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**Coping and Defense Mechanisms of Intergenerational Trauma of
Slavery in Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987)**

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my beloved parents and my sister and my brother in law, and to all the people who supported me, helped me, and believed in me

I will forever be grateful for having you

Thank you

I love you

Abstract

African Americans suffered physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological trauma from slavery, which has been passed down through generations. In the novel *Beloved*, Toni Morrison talks about the trauma of slavery and how it affects both those who directly and indirectly experienced it. This dissertation analyzes the characters Sethe and Denver in the novel *Beloved* by Toni Morrison using Sigmund Freud's theory of psychoanalysis, focusing on the concept of defense mechanisms. Moreover, the researcher seeks to discover the defense mechanisms of intergenerational trauma of slavery. Additionally, this dissertation uses qualitative methods of research to achieve its aim. This dissertation concludes that Sethe used denial, repression, and dissociation, and Denver used avoidance, regression, and dissociation, and these defense mechanisms are defense mechanisms of the intergenerational trauma of slavery because Denver indirectly experienced the trauma of slavery and inherited it from her mother Sethe, and Sethe was transmitted the trauma and directly experienced it as well.

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General Introduction

General introduction

The agony and shame endured by black people did not end with slavery. Despite the terror of long years of brutal physical punishment, psychological abuse, and endless hours of hard labor that the American enslaved human beings went through are gone, the curse of slavery has left an intergenerational legacy of trauma. They survived trauma of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, however this left very deep complex trauma that transmitted to the next generations. Intergenerational trauma of slavery affected generations' personality emotionally, spiritually, and collectively.

Many authors, like Harriet Beecher Stowe and Alex Haley, used fiction to revive the history of slavery and to portray the true horrors of slavery and its aftermath; for instance, Toni Morrison in her novel *Beloved* depicts the true horrors of slavery and its destructive legacy. It chronicles the life of a black woman named Sethe and her life before and after she becomes a free woman. Although the novel *Beloved* is fiction, it was inspired by the true story of a woman called Margaret Garner who killed her baby and tried to kill her other children. Toni Morrison wrote *Beloved* to try and answer the question of how could an enslaved woman kill her children.

Psychoanalysis is one of the most suitable approaches that is used by analysts and critics to analyze and interpret Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. However little to none researchers analyzed *Beloved* using Sigmund Freud's Theory of psychoanalysis focusing on defense mechanisms to identify the defense mechanisms intergenerational trauma of that are portrayed by the characters.

Carrie Forsberg discussed in her dissertation how Morrison used 124 Bluestone Road and the possession of the character Beloved as a conduit for communicating the unspeakable in the deconstruction of self in her book. She suggested that the house of 124 Bluestone Road affected Sethe, Denver, and Paul D through its manifestation of the character Beloved. And that Denver lived in an agoraphobic state of fear in this house and Paul D's manhood and

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sense of self was fractured. In her Bachelor's thesis, Noor Kamaluldeen examined the dominant role that the traumatic past plays in the present by investigating the question of who or what are the consequences the traumatic haunting had for the protagonists' lives and how they dealt with deny or suppress the past. She demonstrated that *Beloved* is a novel of trauma and it approaches the history of the south during the civil war and its effects on the present. Dr. Neveen Samir Mohamed ¹ offered in his article a psychological reading and focused of the defense mechanisms that Sethe, Paul D, and Denver subconsciously used to help them move on in life, and discussed how they overcame the trauma of the past to reclaim their mental freedom. She suggested that Sethe suffered from psychological repression, denial, and identification with the aggressor. Paul D suffered from repression and projection to feel better about himself. Denver, although she did not experience physical slavery, she suffered from denial. Mamona. M used Sigmund Freud's theory of personality and Cathy Caruth's theory of trauma to examine Sethe's thought process and the reasons behind the unbalance in her personality. She revealed that the trauma of her past and the inconsistency in the three elements of her psyche (Id, Ego, and Superego) resulted in Sethe's abnormal and unstable sense of self. Tina Eriksson, in her essay, focused on Sethe and Denver and how they tried to survive their traumas by exploring the psychological reactions that the traumatized character Sethe and Denver experienced and what happened to them psychologically then they were forced to confront their repressed emotions using Sigmund Freud's concepts of defense mechanisms and core issues. Eriksson found that Sethe and Denver confronted the repressed parts of themselves when they meet *Beloved*, the dead daughter of Sethe. They react to and cope with trauma by using defense mechanisms and core concerns.

This dissertation will attempt to psychoanalyze two of the main characters of *Beloved* by Toni Morrison and how they react to their repressed traumas and to identify the defense

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mechanisms of intergenerational trauma of slavery using Sigmund Freud's theory of psychoanalysis focusing on the defense mechanism.

The following questions are set as guidelines to fulfill this aim:

- What are the defense mechanisms used by the main characters Sethe and Denver of the novel *Beloved* by Toni Morrison to deal with their repressed traumas?
- What are the defense mechanisms of intergenerational trauma of slavery?

To fulfill this aim the researcher in this qualitative dissertation will be studying by means of close reading the novel *Beloved* by Toni Morrison using the theory of Sigmund Freud, in specific defense mechanisms concept. The novel will be used as a primary resource and the secondary resources will be taken from books, articles and Internet resources. The potential application of this study is to psychoanalyze the main characters of the novel *Beloved* by Toni using Sigmund Freud's defense mechanisms to identify the defense mechanisms of intergenerational trauma of slavery. Many researchers could use the findings to understand how the human brain copes with the trauma of slavery and how it still affects the people who have experienced slavery as well as the people who have not experienced it.

