences and their ancestors' experiences.

Freud explains how something forgotten can remain through generations, to develop in people's unconscious as a powerful memory. These "[traumatic memories] retain too impression of the past in unconscious memory traces" (Freud 1939, p.151). He discusses how people forgot the initial event and how the traumatic memory is suppressed, buried deep in the unconscious, but has never disappeared. This buried memory may re-emerge in certain circumstances as collective memories.

After all, this project is dealing with women anger, fury and madness in relation with oppression in African American fiction. Therefore, it is necessary to have a background of the African American female problems. Actually, the suffering of African American women transcends that of white women. While the white women are victims in male-dominated societies, black women are double-oppressed females. They suffer from both racism and sexism. They rebel against physical and verbal violence. Indeed, these women are truly feminist, rebellious heroines who try to assert their right to live as normal human beings. Nevertheless, the issue of madness of African American women is still subject to constant discussions and controversies and there are attempts to answer the question of why women? Why is it not black people as a whole? Are these women responsible for their being oppressed? Do they choose to be in such mental states? Are they really mad or furious? Do they have any agency? Are they silent or have they been silenced? Do they burst with anger? These questions will be the heart of this project.

Writers have used the African American mad women with painted images of the dangers of an oppressive dominant culture against these women (Santangelo 1996, p.11). In many ways, literary madness has become the language of despair and alienation, protest and rebellion, anguish and salvation. In other words, "madness serves as a metaphor for female victimization on the one hand, and for female resistance on the other" (Abudi 2011, pp.229-30). Toni Morrison is the founding figure of this trend invoking madness and women anger to an extent surpassing any other twentieth century American woman writer. In novels like *Beloved* and *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison portrays madness and fury as

the ultimate manifestations of cultural reality. In Morrison's novels, "the problems of not being able to recognize and deal with difference are symbolically represented through mothers who, in acts of 'madness', attempt to kill their children" (Santangelo 1996, p.11). Indeed, black women, as slaves, were treated as animals or pigs, for sexual purposes, and also financially. White men as traders used these women as sexual objects for their own sexual needs, and then they took the children and sold them, as made clear in *Beloved*.

In probing the impact of trauma and silence on each one of the protagonists in the selected texts, this thesis benefits from contemporary trauma theories developed by Cathy Caruth, Dominick LaCapra, Dori Laub, Judith Lewis Herman, Marianne Hirsch and others. It also follows a phenomenological approach when it comes to investigate the ways in which each one of the protagonists deal with and respond to their individual and collective traumatic memories and stories. Finally, this thesis, in evaluating the different approaches used by each protagonist, brings into focus many of the ideas attached to Black Feminism, especially those related to the subject of voice, healing and self-definition like the black feminists' bell hooks, Audre Lorde, and Patricia Collins.

It is important to know that African American psychology is a reaction to traditional psychology (white psychology). This is due to the fact that psychology developed in the western world in the context of the strong racial dynamics of colonialism, slavery and other forms of racial exploitation. This African American psychology absolutely examines African American personality, health and mental health. African American psychology focuses on the mental, physical, psychological and spiritual nature of humanity. Alan E. Kazdin asserts that it is "distinguished from the other psychological fields with some specific ideals; the most important thing is that it is a reaction to racist attacks on 'black people'" (Kazdin 2000, p.93). What makes African American psychology different? What makes African American women's psychology different? Is it their way of expressing anger?

In this thesis, there is a focus on some notions like voice, memory, and sexual interaction to stimulate processes of healing and self-definition. Throughout the chosen texts, there will be an exploration of trauma, silence and resistance in

order to reveal the protagonists' psyche. This thesis aims at examining the role of speaking in female lives to achieve identity, power and a high level of self-esteem. Throughout the psychological development of the characters, I am investigating how their voices can burst out of the pages through their stories, their songs, their truths, or even their silence. There is an argument on the burst of anger of female characters in the selected texts. There is also an argument on how the silent can speak through fury as a speaking woman and how a woman can burst her silence and articulates her traumatic memory. What are they doing with this anger and fury? Will they be able to manage? Will this fury crush them or burst them to the top? How can those characters find their voices, their languages? Will their fury help them to accept themselves or will it lead them to a state of self- loathing? What circumstances lead to these women's anger? Do they really feel angry or mad? At whom, at what, and why have they become angry? How do they express this anger? Do they accept what leads to their trauma? In which way do they accept? Do they choose silence, or have they been muted? Are they able to heal themselves from their traumatic memories or not?

The present study is concerned specifically with the issue of women's fury. I will investigate the reason behind their fury or madness throughout the analysis of a number of African American fictional texts. I argue that these women when put under pressure, they turn into furious and dangerous individuals. Fury is their way of accessing power. These women must not be squeezed to that level of fury; otherwise, they would be bursting out of their anger. Sometimes they hurt themselves, sometimes they hurt others out of their anger. This thesis shows that these women are not going mad but lashing in fury. They may be young girls who may go down while mature women will hit out and show their fury either through killing, castrating, or infanticide.

This thesis is set out in four chapters with an introduction highlighting the questions leading to the benefit of the argument. The first chapter contains two parts; the first part is a theoretical background that contains feminist and psychological criticism of madness, hysteria, depression, anger and trauma. The second part presents madness as a theme in literature with a reference to Gilbert and Gubar's argument on madness in their book *The Madwoman in the Attic*.

The second chapter contains four parts; the first part is devoted to some of the major theories related to black feminism in order to highlight the connection between voice, fury, madness and self-definition. The second part focuses on trauma in the selected texts. In this part I explore the effects of collective and belated trauma on the protagonists. I draw attention to the textual and structural narration with its various forms like flashbacks, nightmares, dreams, and intermixing past with present. The third part concentrates on the mother-daughter relationship and the father figure highlighting their effect on the psyche of the protagonists. The final part of this chapter discusses the protagonists' journey to find self -definition. Chapter three is divided into two parts: the first part sheds light on the situation of the protagonists in their societies whether they are forced into silence or choose to be so. While the second part explores the themes of madness and fury in the chosen texts as a result of the protagonists' traumatic experiences. It brings into focus the importance of my study revealing facts and tracing the devastating effects of trauma on the protagonists. The concluding chapter sums up the importance of this study and findings.

1.1 **Theoretical Insights into Race, Gender, Trauma, Fury and Madness**

Lots of writers and psychologists write about and define madness in different ways and from different perspectives. Mary de Young in her book *Madness: An American History of Mental Illness and its Treatment*, states that madness "is too much of something —nervousness or sadness, or perhaps too little of something else- sociability or rationality" (Young 2010, p.8). Though madness hides more than it reveals, it is in somehow a "descriptive word". It reveals how the imagined line between sanity and madness can change over time —that line so often inscribed with the robust sociological variables of gender, race, socioeconomic class and sexual orientation. It also offers an understanding of how theories of madness, and reactions to it are historically different as well (Ibid, p.260).

Elaine Showalter in her book *The Female Malady* argues that feminine mental illness is a protest against feminine subjection and exploitation, and it has been shown from the seventeenth century to the present, that the number of women in

psychiatric care has greatly exceeded the number of men. Showalter believes that labelling women of madness is a cultural phenomenon. She also argues that there is no doubt that psychiatric problems among women is partly controlled by different circumstances around them in a patriarchal society (Showalter 1987, p.3). Also, she mentioned that according to the historians and psychologists, madness "is a female malady because it is experienced by more women than men… [and it is] one of the wrongs of women" (Ibid, p.3). This is the price that must be paid by the creative women for being creative and 'gifted women' in a male dominated culture. The price can be an experience of mental breakdown as in Sylvia Plath, Virginia Woolf, Anne Sexton and others (Ibid, p.4).

Showalter (1987) believes that, "madness even when experienced by men, it is metaphorically and symbolically represented as feminine: 'female malady"' (p.4). Actually, Showalter presents a general understanding of the history of psychiatry, its relationship to oppression and struggle against it. She also posits that the source of women's madness in all cases is located in her frustration of her love for a man. This book presents a gender and feminist critique of madness in Britain from 1830 to the present, as Showalter focuses on the feminization of mental disease. She presents a convincing picture "of how cultural attitudes about the proper role of females shaped the diagnosis and treatment". She also exposes the roots of hysteria as culture's most common "female malady" in their struggle with madness that is nothing but a mirror of society. She adds that male attitudes towards women also play a part in defining female insanity (Ibid, p.259).

Jane E. Kromm (1994) argues that to understand why madness is labelled as feminine, one must understand the stereotype of gendered conceptions of madness. In the case of gender malady, psychiatry differentiates between male and female malady even when both genders have similar signs of mental disorder. Male malady is the one that is associated with the intellectual and economic pressures, while female's is argued to be related to sexuality. In other words, men's problems are always presented, in different arts, as different from women's problems. Men's problems are expressed in familiar terms of occupations or competitions, while the women's conflicts are always portrayed in terms of sexual relationships and domesticity (p.507).

The traditional early modern stereotypes of madness present two types of madness; male and female, with a distinction between the two. The madman is presented as an aggressive belligerent figure, while the madwoman is presented as being a sexual thrilling or self-abusing figure. Kromm (1994) suggests that the madwoman is that woman who expresses her sexual desire as a form of challenge to the male authority and domination. The female malady is always related to sexuality, whereas the studies give the madman a gloss of uncivilized animality. some of these stereotypes place the conceptions of madness in a gender frame constructed from a male position. These stereotypes "offer distinctive responses to male concerns for domination and survival" (p.507).

The period from 1780s to the first decade of the nineteenth century witness a shift from male madness to female madness images. In that period, the most effective figure was the sexually aggressive madwoman that displaced the figure of the 'male lunatic'. This change gave the man more power to use his authority over women, especially the mentally ill. Moreover, madness can be defined as a lack of reason and human agency. That shift from the male dominant to female dominant constructions of madness implies the separation from the irrational and melancholic masculinity to extremely emotional and retrograde of females. That allows these characteristics to be the special features of female madness. It is important to notice that giving such features to female madness, they are literally as well as figuratively treated differently. Their identities and sexual presence in their societies are enhanced through clothes and sexual gestures. Jane E. Kromm debates that madness is a punishment for questionable judgement or it can be a moral crime or offense. These misdeeds are contextualized by gender considerations. For Kromm, men's problems are expressed in terms of professions or occupation, while women's problems in societies, are structured in terms of sex, relationship and domesticity (1994, pp.510-19, 530).

Some psychiatrists believed that women were more vulnerable to mental disorders and breakdown than men, and they also believe that these women experience madness in feminine ways. For the instability of these women's genital systems overlap with their emotional, logical and sexual control. With different perspective, some theories of female insanity were confidently

connected to the biological crises of women's lifecycle: menstruation, pregnancy, and menopause through which the mind could be weakened and then the signs of insanity, hysteria or even breakdown might emerge. Some of the nineteenth century physicians called this connection between women's life cycle and madness as the "reflex insanity in women" (Showalter 1987, pp.7-8, 55). Julia Kristeva (1989) writes:

when I say that the object of my grief is less the village, the mother, or the lover that I miss here and how then the blurred representation that I keep and put together in the darkroom of what thus becomes my psychic tomb, this at once locates my ill-being in the imagination. The depressed person is necessarily a dweller in the imaginary realm. (p.61)

Madness, whether in women or in men, can be either the acting out of the devaluation of one's role in society, or the rejection of one's sex-role stereotype (Felman 1992, p.7). G. Fielding Blandford (1976) in his book *Insanity and Its Treatment* asserts with the female theories about madness and women. He asserts that women become insane during the age of menstruation and menopause, during pregnancy, and some women suffer from puerperal madness postnatally, during which they show aggressive gestures, reluctance and unwillingness to their child and husband; their explosions of anger occur with vociferation and violence. Indeed, women who suffer from puerperal insanity also express their anguish in severe depression, and suicide is recognized to be the tendency of these women in order to end their misery and suffering and "the sympathetic connection existing between the brain and the uterus is plainly seen by the most casual observer" (p.69).

Elaine Showalter (1987) mentions that social norms are so strict in the case of women; women are bearing the whole responsibility of child and husband. These women are trying to direct their energy to their ambitions while they are confined in the routines of their homes and serving their families wishes. Without trying to channel their anger and despair into creative projects, they thus are more prone to madness. They are hopeless women with no ambition. The same was true for women during the Victorian age: women who rejected sexuality and marriage, since these two were synonymous for Victorian women, were muted or driven mad. Depression, illness, madness, and hysteria were

feminine tactics to escape from their problems, from the feminine role that was imposed on them. They also can be forms of protest in a society in which the Other had the authority to silence these women. So, instead of taking the policy of rebellion and action and then being enclosed, these women escape into illness to be free from the limitations of patriarchal society. (pp.63-4).

In psychological terms, trauma can be defined as a severe and very painful emotional and mental experience. This kind of experience can depersonalize the traumatized woman and her relationship with her surrounding environment. In fact, one defining feature of trauma is the uncontrollable duplication of the past. This uncontrollable revival of such painful memories can only be overcome when the trauma victim is able to recount this traumatic event in a way that she can control. “The story can be told, the person can look back at what happened” (Freed 2011, p.409). In her book *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma Narrative and History*, Cathy Caruth (1996) defines trauma as being “much more than a pathology, or the simple illness of a wounded psyche. It is always the story of a wound that cries out, that addresses us in the attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available” (p.4).

Furthermore, in her other book *Trauma: Exploration in Memory*, Caruth (1995) suggests that trauma includes intense personal suffering and involves acknowledgement of human reality (p.vii). She also defines post-traumatic stress disorder suggesting that it is a delayed response to an event or events taking the form repeated and overwhelmed nightmares, dreams, hallucination, thoughts, or unconscious behaviors. The traumatic event is not usually experienced “fully at the time, but only belatedly” (Ibid, p.4).

Laura S. Brown has her own ideas about trauma. In her article “Not Outside the Range: One Feminist perspective on Psychic Trauma”, she claims that the current diagnostic criteria for trauma serves to reduce the dominant social structures. She also claims that bringing a feminist perspective to an understanding of trauma is a shift in understanding social normality. Brown points out that the traumatic experience means that “the person experienced an event that is outside the range of human experience” (Brown 1995, p.100). Such an identification, she argues disregards the experience of minorities and upholds the idea that “oppression is to be tolerated” (Ibid, p.105). Brown also argues

that the traumatic events such as sexual abuse of women and children will continue to be viewed as ‘common’ allowing the psychiatric industry to continue the cycle of oppressing the oppressed and that “many women who have never been raped have symptoms of rape trauma” (Ibid, pp.100-7). She discusses the importance of feminist perspective on psychic trauma, suggesting that it requires to move out of the comfortable position to a position of identification and action (Ibid, pp.108-9).

Judith L. Herman writes about trauma in her special way. In her book *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence-From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*, she affirms that "traumatic memories have a number of unusual qualities. They are not encoded like the ordinary memories...the psychiatrists...understood that unburdening traumatic memories was not in itself sufficient to effect a lasting care” (1992, Ch. l). She also speaks about the differences between the traumatic memories and the ordinary memories. She reveals how the traumatic dreams are unlike ordinary dreams. Herman believes that the traumatic dreams include fragments of the traumatic events and sometimes they are experienced with imagination and terrifying immediacy. Those traumatic nightmares can occur in stages of sleep in which people do not ordinarily dream. So, “in sleep as well as in waking life, traumatic memories appear to be based in an unaltered neurophysiological organization” (Ibid, Ch. 2).

In the introduction to her book, Herman also gives the readers her assumption why people try to avoid or silence trauma survivors and tend to take the side of the criminal. The criminal asks the witness to do nothing but see, hear, and speak no evil. The victim, on the contrary, asks the witness of trauma to share the burden of pain of the traumatic experience through action, engagement, and remembering (Ibid, lntro.). Herman suggests that the victim of trauma may feel that she is “not herself,” only after the event, while the victim of a continuing trauma may feel herself to be changed irrevocably, or she may lose the sense of self forever (Ibid, Ch.4). In the same book, Herman confirms that “traumatized people relive the moments of trauma not only in their thoughts and dreams but also in their actions” (Ibid, Ch2). Herman explains that the traumatic event and its impact on the victims can destroy the bonds between those victims and their

community. It can also result in broken minds, injured bodies, and shattered relationships to those closest to them, the community, and the outside world (Ibid, Ch.11). Consequently, traumatized people may feel that they are dead more than being alive and they may feel alone, abandoned by others, from any familial and social bonds. They may lose their trust in any form of relationship and even within themselves (Ibid, Ch.3).

Judith L. Herman also clarifies how trauma can have a devastating impact on the victims' identities which in turn affect their relationships with other people. "Traumatic events violate the autonomy of the person at the level of basic bodily integrity. The body is invaded, injured, defiled. … The traumatic event thus destroys the belief that one can be oneself in relation to others" (1992, Ch.3). Therefore, survivors of trauma may feel unsafe in their bodies and emotions and they feel that their thinking is out of control (Ibid, Ch.8). Even though the individual may survive the trauma, the effect of that trauma overturns the individual's life. Herman opines that "traumatic events generally involve threats to life or bodily integrity, or a close personal encounter with violence and death. They confront human beings with the extremities of helplessness and terror and evoke the responses of catastrophe" (Ibid, Ch.2).

The psychiatrist Dori Laub, in her article *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History*, defines trauma as being "an event that has no beginning, no ending, no before, no during and no after. This absence of categories that define it lends it a quality of 'otherness'" (1995, p.69). Laub describes trauma "as the response to an unexpected or overwhelming violent event or events that are not fully grasped as they occur ... but repeated flashbacks, nightmares, and other repetitive phenomena" (Ibid, p.94). She also believes that trauma is an escape from the real event or story that caused it rather than facing it to end its bad and "endless impact on a life" (Ibid, p.7). In addition, she relates trauma with the 'horror' of the past, consequently "the traumatic experience has normally long been submerged and has become distorted in its submersion.…The horror is, indeed, compelling not only in its reality, but even more so, in its flagrant distortion and subversion of reality" (Ibid, p.76). Laub also has different perspective of trauma survivor. She asserts that a "trauma survivor...is bearing witness [and] has no prior knowledge, no

comprehension and no memory of what happened". Instead, the trauma survivors have a deep fear of such knowledge and try to shrink away from it. Silence can be a shelter for them to protect themselves and sometimes they cannot break their silence as if it was a fated exile for them and a rule rather than a choice (Ibid, p.58).

Moreover, Laub presents a theory of 'trauma listeners,' and 'bearing witness' in which she suggests that the relation of the victim to the traumatic event affects the listener to the same event. The listener starts partially to feel the feelings of the trauma victim: alone, confused, wounded and struggle. The listener to trauma comes to be a participant of the traumatic event. The listener shares the struggle of the victim with all memories (1995, p.57-8). Laub also affirms that the listener to trauma lives a 'unique situation', has a great responsible to bear witness and to narrate the events:

The listener to the narrative of extreme human pain, of massive psychic trauma, faces a unique situation .... The listener has to be at the same time a witness to the trauma witness and a witness to himself ... to know the lay of the land- the landmarks, the under currents, and the pitfalls in the witness and in himself. (Ibid, p.57-8)

Dominik LaCapra is an American-born historian of European intellectual history, best known for his work in intellectual history and trauma studies. He writes how people try to move beyond their trauma towards their future not overshadowed by the past. They work through two processes 'acting-out' and 'working-through': "in acting-out, one relives the past as if one were the other. ... One is fully possessed by the other or the other's ghost; and in working through, one tries to acquire some critical distance that allows one to engage in life in the present, to assume responsibility" (2001, p.148). LaCapra confirms that "trauma...becomes the basis for collective or personal identity, or both" (Ibid, p.81). Dominick LaCapra affirms:

In acting-out, one relives the past as if one were the other, including oneself as another in the past-one is fully possessed by the other or the other's ghost; and in working through, one tries to acquire some critical distance that allows one to engage in life in the present, to assume responsibility- but that doesn't mean that you utterly transcend the past. It means that you come to terms with it in a

different way related to what you judge to be desirable possibilities that may now be created (LaCapra 2001, p.148).

LaCapra states that: “in many cases, acting-out should not be seen as a different kind of memory from working-through … both are related processes” (Goldberg 1998). In working-through, “the person tries to gain critical distances on a problem, to be able to distinguish between past, present and future. For the victim, this means his ability to say to himself, ‘yes’, that happened to me back again … It is overwhelming and it needs power and agency” (Goldberg 1998). Indeed, LaCapra has derived his concept of acting-out and working-through from Freud and develop them. For Freud, ‘acting-out’ means repetition: “The mind of the hysterical patient is full of active yet unconscious ideas” (Freud 1895, p.2037). People who undergo a trauma relive the past through flashbacks and nightmares.

Cathy Caruth, on the other hand, offers a different definition of trauma. She defines trauma “as the response to an unexpected or overwhelming event or events that are not fully grasped as they occur, but return later in repeated flashbacks, nightmares, or other repetitive phenomena” (1996, p.94).

Ruth Leys’s *Trauma: A Genealogy* is another book that aims at clarifying trauma. Leys suggests that trauma or the traumatic event is nothing but a form of ‘hypnotic imitation’ in which the victim cannot recognize the main traumatic event (2000, p.298). Leys explains that the violent event strongly affects a woman’s mind, causing damage, shattering her psyche and identity: “The hysterical female epitomized the shattering effect of trauma on the mind...the experience of the trauma, fixed, or frozen in time, refuses to be represented as past, but is perpetually reexperienced in a painful, dissociated, traumatic present” (Ibid, pp.2, 4). Leys also speaks about the post-traumatic stress disorder. She describes it as being “fundamentally a disorder of memory ... owing to the emotions of terror and surprise caused by certain events, the mind is split or dissociated” (Ibid, p.2). She emphasizes that “it is unable to register the wound to the psyche because the ordinary mechanisms of awareness and cognition are destroyed. As a result, the victim is unable to recollect and integrate the hurtful experience in normal consciousness; instead, she is haunted or possessed by intrusive traumatic memories” (Ibid, p.2).

After speaking about the trauma and its relationship to madness, it is necessary to refer to anger and its relationship to trauma, which is as Horace explains, “Anger is a short madness,” (Horace 1872, p.15). It is one of the signs of insanity in women and as a reaction to traumatic experience, as most of the psychiatrists suggest. Linda Young and Elizabeth Gibb, in their article “Trauma and Grievance”, argue that:

it is not uncommon for people who have experienced a traumatic event to show intense anger about what has happened to them. However, there are patients who, for a variety of reasons, need to defend themselves against knowledge of their anger...Those people who are left too afraid of their own anger...other than defend against it, may remain crippled by the trauma for a considerable time. (1998, p.81)

They suggest that expressing anger is healthy after a traumatic event because unexpressed anger may lead to anxiety and hysterical explosion. They believe that “anger is a potent form of assertiveness...it is allied to potency and agency; without any anger all that remains may be passivity and a sense of defeat” (Ibid, pp.81-2). So, is anger a form of power? Can a woman through her anger prove her identity in her society? Does her anger help her to rebuild herself and her life after a traumatic experience?

According to Dr. Ronald T. Potter-Efron (2015) anger is the only weapon an individual ever has against feelings of powerlessness. He asserts that “a sudden rage can be described as an unplanned fit of tremendous fury, during which a person loses partial or complete control over his or her feelings, thoughts, actions, and (sometimes) loses conscious awareness of her or his behavior” (p.52). It can be a woman’s way to defence against frequent feelings of danger (Ibid, p.4). Efron uses the term ‘angry brain’ to refer to people who often grew up in angry families and learned the norms how to keep anger. Those people usually feel insecure and tend to develop chronic defensive anger patterns. They are usually angry; they wake up angry, spend the day looking for things that irritate them, sleep angry, have angry and evil dreams, and wake up angry again. It seems as if anger is controlling their emotions and feelings and as if it is their default choice to live. Efron emphasizes that those families encouraged their children to have anger as a habit. According to him, the key to working

effectively with anger first is defusing reactivity by building a bridge from the response of the “old brain” to the “new brain” (Ibid, p.4). He uses the phrase ‘shame-based anger’ to refer to “an explosive style. Here individuals rapidly convert feelings of shame into anger and rage... Shame-based anger may be associated with domestic abuse...They then attack their attackers, the people they believe are shaming them or might be planning to do so” (Ibid, pp.22-3).

Arthur G. Neal debates in his book *National Trauma and Collective Memory: Major Events in the American Century,* that collective memories of trauma may lead to an explosion in the shape of fury or anger. He asserts that:

The concept of trauma is applied primary to extraordinary of experiences in the personal lives of individuals. Trauma involves an element of shock...[the] ongoing activity has been interrupted by an adverse happening that is unexpected, painful, extraordinary, and shocking. A trauma has an explosive quality about it because of the radical change that occurs within a short period of time. (1998, p.3)

Anger is defined by Gilbert Reyes, Julian D. Ford and Jon D. Elhai in *The Encyclopaedia of Psychological Trauma* as: “a negatively toned emotion, subjectively experienced as an aroused state of antagonism toward someone or something perceived to be the source of an aversive event. ... Anger is prototypically experienced as a justified response to a perceived ‘wrong’” (2008, p.27). Anger serves as a guardian to self-respect, and it can be considered as a means of expressing negative emotions, a chance to reform grievances, and to defeat obstacles and fences to happiness and ambitions, it also “serves to suppress both fear and pain in conjunction with activating approach or attack behaviors” (Ibid, p.28). They also distinguish between anger and hostility and anger and aggression, saying: “Anger, an emotion, should be distinguished from hostility, which is an attitudinal disposition, and from aggression, which is behavior intended to do harm...[It] is a recognized feature of a range of clinical disorders that may result from psychological trauma exposure” (Ibid, p.27).

Harriet Lerner believes that “anger is a tool for change when it challenges us to become more of an expert on the self and less of an expert on others” (2014, p.91). She asserts that women have “to transform [their] anger into tears,

apologies, guilt, confusion, or self-criticism." (Ibid, p.85). Lerner also admits that "our anger can motivate us to say 'no' to the ways in which we are defined by others. And 'yes' to the dictates of our inner self" (Ibid, p.l). She sends a message to all women to learn how to translate their own anger: "If however, our goal is to break a pattern in an important relationship and/or to develop a stronger sense of self that we can bring to all our relationships, it is essential that we learn to translate our anger into clear, nonblaming statements about our own self" (Ibid, p.80). She also believes that women's anger is a sign to tell the society about all their problems. It can be their message that they are being hurt and their rights are violated. Anger may help these women to understand their values, ambitions, desires, needs and identities. Through their anger, women can be listened by their communities, "just as physical pain tells [them] to take [their] hand off the hot stove, the pain of [their] anger preserves the very integrity of [their selves]" (Ibid, l).

For Elaine Showalter, a serious feminist study should not romanticize madness as one of women's wrongs or accept an essentialist adjustment between femininity and madness. Instead of that, there must be an essential investigation of how the notion of gender influences the definitions of madness through a cultural context, then there must be suggestions for the treatment of such mental orders. Whereas Charles Bernheimer and Claire Kahan suggest that it is certainly possible to believe that hysteria is an unconscious form of feminist protest and the parallel of the female attack on the patriarchal values. Showalter does not agree with them, stating that: "such claims come dangerously close to romanticizing and endorsing madness as a desirable form of rebellion rather than seeing it as the desperate communication of the powerless" (1987, pp.5-6).

During and after the Second World War, new views of women's madness appeared, especially in American communities. Christopher Langan's theory of the relationship between mind and reality interprets 'female malady' as the result of woman's oppression within the family and the society. Female madness started to be viewed as a form of communication or a reaction to the patriarchal society. Also, madness or schizophrenia started to be understood as a form of protest against women's marginal roles. (2002, pp.222, 248).

Depression is another ‘female malady’ that became more intense with the emergence of the ‘New Woman’ at the beginning of the twentieth century. Also, a new feminist psychology has found its own perspectives through deep searching and analysis of the mother-daughter relationship. Both depression and the ‘mother-daughter note’ are new phases of women's madness suggested by new feminist psychology. These together with new feminist therapy movements, start to challenge both the traditional psychiatry, psychoanalytic and the medical categories, and submit new alternatives of feminist psychotherapy, women’s self-help groups and political activism (Langan 2002, p.250). Felman (1986) states that terrified and depressed female status is quite the opposite of rebellion. Women’s madness is really the deadlock confronting them, especially those who live in cultural conditions that deprive them of any means of protest or self-confirmation (p.7).

Shoshana Felman (1986) in her article “Women and Madness: The Critical Phallacy” asks questions to clarify why hysteria and madness relate to women for a long time. “Is it by chance that hysteria was conceived as an exclusively female complaint? Is it by chance that even today, there is a connection between women and madness?” The social roles that are given to a woman as a wife, daughter, and mother kept her weak and under man’s authority; those roles, Felman concludes, are the main reason behind woman’s madness or depression (pp.6-7). Moreover, Phyllis Chesler in her book *Women and Madness* suggests that “it is clear that for a woman to be healthy she must adjust to and accept the behavioral norms for her sex, even though these kinds of behavior are generally regarded as less socially desirable ... Feminine identity in patriarchal society is the violation of the incest taboo” (1972, pp.68-9). Women must find their own way to overcome their psychic problems and gain power in order to assert their existence in their societies.

On the other hand, Darwinian psychiatrists believe that the main reason behind the predominance of women among asylum patients is because of mothers’ tendency to transmit insanity to their daughters; forasmuch, since women’s main job has been mainly motherhood and wifehood. This insanity or breakdown actually would come when these women deny their nature as mothers and wives, to compete with men. Such Darwinian psychiatry appeared

when women started to have new demands for education, work and personal freedom. When woman started to pursue her new opportunities for self-fulfilment in education and work, psychiatrists notify that the situation would lead to mental sickness, sterility or even suicide. They linked women's new desires to the epidemic of nervous disorders, hysteria or even anorexia nervosa (Showalter 1987, pp.121-3).

A woman, who violates the traditional social mores and adopts a new identity as an active member in her society, is viewed by men as their 'Other', their opposite and even rivals. Therefore, "female sexuality," Felman opines,

is thus described as an absence of the masculine presence, in completeness, deficiency, envy with respect to the only sexuality in which value resides. This symmetrical conception of otherness is a theoretical blindness to the woman's actual difference, which is currently asserting itself and asserting precisely its claim to a new kind of logic and a new type of theoretical reasoning. (1986, p.8)

In effect, Felman discusses how one can think about madness without thinking of it as the opposite of sanity or reason, without relating it to identity. The same is true for a woman: how can she be liberated without being thought about as opposed to man, or as subordinated to the masculine model? How can she speak freely from the standpoint of the Other? This is the real problem of woman's struggle. Felman also discusses the relationship between woman's madness and woman's identity; since women, in general, are deprived of the ability to speak. For Felman, this question is set as a trap and she argues that reason/madness, speech/silence, coincide with the dichotomy men/ women. In other words, women are associated both with madness and silence, while men are identified with reason, activity and the ability to speak. Man's reason reacts by trying to appreciate woman's madness by claiming to understand it. But this has never been a deep understanding, but an external one that reduces the madwoman to a spectacle, to a possessed object (Felman 1986, pp.8, 13- 15). Cristina Herrera in her article "The Madwoman Speaks: Madness and Motherhood in Angie Cruz's *Soledad*" states that madness is a trap for woman. The madwoman is trapped by her madness, and it has never been a liberation for her. She criticizes Gilbert and Gubar because they link woman's madness with protest and feebleness, and

they neglect the main reasons that lead women into mental disorder. They forget that the madwoman cannot act, cannot even speak for herself (p.54).

Shoshana Felman argues how masculinity turns to be the universal equivalent of femininity through the cultural history of gender in order to understand why madness is labelled to be feminine. She affirms that what the narcissistic universal masculinity tries to "eliminate under the label madness is nothing other than feminine difference, since woman is madness and madness is the lack of resemblance... Madness is the absence of womanhood" (1986, pp.14, 15). Felman believes that woman can restore herself, her mind, and her identity as a woman only when she can recognize and answer the question "I? Who?" not "She? Who?" A woman can be herself when she recognizes herself as a subject and not an object; not a reflection of man's image. She agrees with Virginia Woolf who believes that a "woman has served all these centuries as an image (looking glasses) possessing the magic and delicious power of reflecting the figure of man at twice its natural size" (Ibid, p.12). Does a woman need to change the way she thinks? Is it a woman's prerogative to find a way to express her fury without being accused or labelled as a madwoman? Does changing the mind mean getting rid of the sense of lacking phallacy? Nina Baym, in *The Madwoman and Her language* believes that "women are not resigning themselves to silence and non-speech: we cannot afford to, and as we enter the public arena in increasing numbers, we are not silent, and we do not scream. Wishing to speak to effect, we use rational sequential discourse and we use it well" (1986, p.158).

Shoshana Felman suggests that if a woman is associated with madness, her aim will be how to break out of this cultural imposition without being criticized or being under any kind of therapeutic positions of reason. She needs to avoid speaking as a madwoman. Today, woman's real challenge is to invent a language of her own, to learn how to use it, to prove her identity, and to speak outside of the specular phallogocentric structure (Felman 1986, p.17). Felman also asserts that for women, 'mental illness' is a phrase of cultural weakness and that the "depressed and terrified women are not about to seize the means of production and reproduction. Quite the opposite of rebellion, madness is the impasse confronting those whom cultural conditioning has deprived of the very

means of protest or self-affirmation. Far from being a form of contestation, 'mental illness' is a request for help, a manifestation both of cultural impotence and of political castration" (Ibid, p.8).

Finally, all the previous scientific theories about women anger, fury, madness and trauma have been applied to literature throughout history. In the next part of this chapter there will be a discussion of these issues through some literary critical theories.

1.2 **Discussion of Female Madness and Fury in Literature**

Since literature is the mirror of real life, the madwoman or furious woman has been one of the familiar literary figures for many writers. They represent fury or anger as an alternative form of defeat or victory, weakness or strength for the furious female characters. A Furious woman in literature and other branches of art has the stereotype of the sexually aggressive madwoman. Jane E. Kromm affirms that:

representing female disorder in the form of a physically aggressive sexuality that threatens positions of masculine authority had a powerful validity for the male spectator that can be measured by its subsequent effect. Depictions of madness in women were increasingly indistinguishable from and hence reinforceable by the sexualized. (1994, p.530)

From the nineteenth century up till now, novelists started to use madness in an unfamiliar way. They comment on the hypocrisies of reality and challenge the social order. The modern madwoman, for instance, is alienated from the mechanized society and its goals (Lupack 1995, p.1).

Lilian Feder, in her book *Madness in Literature*, believes that madness is "a wide variety of contradictory attitudes and almost any conduct that can be either justified or attacked as extreme. ... Madness has been a continuous theme in western literature from its beginnings to the present time" (1980, p.xi,3). She defines using madness in literature according to three different but related dimensions. The first dimension is an aesthetical dimension in which madness depicts a consummation or eventual self-expression that is subsequently self-

destructive. The second dimension is the political dimension, in which madness can signify a sense of injustice and a motive of confrontation. The third dimension is a social dimension, in which madness is seen as mental illness or "an acceptable personal withdrawal from the values of a repressive society" (Ibid, p.xi).

Actually, Feder sums up that the new literary forms of madness in which revelation of the mind, expansion of consciousness, and social alienation occur are "personal gratification in regressive fantasies, illusions of omnipotence, the expansion of consciousness in dissociation and hallucinations as an avenue to individual and communal rebirth" (1980, p.279). She also debates that "literary representations of madness often go further in their depiction of the processes of restitution. They reveal the ways in which the mad distort reality in accordance with their unique psychic deprivations and requirements. Yet, in so doing, create an emotional environment for the reconstruction of a self-image" (Ibid, p.27). That the modern portrayals of madness act as a psychic and aesthetic goal. Madness as a theme in general always dealt with personal responses to environmental influences: political, social, and cultural pressures (Ibid, p.203). It seems that madness in literature has been romanticized (Ibid, p.xiii), and "madness and women ... turn out to be the two outcasts of the establishment of readability. An ideological conditioning of literary and critical discourse" (Felman 1986, p.11).

Cristina Herrera affirms that the subject of madwoman has been used in numerous literary texts, "first made famous by Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic*. Written over thirty years ago, this work continues to be the foremost analysis of what the madwoman represented for nineteenth century Victorian women writers, and what this literary figure, in many instances, continues to symbolize in contemporary literature by women" (2011, p.51). Herrera also points out that the reason of presenting the madwoman figure in literature may be the rage or anger of the writers themselves, "madwoman represents a mode of rage and resistance to patriarchal dominance which bound the Victorian woman author to write, rather than act out her rage and discontent" (Ibid).

Shoshana Felman argues that in many literary texts the reasons behind woman's madness is somehow completely neglected in favor. In other words, some literary texts that deal with madness and women, in fact focus on the suffering of men with those mad women (1986, pp.10-11). Depending on some literary texts like Balzac's novel, Felman suggests that "madwoman is seen as and compared to an animal that must be captured and tamed ... [And] methods like 'to spy on' in order to 'know'; to 'tame' in order to 'cure' are used by masculine reason to objectify feminine madness, thereby mastering it" (Ibid, p.14). Felman suggests that by capturing and mastering the madwoman, the masculine reason indeed rapes her, and for her madness is the loss of her womanhood (Ibid).

Elaine Showalter, in her book *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture 1830-1980*, writes about the importance of reading Victorian texts to understand the representations of the figure of madwoman in depth. She explains that they "give us a more subtle and complex way of understanding the crises of the female life- cycle than the explanations of Victorian psychiatric medicine. These texts present female insanity in its social contexts, and as a reaction to the limitations of the feminine role itself. Unmarried middle- class women ... were widely considered a social problem by the Victorians" (1987, p.61).

One of the famous mad female characters in literature is Ophelia in *Hamlet* who became an icon of female madness in art and literature. Ophelia sets the standard for female insanity; medical textbooks even contained illustrations of Ophelia-like characters. In nineteenth-century literature, madness became an important theme as an expression of suppressed rebellion. The image of the "madwoman" has mirrored the oppression of feminine potential, her symptoms seeming to critique the society that oppresses her. The rebellious madwoman appears throughout literature of the nineteenth century and is best illustrated by the violently insane Bertha Mason, in Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre, who rebelled against the patriarchal domination. Bertha is kept locked in the attic by her husband, Edward Rochester as a punishment for her revolt. Miss Havisham of Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* depicts a heartbroken spinster who remains shut up in her rooms still wearing the torn and tattered wedding dress

from the day in her youth that she was jilted, leaving the mouse-eaten wedding cake on the table. Though non-violent, Miss Havisham is mentally unstable and devises ways for mad revenge. Charlotte Perkins Gilman's gothic short story *The Yellow Wallpaper*, written in 1892 and based on her actual experiences, expresses a Victorian woman's condition of coping with mental instability within a controlling, male dominated medical profession. Having been subdued and conditioned to obey, the woman in the story follows her doctor's prescribed treatment of rest and isolation, but eventually descends into psychosis. In these examples, the madwoman with her violent and destructive tendencies speaks toward gender politics merged with madness.

The twentieth century theorists Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar offer an extensive study on literary females in their book *The Madwoman in the Attic*. They examine the canonical works of writers such as Charlotte Bronte, Jane Austen, and George Eliot. Their book reviews the madwomen both as literary figures and as writers. They depict the figure of the madwoman as a double in writings to demonstrate how nineteenth century women writers employed mirrors to create the madwoman. According to Gilbert and Gubar, the figure of madwoman in literature emerges "over and over again from the mirrors women writers hold up both to their own natures and to their own visions of nature, and from a silence in which neither [those characters] nor [the] authors can continue to acquiesce" (1984, p.77).

The same idea of mirror and its relationship with the woman's psyche can be found in Gillian M.E. Alban's book *The Medusa Gaze in Contemporary Women's Fiction: Petrifying, Maternal, Redemptive*. Throughout her deep discussion of a number of contemporary women's fiction, Alban argues how a woman creates her own personality not by holding a mirror and reflecting the others' gaze on herself but by turning her own gaze against them. She admits that "the mirror as a paradigm represents the physically reflected sight of the subject returning to [women], creating a metaphor of the psychic and transitive interplay between people" (2017, p.19). She believes that "the mirroring aspect of the gaze [in literature] turns a woman's hard-earned personality against others when they attempt to subjugate her, although she herself may also become vulnerable to such destructive gazes" (Ibid, p.261).

Moreover, Alban (2017) agrees with Barbara Creed (1993) that "women are not passive recipients of the gaze" (1993, p.261). For both Creed and Alban these women are more subjects than being objects. Creed and Alban both challenge Mulvey's view of woman as being an object of the gaze. Creed, in her book *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis*, discusses the idea of castration and she asserts that woman, as a castrator, "controls the…gaze; [and] the male victim is her object" (Ibid, p.193). Both speak about Medusa gaze and the figure of female monstrosity; For Creed, Medusa is the castrating female monster with powerful 'vagina dentata' upon her head, rather than Freudian weak castrated victim with phallic objects upon her head. She affirms that presenting women as victims used by patriarchal ideology to control women (Ibid, p.111). Not unlike Creed, Gillian Alban believes that a woman does not need to be a castrator, but she needs to get out of victimhood. Alban affirms that woman when "turning her forceful gaze against aggressors, she protects the innocent against attack through her forceful, talismanic evil eye" (2017, p.262). Alban credits that "Medusa may empower, or may madden women into destruction, this force a symbol of power within relationships" (p.263). It means the force of gaze may empower the protagonist or turn against her and destroy her. This will be discussed within the analysis of the selected texts in this thesis.

Gilbert and Gubar, like Creed, discuss the concept of angel and monster madwoman. They argue that the monster madwoman "is simply a woman who seeks the power of self- articulation" (1984, p.79). They affirm that "it is the violence of the double the female author enacts her own raging desire to escape male houses and male texts, while at the same time it is through the double's violence that this anxious author articulates for herself the costly destructiveness of anger repressed until it can no longer be contained" (Ibid, p.85).

Furthermore, Gilbert and Gubar deal with the portrayal of female characters in a world shaped by and for men. They provide a fascinating view of the female roles that are defined by a male-dominated world. Each of these roles is ultimately directed to the man's benefit. Because these female roles were mainly negative, especially the role of the madwoman, restrictions and limitations had been imposed on women's behavior. In other words, through

their argument, Gilbert and Gubar interpret the existence of the madwoman image in female writers' fiction. In fact, women had a set of rules and limits to obey; those 'female virtues' emphasized submissiveness and obedience. Gilbert and Gubar express these women's situation as if they wore 'masks' and their faces would not be seen, and their voices would not be heard. These women 'killed' themselves to fit into their society (1984, p.14). In fiction, male writers categorized female characters into two specific forms: either an angel or a monster.

Gilbert and Gubar concentrate on portraying women and women writers and how they were treated by "patriarchal males" as either angels or madwomen. They want to emphasize the maleness of the nineteenth-century society and the entire literary history and describe how women were trying to struggle free from the limitations set for them. Their study can, therefore, easily be linked with the study of madness and its manifestations throughout history. They believe that every woman has both angelic and monstrous features, but "the ideal woman that male authors dream of generating is always an angel" (1984, p.20) who submitted to men. That angelic female "had to draw away her thoughts from others and fix them on herself" (Ibid, p.24). The woman who thought to rebel against male authority would be accused of being a devil or demon; she would be described as 'monster-woman' (Ibid, p.28). Gilbert and Gubar argue that "those [rebellious] women can be seen as prisoners in the [literary] texts and in the 'attics and caves' of society, but they had an invincible sense of their own autonomy" (Ibid, p.16). They affirm that anger is the weapon of those rebellious women. Ever after, in patriarchal culture, female speech and female 'presumption' is that: angry revolt against male domination are inextricably linked and inevitably 'daemonic' (Ibid, p.28).

Gilbert and Gubar based their title on Bertha Mason, a madwoman imprisoned in her husband's attic in Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*. Gilbert and Gubar believe that Bertha is not only a madwoman who is imprisoned in the attic, but she also serves as a 'dark double' for Jane's character, and mirrors Jane's feelings of 'anger and rebellion' (1984, p.338). They suggest that the madwoman story can be a story of self-definition for the woman writer herself, "what is the secret message of literature by women. … What in other words,

have [a] woman [writer] got to hide? ... What literary woman have hidden or disguised is what each writer knows is in some sense her own story" (Ibid, pp.75-76). Moreover, they argue that the feminist rage is enacted by both Jane and Bertha; both in the form of madness and anger. Jane's "refusal to accept the forms, customs and standards of society -in short, it is rebellious feminism" (Ibid, p.338). Bertha's anger is shown in the novel when she escapes her prison (Ibid, p.360). Otherwise, Showalter argues that "Bertha's violence, dangerousness and rage, her regression to an inhuman condition and her sequestration became such a powerful model for Victorian readers, including psychiatrists, that it influenced even medical accounts of female insanity" (1987, p.68).

Actually, talking about Bertha Mason in this part of the thesis is important. In spite of the differences in race, color, and living conditions between her and some of the protagonists in the chosen texts, Bertha can be seen as the other side of the same coin with these protagonists. The readers are not provided with a history or background about her madness or the reasons behind this madness. Yet, her husband is the only person who says that she is mad. Instead, she could be a rebellious woman and she threatens the male authority in her society like some of the protagonists in the chosen texts that will be discussed in the following chapters.

1.3 **Black Feminist Theories on Madness, Fury and Trauma**

Women, despite what is said about the progress of the age, are still vulnerable to the confiscation of their most basic rights in many societies, including in countries that called themselves developed. No matter her age, no matter her color. Is there anyone who does not know this fact?

The African American woman is the one who suffers double than her white counterpart as the history of African American people is marked by slavery from 1619 to 1865. That history was characterized by continuous dehumanization, humiliation, racial segregation, and exploitation. In *Colonial Power and African Illness*, to describe a distinctly African insanity, Megan Vaughan asserts that African men who acted strangely or violently in urban areas or the mining compounds found themselves identified with schizophrenia and confined to colonialist asylums. In contrast, "African women were said not to have reached the level of self-awareness required to go mad, and in the colonial literature on psychology and psychopathology, the African woman represented the happy, 'primitive' state of precolonial Africa" (1991, p.22).

Women across the globe have been labelled as "deviant" and "uncontrollable". These terms in themselves produce the conceptualization of women's "madness," with its wreck, and any study of women and "madness" has to consider this aspect of subversion and the question of power. Such a theoretical underpinning would give rise to the examination of subjectivity and agency, where "madness" becomes a form of resistance and durability. Jane Ussher, in *The Madness of Women: Myth and Experience*, explains how "feminists have celebrated hysteria as a woman's response to a system in which her subjectivity is denied, kept invisible" (p.23). Christina Herrera agrees with Santagelo's assertion that "madness may potentially imprison [the character] in the painful past, opens the possibility for maternal connection" (2011, p.62). Herrera also affirms that the "madwomen characters in literature have so far remained silent and therefore disempowered, yet in modern literary" texts, the madwoman does speak. Her madness, trauma and hysteria, all become forms of protest and a special type of speech and expression of fury (p.52). Silence becomes a form of speech; it is madwoman's language, and each one has her own language.

On the side of women of color the matter is different. For these women, gender is not alone a way to clarify their experiences. One must neglect racial, sexual and economic oppression in the lives of colored women to accept the controversy that madness is a rebellion against the patriarchy that privileges gender as the only form of oppression. In fact, African Americans have been neglected by feminist theories of mental illness for a long time. Marta Caminero Santagelo believes that those feminist theories brought by Gilbert and Gubar did not give the problems and the experiences of women of color any attention. She "demonstrates the limitations of Gilbert and Gubar's argument, especially in terms of how it does not adequately account for the treatment of madness in fiction by women writers of color" (1996, p.51). On the other hand, Patricia Hill Collins in *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowering* (2002) argues that "black women's lives are a series of negotiations that aim to reconcile the contradictions separating our own internally defined images of self as African American women with our objectification as the Other" (p.99). Dorothy E. Roberts, in her article "Racism and Patriarchy in the Meaning of Motherhood", discusses that patriarchal problems are interrelated, and they dominated the lives of all women, both black and white. But racism makes it different for black women. However, "it is not enough to note that black women suffer from both racism and sexism, although this is true. Racism is patriarchal. Patriarchal is racist" (1993, p.3). Indeed, the black women's problem is not too much different from the others; it is between masculine/feminine, man/woman. The difference is in the reasons and the trauma they had experienced.

Joanne Lipson Freed argues that African American women were treated as slaves and were depicted as animals and 'prostitutes'. In African American culture, "the past of slavery remains alive in the present in many ways, and the recurrence of this past exemplifies the process of traumatic repetition" (2011, p.409). Doreen Fowler asserts that slavery "institutionalizes the repression of mother power … The slave woman had no rights, nothing neither her body nor her children were her own" (1997, p.141). Carole Boyce Davies remarks that in the context of slavery's patriarchal system, childbearing implies a definite marking or stamping for the black woman. She believes that "the mark of

motherhood inscribes the domination of men into women's bodies" (1994, p.137). While Patricia Hill Collins attributes the black female's difficulties to the "systems of oppression that hold up distorted mirrors of a 'public image' through which black women learn to view [them]selves" (2002, p.166). Indeed, Black women shoulder a double burden, having to deal with both race and sex discrimination. It is important to understand the differences between black men and black women, and between black women and white women in order to understanding the nature of black womanhood.

bell hooks, in an interview with George Yancy, indicates that anger for black women can be a source of power and they have to be aware of it: "I am so angry!... And I think that if we think of anger as compost, we think of it as energy that can be recycled in the direction of our good. It is an empowering force. If we don't think about it that way, it becomes a debilitating and destructive force" (hooks 2015). She asserts that black patriarchy as well as white supremacy are both pivotal factors in causing black women's madness, trauma, and even anger. The trauma caused by the patriarchal authority "creates wounds, and most of our wounds [as black women] are not healed as African Americans. We're not really different in that way from all the others who are wounded … Wounded white [women] frequently can [get] over their wounds, because they have greater access to material power" (hooks 2015). From a different point of view, Francoise Lionnet argues that "though victimized by patriarchal social structures that perpetuate their invisibility and dehumanization, black female characters actively resist their objectification, to the point of committing murder" (1993, p.133). Trina Jones and Kimberly Jade Norwood, in their article "Aggressive Encounters and White Fragility: Deconstruction the Trope of the Angry Black Woman," suggest that anger "is an emotion; a state of mind; a state of being. Anger can be triggered when, for example, a person is disrespected, ignored, preyed upon, erroneously suspected of wrongdoing, or otherwise discriminated against" (2017, p.2066). Anger is not always a negative emotion, instead it can be a source of self-assertion, especially for women. Women need to express their anger from time to time in order to stop any type of oppression against her and to get out of the victimhood state.

Leslie Jamison suggests that “the phenomenon of female anger has often been turned against itself. The figure of the angry woman has been reframed as theatre- not the one who has been harmed, but the one bent on harming”. (2018) Jamison believes that black women from childhood cannot express their anger in a correct way, “female anger is unnatural or destructive … Anger [is] more acceptable from boys than from girls” (Ibid). She also argues that:

angry women are messier. Their pain threatens to cause more collateral damage. It’s as if the prospect of a women’s anger harming other people threatens to rob her of the social capital she has gained by being wronged…[Actually], people are more likely to use words like ‘bitchy’ and hostile to describe female anger, while male anger is more likely to be described as strong. (Ibid)

Claudia Tate writes that “black women writers project their vision of the world, society, community, family, their lovers, even themselves, most often through the eyes of black female characters and poetic personae. Their angle of vision allows them to see what white people, especially males seldom see…Through their art they share their vision of possible resolution with those who cannot see” (1983. p.xx). Gerda Lerner, in her book *Black Women in America*, argues that in African American literature, the writers present different stereotypical images of the black women during slavery with different traumatic experiences, like ‘mullato’, ‘Mammy’, ‘field slave’, and ‘house slave’. She mentions that the slave narrative writers give accurate images about the black women during slavery, and how these women had to tolerate all kinds of humiliation, racial segregation, and exploitation. These women endured for the sake of their children. For them, survival meant “daily living in danger and hardship, swallowing anger and suppressing rage… Black women stood beside and with their men, doing their shore and more” (1973, p.287). Lerner affirms that the black women writers, through writings and introducing the problems of the black women, do not ask for equality with men or even with white women. They are asking for liberation and calling for their rights to be treated as strong active individuals in their societies, not as victims (Ibid, p.608). In fact, those writers, by presenting the black women’s experience and suffering during slavery, they want to give black women a message to learn how to express their anger without being afraid. Did these circumstances lead to these women’s anger? Do they

really feel angry? At whom, at what, and why have they been really angry? How do they express their anger?

Audre Lorde, in her book *Sister Outside*, discusses the effect of racism and slavery on the black women and how they response with anger: “women responding to racism means women responding to anger” (1984, p.124). She encourages them to use their anger in a right way, turning it to their benefits. In her article “The Uses of Anger”, Audre describes her situation with her anger as a black woman. She indicates that she has “lived with that anger, on that anger, beneath that anger, on the top of that anger, ignoring that anger, feeding upon that anger, learning to use that anger before it laid [her] visions to waste most of [her] life” (1997, p.278). She advises women not to tear their anger and to learn how to express their anger, not in silence, because that may hurt them. She believes that anger is “a response to racist attitudes, to the actions and presumptions that arise out of those attitudes” (Ibid). Audre as a black woman, advises the other women to turn their anger to be a powerful source of energy that leads to a positive change. She believes that this anger has to be a useful expression of a painful process that leads to discover the identity of women (1997, p.280). For Audre, there is a big difference between anger of black women and their hatred. She asserts that “hatred is the fury of those who do not share our goals [as black women], and its object is death and destruction. Anger is the grief of distortions between peers, and its object is change” (Ibid, p.282). These women must not accept the powerless roles, fear and feelings of guilt that are imposed upon them by both male and race authorities. They have to avoid the anger of others and turn their own anger to be a source of empowerment; otherwise, any anger can destroy them (Ibid, p.283).

Lorde asserts that “mother … taught [girl] to survive from a very early age … Her silence also taught … isolation, fury, mistrust, self-rejection, and sadness … And survival is the greatest gift of love. Sometimes for black mothers, it is the only gift possible, and tenderness gets lost” (1984, pp.149-50). bell hooks, in her book *Ain’t I a Woman*, affirms that slavery affects the mother-daughter relationship in a bad way. This is because “the female slave lived in constant awareness of her sexual vulnerability… [and] the threat of rape or other physical brutalization inspired terror in the psyches of displaced African

female[s]… since rape was a common method of torture slavers used to subdue recalcitrant black women" (1982, pp.18-24). Not unlike hooks and Lorde, Tamara Beauboeuf-Lafontant, in her book *Behind the Mask of the Strong Woman*, debates that black women experiencing depressive events, instead of associating their depression with feelings of helplessness and hopelessness, they emphasize states of extreme psychic and physical exhaustion, frustration, and suppressed anger (2009, p.62). These black women can be like bombs that explode their fury out of different types of oppression.

In the case of black women/men relationships and their effect on the women's psychic situation, bell hooks argues that when the black man fails to assume his role, the black woman becomes angry. When the black woman failed to offer what her partner needs, the black man becomes angry. hooks suggests that "in relationship[s], black men openly asserted that they perceived white women as more feminine than black women. Both black females and males were uncertain about their womanhood and manhood. They were both striving to adapt themselves to standards set by the dominant white society" (1982, p.178). Julia Sudbury, in her book *Other Kinds of Dreams*, believes that "black women's visions are not limited to narrow and essentialist identity politics… Black women have 'other kinds of dreams' which are broader and far more revolutionary" (1998, p.2). But the contemporary movement toward feminism did not pay much attention to the women of color and black women's dreams and problems. hooks discusses that,

there was little discussion of the impact of sexism on the social status of black women. The upper- and middle-class white women who were at the forefront of the movement made no effort to emphasize that patriarchal power… is not just the privilege of upper- and middle-class white men, but the privilege of all men in our society regardless of their class or race. (1982, p.87)

Nevertheless, hooks discusses the issue that some scholars have emphasized, of the greater impact of slavery on black men more than that on black women. For her, those scholars minimize the black female slave's traumatic experience. She believes that there is no way to diminish the suffering of those men as slaves, but the female slave suffered double oppression and fear; her suffering was directly related to her sexuality. Most black male slaves did nothing against the

white masters' sexual assaulted and brutality toward the female slaves; rather than performing the role of protector, they raped and oppressed their black females, imitating the white male's behavior. It is obvious that "sexism and racism intensified and magnified the sufferings and oppressions of black women. The area that most clearly reveals the differentiation between the status of male slaves and female slaves is the work area. The black male slave was primarily exploited as a labourer in the fields. The black female was exploited as a labourer in the fields, a worker in the domestic household, a breeder, and as an object of white male [and black male] sexual assault" (1982, pp.22, 24, 35). Frances M. Beal submits her own perspective on the black women's problems, in her article "Double Jeopardy: To Be Black and Female" and she believes that:

The black woman can justly be described as a 'slave of a slave'. By reducing the black man to such abject oppression, the black woman had no protector and was used, and is still being used in some cases, as the scapegoat for the evils that this horrendous [slavery] system has perpetrated on black men. Her physical image has been maliciously maligned; she has been sexually molested and abused by the white [man]; she has suffered the worst kind of economic exploitation, having been forced to serve as the white woman's maid and wet nurse for white offspring while her own children were more often than not, starving and neglected. (1970, pp.110-112)

Both black men and black women did not understand the real danger around them; they were both busy with their personal relationships. Black men believe that they have been castrated by society, while black women are safe from this emasculation

In a description of contemporary black women texts, bell hooks mentions the term "healing". By this term, she expresses how the African American women writers present their female characters who can overcome their wounds and painful traumatic experiences. She admits that "progressive black women artists have shown on-going concern about healing our wounds. Much of the celebrated fiction by black women writers is concerned with identifying our pain and imaginatively constructing maps for healing" (1993, p.11).

Deborah M. Horvitz, in her book *Literary Trauma: Sadism, Memory, and Sexual Violence in American Women's Fiction*, suggests that African American women writers narrated historical trauma literature "long before such narratives emerged in white, mainstream fiction and theory during the last quarter of the twentieth century" (2000, p.70). Some of those African female writers highlight a special fact that trauma is rooted within their ancestors' cultural, historical, domestic, and psychological history (Ibid, p.55). Horvitz argues that, according to the early studies on hysteria and trauma, the black female body "converts" painful emotions into physical signs so that her body always "narrates [her] story. The body is the site of sexual trauma; but, in addition, it operates as the site of the traumas displacement" (Ibid, p.70). The writer becomes less concerned with how the white world views her text, and more concerned with maintaining a balance between being both an individual and a part of a larger black collective. Brown believes that the writings of the contemporary African American women writers are "product[s] of choice, of agency, rather than … reaction to victimization … [They] also provide models of decolonized subjectivity through the examples of their female characters. [Their] decolonizing texts provide models for achieving balance, wholeness, or self-actualization" (2010, pp.60, 64).

Barbara Christian, in her article "The Race for Theory," confirms that "one of the reasons for the surge of Afro-American women's writing during the 1970s and its emphasis on sexism in the black community is precisely that when ideologues of the 1960s said black, they meant black male" (1988, p.76). Actually, when black women speak out against sexism in communal spaces, they are often judged as being under the influence of white feminism or of emasculating black men. Their identities are always related to others'.

Nevertheless, a number of contemporary African American women writers start to write about race, slavery and trauma, woman madness and fury. These writers, throughout their writings and characters, find their way to break the silence and make their voices heard by their communities.

2. TEXTUAL LITERARY DISCUSSION OF MORRISON'S AND JONES' CHOSEN TEXTS

Toni Morrison and Gayl Jones are two famous African American writers who have their own style and way of writing and presenting 'black' women's problems. Chole Anthony Wofford (1931-2019), known as Toni Morrison, has a distinguishable writing style due to her special use of language. Her writings examine the 'Black' experience, especially black female experience within the black and white community. Through her writings she tries to combine between reality and imagination to present her protagonists. Morrison is different from other writers in that she has always been proud of her identity as a 'black writer': "I'm writing for black people…in the same way that Tolstoy was not writing for me, a 14-year-old coloured girl from Lorain, Ohio. I don't have to apologize or consider myself limited because I don't [write about white people] which is not absolutely true" (Hermione 2015). In her book *What Moves at the Margin: Selected Nonfiction*, Toni Morrison affirms that all human beings, no matter the race or color, are worthy of God's mercy and grace and no one deserve to be a slave (2008, p.66). Morrison also asserts that she has no problem of being mentioned as a black woman: "I can accept the labels because being a black woman writer is not a shallow place but a rich place to write from. It doesn't limit my imagination; it expands it. It's richer than being a white male writer because I know more and I've experienced more" (Grady 209).

Furthermore, Morrison has a distinguishable writing style due to her special use of language. Most of Morrison's fictions are always kind of fairy tales that she depicts from the African American oral folklore and stories of real women. For example, *Beloved* is a true story of a runaway slave who killed her infant daughter in order to save her from slavery. *The Bluest Eye* is also a real story of a black girl who is influenced by the white standards of beauty and longs for having blue eyes. Morrison uses these stories, embellished with special techniques, like magic realism, to present her major themes of racism and

sexism. Morrison's protagonists struggle to find themselves and their identities. Moreover, Morrison presents the image of mother and explores mother-child relationships in her novels. She justifies the importance of the role of the black mothers as a safe refuge for their children. Mothers in Morrison's novels are these women who are sold, whipped, brutalized, hanged, and treated as 'objects'.

Morrison, in one of her interviews with Elissa Schappell, talked about writing *Beloved* saying that one of the things behind writing is:

Too show the reader what slavery felt like, rather than how it looked … It seemed to me that describing what it looked like would distract the reader from what I wanted him or her to experience, which was what it *felt* like. The kind of information you can find between the lines of history. It sort of falls off the pages. It's right there in the intersection where an institution becomes personal, where the historical becomes people with names". (Schappell 1993)

Gayl Jones (1949-) is an African American writer who has a creative background. Her mother and grandmother provided her with a good literary background; her mother was a fiction writer and her grandmother was a religion drama writer. Jones started her writing in the age of seven. She has received a great amount of criticism and some critics accused her writings of containing excessive graphic violence. Studying Gayl Jones becomes so essential due to the fact that she explores black female sexuality and remnants of slave brutality that scrap in men-women relations. Her brutal and stylistically breathtakingly writings have masterfully integrated into African American writing culture. Her writings examine the psychological scars of slavery as manifested in sexual abuse and types of violence. She examines ways to introduce the written phrase with characteristics of oral storytelling (Frailey 2011). Jones is a real artist who has found out the depths of the brutal realities of sex, elegance and racial issues within the lives of black people. In her fiction, she frequently portrays violence to demonstrate the devastating effects of slavery on the twentieth century African American families. In some of her novels, Jones focuses on women who are driven to or over the edge of madness by the abuses they endure. The originality of her work lies in allowing these women to speak for themselves (Quadir 2017, pp. 73-77).

Toni Morrison believes that Jones has a unique style of writing in which she describes the relationship between black man and black woman in depth like no one ever did before. Morrison also believes that Jones lit up the special spots of women's journey of slavery. Morrison describes one of Jones' characters, Ursa, in one line: "Ursa Corregidora is not possible. Neither is Gayl Jones. But they exist … [Gayl Jones] had changed the terms; the definitions of the whole enterprise … She had written a story that thought the unthinkable: that talked about the female requirement to 'make generation' as an active, even violent political act" (2008, p.110).

Jones, in an interview, states that: "Ursa in *Corregidora* tells her own story in her own language and so does Eva in *Eva's Man* … Ursa is telling her story and there are stories within stories. Eva is also telling hers. But there's a somewhat different case for Eva. She doesn't want to tell her story in the same way that Ursa does, and so there are more fragments, more jumbling of time and memory and imagination" (Rowell 1982, p.33).

In the following analyses, readers can feel that the exploration of trauma, self-definition, silence, fury and madness in Morrison's *Beloved* and *The Bluest Eye* and Jones's *Corregidora*, *Eva's Man*, and "Asylum" reveals important links between memory, history, and storytelling in the context of the Black Feminist tradition.

2.1 **Memories of Trauma**

There was nothing. It [her face] was empty, totally empty—
Nothing ... There was an unexplainable sadness and
emptiness in the deep waters that swirled around at the
bottom of those eyes that I could not comprehend ...
something snapped in her head. invading her arteries,
spreading through her entire body.

Makuchi, *The Healer*

Trauma can be a response to a deep or very disturbing anxiety that either debilitates a woman and overcomes her ability to cope, or strengths her to burst

out with fury. Judith Herman states that “psychological trauma is an affliction of the powerless. At the moment of trauma, the victim is rendered helpless by overwhelming force. When the force of that is other human beings, we speak of atrocities. Traumatic events overwhelm the ordinary systems of care that give people a sense of control, connection and meaning” (1992, p.33). Herman also argues that “when neither resistance nor escape is possible, the human system of self-defence becomes overwhelmed and disorganized…Traumatic events produce profound and lasting changes in physiological arousal, emotion, cognition and memory. Moreover, traumatic events can sever these normally integrated functions from each other” (Ibid, p.34) and that is what happened with both Sethe and Eva. Cathy Caruth defines trauma as “a kind of double telling, the oscillation between a *crisis of death* and the correlative *crisis of life*: between the story of the unbearable nature of an event and the story of the unbearable nature of an event and the story of the unbearable nature of its survival” (1996, p.7).

The slavery system of brutality against the slaves has a negative impact on Sethe’s memories; she suffers physically, mentally, and spiritually out of her traumatic past as a slave. In other words, Sethe’s memories influence her life; the trauma of slavery was so dehumanizing and painful, “anybody white could take your whole self for anything that came to mind. Not just work, kill, or maim you…[or] who is going to buy you out? Or me? Or her? ... If all my labor is Sweet Home, including the extra, what I got to sell?” (Morrison 2004, pp.295, 232). She gets exhausted and she struggles with her memories at Sweet Home and tries to forget her past. For her “the future was a matter of keeping the past at bay” (Ibid, p. 51) but she could not because “some things go. Pass on. Some things just stay. [she] used to think it was her [rememory]… something you forget. Other things you never do. But it’s not” (Ibid, p.43). When Denver asks Sethe if people can see their memories, she said “yes, oh, yes, yes…so clear…it’s when you bump into a rememory that belongs to somebody else” (Ibid, p.43). For Sethe time and memories are so engaged and she can never get rid of those memories even if she tries or pretends to forget for a while. In fact, “it’s so hard for [her] to believe in it” and she gives a piece of advice that “Places, places are still there. If a house burns down, it’s gone, but the place-

the pictures of it- stays, and not just in my memory, but out there, in the world … even if I don't think it, even if I die, the picture of what I did, or knew, or saw it still out there. Right in the place where it happened" (Ibid, p.43). Moreover, those traumatic memories affect even her relationship with Paul D, She believes that she has responsibilities more important than a love relation with a man, "I have other things to do: worry, for example, about tomorrow, about Denver, about Beloved, about age and sickness not to speak of love" (Ibid, p.83). Sethe is traumatized by so many events but later readers can recognize how she still claims her fury to act outrage only.

In fact, one of Sethe's severe traumatic memories of the boys is taking her milk and beating her and as a result "her back skin had been dead for years" (Ibid, p.18). At that moment, Sethe has lost her identity and her sense as a woman, a mother and a human being, "they took my milk … they took my milk" (Ibid, p.17). What affects Sethe more is not the pain or the scares or the chokeberry tree on her back, but her milk, the stolen milk. She expresses her deep grief for the stolen milk several times throughout the novel, "nobody will ever get my milk no more except my own children. I never had to give it to nobody else- and the one time I did it was took from me- they held me down and took it. Milk that belonged to my baby" (Ibid, p.236). She focuses on the milk that has been taken from her because it has been stolen from her children. It is her motherhood that has been stolen. Taking her milk, like a cow, by the schoolteacher's nephews violates Sethe's sense of self, physically and psychologically. Those traumatic memories lead Sethe to become obsessed with the idea of a perfect mother-daughter relationship, especially after Beloved's appearance. Indeed, Sethe's memories in Sweet Home before the arrival of Schoolteacher are different after his arrival because they come to understand that "everything rested on Garner being alive. Without his life each of [the slaves] fell to pieces" (Ibid, p.259), and Sweet Home was a good place for the slaves. After Mr. Garner's death, Mrs. Garner invites Schoolteacher and his two nephews to live with her and manage the farm, and from this moment Sethe's trauma has started; from the moment she knows that she is on the animal side of the list of features, according to schoolteacher's education. For Schoolteacher slaves "ate too much, rested too much, talked too much, which was certainly

true compared to him, because schoolteacher ate little, spoke less and rested not at all" (Ibid, p.259).

However, Sethe is able to escape and she

had had twenty-eight days … of unslaved life … Days of healing, ease and real-talk. Days of company: knowing the names of forty, fifty other Negroes, their views, habits, where they had been and what done; of feeling their fun and sorrow along with her own … Bit by bit, at 124 … she had claimed herself. (Ibid, p.111)

But Schoolteacher's arrival to 124 Bluestone Road to take Sethe back into slavery, leads to Sethe's 'Rememory' of her own traumatic brutal experience with him and his nephews. As a mother, Sethe tries to kill all of her children in order to save them from the brutality of slavery. For this murder "[she] blamed herself for Baby's Suggs' collapse" (Ibid, p.105). This murder has been Sethe's overwhelming tragedy and she wonders if that would be the pattern of her life, "twenty- eight happy days were followed by eighteen years of disapproval and a solitary life … was that the pattern? She wondered. Every eighteen or twenty years her unliveable life would be interrupted by a short-lived glory?" (Ibid, p.204).

Further, these severing traumatic memories of killing her daughter are always haunting her, creating feelings of guiltiness in her and never letting her live or "lay down nowhere in peace" (2004, p.241). Also, her memories when she wanted to bury her daughter and she had to have a sexual relationship with the engraver because she "thought it would be enough, rutting among the headstones with the engraver, his young son looking on … That should certainly be enough" (Ibid, p.6) to punish herself for killing her daughter. Over and above, Sethe cannot heal from these traumatic memories till the end. When Paul D asks her about what has been written in journals about her crime, she cannot talk about her tragedy directly; otherwise, she

was spinning. Round and round the room … once in a while she rubbed her hips as she turned, but the wheel never stopped … Circling, circling, now she was gnawing something else instead of getting to the point … Sethe knew that the circle she was making around the room, him, the subject, would remain one …

that she could never explain … She knew that the words she did not understand hadn't any more power than she had to explain. (Ibid, pp.187,190,192)

Sethe talks about her lost childhood, how "I wanted to be [a daughter] and would have been if my ma'am had been able to get out of the rice long enough before they hanged her and let me be one" (Ibid, p.240). She reflects on the pain of realizing that her mother may have tried to run away without her, acknowledging that her mother probably planned to abandon her. In fact, Sethe's traumatic memories about her mother also affect her life. She does not know much about her mother to tell her daughters about; her mother was hanged and Sethe never knew why it happened to her 'ma'am': *"Hung. By the time they cut her down nobody could tell whether she had a circle and a cross or not, least of all me and I did look"…"I never found out. It was a lot of Them"* (Ibid, p.241).

When she talks about her ma'am, it seems that, out of pain and trauma, death for her is something ordinary. Sethe admits that she is different from her mother and she would never leave her children alone. She has an eternal conflict not to leave her dead daughter alone and not to leave the others. "When I put that headstone up I wanted to lay in there … and I would have if my Buglar and Howard and Denver didn't need me, because my mind was homeless then" (Ibid, p.241). Spite of the pain of Sethe's traumatic memories and she "got a tree on [her] back", she tells Paul D that "no more running- from nothing. I will never run from another thing on this earth…It cost too much! Do you hear me? It cost too much" (Ibid, p.18).

Morrison (2004) shows the importance of the listener in converting traumatic memories. Beloved, as a listener to both Sethe and Denver, gives Denver the ability to retell her birth story. Beloved creates an emotional distance between Denver and her traumas. Denver is finally able "to see what she was saying and not just to hear it. … Denver was seeing it now and feeling it-through Beloved. … [The] monologue became, in fact, a duet as they lay together. … Denver spoke, Beloved listened, and the two did the best they could to create what really happened, how it really was" (Ibid, pp.91-92). The listener-witness is the crucial link that allows victims to understand their traumas. But ultimately, Paul D, or Denver, or even Sethe cannot be witnesses to each other's traumatic

stories because they themselves are too traumatized to be impartial listeners. At first, Paul D seems to help Sethe understand her trauma because "now there was someone to share it, and he had beat the spirit away the very day he entered her house and no sign of it since" (Ibid, p.112-13). Paul D is an imperfect listener-witness for Sethe because "with Paul D, who had shared some of it and to whom she could talk with at least with a measure of calm, the hurt was always there" (Ibid, p.69).

In fact, the victims of trauma suffer because they want to remember and want to forget. This is not too much different from *Corregidora* (Jones 1975), Ursa, who is affected passively by being a listener and a witness to her foremothers' traumatic memories in spite of the fact that she did not experience it in reality. In *Beloved* (Morrison 2004) Sethe, Baby Suggs and even Beloved herself all can understand each other's trauma because they are all listeners and witnesses. Unlike Denver, "who went deaf" and silent for two years once she knows about her mother's crime; she could not understand.

Baby Suggs is one of the strongest female characters with a faithful heart in spite of her traumatic experience and memories. After her freedom, Baby Suggs becomes kind of a holy woman in Cincinnati for black people; she was a lovely strong woman whose heart was full of love, faith and life. When she was alive, the power of her personality reflected on her new house and "124 had been a cheerful, buzzing house where Baby Suggs, holy, loved, cautioned, fed" (2004, p.102). In her new place, Baby Suggs gives "messages for whoever needed them" (Ibid, p.102). One of her sermons that gives Sethe and people the power to stay strong with a sense of self, "love [your flesh]. Love it hard" (2004, p.103). But Sethe's tragedy breaks Baby Suggs' spirit and she withdraw herself from the people. She stays bedridden and she becomes weaker each day. She is "suspended between the nastiness of life and the meanness of the dead, she couldn't get interested in leaving life or living it … Her past had been like her present- and since she knew death was anything but forgetfulness, she used the little energy left her for pondering color" (Ibid, p.4). In fact, Baby Suggs gives up on life and becomes colorless and lifeless ever since Sethe kills her daughter. She stays in bed all day and slowly lost all sense of self and went from being happy to be depressed. When Sethe goes to jail, Baby Suggs stops holding

ceremonies, and people start to stay away from 124 and she “refused to go to the clearing because she believed [the white people] had won” (Ibid, p.217). She believes that the whites had won because the effect of slavery continues to affect the blacks lives despite their freedom.

Nevertheless, Baby Suggs is never crushed after all the trauma she had passed through during slavery, including losing all of her children. “Seven times she had done that: held a little foot; examined the fact fingertips with her own-fingers she never saw become the male or female hands a mother would recognize anywhere … All seven were gone or dead … [only Halle] was with her everywhere” (Ibid, p.164). She had already lost her children except Halle “a son, deeply mourned because he was the one who had bought her out of there” (Ibid, p.15). So, what is the reason behind her collapse? “her faith, her love, her imagination and her great big old heart began to collapse twenty-eight days after her daughter-in-law arrived” (Ibid, p.105). Twenty-eight days after Sethe’s arrival to 124, Baby Suggs looks at Sethe and her children with happiness, then she “closed her eyes … suddenly, behind the disapproving odor, way back behind it, she smelled another thing. Dark and coming. Something she couldn’t get at because the other odor hid it” (Ibid, p.163). She was thinking “what could it be? ... What was left to hurt her? News of Halle’s death? No. she has been prepared for that better than she had for his life” (Ibid, p.163). Sethe’s killing her daughter seems to be the reason behind Suggs’ collapse because she isolates herself from others and suffers a deep change in her faith. She suffers a kind of depression and stays sick in bed, “she was ashamed and too ashamed to say so. Her authority in the pulpit, her dance … her powerful call … all that had been mocked and rebuked by the bloods pill in her backyard. God puzzled her and she was too ashamed of him to say so” (Ibid, p.208).

Baby Suggs may feel that she has been betrayed by the people in her town. “Nobody ran on ahead; …nobody sent a fleet-footed son to cut’ cross a field soon as they saw the four horses in town. … Not Ella, not John, not anybody ran down to Bluestone Road, to say some new white folks with the look just rode in” (Ibid, p.184). Baby Suggs feels sad and exhausted because she gives her people her heart but “nobody warned them … [they] stand aside, not pay attention” (Ibid, p.185). Something deep inside her has changed when she

"noticed who breathed and who did not and when straight to the boys lying in the direct… [she] had got the boys inside and was bathing their heads… [and] whispering 'beg your pardon, I beg your pardon', the whole time" (Ibid, p.178). When they take Sethe with Denver to the jail, Baby Suggs is shocked and she "meant to run, skipped down the porch steps after the cart, screaming, no. No. Don't let her take that last one too" (Ibid, p.179).

Denver explores her own traumatized past. For the first time, she describes her loneliness and admits that she fears her mother because "I know she killed one of her own daughters, and tender as she is with me, I'm scared of her because of it" (2004, p.242). Sethe's crime leads to isolating Denver and Sethe for "eighteen years" (2004, p.173) and being rejected from their community. Denver is able to explain why she is afraid of the outside world: whatever forces Sethe to kill her one daughter is out there: "I never leave this house and I watch over the yard, so it can't happen again and my mother won't have to kill me too" (Ibid, p.242).

Eva in *Eva's Man* (Jones 1987) is different from the other characters, Ursa and Sethe. She has a different type of trauma and a different way of telling her trauma and her memories. Eva Medina Canada is a black woman who kills her lover Davis and castrates him after several sexual interactions with him. The writer gives memories of Eva's childhood here and there throughout the novel. She has memories of her parents' relationship that introduces her to sexual violence from her childhood. Then she has her own abusive sexual relationships. Like in *Corregidora*, *Eva's Man* recounts the collision between the past and present traumatic events. Eva's experience of trauma began at the early age of five, and then she starts to be overwhelmed and haunted by her past memories. She hears words and voices in her mind, for example when she suddenly hears Freddy's voice, a young boy who disturbed her with a dirty popsicle through her childhood, and she talks to him in her mind: "you let me do it once … *Eva*" (Jones 1987, p. 15). Also, when she hears the voice that tells her "*ain't no man I wont but you*" (Ibid, p.124). Indeed, those voices are memories from her past that interrupt her present throughout the novel. Besides those memories, she has dreams that are always chasing her while in psychiatric prison. Her dream with a man who makes love to her but she "can't feel the

thumb gone" and the man "has iguana tongue…when he leaves her, her memory turns into blood" (Ibid, p.143). The dream with an owl, also refers to one of her traumatic memories with Mr. Logan, her neighbour, "an old owl perched on the stairs" (Ibid, p.125). These dreams function as real pictures for her real memories and real torture and pain.

Eva has traumatic memories about her father's violence against her mother. At age of twelve, with Moses Tripp who "wasn't trying to do nothing but buy me a beer, but that wasn't all he was trying to buy" (Ibid, p.98). In Eva's life "the past is…as hard on [her] as the present" (Ibid, p.5) because her memories and traumatic past is still hurting and affecting her. One of Eva's memories when her father sees her mother's lover around their house, and out of anger and to prove his authority upon her mother, her rapes her violently. He controls her mother with physical and sexual violence. For Eva, that is the most axial traumatic event in her life that utilizes her experiences of violence and oppression against women. She is a witness for what her father has done, and she is a witness of her mother's silence: "then it was like I could hear her clothes ripping" (Ibid, p.37). He calls her with bad words: "he kept saying that over and over. I was so scared. I kept feeling that after he tore all her clothes off, and there wasn't any more to tear, he'd start tearing her flesh" (Ibid).

After poisoning Davis, the past voices start to whisper in Eva's mind; her husband's words knock her mind, "that kiss was full of teeth" (Ibid, p.128). These words lead her to castrate Davis with her teeth and anger. Readers can make a connection between this toothed 'kiss' and the 'toothed vagina' that is mentioned by Barbara Creed that "myth states that women are terrifying because they have teeth in their vaginas and that the women must be tamed or the teeth somehow removed or softened-usually by a hero figure- before intercourse can safely take place" (Creed 1993, p.2). Eva tells the psychiatrist that killing Davis is "filled in the spaces and feelings" (Jones 1987, p.169) because she felt empty. Eva explains that her reason behind the castration is that Davis does not tell her about his wife, but "there were also people saying I did it because I found out about his wife. That's what they tried to say at the trial because that was the easiest answer they could get" (Ibid, p.4).

During her dialogue with the psychiatrist, Eva's memories with Davis and his voice interrupt her and again the collision between past and present appears when the doctor asks her "what do you want Eva", her answer was: "nothing you can give" (Ibid, p.176). In the final part of the novel, all the violence and brutal memories come back to Eva's mind and she reexperiences these traumatic memories. Eva keeps silence which leads to her self-destruction. She dreams of death and of drowning in a river and "*the sand is on [her] tongue. Blood under [her] nails*" (Ibid, p.176). Actually, this dream gives a hint to the readers that Eva is mentally dead.

In *Corregidora* (Jones 1975) there are two types of traumatic victims, those who are direct victims and those who are listeners. Critics like Staphanie Li, Joanna Lipson Freed, Ashraf H.A. Rushdy, Horvitz, Madhu Dubey link trauma to maternal memory, clarified through the memories of traumatized victims. They distinguish the black female sexual body as a site of painful traumatic memories and physical rape and violence. They argue that Ursa's and Mama's bodies suffer because of their foremothers' pain and memories and their own; they suffer because they must 'bear witness'. Staphanie Li, in her article "Love and the Trauma of Resistance in Gayl Jones's *Corregidora*," argues that the foremothers' traumatic memories "convert the female body into a form of documentation" (Li 2006, p.132). Similarly, Madhu Dubey in her book *Black Women Novelists* mentions that the traumatic past of Ursa's foremothers "imprison [all] Corregidora women in a history that is not of their making … their possession of history gives them…nothing other than the history of their own dispossession" (Dubey 1994, p.6). Deborah Horvitz characterizes two sources of Ursa's trauma, "culturally instituted and legally sanctioned sadomasochism- slavery" and "individual and psychological sadomasochism-domestic violence and incest" (1998, p. 238). For Horvitz, the first one is an "external trauma" while the second one is the "internal" one (1998, p.239). In "Relate sexual to historical: Race, Resistance, and Desire in Gayl Jones's *Corregidora*," Ashraf H.A. Rushdy (2000) affirms that "to keep alive the memories of slavery is to keep them available for interpretation and reinterpretation so that they can serve each passing generation in the particular

ways that generation chooses to view the slave past of the New World" (pp.286-87).

Dori Laub in argues that trauma survivors need to tell their stories to keep their memories alive and "there is, in each survivor, an imperative need to tell and thus to come to know one's story, unimpeded by ghosts from the past against which one has to protect oneself. One has to know one's buried truth in order to be able to live one's life (1995, p.61). In fact, Laub's argument of trauma can be applied on *Corregidora* as a story of family legacy of remembering a traumatic past specified and immortalized by the family female members with their collective memories of the past. It carries their history with slavery and its brutality that left its scars on their bodies and souls. They have to bear the witness and transform it to the other generations in order to keep the memory alive. Ursa, the daughter who never lives during slavery period, but since the age of five she starts to share her foremothers' experiences and past of 'prostitution' by their slave owner. "They burned all the documents, Ursa, but they didn't burn what they put in their minds. We got to burn out what they put in our minds, like you burn out a wound. Except we got to keep what we need to bear witness. That scar that's left to bear witness we got to keep it as visible as our blood" (Jones 1975, p.72).

Gayl Jones follows Toni Morrison's term 'rememory' that can be understood as a healing process of reconceiving the slave past. In Corregidora, the understanding of rememory is demonstrated by the emphasis of 'making generation' throughout the whole novel (Setka 2014, pp.130-1). However, both Ursa and her mother have to inherit their foremothers' traumatic experiences; they are entrapped deeper in their foremothers' traumatic experience and psychological wounds and memories. Through retelling their stories, Great Gram and Gram immortalize their trauma; they speak about 'burn out' and spew forth their wounds from the past so they can 'Rememory' and keep it alive. Great Gram keeps saying to Ursa that how slaveowners didn't want to leave evidence of what they had done with the slaves and how she insists to leave the evidence: "I'm leaving evidence. And you got to leave evidence too. And your children got to leave evidence… *the important thing is making generations. They can burn the papers but they can't burn conscious, Ursa. And that what*

makes evidence" (Jones 1975, pp.14-22). She believes that by 'making generations', retelling and bursting their past and memories, Corregidora women can articulate their trauma and heal their wounds. Repetition and generations are their weapon against 'burning the evidence'. In fact, slavery in *Corregidora* comes in the form of sexual prostitution that leads its women to a state of abnormal sexual relationships and they can be relieved through retelling this trauma.

Corregidora women attempt to follow LaCapra's 'working through' their traumas. Ursa and her mother did not live during the slavery time, but they are affected by their foremothers' traumatic past. Not unlike LaCapra, Cathy Caruth (1995) asserts that "trauma … may provide … [a] link between cultures not as a simple understanding of the pasts of others but rather, within the traumas of contemporary history, as our ability to listen through the departures we have all taken from ourselves" (p.11).

Despite that Great Gram and Gram retelling their traumas to keep them alive, it never helps them to heal from this trauma. They are never able to free their bodies or souls from their traumatic past. They believe that though Corregidora cannot be punished for his brutality against them, through keeping this brutality alive by making generations, they can give voice to their traumatic memories. Instead, they transmit these wounds and trauma to the other generations, Ursa and her mother, who do not live their foremothers' trauma during slavery. They both experience it through their flashbacks, dreams and remembering. They become responsible for their foremothers' trauma as well as their own experiences, and they had been imprisoned in these traumatic memories. The retelling of the traumatic past leads to enslave Ursa and her mother, who struggle to understand and assert their own identities. Cathy Caruth argues that "the historical power of trauma is not just that the experience is repeated after its forgetting, but it is forgetting that the first experienced at all … It is fully evident only in connection with another place, and another time" (1995, p.8). 'Another time, and another place' is Ursa's situation because she is affected by a trauma that happened in a different place and time; it was her foremothers' trauma and she is affected by their narrative, "I didn't see him at first because he was standing back in the shadows behind the door. I didn't see him till he'd

grabbed me around my waist and I was struggling to get loose" (Jones 1975, p.3).

However, Ursa's own trauma starts when her husband throws her downstairs out of his anger that causes her to lose her baby and have a hysterectomy. This incident makes her trauma reach its climax. Losing her womb means losing her ability to produce, which means she has lost her ability to 'make generations' (Ibid, p.10). As a result, she cannot fulfil her responsibilities towards her family, 'bearing witness'. She admits that "I lay on my back, feeling as if something more than the womb had been taken out" (Ibid, p.6). "I am different now … I can't make generation" (Ibid, p.60). In other words, Mutt by his violent behavior takes the child that he gives to Ursa. Once she can no longer 'bear witness' and 'leave evidence,' she is physically and psychologically damaged and starts to lose her sense of identity. From an early age, Ursa learns from her Great Gram that the function of her own body will configure her identity and her role in life. Great Gram plays as the main creator of Ursa's self-identity understanding. Therefore, after losing her ability to 'make generation', Ursa starts to lose her sense of identity since her role in this life is only 'making generations' and her body function is to bear the witness and remember her foremothers' wounds. "The important thing is making generations ... They can burn the papers, but they can't burn conscious, Ursa" (Ibid, p.306). Even her voice and songs as a singer have been changed as her friend Cat told her once: "it sounds like you been through something. Before it was beautiful too, but you sound like you been through more now" (Ibid, p.44). In fact, Ursa is haunted by the memories of her foremothers and is trapped in their traumatic past during slavery. In addition, she suffers from violence that she experiences in her life, being kicked downstairs by her husband, Mutt, as she states: "we're all consequences of something. Stained with another's past as well as our own. Their past in my blood. I'm a blood" (Ibid, p.45). Her Great Gram tells the same story over and over again. The traumatic experience of her foremothers is overwhelming her life and affected her psyche from her childhood.

Indeed, Great Gram and Gram lived through the trauma of slavery and its brutality and they could not get rid of it; they can live only through these memories and retelling them. Physically, they are alive, but psychologically and

spiritually they feel dead. Their traumatic memories can be the bridge between their past and present. They could not understand their own identities. Their memories destroy their sense of self: “Whites wanted to play like what happened before never did happen” (Ibid, p.79). Great Gram is the favorite for Corregidora; She is a source of both sexual pleasures and financial one to Corregidora, and she is “[the] best. Dorita. Little gold piece … the pretty one … his favorite” (Ibid, p.10). One of Great Gram’s traumatic memories is that Corregidora’s wife starts to have sexual affairs with the female slaves and that is an additional source of sexual abuse for Great Gram. This affects Ursa’s psyche, especially when she discovers that Cat and Jeffy are both lesbians. Jeffy once told her that it is normal to be lesbian because she “heard mam talking about women like that. Mess up their minds” (Ibid, p.38). Somehow, Ursa is like her foremothers; after losing her ability to make generations, she is fluctuated between past and present: the past of her ancestors and the present of her own. After Mutt’s violence against her, the memories of her ancestors interrupt her own traumatic experience and the flashbacks of her foremothers lead to her psychological breakdown. Indeed, Corregidora’s legacy of violence and ‘prostitution’ against her foremothers and her own experience of violence recreate Ursa’s own understanding of self and identity. A self-loathing sense starts to attack her throughout the first part of the novel. This leads the readers to return back to Dori Laub’s (1992) theory of the ‘trauma listener’ and ‘bearing witness’. Laub suggests that the relation of the victim to the traumatic event affects the listener to the same event. The listener shares the struggle of the victim with all memories like Ursa, who is the listener to her foremothers’ trauma, and she is imprisoned in it. She does not live the slavery experience in reality, but she lives those traumatic experiences throughout the repetition of Great Gram and Gram’s memories. Ursa relates lots of her own dreams with the stories of her foremothers; her dreams now are full of Corregidora. Out of being affected by her foremothers’ traumatic past and her own trauma, her dreams are full of memories of Corregidora and there is a mix between the image of Corregidora himself and Ursa’s current partners,

> “Ursa, wake up Ursa, baby”
>
> “you must have been having a nightmare”

"Was it the old man again?"

"Yes" …

"*Ain't even took my name. you Corregidor's, ain't you? ...You ain't my*

Women" (Jones 1975, p.61).

Gram's also explaines her own trauma to Ursa when she tells her that "[my father] raised me and then when I got big enough. …Yeah, Mama told me how in the old days he was just buying up women … That's why he said he always liked my mama better than me" (Ibid, p.172). It is hurting her that her own father is using her as a "prostitute" for himself and other men, rich men: "he didn't send nothing but the rich mens in there to to me, cause he said I was his little gold pussy, his little gold piece, and it didn't take some of them old rich mens no time, and then I still be fresh for him" (Ibid, p.124). In fact, she is not a 'prostitute', she is a victim who is sexually abused; her father sells her body and she has no choice.

Furthermore, those dreams are disturbing her attempts to find self-identity. "My great grandma told my grandmamma the part she lived through that my grandmamma didn't live through and my grandmamma told my mama what they both lived through and my mama told me what they all lived through and we're supposed to pass it down like that from generation to generation so we'd never forget … Yeah, and where's the next generation?" (Ibid, p.9). After losing her womb, Ursa told Todpole about her main role in life, and with the question 'where's the next generation?' she feels lost. She loses her self- assertion and her feeling of her own identity. She feels that her trauma cannot be separated from her foremothers' trauma: "my voice was dancing, slow and blue, my voice was dancing, but I was saying nothing. I dreamed with my eyes open. All the Corregidora women with narrow waists and high cheek bones and wide hips. All the Corregidora women dancing. And he wanted me. He grabbed my waist" (Ibid, p.61). "*Are you mine, Ursa, or theirs*? What he would ask. What would I ask now?" (Ibid, p.45). In a monologue, Ursa speaks to her husband, Mutt, telling him that he is like Corregidora, who teaches her Great Gram what she knows, and Mutt teaches Ursa what she knows, "didn't I tell you … You taught

me all of the things Corregidora taught Great Gram … I got a terrible Memory. I kept asking you, but you never would tell me" (Ibid, p.76). However, her experience and traumatic memories are interacting with her foremothers' memories. The impact of foremothers' violent experiences is too strong to affect her sexual relationship with men, both Mutt and Todpole, that is also colored with violence and physical pain: "I am working" but "it was almost a cry, a cry I didn't want him to hear. I don't know how long it was… I can't, I can't" (Ibid, p.83). In a conversation with her first husband, Mutt, about their slave ancestors, he tells her not to act like them because their situation and circumstances are different. Ursa tells him that she cannot because although she was not in the same situation, "the way [she]'d been brought up, it was almost as if [she] was" (Ibid, p.151).

Moreover, Corregidora's shadow appears to Ursa from time to time, in her dreams and memories, showing how she is affected and bridled by the traumatic past of Corregidora women. "It was in your hole before you even you had one … I was struggle against him, trying to feel what I wasn't feeling" (Ibid, p.75). She has no balance because of those painful memories; one time she is strong, and once she cannot even feel anything out of weakness. Corregidora has a powerful influence on her psychic life. She describes one of her dreams that "I dreamed that my belly was swollen and restless, and I lay without moving, gave birth without struggle, without feeling. But my eyes never turned to my feet. I never saw what squatted between my knees. But I felt the humming and beating of wings and claws in my thighs" (Ibid, p.76). This dream gives the reader an idea about Ursa's struggle in her life between her own painful experience and her foremothers' heavy traumatic experience,

> *'I felt a stiff* [something] *inside me. 'Those who have* [rape]
>
> *their daughters would not hesitate to* [rape] *their own mothers'.*
>
> *Who are you? Who have I born?*
>
> *'Who are you?'*
>
> *'You don't even know your own father'*
>
> *'You not my father. I never was one of your women'*

'Corregidora's women. Yes, you are'

'No!'. (Ibid, p.77)

Another dream that is interacted by both her painful memories and Corregidora's shadow when she dreams of Corregidora, asking her about Mutt and what he has done to her. She tells him that he is not better than Mutt: *"It looks ugly in there"*, *'It's no worse than what you did'"* (Ibid, p.77). In fact, from the beginning of the novel, the readers get information about the Corregidora women's trauma and they feel confused about who is telling and repeating this trauma: Ursa, Mama, Gram or Great Gram. In other words, in this novel there is a narrative collision between Ursa's own memories and her foremothers' traumatic memories and past; "he [raped] his own whores and fathered his own breed. They did the [rape] and had to bring him the money they made. My grandmamma was his daughter, but he was [raping] her too" (Ibid, p.9).

Not only readers who notice that Ursa has this collision, but even the characters outside the Corregidora legacy like Tadpole, her second husband. He tells her that she "mixed up every which way… [and she] seem[s] like [she] got a little bit of everything in [her]" (Ibid, p.80). She answers that she "didn't put it there". When he asks her "what she wants" she can answer out of her foremothers' trauma "what all us Corregidora women want. Have been taught to want. To make generations" (Ibid, p.22) in a hint that she has been forced to relive her foremothers' past and memories and it is not her choice.

Finally, when Ursa has lost everything, her husband, her unborn child, and her sense of self, she goes to her mother to dig in her memories, and trying to find something in her mother's story that can assist her getting rid of the traumatic life she is forced to live in. She decides to search and find her own identity and voice that is separated from the other Corregidora women: "I couldn't be satisfied until I had seen my Mama … until I discovered her private memory" (Ibid, p.104). Ursa's mother, Irene, is also forced to live with Corregidora through dreams and traumatic fantasies of her foremothers. Both, Ursa and her mother, have to load their own and their foremothers' traumatic memories in the form of making generations. Her mother's traumatic memories affect her badly and she lives her foremothers' life that leads to the loss of her own life and

future. She tells Ursa that “I wasn’t looking for a man…but it was as if my whole body wanted you” (Ibid, p.117). She also describes her feelings with her husband that “My voice felt like it was screaming. What do they say about pleasure mixed in the pain?” (Ibid, p.50). She believes that “Corregidora is responsible for that part of [her] life. If Corregidora hadn’t happened that part of [her] life never would have happened” (Ibid, p.111). After telling Ursa about her own memories, Irene realizes Ursa’s father’s anger and violence towards her. She cannot feel anything with him because of Corregidora’s control over her life, her dreams and memories. After talking to each other, Ursa feels that her mother has been released from all those old memories “it was as if she had more than learned it off by heart, though. It was as if their memory, the memory of all the Corregidora women, was her memory too, as strong with her as her own private memory, or almost as strong. But now she was Mama again” (Ibid, p.129).

Furthermore, it is the first time for Ursa to hear a different kind of trauma and different memory; a memory that helps her to find herself and heal. She can make a clear and new vision of her own life away from Corregidora. Ursa is the only one of Corregidora women who is able to find her way to heal. Through her voice, she finds her weapon against all the traumatic memories in her life.

Eventually, all those protagonists have been through different types of traumas, and each one of them deals with her own trauma in her own way. Ursa, in the end, is able to find a way helping her to heal and accept her new body. Sethe is about to be crushed but with some help from Paul D she is able to overcome. Eva and Pecola cannot pass over her memories and trauma.

However, these protagonists experience trauma and their traumatic experiences affect their relationship with people around them. Next part will discuss the effects of trauma on these protagonists and their relationship with their mothers, daughters, and fathers.

2.2 **Father Figure/Mother-Daughter Knot**

The mother-child bond is a special relationship in the world; but as a black mother in a white society, the matter is different. The strength of motherhood in

such communities is struggling against the horrors of slavery. In simple words, slavery does not allow for normal motherhood, as Paul D in *Beloved* states that it is dangerous for mothers to love. Dorothy E. Roberts debates that "in America the image of Black mother has always diverged from, and often contradicted, the image of the white mother" (1993, p.6). She means that white patriarchal slavery "denied to Black mothers the authority and joy of mothering which it allowed white mothers" by selling either the mothers or their babies (Ibid, p.13). Roberts explains that the black mothers were deprived of enjoying their motherhood. They never shared what other mothers experience, i.e., "there are joys and sorrows that most mothers share: the pleasure of nursing her baby; the exhaustion from chasing after her toddler; the gratification of watching her child achieve whatever goal; the terror of unwanted pregnancy"(Ibid, p.4). Throughout the last two decades, black motherhood and maternal figure have been the heart of contemporary black feminist writings and theories. Numbers of black feminist scholars, like Patricia Collins, bell hooks, Audra Lorde and others have discussed the experiences of black mothers. These scholars believe that the past of slavery has hovered over black motherhood even after the end of slavery.

Patricia Hill Collins affirms that the African American mother "must learn how to survive in interlocking structures of race, class and gender oppression while rejecting and transcending those very same structures" (1991, p.54). bell hooks speaks about how the relationships between black women and black men affect the role of the black mother due to the effect of racism and slavery. hooks calls for a kind of criticism for this relation in which a black woman and black mother can resist racism and sexism that affect her relationships. She says "within a society that remains patriarchal, no matter how alternative you want to be within your unit, there is still a culture outside you that will impose many, many values on you whether you want them to or not" (2000, p.84). Christina Herrera asserts that "madness [and] how the mother-daughter bond may grant the madwomen agency and subjectivity … tragic memories from her daughter [representing] her past cause tension in the present, visibly seen in her relationship with her daughter. The madness as a result of repression further causes strain in the mother-daughter relationship" (2011, pp.52-53).

Moreover, black motherhood has been encumbered with numerous challenges and obstacles, including mothers being separated from their children during and after the slave trade, slavery itself, various forms of sexual, physical and psychological abuse. Lots of contemporary African American female writers try to present the black mothers' experiences and their sufferings through examining the past and its impact on the present. In their writings, they face lots of challenges. Toni Morrison and Gayl Jones are authors who try to reconstruct what the black mother is like in their writings. They use 'Rememory' to review the past and elucidate the black maternal figure.

Toni Morrison, in *Beloved* (2004), presents images of African American mothers, and their relationships with their children. She gives her readers a clear description and vivid picture about the effects of slavery and racism upon the black people, especially black mothers and upon their behavior towards their children. In the same novel, Morrison uses the word 'Rememory' to speak to the imagination and to re-examine the protagonist, Sethe's, traumatic memory in her past as a slave in which she attempts to kill her children to protect them from the harshness of slavery. *Beloved* is one of Morrison's great, powerful novels in which she discusses different subjects to speak about black community and their suffering under the conditions of slavery. Motherhood is one of the central issues in this book. Morrison gives her readers a clear concept of the effect of slavery on this issue, using the magical realism technique to give her novel a vigorous quality.

Sethe, one of the black mothers in *Beloved,* suffers under the horrors of slavery. She has special thoughts on mother love towards her two boys, Howard, Buglar, and her dead "crawling daughter" and her Denver. Readers can feel her strong love for her own children when she decides to take them out of Sweet Home and run away when she hears Schoolteacher talk to one of his nephews. He asks him to give his notes on Sethe and put "her human characteristics on the left; her animal ones on the right. And don't forget to line them up" (Morrison 2004, p.228). She does not accept this for her children, and so she makes her decision. She sends them to their grandmother in Ohio to save them afterwards she will join them, as she explains later to her baby ghost, "I got you out, baby. And the boys too. … No notebook for my babies and no measuring string neither. What I

had to get through later I got through because of you. Passed right by those boys hanging in the tree. … I walked right on by because only me had your milk … and I was going to get it to you…when I got here I had milk enough for all" (Ibid, p.233). Sethe here shows the importance of milk as the special bond between a mother and her baby; she has to keep her milk for her nine-month girl. Factually, speaking about her child's milk, Sethe feels bitter and she cannot forget being humiliated by Schoolteacher's two nephews. They lay her down when she "was pregnant with Denver but had milk for [her] baby girl. [She] hadn't stopped nursing her when [she] sent her on ahead with Howard and Buglar" (Ibid, p.19).

She tells Paul D that "Those boys came in there and took my milk…. Held me down and took it…and they took my milk. … And they took my milk" (Ibid, pp.19-20). She does not care about their beating her back as much as taking her precious milk. The milk that strengthens the relationship between the mother and her infant; the milk that she is keeping for her own daughter. She states: "All I know was had to get my milk to my baby girl. Nobody was going to nurse her like me. Nobody was going to get it to her fast enough or take it away when she had enough and didn't know it. … Nobody knew that but me and nobody had her milk but me. … The milk would be there and I would be there with it" (Ibid, p.19.) This gives the readers a strong sense about Sethe's great and deep nurturing love for her daughter.

Sethe, "the nineteen years old slave girl", has a mother's heart that is full of profound love for all her children and this can be felt when she has escaped Sweet Home. Even after being beaten and "her milk had been stolen" (Ibid, p.39), she "walked on two feet meant, in the sixth month of pregnancy, for standing still" (Ibid, p.36). She wants to reach her children and not to be separated from them for a long time. She "was hungry … just as hungry as [she] could be" (Ibid, p.38) but she does not care. She is "near the Ohio River, trying to get her three children, one of whom was starving for the food she carried … she was not to have an easeful death. No" (Ibid, p.38). She insists on reaching her children under any circumstances out of her motherlove. Indeed, she walks "through the dark wood to get to her children who are far away. She is tired, scared may be, and may be even lost. Most of all she is by herself and inside her

is another baby she has to think about too. Behind her dogs, perhaps; gun probably; and certainly, mossy teeth" (Ibid, p.91).

However, "Sethe looked down at her stomach and touched it. The baby was dead. She had not died in the night, but the baby had. If that was the case, then there was no stopping now. She would get that milk to her baby girl if she had to swim" (Ibid, p.97). This sense of a loving mother makes her hurry in order to reach her own children, as she tells Amy, the woman who saves her: "I ain't nothing but in a hurry, miss" (Ibid). After that, she bears her baby, Denver. Amy leaves her and she is "weak and alone, but alive" (Ibid, p.105) and she has to be alive for her children. She even, as a loving mother, thanks God for sweat from a fever because "it would certainly keep her baby warm" (Ibid, p.106).

As an end to her terrible escaping journey, Sethe has had twenty –eight days of unslaved life. She has a life of freedom with her "sleepy boys and crawling-already girl. … Sethe lay in bed under, around over … with them all…. [Her] laugh of delight was so loud … she kissed the backs of their necks, the tops of their heads and the centers of their palms … finally she lays back and cradled the crawling- already? girl in her arms" (Ibid, p.110). She feels comfort and love among her own precious creations, her own children and she feels free. She forgets everything in that moment except her love for them. She even does not cry when her sons ask her about their father, she only says "soon" (Ibid, p.110). Unfortunately, those twenty-eight days of freedom ended very quickly, the hands of slavery descend on her to interrupt her life, to dominate her motherhood, and then everything changes. Sethe's life is now full of painful memories.

The conflict between motherhood and slavery is very clear in the essential act of the novel: Sethe's killing her daughter and attempting to kill her other children. If the readers deeply think of this action, they may see clearly the facts behind it. Firstly, Sethe refuses to be a mother under slavery; it will prevent her from being a real mother to her children and to offer her special motherly care to them. She tells Paul D, "When I stretched out my arms all my children could get in between. I was that wide. Look like I loved em more after I got here. Or maybe I couldn't love em proper in Kentucky because they wasn't mine to love. But when I got here, when I jumped down off the wagon- there wasn't nobody

in the world I couldn't love if I wanted to" (Ibid, pp.190-1). When she comes to Cincinnati, she tastes freedom and believes that no one can prevent her from loving her children as a normal mother. Secondly, she wants to protect her children from the clutches of slavery, believing that death is the place "where they would be safe. … 'I took and put my babies where they'd be safe'" (Ibid, pp.192-3). This is the main reason behind killing her daughter. The moment she sees the Schoolteacher coming to take her back "she heard wings … and if she thought anything it was No. No. Nono. Nonono. She just flew. collected every bit of life she had made, all carried, pushed, dragged them through the veil…where they would be safe. And the hummingbird wings beat on" (Ibid, p.192). Morrison, by mentioning wings, may mean "wings" of the angel, as if Sethe is the angel who will save those children from being hurt. However, she may mean the opposite; be these "wings" are Schoolteacher's wings of the angel of death for Sethe and her daughter.

Moreover, Sethe believes that by killing her daughter, she puts her on the safe side, and she believes that she does the right thing. Even when Paul D tells her "your love is too thick" (Ibid, p.193), she answers him that she needs this thick love to protect her children with "Love is or it ain't. Thin love ain't love at all" (Ibid, p.194). For Paul D, Sethe does a terrible thing and he tells her that she is not an animal "you got two feet, Sethe, not four" (Ibid). But the matter is not like that for Sethe herself; "It is [her] job to know what is and to keep them away from what [she] know[s] is terrible. [She] did that" (Ibid). She does not regret her action; she does not realize that this action affects each one of her children negatively. If she was able to kill them all, she would kill herself also to join them in the safe world as she claims: "my plan was to take us all to the other side where my own ma'am is. They stopped me from getting us there" (Ibid, p.240).

In fact, after the "Misery", Sethe has a different type of relationship with each of her children: Denver, Howard and Buglar, and even the ghost of the two-year-old daughter, who Sethe "had her throat cut" (Ibid, p.6). The two boys have run away from home and she thinks that it is because of the ghost that "haunted the house". But it is more than that. They are afraid of their own mother; they still have the fear that she may kill them one day. On the other

hand, Sethe always has a belief that her two sons will return to her from "wherever they had gone on" (Ibid, p.215). Indeed, the novel gives a great example of the strong bond between a nursing mother and her child. At the beginning of the novel, readers can notice the deep love of Sethe to her "crawling-already baby"; she even rejects the idea of leaving the house because she believes that the ghost that haunts her house is her own daughter's ghost and she wants to be close to "her". Furthermore, the word "Beloved" on her daughter's tombstone reflects Sethe's care and love for the murdered child. Sethe wants to have "Dearly Beloved" (Ibid, p.5) written, but the engraver she sold herself to decided ten minutes was enough for "seven letters … Beloved" (Ibid). She thinks it will be "enough rutting among the headstones with the engraver, …enough to answer one more preacher, one more abolitionist and a town full of disgust" (Ibid), enough to tell her murdered daughter how "powerful … the way I love her" (Ibid) Sethe states. Sethe and Denver, her other daughter, try to call the baby ghost to "end the persecution by calling for [it] that tried them so" (Ibid, p.4).

Sethe believes that it is her own daughter's ghost "my daughter. The one I sent ahead with the boys" (Ibid, p.11), as she tells Paul D when she invites him to her house. Her look "at the spot where grief had soaked him. The red was gone but a kind of weeping clung to the air where it had been" (Ibid, p.11), he thought that it is Baby Suggs. From the beginning, the baby's spirit does not like Paul D, being closer to her "ma'am", so she tries to get him out by frightening him when she makes the house "pitching" (Ibid, p.21) and crushes a table towards him. Paul D shouts at the ghost aggressively, which makes it disappear for a while. Then Beloved decides to come back as "flesh" to her mother. In fact, Beloved, the woman who comes to Sethe's home from the water, is the spirit of Sethe's slaughtered daughter. The readers, throughout the novel, can realize how Beloved is selfish and greedy mostly with Sethe. She wants everything for herself and never gets enough of everything, especially her mother. She always shows a need to be near Sethe. In other words, Beloved is hungry to overcome Sethe's life. She believes that Sethe took her life when she was a baby, and now she is hungry for her mother's love, to the point that she may abuse her by dominating her: she wants Sethe for herself, "it was a greedy

ghost and needed a lot of love. … I am Beloved and she is mine" (Ibid, pp.247-8).

Beloved does not want to lose any chance to look at her mother's face: "her face is my own face and I want to be there in the place where her face is and to be looking at it too" (Ibid, p.248). She has strong feelings towards her mother, and she states, "I cannot lose her again. … I can see her [face] she is going to smile at me she is going to" (Ibid, p.250). Actually, Beloved is always talking about Sethe and she keeps telling her sister Denver about her need for Sethe and no one else: "I need her face to smile. I want her face" (Ibid, p.255). When Denver asks her "what did you come back for" (Ibid, p.88), Beloved answers "to see her face" (Ibid, p.88). Morrison gives a quite nice description for this situation "Beloved could not take her eyes off Sethe. … Sethe was licked, tasted, eaten by Beloved's eyes" (Ibid, p.68). Indeed, Beloved focuses on having Sethe all to herself as a selfish child. She always tries to attract Sethe's attention, waits for her in the kitchen in the morning. and goes to meet her on her way back from work at night. Her dependence on Sethe seems to be like a baby who is dependent on its own mother. She has her eyes only on Sethe and no one else. "I see her face which is mine it is the face that was going to smile at me in the place where we crouched when I open [my eyes] I see the face I lost Sethe's is the face that left me Sethe sees me see her and I see the smile her smiling face is the place for me it is the face I lost she is my face smiling at me doing it at least" (Ibid, p.251-2), Beloved denotes. For her: "[Sethe] is the laugh and I am the laugher" (Ibid, pp.251).

Beloved insists on possessing Sethe as her and she is selfish to the extent that she forces Paul D gradually out of 124 and she even forces him to sleep with her because she wants Sethe completely for herself. It is something awful to make her mother's lover sleep with her in order to get rid of him. Beloved feels happy when she asks Sethe to tell her stories about her past that she already knew about, like Sethe's diamonds: '"Where are your diamonds? Beloved searched Sethe's face 'Tell me', said Beloved, smiling a wide happy smile. 'Tell me your diamonds'" (Ibid, p.69). Sethe in turn, finds excitement when telling these stories even when they contain a large amount of painful memories but she "learned the profound satisfaction Beloved got from storytelling. It amazed

Sethe as much as it pleased Beloved … as she began telling about the earrings, she found herself wanting to, liking it. Perhaps it was Beloved's distance from the event itself, or her thirst for hearing it- in any case it was unexpected pleasure" (Ibid). In fact, Sethe believes that Beloved can understand her reason of killing her "my girl come home. Now I can look at things again because she's here to see them too" (Ibid, p.237). But it is not like that because Beloved keeps blaming her mother for leaving her alone in the dark, "you hurt me, you left me" (Ibid, p.256).

Beloved feels angry with her mother and she cannot understand why she left her, and she says "all I want to know is why did she go in the water in the place where we crouched? Why did she do that when she was just about to smile at me?" (Ibid, p.253). But Sethe is strong and she does not regret her action; instead, she believes that her strong love for her daughter makes Beloved comes back to her, "Beloved my daughter. She mine. See. She come back to me of her own free will and I don't have to explain a thing…she had to be safe and I put her where she would be…and she back now" (Ibid, p.236). On the other hand, Beloved is passionate about the things that she did not do with Sethe because of her death, "I wanted to join. I tried to join. … I wanted to join her in the sea but I could not move; I wanted to help her when she was picking the flowers…but…I lost her" (Ibid, p.253). She proclaims that "three times I lost her: once with the flowers…once when she went into the sea instead of smiling to me; once under the bridge when I went to join her and she came towards me but did not smile" (Ibid, pp.253-4).

Beloved seems to have made her decision not to lose her mother again. Anyhow, both Sethe and Beloved want to compensate for the time they spent away from each other. Sethe states "we will smell the together, Beloved. Beloved. Because you mine and I have to show you these things and teach you what a mother should" (Ibid, p.237. They start "holding hands, bracing each other … but nobody saw them falling" (Ibid, pp.205,206).

Nevertheless, out of her greedy selfish love, and anger towards Sethe, sometimes it seems that Beloved wants Sethe's life instead of hers. Once Sethe feels that there are hands choking her, and Sethe becomes completely weak under the domination of Beloved. She "ate up her life, took it, swelled up with

it, grew taller on it. And the older woman yielded it up without a murmur" (Ibid, p.295). Furthermore, both Sethe and Beloved have a long conversation by which each one expresses her feelings towards the other. When Sethe asks Beloved "tell me the truth. Didn't you come from the other side? You never forget me?" (Ibid, p.254), Beloved says to her: "your face is mine…. Will you smile at me?... I love your face" (Ibid, pp.254-5). Even as Beloved expresses her deep love for her mother, she is always thinking that Sethe is cruel; she "accused her of leaving her behind. Of not being nice to her, not smiling at her. she said they were the same, had the same face, how could she have left her? and Sethe cried, saying she never did, or meant to" (Ibid, p.284). For this, Beloved turns out to be too strong and has the control over Sethe as if she were punishing her. At the end of the novel, Sethe has the chance to protect her daughter without hurting her, but again she leaves her behind "standing alone on the porch, Beloved is smiling … but now her hand is empty. Sethe is running away from her…now [Sethe] is running into the faces of the people out there, joining them and leaving Beloved behind. Alone. Again" (Ibid, p.309). This leads to her disappearance and return to water.

On the other hand, Denver Sethe's other daughter, loves her mother too much but she is frightened by her, "I love my mother, but I know she killed one of her own daughters, and tender as she is with me, I'm scared of her because of it. She missed killing my brothers and they knew it. They told me die-witch! Stories to show me the way to do it, if ever I needed to" (Ibid, p.242). She even does not sleep when Sethe is in their room, checking her children. Denver claims, "When she finishes the combing and starts the braiding, I get sleepy. I want to go to sleep but I know if I do I won't wake up. So I have to stay awake while she finishes my hair, then I can sleep" (Ibid, p.244). Denver is not able to hear the real story of her mother's murder when she was a little girl and Nelson Lord asked her: "didn't your mother get locked away for murder? Weren't you in there with her when she went?" (Ibid, p.123). These two questions turn her deaf for years and increase her fright of her mother, the sense that covers her love of the same mother. Otherwise, she is always entertained when she hears the story of her birth. May be because she thinks that her mother has been once different and there is no sense of fear between her and her mother, there is only

love. However, because of her fear of her mother, she has more feelings for her father, whom she has never seen. She tells Sethe that one day he will come "I bet he's trying to get here. If Paul D could do it my daddy could too. Angel man. We should all be together. Me, him and Beloved. Ma'am could stay or go off with Paul D if she wanted to" (Ibid, p.246).

After the appearance of Beloved, Denver feels responsible for her sister and she feels that Beloved is "ready to be taken care of; ready for me to protect her. This time I have to keep my mother away from her. That's hard, but I have to" (Ibid, p.243), Denver thinks. She is trying to protect her sister from Sethe because she believes that it might happen again,

I'm afraid the thing that happened that made it all right for my mother to kill my sister could happen again. I don't know what it is, I don't know who it is, but maybe there is something else terrible enough to make her do it again. I need to know what that thing might be, but I don't want to … whatever it is, it comes from outside this house, outside the yard. (Ibid, p.242)

Denver tries to warn Beloved of Sethe and not to "love her too much" (Ibid, p.255) because this love will kill her again, Denver thought. She loves her sister and she admits that "I shouldn't be afraid of the ghost. … I tasted its blood when Ma'am nursed me … [I] love her. I do. She's mine, Beloved. She's mine" (Ibid, p.247).

Nevertheless, Denver gradually changes her thoughts after seeing Beloved's bad effect on Sethe. After she sees her mother's weakness, she feels pity for her: "the pain was unbearable when they ran low on food and Denver watched her mother go without- pick eating around the edges of the table and stove" (Ibid, p.285). Denver feels sorry for this situation, especially after seeing "the flesh between her mother's forefinger and thumb fade. Saw Sethe's eyes bright dead" (Ibid). Then she decides to protect her mother from Beloved and she gains power to go out from her loving mother and the memory of her loving grandmother. Now "the job she started out with, protecting Beloved from Sethe, changed to protecting her mother from Beloved … that her mother could die and leave them both and what would Beloved do then?" (Ibid, p.286). She is also "afraid to leave Sethe with Beloved alone all day" (Ibid, p.296), because

Beloved might kill her mother. Ultimately, Denver's love for her mother has the victory over her old fears and she helps her mother and saves her from Beloved.

Moreover, Morrison presents images of loving mothers like Baby Suggs, who despite slavery and racism against them as African American women, still has a motherly heart full of passion and care for her children. Baby Suggs, Halle's mother, is a woman of sixteen who has a big heart that is full of love enough for all around her. She is different from Sethe's mother, who "rebuffed" her children delivered out of rape. She is always wondering about her children despite the fact that they are the consequences of rape. Also, she is different from Sethe, who tries to kill her own children. This action frightens her children. Baby Suggs objects to Sethe's savage behavior because she believes that violence in front of children will hurt them. Indeed, out of her love as a mother, Baby tells Denver that "she was always afraid a Whiteman would knock her down in front of her children. She behaved and did everything right in front of her children because she didn't want them to see her knocked down. She said it made children crazy to see that" (Ibid, p.246).

Actually, she has eight children and they have six fathers. She has a deep motherly sense that makes her remember her taken away children and wondering about their lives. She is only able to keep Halle, the youngest one, the one who decides to buy his mother's freedom, not his own. He "rented himself out all over the country to buy her away from there" (Ibid, p.27) and he "usually worked Saturdays and Sundays to pay off Baby Suggs' freedom" (Ibid, p.71). He is "nothing but a man" (Ibid, p.27) for Baby. She believes that "a man ain't nothing but a man, but a son? That's somebody" (Ibid, p.27). For him, it "looked like it meant more to him that she go free than anything in the world" (Ibid, p.166). In fact, she has a special mother-child relationship with Halle, for "she chose the hard thing that made him happy, and never put to him the question she put to herself: what for? What does a sixty-year-old slavewoman who walks like a three-legged dog need freedom for?" (Ibid, p.166). Baby Suggs feels thankful for Mr. Garner not beating her, feeding her well, and letting her have her freedom, but she cannot forgive him that he made Halle, "her boy", pay for her freedom; she was thinking "you got my boy and I'm all

broken down. You be renting him out to pay for me way after I'm gone to glory" (Ibid, p.172).

Baby Suggs is a loving mother for her daughter in law, Sethe. When the latter arrives at Bluestone house as a final station of her escaping journey, Baby Suggs "kissed her on the mouth and refused to let her see the children. They were asleep she said and Sethe was too ugly looking to wake them in the night. She took the new-born and handed it to a young woman in a bonnet, telling her not to clean the eyes till she got the mother's urine" (Ibid, p.109). As a mother, Suggs leads her daughter in law to a warm room in order to clean her up and prepare her to meet her children with a good appearance. Baby Suggs feels sorry for Sethe when she saw "roses of blood blossomed in the blanket covering Sethe's shoulders. Baby Suggs hides her mouth with her hands" at the sight of her scared back (Ibid, p.109). Sethe, in turn, always remembers Baby as a caring and affectionate mother for her. She "remembers touch of those fingers that she knew better than her own. They had bathed her in sections, wrapped her womb, combed her hair, oiled her nipples, stitched her clothes, cleaned her feet, greased her back and dropped just about anything they were doing to message Sethe's nape" (Ibid, pp.115-16). Baby Suggs is also the mother figure for Denver, the youngest grandchild, who needs someone normal in her life; she needs a mother and Baby Suggs was that mother even after her death. Denver claims that Baby Suggs was the safe harbor for her, the protection from her mother since she is afraid of her mother, "the only place she can't get to me in the night is Grandma Baby's room" (Ibid, p.244).

Sethe's mother can be seen also as a loving mother for Sethe, despite the fact that they both do not see each other much. Sethe loves her mother and believes that her mother loves her too. She is the only one of her children whom she keeps because she is the product of a loving union and the only one who has a name. Nan "the one she knew best who was around all day, who nursed babies, cooked" (Ibid, p.73) tells her that her mother had a number of children out of rape but "she threw them all away but [Sethe]" (Ibid, p.74). She tells her daughters, Denver and Beloved that she does not have a normal relationship with her own mother under the domination of slavery: "I didn't see my mother but a few times out in the fields and once when she was working indigo. By the

time I woke up in the morning, she was in line. If the moon was bright they worked by its light. Sunday she slept like a stick…she didn't even sleep in the same cabin most nights I remember" (Ibid, p.72).

Sethe also talks about being nursed from her mother; they were harmful memories for Sethe, "she must of nursed me two or three weeks- that's the way others did. Then she went back in rice and I sucked from another woman whose job it was" (Ibid, p.72). May be this is one of the reasons that makes Sethe insist on keeping her milk for her own daughter. She believes that her mother loves her and she does not understand her mother's behavior when she slaps her on the face when Sethe asks her mother to have her own mark. "This is your ma'am 'I am the only one got this mark … you can know me by this mark now. … 'yes ma'am' I said. 'but how will you know me? How will you know me? Mark me, too' I said…I didn't understand it then. Not till I had a mark of my own" (Ibid, pp.73-4). Now she understands that her mother's behavior is out of love and care.

Actually, Sethe does not know the reason behind the hanging of her mother and she does not want to think that it is escape because she thinks that no loving mother can run away, leaving her girl behind. For her, she is wondering "what they was doing when they was caught. Running, you think? No. Not that. she was my ma'am and nobody's ma'am would run off and leave her daughter, would she? Would she, now? Leave her in the yard with a one-armed woman? Even if she hadn't been able to suckle the daughter for more than a week or two and had to turn her over to another woman's tit that never had enough for all" (Ibid, p.240). It seems that her mother has a deep love towards Sethe, but she is under the effects of slavery.

Furthermore, black mothers have historically had to cope with various forms of oppression, often resulting in an emotionally distant mother-daughter relationship, like in Gayl Jones's *Corregidora* (1975). *Corregidora* (1975) is the story of a group of female survivors of slavery and sexual abuse who all remember and detect their own painful experiences and buried truth. After surviving slavery, these women fear being silenced and that the truth could die. So through 'making generations,' they transfer the truth of abuse and slavery and keep them alive. Ursa Corregidora, the protagonist, is the last one of

Corregidora's women who must 'bear the witness' but she lost her ability to have babies after being pushed down the stairs by her husband. How does she recapture her memories and her mother's and foremothers' memories? In which way can she manage to survive?

Ursa has been told her maternal history through oral stories by her foremothers. This oral history is told generation after generation with a hope to keep the memory of slavery and the physical and sexual abuse they went through. Ursa learns about the history of her foremothers whose stories begin with bodies, rape, abuse, and prostitution as female slaves. Ursa herself is not expose to this abuse, but she lives it in its details, affected by the stories of her grand and great grandmother, who were prostituted and gave birth to children who were fathered by the abusive slave master, Corregidora. Ursa is entrusted with the task of retelling the facts and the stories. This traumatic memory is passed on from generation to generation and her great grandmother told it to her grandmamma. "The part she lived through that [her] grandmama didn't live through and [her] grandmama told [her] mama what they both lived through and mama told [her] what they all lived through and [all] were supposed to pass it down like that from generation to generation so [they'd] never forget. Even though they'd burned everything to play it like it didn't never happen" (Jones 1975, p.9). Burning the documents of slavery leaves these women hopeless to have their stories told. But they try to keep the memory through oral stories, and they want also to reclaim their bodies. Though the blues songs are about men and women's problems, Jones employs these songs to express Ursa's desire to connect with her mother and her desire to escape to her mother.

Ursa Corregidora is forced to work her own relationship with her husband through the 'rememory' of the relationship between her Great Gram and Gram and the Portuguese old man Corregidora. So, she tries to set up her own world of love, marriage and motherhood, a world that enables her to sense the psychological effects of rape, abuse and violence, a world that enables her to face her own feelings. Therefore, Ursa understands that marriage will never support her and her own world of 'rememory'. According to Great Gram and Gram's directives, Ursa and her mother have to pursue and follow the foremothers' steps to 'Rememory' despite the fact that none of the young

‘generation’ have been prostituted by Corregidora. For this, Ursa’s mother distances herself from men and from her own daughter Ursa. She tries to build her own world and her only loyalty to her mothers is expressed by ‘making generation, “I wasn’t look for a man. They’d be telling me about making generations, but I was’t out looking for no man. I never was out looking for woman. I kept thinking back on it, though, and it was like I had to go there, had to go there and sit there and have him watch me like that” (Ibid, p.112).

Ursa’s mother is different from Sethe in *Beloved*. She chooses to be silent and, as a result of her mothers’ traumatic experience, has the dilemma of having a man in her life. She has a relationship with Ursa’s father only for one reason, which is ‘making generations’. She, moreover, tells Ursa about her desire to have a baby: “it was like my whole body wanted you, Ursa, can you understand that? … I knew you was gonna come out a girl even while you was in me. Put my hand on my belly, and knew you was gonna be one of us” (Ibid, p.117). Through the desire of proliferation, Corregidora women have their power to resist, using their wombs as their form of immovability. Their production of girls is their way to turn rape on itself as ‘bearing witness’ and becomes a way of birth control that frees these women. Indeed, Ursa and her mother do not initially communicate; so her only information about her own mother comes from her grandmother.

There are lots of circumstances that affected Ursa’s mother’s life and she is painfully forced to strip herself of her own individuality. Jones’ portrayal of Ursa’s mother, Irene, affirms how an unwillingness to accept the oppression of her foremothers’ memories, without a true sense of individuality is intended to fail. Irene continues her duty of ‘bearing witness’ and sharing the slave past with her daughter, but she withholds her own personal experience, memories and pain from her family and her daughter. Her foremothers’ memories possessed her to the extent that she exposes her real role as a mother of Ursa and she could not build a mother-daughter relationship outside of being members of the witness bearers’ system. So, by choosing silence, Irene can create a small private world for herself, has a little individuality, and neglects her own daughter, Ursa.

Irene's silence affects Ursa and prevents her from comprehending the danger of the Corregidora traumatic legacy in her life. Irene, herself, cannot understand or get rid of this danger even after getting married to Ursa's father. She persuades him to live with her mothers and by doing this, she puts her marriage at risk. She cannot explain to him and she cannot function as a wife to him; she cannot have a healthy relationship with her husband because of Corregidora's legacy. The idea that the aim of her marriage is only to 'make generation' to bear the witness, has possessed her and her relationship with her husband and any other man, "he wasn't getting what he wanted from [her]" (Ibid, p.130). Her foremothers resent her relationship with a 'black man', like their white slave master, "messing with my girl, he ain't had no bit of right … black bastard" (1975, pp.130-31). They reset the idea that Irene may love her husband because they never got used to do so since "[Corregidora] made them make love to anyone, so they couldn't love anyone" (Ibid, p.104). Their love must be only to their offspring, and such a love can be a possessive and a destructive one. In fact, they are imitating their slave master in his objectifying them, so in turn they objectify their daughters. Through their oppressive mothering states, Ursa's grandmother and great grandmother try to create realizing steps for both Ursa and Irene. They insist on their scheme of making generation, especially daughters, who can bear the witness, and this is clear when grandmother slaps Ursa for questioning her truthfulness when she was five years old.

Indeed, both Ursa and Irene can never touch Gram's and Great Gram's violation or really understand their traumatic painful experiences no matter how much they listen and remember. Both have their own personal trauma that leads them to recognize the distinction between them and their foremothers. Ursa tries to understand her mother in order to understand herself, her identity, and her emotions towards her husband. She believes that her mother has memories and pain more than her foremothers: "I knew she had more than their memories. Something behind her eyes. A knowing, a feeling of her own. But she'd speak only their life" (Ibid, p.103). She wonders "how could [her mother] bear witness to what she'd never lived, and refuse me what she had lived?" (Ibid). Ursa believes that "it was as if she had more than learned it off by heart, though. It was as if their memory, the memory of all the Corregidora women, was her

memory too, as strong with her as her own private memory…but now she was Mama again … Mama had gotten it all out, her own memory" (Ibid, pp.129-32). It seems that Irene's choice to keep silent is to help herself and it is necessary for her own self-preservation and psychological survival, since for Corregidora's women's "survival depends on suppressed hysteria" (Ibid, p.59).

Since the slave past is too heavy to be home and too strong to be passed over, between the black mother and daughter there is a redoubled loss that affects the daughter's trajectory. According to this fact, Ursa's relationship with her mother is so difficult, if not impossible. In fact, *Corregidora* is a novel that retells the story of four generations of women. These women depend on each other to retell their painful experiences as victims of abusive white patriarchal slave society. They use their offspring to preserve their wounds as evidence to "hold up against" the oppression (Ibid, p.14). Although Ursa grows up to cry her mother's choice of withholding her past, she declares: "I would have rather sung her memory if I had to sing any" (Ibid, p.103). Ursa is different from her foremothers and mother in that she chooses not to remain silent even after losing the ability to make generation. She chooses to sing the memories.

Irene chooses to keep silent whereas Ursa through blues songs gains the ability to personalize and understand their stories, giving her sensibility of her own personal power. Her mother objects to her singing because she believes that these songs are immoral: "songs are devils. It's your own destruction you're singing. The voice is a devil. … 'Naw, Mama. You don't understand'. … 'unless your voice is raised of to the glory of God" (Ibid, p.53). When she asks Ursa from where she gains these songs, Ursa replies, "I got them from you" (Ibid), and she tells her mother that "if you understand me, Mama, you'd see I was trying to explain it, in blues, without words, the explanation somewhere behind the words" (Ibid, p.66).

Nevertheless, Ursa, in some situation, is like her mother in that she is influenced by her foremothers' memories and her mother's silence. She repeats her mother's fault with her husband(s), "taking what [she] need[s], but never be giving him what he need" (Ibid, p.26). However, Ursa at the end, contrasting to her mother, can find her individuality and herself. She accepts her role as the 'bearer of witness' and she recognizes that blues songs, mixing them with their

painful experiences, empower women more than making generation. Her foremothers “squeezed Corregidora into me, and I sung it back in return” (Ibid, p.103). The blues songs give Ursa agency and power, unlike her mother who tries to gain agency by keeping silent to no avail.

Eva’s story is different from both Ursa and Sethe in that she has a different kind of relationship with her mother. Indeed, the readers do not get much information about Eva and her mother, but the strongest scene is the violent one when her father discovers her mother’s sexual relationship with another man. The violence of that incident and the silence of her mother play a great role in building Eva’s personality and sexual views. Clara Escoda Agusti discusses Eva’s relationship with her mother saying that “Eva learns from her mother a strategy of survival that…uproots her from the realm of signifying and identity … Davis’ castration is directly related to the traumatic scene in Eva’s family” (2005, p.32). Moreover, Eva is imitating her mother by having a lover, imitating her by keeping silent, to keep a certain amount of autonomy by refusing to utter a word. While her mother does not talk about the reason behind having a lover, Eva never explains the reason behind castrating her lover.

The Bluest Eye (Morrison 1993) is the story of Pecola, a young black girl who is growing up during post World War I. She eagers to have blue eyes. In this story many factors affect Pecola’s life, relationships, psych, and sense of self. Living in a racial community that glorify the whiteness as a norm of beauty and worthiness affects the relationships of the members of this family and their journey of searching for identities and sense of self. Living in a family with no love between a father and a mother has a bad effect on both daughter/mother and daughter/father relationships. Pecola’s parents, Pauline and Cholly Breedlove, suffer from racism and their actions and behaviors with their children are reactions to that racism they had been submitted to. Pecola lives in such family and community that lead her to be obsessed with her wish for blue eyes. Furthermore, the idea of ugliness is associated with blackness in Pecola’s community. It is a cultural view that is delivered to the black girls at birth and that reflects the issue of racism.

Indeed, Pecola’s family consists of four members: a father, Cholly who has a false sense of love, a mother Pauline who falsely transfers her love towards

others, and a brother, Sammy who rejects the family by running away, and Pecola herself who wishes she could disappear from the world. Cholly has a false sense of love because he is rejected by his mother and father, and there is no model of parental love for him to learn from. Although Aunt Jimmy takes care of him in his childhood, he does not grow up in a functional family where real parental love is to be found. In turn, he does not know how to love his children and he "[has] no idea of how to raise children, and [has] never watched any parent raise himself, he could not even comprehend what such a relationship should be" (Morrison 1993, p.146). Later when he tries to show his affection for Pecola, he does it in a wrong way which is against morality as he rapes his own daughter. Since Pecola needs love and asks that: "how do you get somebody to love you", (Ibid, p.33) her father "loved her … sure he did. He, at any rate, was the one who loved her enough to touch her, envelop her, give something of himself to her. But his touch was fatal, and the something he gave her filled the matrix of her agony with death" (Ibid, p.186).

Pauline transfers her love to white families. Pauline rejects her own family and devotes her life to the family she works for. This is because she chooses to live in her idealized world where cleanness, order, and romantic stories exist. She thinks of her own family as a "stain" in her life. A stigma which she is not able to escape from. That "stain" is also like her lame foot which she cannot get rid of. Pauline maintains "this order, this beauty, for herself, a private world and never introduced it into her storefront, or to her children" (Ibid, p.116). As a result, Pauline excludes her black culture and rejects her own daughter. She teaches her children "fear of life … fear of being clumsy, fear of being like their father, fear of not being loved … fear of madness" (Ibid). However, the reader can feel that Pauline loves her daughter when she has been in her womb and she says that she "felt good about the baby like good friends [they were]" (Ibid, p.111). She dreams of a child that fit the standards of a white society not an "ugly" and "*like a black ball of hair*" (Ibid, p.112). However, when she gives birth to her baby, she is disappointed by her 'ugly' figure: "Anyways, the baby come. Big old healthy thing. She looked different from what [Pauline] thought…I used to like to watch her. Eyes all soft and wet…But I knowed she was ugly. Head full of pretty hair, but Lord she was ugly" (Ibid, p.114). For

Pauline, Pecola is not the girl that fits to her dream world. She devotes her love to “the little pink-and-yellow girl” (Ibid, p.100). The little white girl who calls her ‘Polly’, a nick name that no one in her life calls her with, even her children who address her as ‘Mrs. Breedlove’. So, Pecola is spiritually abandoned by Pauline and that leads Pecola to adore the whiteness beauty values of her community.

Pecola prays every night for a year with a hope for blue eyes “pretty blue eyes. Big blue pretty eyes” (Ibid, p.45). She cannot find her own beauty without ‘the blue eyes’ she prays for a whole year. Without receiving love from her own family, Pecola grows up to be lonely and yearning for love. That is also why Pecola desires blue eyes because she believes that everyone will love her if she has blue eyes. Thus, at the end of the story, she goes mad due to her illusion of really having blue eyes.

However, the traumatic memories affect the mother-daughter relationship of the protagonists in different ways. Sethe’s slavery trauma affects her relationship as both a mother and as a daughter. Ursa’s relationship with her foremothers affects her relationship with men and other people. Eva’s memories about her mother’s life and relationships affect her psyche and her sexual relationships with men. Pecola is the one who gets no love from either her mother or her father. Being raped by her father and rejected by her mother, Pecola goes really mad. Everything around her pushes her down with no chance to breathe.

Eventually, the traumatic memories of the protagonists and their relationships with their parents and people around them affect their sense of self. The next part will offer an analysis of the protagonists’ sense of self and how it has been affected by their traumatic memories.

2.3 **Self-Loathing, Self-Respect**

“Hate does that. Burns off everything but itself, so whatever your grievance is, your face looks just like your enemy’s.”

Toni Morrison, *Love*

bell hooks affirms that as women: “We all knew first-hand that we had been socialized as females by patriarchal thinking to see ourselves as inferior to men, to see ourselves as always and only in competition with one another for patriarchal approval, to look upon each other with jealousy, fear, and hatred” (2000, p.14). She also believes that “sexist thinking made us judge each other without compassion and punish one another harshly. Feminist thinking helped us unlearn female self-hatred. It enabled us to break free of the hold patriarchal thinking had on our consciousness” (Ibid). One of the most difficult challenges that faces contemporary feminist movements is challenging sexist thinking about the female body, which means women can never be liberated without developing healthy self-esteem and self-love. hooks argues that “before women’s liberation all females young and old were socialized by sexist thinking to believe that our value rested solely on appearance and whether or not we were perceived to be good looking, especially by men” (Ibid, p.31). Claudia Tate mentions that the black heroine “seldom elects to play the role of the alienated outsider or the lone adventurer in her quest for self-affirmation. This does not mean that she is unconcerned about her self-esteem and about attaining a meaningful social position, but rather that her quest of self -discovery has different priorities and takes place in a different landscape” (2011, p.xx).

However, Eva’s sense of self is related to hooks’ attitude and depends mostly on Laura Mulvey’s theory of the male gaze and the pleasure in looking, and “to-be-looked-at-ness” (Mulvey 1999, p.837). Mulvey argues that “in a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female figure” (Ibid, p.837). The female, “then, stands in patriarchal culture as a signifier for the male other, bound by a symbolic order in which man can live out his fantasies and obsessions through linguistic command by imposing them on the silent image of a woman still tied to her place as the bearer of meaning, not maker of meaning” (Ibid, p.834). This means the woman wants to be looked at and the man wants to look. Eva lacks self-knowledge, when Freddy Smoot tries to rape her and she says, “I didn’t know what had seen in my eyes, because I didn’t know what was there” (Jones 1987, p.120). Audre Lorde in her review on *Eva’s Man* argues that “Eva has no quest nor self, only unsatisfied hunger,

hurt, and mute revenge. The lie has already been told too often, that what Black women best know how to do is suffer and castrate. Eva's final act upon Davis is not monstrous because it is ugly, but rather because it pretends to be meaning" (Lorde2009, p.153).

Indeed, Eva's sense of self fluctuates between mostly self-loathing and self-esteem; once she imagines herself as a flower, "he stings me between my breasts, the bud between my legs. My flower" (Jones 1987, p.151), when she remembers Davis. Once as "a wild woman" (Ibid, pp.3, 4) as the newspaper portrays her because she has done something, which according to the society criteria, is a violent crime. Looking in the mirror and comparing herself with Medusa, "I'm Medusa … Men look at me and get hard-one. … I'm a lion woman" (Ibid, p.130) and comparing herself with queen Bee whose "men had to die for loving her" (Ibid, p.131). Eva is trying to build an imaginary self-definition and self-empowerment against her memories of abuse and she even seems to be satisfied with her castration and murder of Davis: "what kind of woman can it be to do something like that?" (Ibid). However, Eva throughout the novel will never have a sense of self-respecting; it is only in her mind. In spite of the fact that Eva tries to act or be strong like Medusa, but she cannot manage. She tries to be the active castrating woman and get out of victimhood, but her sense of self-loathing is stronger than her attempt to survive, that leads to her destruction. As Alban argues "Medusa may empower, or may madden women into destruction, this force a symbol of power within relationships" (2017, 263).

Actually, Eva's sense of self- loathing starts from her childhood and she used to view herself as a sexual animal because of the education that she receives from her mother and Miss Billie, as Mulvey affirms that a "woman's desire is subjugated to her image ... as bearer, not maker, of meaning" (Jones 1987, p.834). Miss Billie used to compare men to animals "banny roaster"(Ibid, p.14), "bunch of wild horses" (Ibid, p.20) and she tells Eva that "once you open your legs … it seems like you can't close them"(Ibid, p.15) like animals and like a whore. Furthermore, shame and confusion that surround Eva's traumatic past caused in her self-loathing; all the men in her life take advantage of her and all

try to defeat her silence and what is buried deep inside. All these create Eva's own sense as a sexual animal, the sense that Sethe never accepts.

However, Eva also has the sense of being a whore from her childhood and then with Davis who treats her like one: "one of these days you going to meet a man and go somewhere and sleep with him. I know a woman like you" (Ibid, p.166). This sense of self-loathing is represented to the readers clearly in the last part of the novel when she keeps telling the prison psychiatrist: "don't explain me. Don't you explain me. Don't you explain me" (Ibid, p.173). Eva tries to escape or get rid of this look and gaze. However, Eva throughout the novel used to be defined by male gaze at her. This is clear when she tries to explain the reason behind killing Davis to the psychiatrist at the end of the novel, she keeps saying "the way he was looking at me…the way he was looking at me…Every man could look at me the way he was looking. They all would" (Ibid, p.171). Melvin Dixon identifies with men, and "Eva persists in acting out with Davis the role of women predators … which are really created by men out of their own castration anxiety and fears about their repressed femininity" (Joyce 2006, p.247). Nevertheless, Gayl Jones herself remarks that Eva is always viewed as a whore. As a result, "she begins to feel [that] she is, and eventually associated herself with the Queen Bee and the Medusa symbol. I put those images in the story to show how the myths or ways in which men perceive women actually define women's characters" (Tate 2011, p.96).

Speaking about Mulvey's gaze theory in which she believes that woman is the object of the gaze, Barbara Creed asserts that woman is a subject more than an object. She discusses the concept of castrating woman, as the figure of female monstrosity. For Creed, the castrating woman is an active monster and the controller of the gaze, unlike the passive castrated woman. By deciding to be a castrator, woman challenges the patriarchal authority and tries to get out of victimhood. In spite of not being a 'liberated' female figure, the castrating woman challenges the society gaze in general and male gaze specifically against her (Creed 1993, p.7). Eva in *Eva's Man* fits into Creed's concept of the castrating woman as an active monster, in spite of being attacked harshly by her society. Eva decides to be an active monster rather than being a passive

castrated victim and being the subject of 'the gaze' rather than being the object of 'the gaze'.

The matter is totally different with Sethe and Ursa; They have different reasons and backgrounds that build their own sense of self, whether self-hated or self-respect. Toni Morrison asserts that "one of the nice things that women do, is nurture and love something other than themselves_ they do rather nicely… they are certainly taught to do it, socialized to do it, or genetically predisposed to do it … It's something that I think the majority of women feel strongly about" (Rothstein 1987). Morrison also clarifies

I wanted it to be our past, which is hunting, and her past, which is hunting- the way memory never really leaves you unless you have gone through it and confronted it head on. But I wanted that hunting not to be really a suggestion of being bedevilled by the past, but to have it be incarnate, to have it actually happened that a person enters your world who is in fact- you believe, at any rate- the dead returned, and you get a second chance, a chance to do it right. Of course, you do it wrong again. (Ibid)

In *Beloved*, Baby Suggs, Sethe and Denver have their own sense of self and it is presented differently to the readers. Sethe's sense of self is fluctuated throughout the novel, once she feels strong, self-assertiveness, and once she has the sense of self-loathing, losing identity and destruction. Beloved, Paul D, Baby Suggs, Schoolteacher, Denver and the community differently play the role to build Sethe's sense of self. Sethe rebuilds her sense of self- respect through her 'rememories' and she stands for every woman's experience who survives after rape, violence and humiliation. Indeed, Baby Suggs with all her 'rememories', gives Sethe the power to heal her soul and self, while Beloved leads her to a state of deep self-loathing and weakness "it was a greedy ghost and needed a lot of love … I am Beloved and she is mine" (Morrison 2004, pp.247-8). However, Baby Suggs is one of the characters who serves as a healer and loving and supporting mother to Sethe and all the people around her: "She let her great heart beat in their presence" (Ibid, p.103).

Baby Suggs has a great sense of self-esteem in spite of all her traumatic experiences during slavery. She is the one who has eight children from different fathers. She is the one who has lost all her children because of the brutality of

slavery, and she is the one who gives hope to others. She affects them with her hopeful preaching: “when warm weather came, [she] … followed by every black man, woman and child who could make it through, took her great heart to the clearing-a wide- open place cut deep in the woods … In the heat of every Saturday afternoon, she sat in the clearing while the people waited among the trees … [she], holy, offered up to them her great big heart (Ibid, pp.102, 103).

Sethe remembers Baby’s advice to “lay em down [all that]. Lay all that mess down. Sword and shield” (Ibid, p.101) to empower herself. In fact, Baby Suggs advises her people not to forget, since remembering is their first step in their journey of healing. “Cry… for the living and the dead. Just cry” and she “told them … they could imagine. That if they could not see it, they would not have it” (Ibid, p.103). All these speeches of Baby Suggs keep Sethe strong even after her house is haunted by the ‘crawling baby’ ghost and even after her two boys run away. Furthermore, 124 house gives her the power when she tells Paul D that “124 was so full of strong feeling, perhaps she was oblivious to the loss of anything at all” (Ibid, p.39).

Paul D’s arrival actually gives Sethe the chance to reconnect with herself, memories and feelings. His appearance gives her the sense of power and safety, a sense to love and respect herself as a woman. She asks herself “would it be all right to go ahead and feel? Go ahead and count on something?” (Ibid, p.46). Indeed, he gives her the power to be strong and to recognize her right to live “you your best thing, Sethe. You are” (Ibid, p.322) and he tells her that: “Sethe, if I’m here with you, with Denver, you can go anywhere you want. Jump, if you want to, cause I’ll catch you, girl. I’ll catch you ‘fore you fall. Go as far inside as you need to, I’ll hold your ankles” (Ibid, p.55). He supports her by sharing her every moment of their past and their future and he helps her to talk and ‘rememory’ her days in Sweet Home and first ‘28 days in Cincinnati’. He tells her that “Sethe… me and you got more yesterday than anybody. We need some kind of tomorrow” (Ibid, p.322). Sethe believes that both have lots of memories to share and “trust and rememory, yes, the way she believed it could be … The mind of him that knew her own. Her story was bearable because it was his as well- to tell, to refine and tell again” (Ibid, p.116).

However, because of being rejected by her people after killing her baby, Sethe feels that Paul D is the one who can "share it, and he had beat the spirit away…[and] the fingers touching the back of her neck were stronger now … she wanted Paul D … in her life" (Ibid, pp.112, 116). In the last scene of the novel, Paul D helps her again to find herself and her identity and to heal from her traumatic experiences and gives her a hand: "You got to get up from here, girl … Sethe" (Ibid, p.320). He encourages her to have her own sense of self. It is clear that she is able to reach this moment of awareness and self-esteem when she answers him "Me? Me?" (Ibid, p.322), as Hirsch debates "a double assertion of herself" (1989, p.103).

Paul D is surprised that she escapes by herself alone, and she is able to reach 124 and be with her children, "all by yourself … running off pregnant" and he "was proud of her and annoyed by her" (Morrison 2004, p.9). Sethe is also proud of herself for doing it alone "almost by myself" (Ibid, p.9). Her self-esteem is of its highest level here and the use of the pronoun "Me" reflects her sense of self-respect in these moments: "I did it. I got us all out. Without Halle too. Up till then it was the only thing I ever did on my own. And it came off right, like it was supposed to. We was here. Each and every one of my babies and me too… still it was me doing it; Go on, and Now. Me having to look out. Me using my own head" (Ibid, p.190). Nevertheless, this moment of Sethe's triumph, power and self-assertion immediately disappears after losing Beloved for the second time. She feels weak and stays in bed losing her self-confidence and starts to feel self-loathing again.

One of the things that gives Sethe a sense of self -respect throughout the novel is her mother's memory. Although her relationship with her mother is not too strong and her mother nurses her only two or three weeks, from these limited interactions, she can build a good self-respect of herself since her childhood. When Nan tells her that she is the only child that her mother decides to keep: "she threw them all away but you. The one from the crew she threw away on the island. The others from more whites she also threw away. Without names, she threw them. You gave the name of the black man. She put her arms around him. The others she did not put her arms around. Never. Never" (Ibid, p.74). Choosing Sethe to keep and giving her the name of father, Sethe gains a sense

of self and identity despite slavery. Morrison throughout the novel affirms the importance of community in building a sense of self. Furthermore, her success to escape alone: “I did it” and giving birth to Denver during her escape journey, also gives her a high sense of self-esteem.

The mother-daughter relationship controls Sethe’s sense of self and self-loathing throughout the novel by the appearance of Beloved. This appearance leads to restore a group of contrasted feelings, love and sense of motherhood that she has her “own best thing [Beloved]” back; feelings of guilt and shame of her crime. In addition, one of the reasons that leads her to self -loathing as a mother is that her children were afraid of her, “neither Howard nor Bugler would let [her] near them, not even to touch their hair” (Ibid, p.216). At the beginning of Beloved’s appearance, Sethe starts to take a new step of healing through the new interaction between her and her two daughters. Especially Beloved and “she slept…still smiling…looked at Beloved’s face and smiled… she started the cooking stove as quietly as she could, reluctant to wake the sisters, happy to have them asleep at her feet” (Ibid, pp.213-215).

Sethe can feel her identity again as a good mother when her daughter comes back to her: “She come back to me, my daughter, and she is mine” (Ibid, p.241). She thinks that Beloved is not mad with her any longer: “I thought you were mad with me. And now I know that if you was, you ain’t now because you came back to me … You mine and I have to show you… and teach you what a mother should” (Ibid, pp.217, 237). Sethe starts to explain the reasons of her crime, “they held me down and took [your milk] … They handled me like I was a cow, no, the goat” (Ibid, p.237) and “I know what is it to be without the milk that belongs to you” (Ibid, p.236). Sethe is trying to justify her murder and keep her sense of self that is brutally crushed by schoolteacher and his two nephews who beat her and steal her milk and humanity. She tells Beloved that she kills her because “whites might dirty her all right, but not her best thing, her beautiful, magical best thing-the part of her that was clean” (Ibid, p.296). She kills her in an attempt to protect her. However, Sethe also affirms her sense of loathing-self because of her own memories as a slave by saying “that anybody white could… dirty you so bad you couldn’t like yourself anymore. Dirty you so bad you forget who you were and couldn’t think it up” (Ibid, p.295).

However, Sethe starts to lose herself and succumb to Beloved's control and greediness; she "was worn down, speckled, dying, spinning, changing shapes" (Ibid, p.300). Her feeling of guilt destroys any sense of self and identity she has: "it was a greedy ghost and needed a lot of love" (Ibid, p.247). Her love to her daughter Beloved leads her to be crushed, and "Beloved invented desire … and the mood changed, and arguments began … A complaint from Beloved, and apology from Sethe … Beloved accused her for leaving her behind. Of not being nice to her, not smiling to her" (Ibid, pp.283-84). Sethe, from the night of "ice-skated under a star-loaded sky", starts to change. She cuts Denver out completely and "played all hard with Beloved, who never got enough of anything … It was as though [Sethe] had lost her mind" (Ibid, p.282). Indeed, all these details are choking Sethe and destroying her self-assertion and leading her to a state of self -loathing and she "pleaded for forgiveness… and listing again and again her reasons: that Beloved was more important, [and she would] give up her life, every minute and hour of it, to take back just one of Beloved's tears" (Ibid, p.284). She always gives excuses for her crime: "my mind was homeless then… I couldn't lay down nowhere in peace … Now I can. I can sleep like the drowned, have mercy" (Ibid, p.241).

It is obvious throughout the novel that Sethe's sense of self is always fluctuating, once she feels strong and then she has a sense of self- loathing and destruction. After losing her Beloved for the second time, she no longer feels the inner strength or the energy to stay strong, as she admits: "I'm tired. … She left me. … She is a friend of my mind. She gathered me … the pieces I am, she gathered them and give them back to me in all" (Ibid, pp.320, 321). So, losing 'a friend of mind' for Sethe is losing herself again and without having the power to gather herself anymore. Additionally, the arrival of schoolteacher after twenty-eight days of freedom leads to Sethe's unbalanced feelings and thinking. It shatters her sense of self, safety, and control. In fact, her traumatic experience with Schoolteacher recreates a sense of fear, self-loathing and weakness within her that lead to the murder of her daughter; this murder destroys any sense of self inside her. To overcome this murder and restore her sense of self, Sethe has to defy her feelings of remorse towards her murdered daughter.

Throughout the novel, Denver builds a new developed sense of self- respect and self-knowledge through her relationship with Beloved and Sethe that leads her to recommunicate with people and have "a self to look out for" (Ibid, p.297). In fact, she gains her sense of self and the power from her grandmother, Baby Suggs, "remembering those conversations and her grandmother's last and final words" (Ibid, p.287). She remembers Baby's speech about her dad and about her birth. Even after Baby Suggs' death her memories still encourage Denver to overcome her loneliness and fears. Baby Suggs once tells her "not to listen to all that. That [she] should always listen to [her] body and love it" (Ibid, p.247). Actually, Baby Suggs remembers that "people look down on her because she had eight children with different men. Coloredpeople and whitepeople both look down on her for that"; nevertheless, she has a high level of self-respect and she loves "everybody like it was her job and hers alone" (Ibid, p.161). She helps her granddaughter Denver to develop her own sense of self. Also, Denver's love of her mom gives her the power to develop and go out of 124 and find a job.

However, when Denver sees that Sethe is losing her spirit and giving it all to Beloved, she realizes that she is the only one left to resolve the situation. All the changes in the end of the novel are because of Denver. As her mother and Beloved have distance themselves from Denver more and more, her grandmother's words give her the strength to go to the community and ask for help to save her mother:

It was a new thought, having a self to look out for and preserve. And it might not have occurred to her if she hadn't met Nelson Lord leaving his grandmother's house as Denver entered to say a thank you for half a pie. All he did was smile and say, 'Take care of yourself Denver,' but she heard it as though it were what language was made for. The last time he spoke to her his words blocked up her ears. Now they opened up her mind. (Ibid, p.297)

In fact, Denver makes her decision to help her mother and save her from Beloved. The first step in Sethe's healing journey is when Denver asks Ella for help. Ella is the one who asks the other women to help Sethe by gathering in front of her house and singing. The connection with the black community again after eighteen years through Denver, is an essential act of self-restoration for Sethe. The women's crowd reminds Sethe of Baby Suggs' message to 'love

yourself'. But when Mr. Bodwin appears, he looks like schoolteacher to Sethe. These two things empower Sethe again to burst out with her anger, fury and sadness of long years. Instead of directing her anger and violence towards her 'own best things', this time Sethe directs her fury against Mr. Bodwin whom she sees as Schoolteacher.

The daughter/parent's relationship similarly controls the protagonist's sense of self in *The Bluest Eye*. Like in *Eva's Man* the 'gaze' affects the female characters' sense of self. Toni Morrison mentions that the story of Pecola has been inspired from a real girl's story and "the 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 think 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?" (Morrison 1993, p.187). Pecola's eagerness for the blue eyes is indeed an evidence of Morrison's thought of 'racial self-loathing'. Pecola wants to be someone who fits to the beauty norms that is more appreciated by her family and her community. By having blue eyes, she thinks that she may be treated differently by others: "if she looked different, beautiful, maybe Cholly would be different, and Mrs. Breedlove too. Maybe they'd say, 'why, look at pretty-eyed Pecola. We mustn't do bad things in front of those pretty eyes"' (Ibid, p.45). This story reflects the impact of the domination of white culture on black people during 1941. The values of white culture during that period relates blackness to ugliness that leads lots of black people to develop self -hatred of themselves. Breedlove family in which Cholly the father, both Pecola and her mother Pauline have experienced low level of self-esteem sense. They all experience sense of self-loathing because they believe that they are ugly. "They seemed to have taken all of their smoothly cultivated ignorance, their exquisitely learned self-hatred" (Ibid, p.61).

In Pecola's community, she is 'ugly' and represented the image of extreme 'ugliness' and poverty. Even children at school mock Pecola by calling her "black", "Black e mo Black e mo" (Ibid, p.62). It is more terrifying to be mocked for being 'ugly' by one's own people. Morrison originates Pecola's racial self-loathing in her parents, but she also presents a complete antithesis to

Pecola's self-denying racial identity in the form of Maureen Peal (Mahaffey 2004, p.159).

Morrison points out how children have already internalized the cultural message that dark skin is bad and "it was their contempt for their own blackness that gave the first insult its teeth" (Morrison 1993, p.61). That is why she keeps her head down out of shame and self-hatred with her hands on her eyes, she wishes to disappear: "please God make me disappear" (Ibid, p.44). Children can be cruel, like Maureen, a white little girl in Pecola's school who believes that she is better than Pecola and her friend Frieda because she has a white skin and says that: "I am cute! And you ugly! Black and ugly black e mos. I am cute!" (Ibid, p.73). Pecola herself spends "long hours … looking in the mirror, trying to discover the secret of the ugliness, the ugliness that made her ignored or despised at school, by teachers and classmates alike" (Ibid, p.45). For a young, black female like Pecola growing up in a black community that idolizes everything Maureen represents, she believes the only recourses left for her is to first accept the community's racial preference and then withdraw into an isolated community of the self (Mahaffey 2004, p.160).

Pecola believes that "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 1993, p.22). Pecola notices dandelions when most others do not. She is sensitive to the beauty of flowers' but also knows that most people ignore or dismiss them, "Dandelions. A dart of affection leaps out from her to them. But they do not look at her and do not send love back. She thinks, 'They are ugly. They are weeds'" (Ibid, p.48). Pecola believes that "if her eyes … were different, that is to say, beautiful, she herself would be different" (Ibid, p.45).

Furthermore, Pecola and Pauline's, sense of self can be understood through Mulvey's concept of gaze like Eva. Pecola is affected by her community's gaze towards her. Pecola is very fond of the Shirley Temple's cup and candies with the picture of little Mary Jane. For her, having them "is somehow to eat the eyes, eat Mary Jane. Love Mary Jane. Be Mary Jane" (Ibid, p.49). She believes that if her eyes were blue like Shirley Temple, people might love her. Instead, day after day Pecola starts to lose her identity and her sense of self-loathing has

increased because of the people around her. For example, when she goes to the candy store of Mr. Yacobowski, he ignores Pecola and "he does not see her, because for him there is nothing to see" (Ibid, p.47). Out of his sense of hate and disgust towards her, "he hesitates, not wanting to touch her hand" (Ibid) to take the money. It is the racial self-disrespect and the value of whiteness beauty that also can be found in the novel through the character of Geraldine, a 'colored' woman who believes and teaches her son that [there is] a difference between colored people and niggers … colored people were neat and quiet; niggers were dirty and loud" (Ibid, p.81). All these humiliation with the rape of her father can be found in Pecola's eyes. Her eyes reflect her memories, and "they were everything. Everything was there, in them. All of those pictures. All of those faces" (Ibid, p.44).

Indeed, Morrison gives a message to her readers that the shame of sexual abuse in Pecola's family is central, but it is also the fear of ugliness. Ugliness is an emotion that "is more pervasive in Pecola's culture and readers" (Bump 2010, p.159). Pauline, like her daughter Pecola, fails to fit herself in her own community and a sense of self-loathing develops inside her. After her marriage, Pauline tries to represent herself like movie stars, but she can only experience a sense self-respect with her role as an "ideal servant" (Morrison 1993, p.115). Pauline tries to escape her own 'ugly' life and finds what she needs when she works as a servant in Fisher White's house. 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" (Ibid, p.111). Actually, Pauline escapes her real life through movies, and she is influenced by them and by the depiction of physical beauty in those movies. She affirms that "the onliest time I be happy seem like was when I was in the picture show" and "probably the most destructive ideas in the history of human thought" (Ibid, p.111). She says that: those "pictures gave me a lot of pleasure, but it made coming home hard, and looking at Cholly hard" (Ibid, p.112). When she loses her teeth, she feels angry and "look like [she] just didn't care no more after that. [She] let [her] hair go back, plaited it up, and settled down to just being ugly" (Ibid) and that increases Pauline's self-loathing.

At the end of the novel, Pecola goes mad because she cannot find the love that she needs either from her family or from her community.

Ursa in *Corregidora* also has a journey to find herself. Her sense of self is fluctuating between self-loathing and self-respect, like Sethe. Through this journey, Ursa asks her foremothers lots of questions to understand herself as a black woman. “How many generations?... And you Grandmama, the first mulatto daughter, when did you begin to feel yourself in your nostrils? And, Mama, when did you smell your body with your hand?” (Jones 1975, p.59). Since her childhood, Ursa starts to understand the image of woman/man sexual relationship and it is a step on her way to understand herself and her identity as a woman. Her Grandma tells her that:

Days that were pages of hysteria. Their survival depended on suppressed hysteria. She went and got her daughter, womb swollen with the child of her own father. How many generations had to bow to his genital fantasies?... They knew you only by the signs of your sex. They touched you as if you were magic. They ate your genitals. (Ibid)

Actually, Ursa is trying to understand and find herself, but she is floundering about being one of Corregidora’s woman and being herself because she has lost her ability to ‘make generation’; once she feels proud of being one of “The Mulatto women” and once she feels different “because she can’t make generation” (Ibid, p.60) anymore. From her childhood, Ursa has been raised on the idea that she has to make generation in order to retell the trauma of her foremothers. When she loses her ability to be a mother, her identity as a Corregidora woman has gone: “as if part of my life’s already marked out for me__ the barren part” (Ibid, p.6). It is not only losing her womb, but her role to ‘bear the witness’. She affirms that “I can’t make generations. And even if I still had my womb, even if the first baby had come __what would I have done then? Would I have kept it up? Would I have been like her, or them?” (Ibid, p.60).

Ursa cannot decide who is she; is she Ursa herself? or is she one of the Corregidora’s women? “I realized for the first time I had what all these women had. I’d always thought I was different. Their daughter, but somehow different. Maybe less Corregidora. I don’t know. But when I saw the picture, I knew I had it. What my mother and my mother’s mother before her had. The mulatto

women. Great Gram was the coffee-bean woman, but the rest of us…But I am different now, I was thinking" (Ibid, p.60). This is because of her trauma. She feels different and she is loathing herself because she "[has] everything they had, except the generations" (Ibid, p.60). Additionally, Ursa's color is another thing that causes her sense of self-loathing. Her color is lighter than other black women, asserting her white ethnicity and approving her foremothers' traumatic past of rape. This color affects her acceptance of self because she is always being referred to by thumb, "you look like you Spanish. Where you from? (Ibid, p.71) … [she has] light skin and good hair…who's that? Some new bitch from out of town going be trying to take everybody's husband away from them? ...'half-white heifer'" (Ibid, p.73).

Ursa's mother tells Ursa how her father Martin treats her as a 'woman'; she expects from him to be like Corregidora and any man must be like Corregidora in his way of treating women. She expects him to talk to her using bad words like "you got a mouth ain't you bitch", but instead he calls her '"woman… [and she says] 'I didn't feel like a woman… I didn't even feel like no woman and he called me one…I think I mighta even been liking him calling me that, like men never did call women that before,… that was just a special name for me, his special name for me"' (Ibid, pp.114,115). Unlike Ursa, who believes that love means respect when she speaks to Cat about Mutt. Ursa says that "if that nigger loved me, he wouldn't've throwed me down the steps" (Ibid, p.36). While Cat agrees with Ursa's mother's opinion about black men: "I know niggers love you do worse than that" (Ibid, p.37). However, Ursa's mother feels something towards her husband, but the legacy of Corregidora's women prevents her from having a healthy relationship with him. The sense that she must only 'make generation' prevents her from feeling anything with him. That increases her sense of self-loathing: "I hadn't even given myself to feel anything before I pushed him out… I wouldn't let myself feel anything" (Ibid, pp.117-118).

Throughout the novel Ursa has dreams in which she loathes herself since she is grown up with the idea of 'making generation' in order to 'bear witness' while she has lost the ability to make generation:

> "Great Gram, if she were back, what would she say?"
>
> "Be glad he didn't fuck you".

“Oh, but he did. What do you say to me now?”

“where’s the next generation?”

“Hush” (Ibid, p.77).

She is convinced that woman is nothing but a sexual object: “That’s what a woman waits for … why didn’t you?’ ‘was I so bad”’ (Ibid, p.76). In spite of loathing herself in those dreams, Ursa is trying to get rid of her weakness to pass over her trauma and ‘theirs’. She is trying to find her own voice, her own language to tell the past and to find her own identity in a way that is different from her foremothers’ way. She finds her way to discover her identity and reach a good level of self-esteem through her voice and music, “I am Ursa Corregidora. I have tears for eyes. I was made to touch my past at an early age. I found it on my mother’s tiddies. In her milk. Let no one pollute my music. I will dig out their templets. I will pluck out their eyes” (Ibid, p.77).

Finally, Ursa gets rid of all trauma that hurts her before and finds her identity. Singing gives Ursa a sense of self-respect, relief, and “it helps [her] to explain what [she] can’t explain” (Ibid, p.56). She asserts that she can give witness through her own voice: “let me give witness the only way I can. I’ll make a fetus out of grounds of coffee to rub inside my eyes. When it’s time to give witness, I’ll make a fetus out of grounds of coffee. I’ll stain their hands” (Ibid, p.54). After listening to her mother’s story, Ursa’s sense of self has been changed. She starts to think about herself and her own life differently. She discovers that her voice is an instrument of power in her journey of healing, “I was thinking, what had I done about my own life” (Ibid, p.132).

However, these characters through an inside looking standardize their extremely oppressive and excessively unfair circumstances. They try to find their own ways of healing their selves. The act of deep looking leads Ursa in somehow to overcome everything and gain kind of self-assertion and identity. Eva fails to discover her identity and her trauma since her memories and sense of self-loathing lead to her destruction. Pecola is not able to manage and her sense of self-loathing lead to a real madness and destruction. Sethe, with the help of her community, Paul D and her daughter Denver, is in the right way to heal and find her identity.

Furthermore, experiencing trauma for some of those protagonists leads to a kind of self-loathing and weakness, like Pecola and Eva. This sense of self-loathing leads the characters to keep isolate themselves from the outside and create their own worlds. Pecola creates her imaginary world that gives her the blue eyes that she wants, and this leads to her madness. Eva's self-loathing creates feelings of anger inside her that she expresses by castrating her lover. While the traumatic memories strengthen the others, like Sethe and Ursa. Through their journey of healing and finds identity, some of them choose to be silent as a form of power. Some choose to accept the authority of the society over them and to be muted. Some express their anger and fury as a response to all traumatic memories they pass through. Some have been smashed and become mad. These points will be discussed in the next chapter within the analysis of the chosen texts.

3. MUTED OR SILENT

Being muted or choosing to be silent is depended at many things; gender, social circumstances, trauma, and self-affirmation. For gender, women in most patriarchal societies are used to be muted; otherwise, they are accused to be mad.

bell hooks writes that the act of speaking or gaining voice for women is a decolonizing gesture- one that transforms from object to subject. She believes that "only as subjects can we speak. As objects, we remain voiceless- our beings defined and interpreted by others" (1989, p.12). hooks also affirms that "within feminist circles, silence is often seen as the sexist 'right speech' of womanhood -the sign of woman's submission to patriarchal authority… for many women, it is not a simple task to talk about men … within patriarchal society, silence has been for women a gesture of … complicity, especially silence about men" (Ibid, p.6, 128). Speaking can be an act of risk and daring while the "context of silence is varied and multi-dimensional. Most obvious are the ways racism, sexism, and class exploitation act to suppress and silence. Less obvious are the inner struggles, the efforts made to gain the necessary confidence to [speak]" (Ibid, p.8). Cixous, in "The Laugh of the Medusa", encourages women to break out their silence and not to accept to be muted. (1976, p.881) Cixous also debates that hysteria is a rebellion against the patriarchal order and writes in "Castration or Decapitation", that "silence is the mark of hysteria. The great hysterics have lost speech … their tongues are cut off and what talks isn't heard because it's the body that talks and man doesn't hear the body" (Cixous 1981, p.49). Audre Lorde agrees with Cixous and affirms that to break the silence is better than keeping it because "the weight of our silence will chock us" (Lorde 1997, p.44).

African American writers use the theme of silence in their literature as a form of either power or weakness, like Toni Morrison and Gayl Jones. In Jones's *Eva's Man*, silence is too clear throughout the novel, but its motive cannot be clear

without a close reading of the text. Gayl Jones affirms that "In *Eva's Man* I sensed that Eva's character was not going to be involved by anyone, not even by her selected listener" (Tate 2011, p.92). Indeed, Eva, the protagonist, uses silence from the beginning of the story, with the policemen and with the psychiatrists and other people. This silence is echoed in Eva's relationship and interactions with other characters, especially men.

Living in abnormal family and being a witness of the violent sexual relationships and being a victim of a series of sexual abuses, Eva struggles to have a normal healthy relationship with men. She used to be silenced by people around her, and emotionally and physically have injured her. Her silence after committing her crime seems to be her own choice, and a result of her traumatic past. She believes that this silence is a powerful weapon, not a form of weakness. Eva is silent and unwilling to express herself, her emotions and her intentions to people. By her silence, Eva can create her own world of freedom. After her violent crime, castrating her lover with her teeth, she has been termed as mad and imprisoned in a psychiatric prison. Eva insists on her silence and never justifies her brutal behavior. Actually, her silence is not a fear of confessing because Eva is the one who calls the police and confesses her crime and returns back to the scene of the crime. "I found [the telephone], and called, and told them about the man in the hotel room" (Jones 1987, p.129). Dori Laub states that silence for those who chooses to keep silent "serves them both as a sanctuary and as a place of bondage. Silence is for them a fated exile, yet also a home, a destination, and a binding oath. To return from this silence is a rule rather than exception" (1995, p.58). Eva refuses to tell her story and her past to anyone but to her readers. For her, silence is a way of refusing submission.

Laub affirms that women can find peace in keeping silent and it could be a source of relief (Ibid, p.79). Eva cannot override her experience and traumatic memories and she entrapped in an endless cycle of pain. That pain leads to her silence: "I tell them it ain't me lying, it's memory lying" (Jones 1987, p.5). Her traumatic experiences lead to her cumulative silence that leads to her collapse. Throughout the novel, Eva refuses to speak her pain, disappointment, or even her motives and actions. She "didn't tell anybody… just let the man tell his inside" (Ibid, p.98) and she admits "nobody knew why I knifed him because I

didn't say" (Ibid, p.99). She insists on keeping silent and the readers can notice that she has suppressed her feelings, emotions, memories and pain for long time. Even when Davis tries to help her to open her heart for him, she refuses and states that "I hadn't said anything to any man in a long time… [and] don't like to talk about myself" (Ibid, pp.9,73). Eva keeps silent of her all memories even her marriage she never speaks about. She admits that "I didn't talk about my husband. He was the part of my life I didn't talk about" (Ibid, p.103). When Davis asked her if she is married, she did not tell him, and she prefers to keep "all [her] secrets" because there's nothing to say (Ibid, p.101).

Some critics affirm that Eva's silence is a matter of weakness, a form of passivity; by refusing to speak, Eva encourages the patriarchal oppression to demean her more and accepts to be the victim of these oppressions and abuse and she is accepting men's definitions against her. Melvin Dixon affirms that "Eva remains imprisoned literally and figuratively by her silence that increases her passivity and her acceptance of the words and definitions of others" (Joyce & McBride 2006, p.120). Her "silence is more abusive than protective and inhibits her from developing her own 'song' or voice about self and ancestry… [this silence] makes her unable to hear others" (Ibid). Eva is unintelligible and "brutally silent throughout most of the novel as if she were rebelling against language or had just lost her voice completely" (Ibid, p.246). Indeed, when she starts speaking, she is confused and mixed up reality with fantasy and dreams. While other critics agree that Eva's silence is a form of protection from being objectified by the male gaze. Like Françoise Lionnet argues that Eva's silence is her way to refute the odds of her society and the male gaze. Her silence is the source of her power. Lionnet confirms that Eva resorts to silence to rebut the phallocentric portrayal and to protect her own independence. Eva, as a black female, knows that the odds are against her and that she will always be viewed, as a sexual monster, not as a victim of a series of sexual abuse (1993, p.144).

Eva keeps saying "there is nothing to say" in order to assert the idea that speaking language is not helping her. Whenever she tries to speak, she is misjudged and misunderstood. When she tries to talk about Queen Bee with Davis, he accuses her of lying and states that he does not "even think it's a real woman … Somebody [Eva] just made" (Jones 1987, p.74). Even the psychiatrist

tries to help her to speak, with his "like cotton candy" (Ibid, p.76) voice telling her that she has "to open up sometime … to somebody" (Ibid, p.77), but she keeps her silence. Her traumatic experiences forced her to keep silent. Sally Robinson states that: "critics of *Eva's Man* failed to discern the power of Eva's alternate construction of subjectivity, and have reduced Jones' protagonist to a static figure who has no discursive agency… Eva is indeed 'rebelling' against a certain kind of language, but she certainly is not 'silent'; she does, maintain control over the place of enunciation even as she mimics others' discourses" (1991, pp.181,182).

In contrast with Ursa, Eva can keep her harsh memories alive through her silence. Dixon asserts that silence and voice are different in both *Eva's Man* and *Corregidora*. "The unrelenting violence, emotional silence, and passive disharmony in *Eva's Man* are the undersides of the blues reconciliation and active lovemaking in *Corregidora*" (Joyce & McBride 2006, p.118). In other words, Eva's silence can be translated as she is trying to put her traumatic experiences, since her childhood, in a deep locked place to keep them alive. While Ursa and her foremothers keeping their memories by 'making generation' in order to 'bear witness' and 'retelling the past'. Gayl Jones herself says that it is different from telling the slave stories, and in "*Eva's Man* I wanted the sense of her keeping certain things to herself. Choosing the things, she would withhold. But I also wanted the reader to have a sense of not even knowing whether the things she recalls are true" (Tate 2011, p.92).

The interaction between the present and the past gives the readers an insight into Eva's memories. She, herself, is confused about what she is saying because the power of her memories affect her language. When she is talking about her husband to the psychiatrist and how he once "reached over and grabbed [her] shoulder, got up and started slapping [her]" (Jones 1987, p.163), she immediately changes her narrative saying that "Naw, he didn't slap me, he pulled my dress up" (Ibid, p.163). Indeed, some memories cannot be understood through speaking language; instead, they must remain deep in order to continue and "it was a silence that swallowed up the past" (Laub1995, p.64). Eva's silence and memories have been reflected when she met Davis who has reminded her of all her past. All men who abused her and she concedes that "it's

funny how somebody can remind you of somebody you didn't like or ended up not liking and fearing" (Jones 1987, p.9). Eva by her silence gives a sign that speaking doesn't work and no one can force her to explain her action because she believes that no one may understand if she speaks. It seems that speaking language disturbs Eva and makes her struggle to remember and relive her traumatic past. "I tell the psychiatrist what I remember. He tells me I do not know how to separate the imagined memories from the real ones" (Jones 1987, p.10). Moreover, those who experienced traumatic past, their experiences can be ended up with silence and "the power of silenced memory… finds its way into their lives… through an uncanny repetition of events that duplicate… the traumatic past" (Laub 1995, pp.65,71).

Eva "has been in trouble before. When she was seventeen, she stabbed a man. She wouldn't talk then either, wouldn't say anything to defend herself" (Jones 1987, p.70). It seems that Eva used to be silent since her early life. Through this silence, she gains her agency and by hiding parts of her past and experience, she protects her memories and keeps them alive for herself. In fact, Eva seems to be imitating her mother in her silence when Eva's father sees her mother's lover around the house. Out of anger and to prove his authority upon his wife, Eva's father rapes her mother violently. Eva is the witness of this situation and the witness of her mother's silence. Her mother keeps silence with the whole violence and rape against her from her husband, as Eva explaines: "I didn't hear nothing from her the whole time. But how he was tearing that blouse off. … I didn't hear anything from her" (Ibid, p.37). Eva cannot understand her mother's silence at that time, but it seems to be her mother's weapon against this violence. The mother withholds her own reasons that lead to her affairs with another man. She does not want to discuss or to give excuses for her behavior. This silence gives her a space of freedom and independence and through her silence she can control her own mind and emotions.

Though Eva struggles to understand her mother's silence when she was a child, Eva follows her mother's steps and chooses to be silent, and her silence makes her deep-rooted struggles to withhold her traumatic past and present. She uses her silence to spell her own and her mother's traumatic memories. Despite keeping silence like her mother, Eva, by castrating her lover Davis, is saying

enough with violence and bursting her fury of all her memories, of past and present. Then she returns to her silence and refuses to explain why she did it and "even now people come in here and ask [her] how it happened. They want [her] to tell it over and over again" (Ibid, p.4). It is something strange and powerful that a woman can commit a violent crime as a form of bursting anger like castration, and then keeps silence after such a crime. "Bastard" is the only word that has been uttered by Eva after her crime out of anger and '"A woman like you. What do you do for yourself?' 'I got the silk handkerchief he used to wipe me after we made love, and wrapped his penis in it'… What kind of woman can it be to do something like that?"' (Ibid, pp.129, 131). By castrating him, Eva protects herself from another emotional and sexual abuse and pain as a furious woman. But then, she chooses silence to shield herself from being scrutinized by others. She symbolically grabbed Davis from the patriarchal pride, and by remaining silent, Eva combats the norms of society when the others try to dominate her and interpret her own memories, life, and silence. At the same time, by keeping silent Eva lost her power of anger that she used in castrating.

Since her childhood, Eva chooses to keep silent rather than explaining her motives. "She's been in trouble before. When she was seventeen, she stabbed a man. She wouldn't talk then either, wouldn't say anything to defend herself. She was given a six-month sentence" (Ibid, p.70). Eva's silence can be a form of power that challenges the patriarchal and social authority. She does it, and no one can force her to admit her crime or to give reasons and justifications. When the psychiatrist asks her "have you had any hallucinations?... 'No', 'why did you think you bit it all off?' 'I did'" (Ibid, p.167). But this silence can also destroy her. Mae Henderson argues that "Eva's speechlessness would seem to keep her imprisoned. Indeed, the novel opens with its protagonist narrator in a prison for the criminally insane. Yet, as her story unfolds through a complex interplay of memory and fantasy, the reader (listener) witnesses the reclamation of a woman's past" (2014, p.131). Actually, Eva never answers the psychiatrist in detail while she tells her readers her own story through collision of narrated events. She jumps in her narration from time to time and mixes the past with present.

In *The Bluest Eye*, Pecola is like Eve in her silence. She decides to keep silence because no one will believe her if she speaks about her rape even her mother. Eva tells the readers her memories only through dreams and hallucinations. While Pecola tells her imaginary friend about it. In a long speech of Pecola with her imaginary friend, the readers understand that Pecola had been raped by her own father and her mother does not believe her:

> *I wonder what it would be like.*
>
> Horrible.
>
> *Really*?
>
> Yes. Horrible
>
> *Then why didn't you tell Mrs. Breedlove?*
>
> I did tell her!
>
> *I don't mean the first time. I mean the second time when you were sleeping on the*
>
> *couch.*
>
> I wasn't sleeping I was reading!
>
> *You don't have to shout.*
>
> You don't understand anything do you? She didn't even believe me when I told her.
>
> *So why didn't you tell her about the second time?*
>
> She wouldn't have believed then either.
>
> *You're right. No use in telling her when she wouldn't believe you* (Morrison 1993, p.179).

Pecola prefers to keep silent because she knows that no one will believe her.

Ursa, in *Corregidora*, is different from Eva in her way of keeping silent and her reasons of this silence. "I said nothing", an expression used by Ursa all over the novel, and from the beginning of her story, silence appears symbolically in the shape of Ursa's loss of her womb. Losing her ability to 'make generation' means losing the ability to retell the rape and violence against her foremothers.

She is a silent woman because she has lost her identity as a woman “silence in my womb” (Jones 1975, p.99). “I can’t make generations. And even if I still had my womb, even if the first baby had come- what would I have done then? Would I have kept it up? Would I have been like her or them?” (Ibid, p.60).

Actually, Ursa’s relationships throughout the novel are based on silence with her Great Gram and Gram. She is only listening to their stories, and sometimes she is forced to be silent by her mother: “don’t ask them that, the only reason I’m telling you is so you won’t ask them” (Ibid, p.61). With her friend May Alice when she asked her “you my best friend, ain’t you?” (Ibid, p.145), Ursa says nothing to her and expresses her feelings only to the readers: “I wanted to say something real nasty to her, but instead I ran across the railroad track without looking… But after that day… me and May Alice didn’t speak to each other” (Ibid, p.146). Ursa does not want to be owned by others, that is why she keeps silent as a form of expressing power and rebellion. With her second husband Tadpole, Ursa also keeps silent in many situations like when he wants to talk about her loss of her unborn baby from her first husband and she answers as: “I can’t talk to you about it” (Ibid, p.8). She never answers him when he asks her “what’s wrong?” (Ibid, p.22) and says nothing when he told her that he loves her. Ursa keeps silent with her first husband Mutt when he keeps asking her that “whose woman is you?” and when he calls her ‘bitch’ (Ibid, p.147).

Gayl Jones in *Corregidora* portrays a complex representation of slavery through four generations of women: Great Gram, Gram, Mama, and Ursa. The legacy of the Corregidora women begins on a Brazilian coffee plantation during the nineteenth century, with a Portuguese slaveholder, Corregidora. Corregidora consistently rapes two generations of women: “Corregidora fathered my grandmamma and my mama too” (Ibid, p.10). These women decide to speak their own traumatic memories in order to keep it alive and never. Unlike her foremothers, Ursa at the beginning of the novel chooses to be silent. But at the end she creates her own womb and language through her songs to express herself; express her fury and keep her foremothers’ past. She finds herself in her Blues songs because those songs depict black women as sexual, spiritual, vulnerable, creatures and reflects the power of women.

Her mother, Irene, also used to keep silent and decided to keep her own memories and traumatic experience for herself: “she was silent” (Ibid, p.110). Ursa believes that her mother had “too many memories… more her own, than theirs. The lived life, not the spoken one” (Ibid, p.108). Ursa is affected by her mother’s silence that is so obvious in one of her dreams or fantasies, in which she tells Mutt about her mother’s silence about her memories. “It was as if my mother’s whole body shook with that first birth and memories and she wouldn’t make others and she wouldn’t give these to me…she wouldn’t give me her own terrible ones” (Ibid, p.101). For Ursa, her mother’s memories are important in her journey of healing and finding voice and identity. So, she is in need for her mother to break her silence and she told her mother once that “what happened with you was always more important. What happened with you and him” (Ibid, p.111). For Ursa, Great Gram and Gram’s memories encage her with the past and never help her, like her mother’s. She needs her mother to speak in order to release her and help her to overpass her own traumatic experience. Both Ursa and her mother, through the mother’s memory, recognize and understand the difference between them and Great Gram and Gram.

Irene explains to Ursa how she has met Martin, Ursa’s father, and how she has lived with him in her house with her foremothers. She explains to Ursa how their relationship is. After telling Ursa about her own memories, Irene can realize Martin’s anger and violence towards her. She cannot feel anything with him because of Corregidora’s control over her dreams and life: “I hadn’t even given myself to feel anything before I pushed him out… I wouldn’t let myself feel anything” (Ibid, pp.117-18). Ursa describes her mother’s speech about her own private memory, that “it sounded almost as if she was speaking in pieces rather than one long thing” (Ibid, p.123). Ursa believes that her mother is free now from her own old memories and her foremothers’ memories: “it was as if she had more than learned it off by heart, though. It was as if their memory, the memory of all the Corregidora women, was her. … But now she was Mama again” (Ibid, p.129). After that, Ursa realizes that she needs also to find her own way of healing, her voice and her power. She realizes that she has to burst out her silence and push herself out of Corregidora’s legacy: “I was thinking that

now that Mama had gotten it all out, her own memory___ at least to me anyway. … But … what had I done about my own life?" (Ibid, p.132).

Rushdy asserts that Ursa decides to change "her own position within the family narrative from a state of debilitating possession … to a state of healthy intersubjectivity" (2000, p.289). Staphanie Li agrees with Rushdy and argues that Ursa gains her strength throughout her new decision is to use her voice to reflect memories (2006, p.147). Actually, Ursa discovers the power of her blues songs, since she cannot 'make generations'. But she can speak through her own voice, through her own songs and she believes that "the blues is something (she) can't loose" (Jones 1975, p.97).

Ashraf Rushdy describes Corregidora women's silence as "the phantom hunts not only the Corregidora family but also the family narrative" and this silence is the main source of these women's trauma (2000, p.279). Claudia Tate states that

when I read *Corregidora*, I sensed that I was hearing a very private story, one not to be shared with everyone. I felt that the narrator was consciously trying to select events in order to relay her story to me. I also felt it was not just my job to listen to her, but to become so involved in her story that I would somehow share her effort to understand and accept the past. (Tate 2011, p.91-92)

However, Ursa's painful memories help her to manage her trauma in a constructive way more than Eva. Eva chooses violence and silence to face oppression against her and to protect her memories as her own while Ursa gives voice to her traumatic memories through her songs. Indeed, Ursa can express herself, her anger and tells her trauma through singing: "It helps me to explain what I can't explain … The voice … tells what you've been through" (Jones 1975, pp.45,56). She "seems as if [she is] not singing the past, [she is] humming it" (Ibid, p.45). She admits by saying that "I wanted a song that would touch me, touch my life and theirs. A Portuguese song, but not a Portuguese song. A new world song" (Ibid, p.59). Ursa finds her power and her way to accept and express herself and her fury through 'the new world song'. She describes her new way of singing when she admits that "I started singing about trouble in my mind. Still the new voice. The one Cat said you could hear what I'd been through in" (Ibid, p.50).

Ursa asserts that her new way of singing and new voice is her way to free herself and healing herself from all traumatic memories that once control her life. With her new voice, Ursa succeeds in keeping her family legacy alive. "[She] got a hard kind of voice … Something powerful" (Ibid, pp.92-93). Indeed, Ursa's songs are her way to speak the unspoken trauma and memories of her own and her foremothers'. She has the chance to have the rememory in her special way that is different from her foremothers' way and this gives her the power:

While mama be sleeping, the ole man he crawl into bed

While mama be sleeping, the ole man he crawl into bed

When mama have wake up, he shaking his nasty ole head

Don't come here to my house, don't come here to my house I said. (Ibid, p.67)

In *Beloved* the silence of the female characters, especially Sethe, has a relation with their traumatic memories of slavery and 'rememory'. Sethe cannot be able to speak her past as a slave till the arrival of Paul D who can share and understand these memories as a listener and witness. Sethe can just mysteriously say that "they took my milk" and that she has a tree on her back (Morrison 2004, p.17). That scarred "tree" on her back, is a form of muting and a mark of oppression. She tells Paul D that "this is the first time I'm telling it" (Ibid, p.228). She meditates them at length and starts to understand her own feelings and fears. Sethe describes her demolition at overhearing schoolteacher define her as an animal. She remembers her rape, her beating, her escape, and her heart-wrenching choice to send her children ahead in order to try to find Halle.

In the beginning of the novel, Sethe can be seen as both a muted and a silent woman. In other words, Sethe has been muted by the slavers in Sweet Home. She is muted in the scene of milking her by Schoolteacher and his nephews because she is a slave and 'an animal' and when she told Mrs. Garner about them. As a form of muteness, they beat her on her back and give her own mark, 'the tree'. But she is a speaking strong woman with her power of fury in the scene of killing her daughter. Sethe finally break out her silence against schoolteacher's and slavery violence. By killing her daughter, she said 'no' to

all kind of violence and humiliation and she decides that “no more running-from nothing. [She] will never run from another thing on this Earth. [She] took one journey and… paid for the ticket…it cost too much!” (Ibid, p.15). But after this, she sinks in a long state of silence again and she cannot talk about her memories. Sethe has “no words… no words at all” after she kills her daughter (Ibid, p.179). She is quiet about her past because “every mention of her past life hurts. Everything in it was painful or lost. She and Baby Suggs had agreed without saying that it was unspeakable” (Ibid, p.69). Sethe constantly stops mid story because she does not want to “go inside” (Ibid, p.55). It “signs that Sethe had reached the point beyond which she would not go” (Ibid, p.45).

Nevertheless, throughout *Beloved*, the female characters get the chance, or have been forced to speak out their stories and break a silence that has affected their lives for so many years. It is very hard for Sethe to remember her life in Sweet Home and for a long time she tries to push her memories away; she “counts on the stillness of her soul trying [to forget]” (Ibid, p.5). When Paul D shows her the newspaper that is talking about her murder and asks for an explanation, “Sethe could recognize only seventy-five printed words … but she knew that the words she did not understand hadn’t any more power than she had to explain” (Ibid, p.190). Indeed, Sethe is forced to tell Paul D about her memories of being milked and beaten. She is forced to tell Beloved about her past to explain the reason behind her crime and gain Beloved’s forgiveness. Through breaking her silence again and facing the shadow of her heavy traumatic memories, Sethe manages to heal and find herself again.

Denver also keeps silence for a long time when she heard about her mother’s crime and “she went deaf” and silent for two years (Ibid, p.105). Beloved herself expresses the difficulty of enunciating memories, images, and feelings: “how can I say things that are pictures” (Ibid, p.248). Baby Suggs keeps silent despite her strength and faithful heart, she collapses after Sethe murdered her girl.

However, it is the silence of Ursa, Eva and Sethe that resonates with an echo, that speaking louder than words. Indeed, their voice is their way to reclaim their subjectivity. Pecola is the one who has different reason to keep silent that no one would believe her or even listen to her because she is “nothing”.

Nevertheless, keeping silence for a long time leads some of these protagonists to burst that silence out and empower themselves by expressing their fury and anger. The silence for others has been a cause of destruction. In other words, the psychic of these protagonists is affected differently by their circumstances. Some turn to be absolutely mad and some turn to be monstrously furious and that will be discussed in the next part.

3.1 **Fury or Madness!**

Fury may burst from a woman's frustration

Gillian Alban, *The Medusa Gaze*

bell hooks argues that "madness, not just physical abuse, was the punishment for too much talk if you were female" (1989, p.7). This is what happens with Sethe when she says 'No. no' to schoolteacher, to slavery, to everything that humiliates her in the past and trying to humiliate her own children. She says 'No', and kills her daughter; so she is accused of being mad and she is abandoned by her neighbours, her own people, because she dares to speak and break the silence with anger and fury. Clara Agusti asserts that "the language of madness [in literature] … is not devoid of meaning, but detaches itself from its referential quality, from its truth-value, in order to become pathos, or suffering" (Ibid, p.34).

Some scholars argue that *Beloved* is about silence and about madness. In other words, Sethe is accused of being mad, and her madness takes the form of hysteria with too much silence. The fact is that, Sethe has never been mad or silent. Morrison gives a voice to the voiceless to speak the unspeakable and Sethe is a furious woman rather than mad. With her fury, Sethe is speakable rather than silent (Rigney 1991, p.21). She tells "how offended the tongue is, held down by iron" (Morrison 2004, p.71). Jeanna Fuston -White argues that "it was not madness, but the reality of slavery, that drove Sethe to kill her child, fully aware of the act and its brutality" (2002, p.461). Indeed, it is Sethe's anger with this slavery and her traumatic experience through it that leads her to

murder her daughter and attempt to murder her other children without realizing the consequences. She is full of fury, resentment, fear, and depression; these mixed feelings blind her.

In the beginning of the novel, Sethe feels sad about the past rather than being angry about moral injury and the injustice of slavery. Being saturated with sad memories of her past, Sethe's power of anger and fury is repressed and displaced, until Paul D and her dead daughter Beloved return. They make her remember her traumatic experience in Sweet Home. Indeed, memories in Toni Morrison's *Beloved* are made up of the stories that influence the characters, which anger them, make them laugh and make them cry. Moreover, since Sethe suffers a humiliating experience on the hands of schoolteacher and his two nephews, she is full of great emotions of anger and fury when she sees them. These traumatic memories and enraging experiences trigger angry feelings inside her, and she translates her feelings of anger into committing murder.

Marianne Hirsch mentions Sethe's 'anger' and argues that when Sethe tries to explain why she cut her daughter's throat: "she is explaining an anger handed down through generations of mothers who could have no control over their children's lives, no voice in their upbringing. Beloved suggests why that anger may have to remain unspeakable, and how it might nevertheless be spoken" (1989, p.198).

Otherwise, Sethe does not have recognized her anger till Paul D comes to her house and they start to share some of their 'sweet' memories in Sweet Home. The appearance of Beloved forces Sethe to remember and retell her traumatic experience with slavery so that she can recognize and feel her anger: "He is coming into her yard and he is coming for her best thing. She hears wings. Little hummingbirds stick needle beaks right through her headcloth into her hair and beat their wings. And if she thinks anything, it is no. No no. Nonono. She flies. The ice pick is not in her hand; it is her hand" (Morrison 2004, p.309).

Morrison describes Sethe's final attack of Edward Bodwin when she misrecognizes him as Schoolteacher, full of the same rage and fury when she murders her daughter. But the difference is that this time Sethe directs her feelings of anger towards the real reason- the white man, and not her children. In fact, Sethe's children are the only part that has never been defiled by slavery

and its brutality. So that she has no other choice to protect this part of her not to be “dirty”. She expresses her anger in front of schoolteacher: “I stopped him, she said, staring at the place where the fence used to be. I took and put my babies where they’d be safe” (Ibid, p.193).

Sethe believes that her attempts to kill all her children is out of her motherly love and protection. For twenty-eight days, she can feel her motherhood with happiness and freedom for the first time, and she is not ready to lose it: “I birthed them and I got em out and it wasn’t no accident…When I stretched out my arms all my children could get in between. I was that wide. Look like I loved em more after I got here” (Ibid, p.190). Nevertheless, Sethe is accused of being silently mad for the murder of her daughter and after. Since women, both white and black, are denied the right to feel angry till the nineteenth century in America, it is not surprising that Sethe, who is an ex-slave black woman, is not be able to recognize her anger. Morrison puts textual signs in her novel, that refer to Sethe’s anger. Nonetheless, Sethe is not able to understand these feelings. These signs help readers to touch Sethe’s deep and unconscious anger. “Recognizing this anger”, Grasso remarks, “is important, because it has a close relationship with the sense of self” (Grasso 2002, p.191) and this “anger is at the heart of women’s truths” (Ibid, p.194).

In fact, Sethe is not mad yet she keeps silent such a long time that she never talks or remembers anything about her ‘rememory’ till the arrival of Paul D. When he asks her about the ‘tree’ on her back, she is clashed for the first time with her traumatic experience of slavery. Then after the appearance of Beloved, she forces Sethe to talk and recognize her anger. Sethe starts to leave her silence and confess her regret for her ‘best thing’. She tries to explain the reason behind her crime. Even when Paul D tells her that “[her] love is too thick,” she explains to him the reason with a self-realization of her reasons by saying to him: “I couldn’t let all that go back to where it was, and I couldn’t let her nor any of em live under schoolteacher … I stopped him. I took and put my babies where they’d be safe … love is or it ain’t. Thin love ain’t love at all, [and] it worked … they ain’t at Sweet Home. Schoolteacher ain’t got em” (Morrison 2004, pp.192-4).

Schoolteacher is clearly the primary representation of the white supremacist. Actually, Schoolteacher is an educated person, but he is very cruel and uses all the means of traditional slavery on the slaves. He introduces whipping, torture, humiliation and he dehumanizes them. In *Beloved* Schoolteacher is the representative of white supremacy. He is not satisfied with what is going on with the slaves on Sweet Home, so he starts to change things: "He complained they ate too much, rested too much, talked too much, which was certainly true compared to him, because schoolteacher ate little, spoke less and rested not at all" (Ibid, p.259). As a result of schoolteacher's cruel actions, the slaves on Sweet Home decide to run away. Sethe is one of nine slaves who endure and suffer different kinds of persecution. She is raped and whipped by schoolteacher's nephews. She is treated in such a cruel way that leads her to kill her two-year old daughter for the sake of protecting her from facing the same brutality and dehumanization.

Sethe is pregnant and she sends her two-year-old daughter and her two older sons ahead with Baby Suggs. When her husband Halle does not arrive to meet them at the place where they decide to meet, she goes back to look for him. Unfortunately, she has been caught by schoolteacher's nephews who held her down, rape her and sucks milk from her breasts. Later schoolteacher discovers that Sethe tells Mrs. Garner about them. He orders his nephews to whip Sethe. The whipping of Sethe opens the skin of her back. Later, the readers can feel that Sethe does not care about her back but only her daughter's milk. In other words, what mostly affects Sethe is not the torturous pain and dehumanization she has experienced. For her the stolen milk is more important than her body because it belongs to her "best thing".

At the time, Sethe is whipped and raped, she is pregnant and that is why she has milk in her breasts. Sethe does not mention or talk about the pain she has endured, but she mainly focuses on the milk that is taken from her which is vital to feed her baby. However, Sethe starts to recognize her anger for the first time and speaks after eighteen years of silence and she can express her deep grief: "they took my milk... Nobody will ever get my milk no more except my own children. I never had to give it to nobody else—and the one time I did it was

took from me—they held me down and took it. Milk that belonged to my baby" (Ibid, pp.20,236).

The effect of taking Sethe's milk is mentioned by Sethe repeatedly. Throughout the novel, the readers can feel that Sethe's fury over the fatality of taking her milk is due to her old unconscious anger from her mother and from slavery itself. Indeed, her mother, as a slave, has to feed the white babies before her own: "The little white babies got it first and I got what was left. Or none. There was no nursing milk to call my own. I know what it is to be without the milk that belongs to you; to have to fight and holler for it, and to have so little left" (Ibid, p.236). Sethe retells these memories: "I'll tend her as no mother ever tended a child, a daughter. Nobody will ever get my milk no more except my own children. I never had to give it to nobody else-and the one time I did it was took from me- they held me down and took it. Milk that belonged to my baby" (Ibid, p.236).

Furthermore, the power of fury enables Sethe put her eyes on Schoolteacher's and express her feelings of deep anger, grief, and pain and say 'no'. Gillian Alban argues that Sethe "faces Schoolteacher with her absolute, petrifying Medusa look, which stops him dead in his tracks, forcing him back with the sight of the dead child in her arms" (2017, p.135). She never allows her 'best things' to have the same 'dirty' and the same traumatic experience. When Schoolteacher arrives to take Sethe back, she takes her children quickly into a shed and attempts to murder them, rather than allowing them to live their lives in slavery like her. Both her mother-in-law and Stamp Paid stand in the yard behind the house, frozen in terror. She kills her two-year-old daughter. She cuts her daughter's throat, and also attempts to kill Denver. The two boys are also severely beaten on their heads with a shovel, "two were lying open-eyed in saw dust; a third pumped blood down the dress of the main one" (Morrison 2004, p.176). She believes that she "put [her] babies where they'd be safe" (Ibid, p.193). This scene is not easy to be understood or to be justified.

Morrison herself comments on this by saying that "it was absolutely the right thing to do, but she had no right to do it. I think if I had seen what she had seen, and knew what was in store, and I felt that there was an afterlife… I think I would have done the same thing. But it's also the thing you have no right to do"

(Rothstein 1087). However, a deep reading of what Sethe has experienced and the brutality that she has endured as a slave on Sweet Home, explains why she commits infanticide, which surely of the worst thing a mother can do to her child. However, Sethe's fear and fury of slavery and its effect is so terrible. She does not want her children to experience the same torturous difficulties.

Agusti underlines that: "in killing Beloved, Sethe opposes her own reintroduction, and that of her daughter, to their status as property… [and she is] the reproducer of slavery's labor force" (2005, p.31). And this is true; Sethe in a moment of anger and fear, thinks that she has the right to take her children's lives just because she is their mother. She reacts to Schoolteacher's behavior with slaves on his farm. He owns his slaves, so he has the right to dehumanize them. Over time, sacrificing one of her children signifies a tragic twist in her disposition, she loses her herself and becomes emptied of vitality, like the tree shape on her back. Sethe feels guilty and she regrets the murder of her daughter. She permanently feels the desire to tell Beloved about the reason that motivates her to kill her and her feelings of regret. Sethe knows that she has to pay a very high price to protect her children: "I took one journey and I paid for the ticket, but let me tell you something, Paul D Garner: It cost too much! Do you hear me? It cost too much..." (Morrison 2004, p.18).

Sethe intends to explain her reason of her horrible act to Beloved: "How if I hadn't killed her, she would have died and that is something I could not bear to happen to her. When I explain it she'll understand, because she understands everything already" (Ibid, p.236). Out of this, the readers can feel Sethe's anger and rage because of her inability to lay with her murdered daughter in the grave. In other words, as a mother, her feelings and love are "too thick" that she even has a desire to get together with her daughter into the grave, but she cannot do this. She has to look after her remaining children Denver, Burglar and Howard. İt is obvious that it is so hard for Sethe to be separated from her "Dearly Beloved": "When I put that headstone up I wanted to lay in there with you, put your head on my shoulder and keep you warm, and I would have if Burglar and Howard and Denver didn't need me, because my mind was homeless then. I couldn't lay down with you then … No matter how much I wanted to. I couldn't lay down nowhere in peace, back then" (Ibid, p.241). Because of being regretful

for her crime and her disability to join her crawling, murdered girl, Sethe punishes herself by sleeping with the grave man for ten minutes like a prostitute instead of money that she does not have for the sake of seven letters on the gravestone. “You got ten minutes I’ll do it for free. … She thought it would be enough, rutting among the headstones with the engraver, his young son looking on, the anger in his face so old; the appetite in it quite new. That should certainly be enough. Enough to answer one more preacher, one more abolitionist and a town full of disgust” (Ibid, p.5).

Again, Sethe has bad memories with her mother that also create fury and deep unconscious anger inside her: “As a small girl, she was unimpressed. As a grown-up woman she was angry but not certain at what” (Ibid, p.74). She does not believe that her mother is trying to run away, leaving her behind or may be does not want to. Her anger with her mother is part of her anger at slavery that is reflected on her behavior with her children later. She sends them with Baby Suggs before her because she knows what it means to be left behind a mother as a slave. Also, when she decides to kill them all and herself rather than being under slavery, she prefers to put them dead in graves rather than alive with schoolteacher. She states that her plan is to kill herself and all her children to be safe in the “other side where [her] own ma’am is” (Ibid, p.240).

Unlike her mother who runs and leaves her own daughter behind her. Possibly, deep inside, she hopes her mother would kill her rather leave her behind to be humiliated and subjected. She wonders what her mother is doing: “Running…? No ... Because she was my ma’am and nobody’s ma’am would run off and leave her daughter, would she?... Leave her in the yard with a one-armed woman? Even if she hadn’t been able to suckle the daughter for more than a week or two and had to turn her over to another woman’s tit that never had enough for all” (Ibid, p.240). When Sethe and Denver talk, Denver asks about Sethe’s mother, but Sethe does not know much to say to Denver about her mother. It is as if death and cruelty pass on like something routine to Sethe. In fact, there is fury and grief deep inside her and “[She] walked over to a chair, lifted a sheet and stretched it as wide as her arms would go. Then she folded, refolded and double-folded it. She took another … She had to do something with her hands because she was remembering something, she had forgotten she knew.

Something privately shameful that had sped into a slit in her mind right behind the slap on her face and the circled cross" (Ibid, p.73).

Part of Sethe's anger is directed towards her husband Halle who also gets ruined as a result of slavery. In the novel, it is implied that Halle goes mad after he has seen what happened to his wife. It is like a shock for Sethe that her man did not save her from the boys. She feels angry and decides not to let him enter her life again, if he is alive: "(Halle's) cowardice, or stupidity or bad luck" (Ibid, p.112). It does not matter to her, she feels disappointed by her man because for her only a man could do something, not a woman. "He saw?" Sethe was gripping her elbows as though to keep them from flying away. "He saw them boys do that to me and let them keep on breathing air? He saw? He saw? He saw?... If he is alive, and saw that, he won't step foot in my door. Not Halle'" (Ibid, p.81-2).

Ultimately, against the silence imposed by slavery and agents of patriarchy, anger enables a woman to find her voice with regards to her maternal experience, as Sethe does. In other words, the silent women can speak through anger, fury, rage or even resentment not mad, not insane but speaking females. They cannot be recognized as individuals only through their anger. They are not able to recognize their identities only by recognizing the power of their fury. Sethe is able to say 'No' to schoolteacher with her fury, even with a violent murder. At least she keeps her children away from Sweet Home, as she believes.

In *The Bluest Eye,* "the damage done was total" (Morrison 1993, p.184) which means Pecola, 'the ugly girl' has totally been destroyed and rendered mad. Throughout the novel, Pecola has been neglected by her family and her community because she is 'ugly'. In fact, according to the norms of her society which associates worthiness with whiteness and ugliness with blackness, beauty means to have blue eyes, blond hair, and fair skin. These norms make Pecola believe that the only means to be accepted and loved by others is to possess "the bluest eye". Despite the influences from society, Pecola's madness is also a result of a loveless rejected family. Being neglected by her mother and raped by her father, Pecola starts to have illusions about having 'blue eyes' and she "stepped over into madness, a madness which protected her" (Ibid, p.186). Her madness is her safe world where she can escape all the harms and misery

outside: “look at pretty-eyed Pecola. We mustn’t do bad things in front of those pretty eyes” (Ibid, p.45). A world where she can get rid of all the hatred and ugliness and where she can see her beauty and may be loved by her family. She starts to have an imaginary friend with whom she spends the time, talking about nothing but her ‘blue eyes”. She believes that everybody averts eyes from her because she has the prettiest and bluest eyes. She tells her imaginary friend that “Everybody’s jealous. Every time I look at somebody, they look off” (Ibid, p.174).

However, the madness of Pecola is a result of pressures from the society, her family, and her self-denial upon her identity. After being mad, Pecola can finally receive her ‘blue eyes’ and see her beauty, but it is not enough for her. She thinks “if there is someone with bluer eyes than mine, then maybe there is someone with the bluest eyes … in the whole world” (Ibid, p.183). Pecola is different from Ursa, Eva, and Sethe that she is never able to express her anger and fury so that she becomes mad. She is the weakest protagonist in the selected texts, and she cannot use her fury to survive. Everything pushes her down with no chance to breathe.

In the case of Eva, she is subjected as a madwoman for her failure to justify her crime of castrating her lover. The fact is that Eva speaks through her silence: “I wouldn’t tell them. I hung up. I walked out. I went to the toilet of a filling station, pick out my hair again” (Jones 1987, p.130). Madhu Dubey argues that

the unreliability of Eva’s narration is … a result of her madness. Eva’s madness functions as a kind of safety valve, allowing readers to dismiss the more uncomfortable moments of the novel as the distorted fabrications of an insane mind … [and] the use of a mad narrator serves to distance not only the reader, but also the author from the ideological implications of the work. (1994, p.102)

She also affirms that “*Eva’s Man* provides the reader no directions, no clues to a correct reading of Eva’s madness” (Ibid, p.103). The readers cannot judge “whether the repetition of events in Eva’s life caused her insanity or whether Eva’s insanity is the source of the repetition of events in her narrative … [and] cannot identify with Eva or take away any clear meaning from her madness. Eva’s madness contributes … to the impression of self-containment conveyed by *Eva’s Man*” (Ibid, p.103).

Gayl Jones mentions that “in Eva’s mind, time and people become fluid. Time has little chronological sequence, and the characters [in her mind] seem to coalesce into one personality” (Tate 1983, p.96). When the psychiatrist asks Eva ‘“have you had any hallucinations since I gave you these? ‘No’, ‘Why did you think you bit it all off?’ ‘I did’, ‘The police report says you didn’t’” (Jones 1987, p.167). Because she cannot answer, or does not want to tell the truth, Eva is accused of being mad. The psychiatrist tries hard with her and asks her if her crime is out of her fury: “it is just because he kept you in that room and kept his hands on you that you killed him?” (Ibid, p.171). Her answer does not help the doctor to understand whether she is furious or mad: “I wanted him to stay closer, longer, to stay inside me longer, but he didn’t, and I didn’t ask him to” (Ibid, p.95).

In fact, Eva’s narrative structure, where she remembers with great concern and chronicles the painful events and memories of her life while in a psychiatrist’s prison after murdering and castrating Davis, provides a deep insight into her exhausted mentality. There is an essential question that must be asked about Eva’s crime, since “she got [no] marks on her… [only] a mark of the policewomen check her over … No scratches … ‘He didn’t beat her or anything?”’ (Ibid, p.69). If there are no physical marks of violence on Eva’s body, why then does she castrate? Indeed, she has been accused of being mad because she keeps silent and never clarifies her reasons. But it is obvious to the readers that Eva, out of her own collected traumas, burst out of her silence with fury and anger and in a form of violent crime, like Sethe in this point.

Clara Agusti affirms that Eva’s act of castration symbolizes the female situation under the patriarchal oppression. Agusti asserts that “in castrating Davis, [Eva] makes visible that which male sexual and linguistic domination represses a woman’s own space and desire. Through this particularized pointing to that which is not the phallus, Eva uncovers this objectified female Other” (2005, p.32). This is different from Sethe’s violent act that reintroduces the black female situation throughout slavery. Indeed, by castrating Davis, Eva threatens the male domination and the oppressive system. She defies all the male oppression and sexual dehumanization she has been through. At the same time

“the aggression and savagery of her desperate fury against her opponents turns back onto her and destroys her in the end” (Alban 2017, p.260).

“Asylum” is one of Gayl Jones’s short stories from *White Rat*, a short story collection in which the narrator of the story is a black girl who is required to submit to a psychological examination in a mental hospital. This woman imposes a self-silencing state after she has a pee in front of her nephew’s white teacher. Is her behavior a form of madness or expressing fury? Indeed, it seems that she expresses her anger of something in her past, that is not clarified by the writer throughout the story. She clarifies the reason why they bring her to the mental hospital as: “the reason they got me here is my little nephew’s teacher come and I run and got the slop jar and put it in the middle of the floor. That’s why my sister’s daughter had me put in here” (Jones 1977, p.68). When the doctor asks if she knows why they put her in the asylum, her answer is “I peed in front of Tony’s teacher. ‘Did you have a reason?’” her answer is “I just wanted to…I wanted to” (Ibid, p.69). She is trying to prove her dignity; she wants to do it, so she does. But the real reason behind her behavior is still not clear. Gayl Jones utilizes a technique in her long and short fiction, in which she presents a special form of relationship between psychology and form. She experiments with how psychology affects speech ability and language pattern. The narrator in this story decides not to say anything during the medical examination, “I just sit there and don’t say nothing … I look at his blue eyes. I say nothing” (Ibid, pp.67,69).

According to the doctor, this girl has a sexual problem because she refuses to let the doctor examine “her down there”. She states that: “he can examine me anywhere else he wants to, but he ain’t touching me down there … I ain’t got nothing down there for [him]” (Ibid, p.68). From this, the readers can feel that she is trying to protect her privacy, that maybe she has a sexual abuse in her past. When they give her papers to write down what she wants, with a question “Why did you do it when the teacher came?”, her answer is full of fury and angry feelings. “[I did it because] she just sits on her ass and fuck all day and it ain’t with herself … I write that down because I know they ain’t going to know what I’m talking about. I write down whatever comes into my mind. I write down some things that after I get up I don’t remember” (Ibid, pp.69-70). Like

most of Gayl Jones' protagonists, the girl at the end of the story has a monologue in which she mixes what she thinks, what she hears and what she wants to say:

> *If the sounds fit put them here.*
>
> *They don't fit.*
>
> *How does this word sound?*
>
> *What?*
>
> *Dark? Warm? Soft?*
>
> *Me?...*
>
> *Nothing.*
>
> *You should tell me what you are thinking?*
>
> *Is that the only way I can be freed?* (Ibid, p.71).

Like Eva, the girl here is accused of being mad or having mental problems just because she expresses her anger in her own way. Both characters' behaviors are unusual and unfamiliar to their society and both keep silent and never justify the reasons behind their behaviors.

In *Corregidora*, Ursa is different from both Sethe and Eva in her madness. It is never a kind of real madness but a clear fury and anger. In other words, Ursa's anger and fury burst after losing her ability to 'make generation'. When her husband pushes her downstairs and she is pregnant, she loses her baby and her womb. She loses the pot through which she can transform and tell her foremothers' story. In fact, from her childhood, Ursa has been taught that her identity is centred on being a mother and her identity crisis starts when Mutt throws her downstairs. After that accident, Ursa's womb must be removed, and she is forced to redefine her identity in terms other than being a mother. She feels angry inside her and out of her fury and anger, she intermixes her memories with Mutt and her foremothers' memories with Corregidora. She says that: "it was like I didn't know how much was me and Mutt and how much was Great Gram and Corregidora- like Mama when she had started talking like Great Gram" (Jones 1975, p.184). Fury can be felt throughout the whole novel and it

can be felt throughout the man-woman relationships. It can also be felt throughout some of Ursa's songs, for example, when she describes her first meeting with Mutt:

when I first saw Mutt, I was singing a song about a train tunnel. About this train going in the tunnel, but it didn't seem like there was no end to the tunnel, and nobody knew when the train would get out, and then all of a sudden, the tunnel tightened around the train like a fist. Then I sang about this bird woman, whose eyes were deep wells. How she would take a man on a long journey, but never return him. (Ibid, p.146)

Ursa's anger is also obvious when Tadpole tells her that when she is in the hospital, she expresses her anger with words, "you was cursing everybody out … They said they didn't know what you was" (Ibid, p.167), "words they ain't never heard before. They kept saying, 'what is she, a gypsy" (Ibid, p.8). It is a form of anger and fury, breaking the silence, attacking the violence, but she has been accused of being 'gypsy' and 'unintelligible' just because she expresses her anger. Also, when Ursa describes her Great Gram's anger when she talks about her memories, "it was as if the words were helping her, as if the words repeated again and again could be a substitute for memory, were somehow more than the memory. As if it were only the words that kept her anger" (Ibid, p.11). Her Gram expresses her anger of her past by repeating her story, while her mother keeps silent and Ursa expresses her anger through Blues songs.

Furthermore, *Corregidora* is the story that shows the difficulties involved in a sexual and patriarchal society in which a black woman has to vomit her body and deny her sexual desire. *Corregidora* criticizes the historical tendency of women to settle their marginal status within a patriarchal and racial language and society by firmly adhering to their role as mothers. In Ursa's maternal ancestry, women achieve power upon the male and express their own anger against sexual abuse through "making generations," and limiting the male presence. Ursa's mother explains: "It was like my whole body wanted you, Ursa ... I knew you was gonna come out a girl even when you was in me. Put your hand on my belly, and knew you was gonna be one of us ... I knew my body would have a girl" (Ibid, p.117). However, as Irigaray argues, within a patriarchal society, motherhood is nothing but an illusion of power and "[the]

pleasure will find, in the child, compensations for and diversions from the frustrations that she too often encounters in sexual relations. … Thus, maternity fills the gaps in a repressed female sexuality" (1985, p.27).

Ursa reflects back Collins' argument of "distorted mirrors". She is the only female character who can go beyond the use of violence and fury in order to affirm herself. Actually, Patricia Hill Collins asserts that the black woman's difficulties with identity and self-definition is controlled by the "systems of oppression that hold up distorted mirrors of a 'public image' through which black women learn to view [them]selves" (2002, p.166). Collins argues that "When black women learn to hold up 'mirrors' to one another that enable us to see and love one another for who we really are, new possibilities for empowerment can emerge" (Ibid). Indeed, the female appropriation of the mother role to express rage against the father and achieve self-assertion never helps Ursa to find herself or her voice, instead it contributes the patriarchal control over women. Ursa's husband, Mutt, responds to Ursa's duality with a comment, "all you act like you want from a man is a little peck on the cheek. Somebody ought to give you a little peck on the cheek" (Jones 1975, p.152). May Alice also helps Ursa when she tells her that a woman submits herself to male sexuality: "but then after you start giving them some … you wouldn't feel you had any right to tell them to stop" (Ibid, p.140).

Nevertheless, Ursa finds her way to achieve self-assertion through her voice and songs. She is like her foremothers, a victim of patriarchal domination in the form of jealousy, domestic violence and aggressiveness at the hands of her two husbands, Mutt and Tadpole. Ursa, through her songs, can cope with her trauma and find her identity as a strong black woman and she is singing to express her fury. She creates her voice that transmits her foremothers' story and the story of her own: "I said I didn't just sing to be supported. I said I sang because it was something I had to do, but he never would understand" (Ibid, p.3). Although she is able to tell her story that is different from her foremothers' stories, at the end of the novel, Ursa gives the reader a sense that she cannot get rid of her feelings of anger and fury. She has the sense that she must do something to Mutt that one of her foremothers does to Corregidora: "What is it a woman can do to a man that make him hate her so bad he want to kill her one minute and keep thinking

about her and can't get her out of his mind the next?" (Ibid, p.184). Castration is the answer. Through a conversation between Mutt and Ursa, the readers can feel Ursa's fury deep inside: "I don't want a kind of woman that hurt you"', "Then you don't want me … I don't want a kind of man that'll hurt me neither" (Ibid, p.185).

Moreover, Sethe, Eva and the woman in "Asylum" have been accused of being mad, but Sethe kills her daughter out of her fury and fear of the racial injustice. She bursts out of silence against all the traumatic memories she experiences in slavery. The woman 'peed' in front of the teacher expresses her anger. Eva castrates and kills her lover as a sign of her fury. Ursa is different from them; she can overcome her trauma and express her anger through her songs in an attempt of healing. Pecola is the one who has been destroyed and goes mad. Her madness is her shelter in which she can find the beauty and love that she is deprived of in her life.

4. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that expressing fury is empowering women and helping them to get out from the victimhood while silence is smashing them and may lead them to madness.

In the chosen texts, the writers present the image of the furious monstrous women. These women throughout their anger are trying to overcome their traumatic experiences and find their identities. Some of the protagonists keep silent instead of expressing their anger and being only victims that have been crushed and smashed by being mad. By communicating their painful memories, and by giving voice to their traumatic memories, these protagonists manage to work through their pain and trauma. They also manage to define themselves against sexist and racist discourses. Some of these characters can cope with their trauma in a more constructive way than other characters. Some suppress their voices and fall into a self-imposed silence and self-loathing status.

Moreover, this thesis aims to examine the role of speaking to achieve identity and self-definition in the females' lives. Some protagonists find their voice and achieve selfhood, like Ursa and Sethe. The others cannot find a way to survive because their traumatic memories affect their psychology. They cannot direct their fury correctly, which leads to their destruction, like Eva. Others are just so weak that they fall victims to their traumas that push them down and lead to mental disorder, like Pecola.

Both Morrison and Jones in their stories imitate the past and the present. In the selected stories, the past always introduces into the present and oppresses the protagonists' psyches. Remembering the past for some characters is their way to heal from the traumatic experience of slavery, racism, male oppression and violence. But for some characters remembering the past is a direct way to their destruction. For Sethe, relink her present with her traumatic past and memories is a healing power, despite the fact that it demands much emotional, psychological and physical effort. In contrast, memory imprisons Ursa instead

of freeing her. It ties her to a life not of her own. Ursa finds a way to cope with the past and the memories and does not let them destroy her. She pushes aside the weight of the past and creates a space for herself through the Blue songs in which she can find her own identity. For Pecola and Eva remembering the past is too ugly and harsh. It leads Pecola directly to a real madness and it pushes Eva down with a high level of self-loathing.

Furthermore, Morrison and Jones in their stories convert the concept of the female madness into fury and anger as a kind of assertion of the female sense of self-building. Nevertheless, not all the protagonists in the selected novels successfully achieve this level. After being so close to the edge of madness, Sethe achieves a sense of self-assertion with the help of her community, her daughter, and Paul D. Eva simulates violence as her weapon against sexism. Ursa achieves a level of self-respect and finds a voice. Pecola is totally destroyed and fails to manage. fury enables these protagonists to find their powerful voices and their identities in the face of silence and trauma that is imposed on them by slavery or by the patriarchal society.

Fury, not madness, enables Sethe to say ‘no’ and protect her children from slavery even though by murdering her children. It is fury not madness that enables Eva to stop all the sexual abuse albeit through castrating her lover violently despite the fact that this leads to her destruction. It is Fury that makes the women in ‘Asylum’ pees in front of her nephew’s teacher. Ursa is the only female character who expresses her fury beyond the use of violence. Pecola is the only character that turns to be really mad after several brutal traumatic experiences because she keeps silent and cannot express her anger.

Moreover, speaking about the power of fury, Sethe is the most powerful female character in this thesis with her power of anger. Indeed, I agree with Gillian Alban’s opinion that Sethe faces Schoolteacher with her Medusa look and power that stops and freezes him. Sethe turns to be the subject rather than being the object as bell hooks suggests for women to gain their power of anger and burst the silence. Recognizing her power of anger gives Sethe the sense of self even if that power leads her to kill her own daughter as Linda Grasso believes. In addition, Albans’ perspective that woman must pick herself out of victimhood and use her gaze with Medusa fury is harmonized with the results

that are obtained by analyzing the selected texts in this thesis. In Eva's case, Creed's attitudes of the castrating woman are absolutely true and is close to Eva's situation to some extent. Eva is the 'active monster' when she castrates her lover. She is no longer the victim of the gaze but rather the passive subject. Nevertheless, she has lost her power of anger and Medusa's fury when she decides to keep silent. She thinks that this silence is the source of power, but the fact is that her silence has destroyed her. In other words, keeping silent after bursting her fury leads to her confinement in an asylum. Melvin Dixon and Mae Henderson's perspectives that Eva's silence is a prison for her is absolutely true.

Indeed, Eva's silence keeps her imprisoned and afflicted by her traumatic memories with a state of mixing reality and dreams, past with present. Eva starts her way in recognizing her power of anger, but she cannot continue because of her silence. She thinks that silence is her weapon to protect herself but in fact her silence intensifies her agony. By keeping silent Eva violates her Medusa power of fury that she once uses to castrate her lover. Pecola is like Eva and follows Dori Laub's perspective that silence is an exile for her in which she is able to find relief and peace. Actually, Pecola keeps silent and her silence chocks her and leads to her destruction and madness. Here Audre Lorde and Cixous's perspectives are the most suitable to describe Pecola's situation. Pecola cannot understand her feelings of anger and is not able to burst her fury out; therefore, she succumbs to madness.

In contrast, Ursa finds her way to express her fury through her Blues Songs. She remains silent for many years and learns of her foremothers' legacy of persecution. She finally decides to burst that silence out with her voice. Unlike Eva, Ursa, with no violence, gains her power and expresses her Medusa fury. Ashraf Rushdy and Stephanie Li's perspectives are effective in describing Ursa's situation that sharing her ancestors' slavery stories throughout her songs is her way to express her power of anger. Through her songs, she can come to terms with her trauma and find her identity as a strong black woman. In other words, in the last scene of the novel, she has the sense that she must do something to Mutt that one of her foremothers did to Corregidora. What is it? Castration is the answer and the readers can feel Ursa's fury deep inside. But

the fact is that Ursa is singing to express her fury and she creates her voice that transmits her foremothers' story and the story of her own: "I said I didn't just sing to be supported. I said I sang because it was something I had to do, but he never would understand" (3).

The examples analysed in this thesis offer a lens through which to understand women's psychology and their suffering in male-dominated societies. It also explores the reaction these marginalized women manifest as a reflection of their defence mechanism. Besides, it aims to find solutions to their problems through their experience as victims.

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