This dissertation is divided into three chapters. The first chapter is entitled "Trauma of Slavery and its Intergenerational Transmission". This chapter provides a brief historical background on slavery especially in America and the sexual and the physical abuse that was endured by the enslaved captives that affected them and their offspring. The second chapter is entitled "Coping and Defense Mechanisms of Psychoanalysis Theory of Sigmund Freud". This chapter briefly introduces Sigmund Freud and his theory of psychoanalysis and it talks about the concept of defense mechanisms. The third chapter entitled "Defense Mechanisms of Intergenerational Trauma of Slavery in *Beloved*". This chapter psychologically analyzes

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the character Sethe and Denver to detect the defense mechanisms they use to cope with their traumas and it to find defense mechanisms of intergenerational trauma through the novel.

CHAPTER ONE

1. Introduction

Slavery was legalized in the majority of societies because it was a common characteristic of the human civilization. During the 17th and 18th centuries, millions of African Americans were forced to become slaves. Slavery caused major, deep psychological wounds due to the physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. These wounds were passed down through generations. This chapter presents the thematic aspect of the work. First, it provides a brief historical background on slavery, especially describing the horrors of chattel slavery in America. Second, it discusses the physical and the sexual abuse that was endured by the African captives. Finally, it discusses the psychological trauma of the long endured abuse of chattel slavery on enslaved Africans and how it transmitted through generations.

1.2 A brief historical background of slavery

As far back as we can go in human history, we find slavery. Slavery existed over three thousand years in ancient Mesopotamia where “male slaves worked in agriculture or their owner's business, while female slaves worked as domestic servants”(slavery in Ancient History). It also existed in Ancient Egypt and Ancient China as well as many other Ancient Civilizations.

According to Mariam Webster, slavery is a situation in which people are entrapped and exploited. Kevin Bales, a professor of contemporary slavery at the University of Nottingham, defines slavery in his article "Defining and Measuring Modern Servants" “as a relationship in which a person is controlled by violence through violence, the threat of voice, or psychological coercion.

Historically, Slavery existed in many forms, and the key characteristics of the many forms of slavery are the loss of freedom and legal rights, chattel slavery was the most common form of slavery in America. Chattel slavery was a system that allowed people to buy, sell, and own human beings under legal protection supported by the United States and European powers from the 16th century to the 18th century. In the following section the researcher will describe brief history of slavery in America.

1.3 Slavery in America

Before and during African slavery, slavery was the economic and social construct of Europe and other parts of the world. Indian slavery was a common alternative to African slavery in America, starting with the events of 1492 on Christopher Columbus' second voyage to the New World. When the Europeans started colonizing the new world, they were almost entirely independent on Indian labor. Native Americans were forced to labor as slaves working in mines, plantations, or as domestic slaves. However, when the Columbian exchange started in 1492, exchanging implants, animals, metals, culture, ideas, people, and even disease resulting in an indigenous Holocaust. In an ensuing email exchange between David Michael Smith, the author of "Endless Holocaust: Mass Death in the History Of the United States Empire", and Russell Thornton, a Cherokee American anthropologist and professor of anthropology at the university of California, Thornton estimated a number of 12 million indigenous people died between 1492 and 1900 (Smith 20).

With the rapid decline of indigenous population of the new world, the European colonists turned to African Slavery to meet the massive demand for labor on the plantation fields of sugar, tobacco, and cotton to establish high profits with no labor costs. As a result, the Atlantic Slave trade flourished from the 15th and 19th centuries. Between 15 and 30 million people were violently brought to the new world.

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It was recorded by early English settlers in Virginia that the first 20 Africans stepped a foot in America on August of 1620. The image shows a letter to sir George yearly, who was the colonial governor of the colony of Virginia, letting him know that "20 and odd Negroes" were brought by the English ship the White Lion to what is now fort Hampton, Virginia. This arrival stained the past and shaped the modern world in America. (View Appendix 1).

Slaves were traded in exchange for manufactured goods, firearms, and gold to meet the massive demand for labor in the colonies. The journey of the Middle Passage from Africa to America inside the slave ships was horrible, deadly, and traumatizing; over 600 slaves were packed together in a ship with no space in terrible conditions for 2 to 3 months across the Atlantic. "They had no not so much room as a man in a coffin"(Sam 13). Many slaves did not survive the dreaded Middle Passage; 1.8 million people died (Wolfe).

Appendix 2 shows a slave ship diagram. Slave ships were built with extra portholes for ventilation, weapons on deck in case of sudden rebellion, and additional compartments below deck to fit more humans and transport hundreds of enslaved people per journey. With no room or sanitation, disease was rampant. They were subjected to forced exercise such as dancing for the entertainment of crews, tortured, whipped, and sexually abused. The horrors of the middle passage were exposed in the 1783 court trial between the slave ship Zong and their insurance company. After two month journey with 442 enslaved human beings on board, 62 of them and seven crew members died due to disease a lack of fresh water. Captain Luke Collingwood ordered to throw over 130 enslaved human beings overboard to halt the spread of disease, and it was argued that if it was legal to kill sick animals for the health of the ship, it was legal to treat enslave human beings the same, and surprisingly, the court agreed.

Leary states that African slaves were subjected to abuse in everyway possible (Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome). They endure physical and sexual abuse that affected their

psychological and emotional state let alone the dreadful and the coerced dehumanizing journey that they had to take to come to the new world . Slavery abuse is well documented. Yet, it is important to address the sexual and the physical abuse to understand the emotional and psychological damage that came with it.

1.4 The physical and sexual abuse of trauma of slavery

Enslaved Africans experienced the viciousness of slavery for more than 400 years, many men, women, and children faced sexual, emotional, and physical trauma that affected greatly their physical, emotional, and social status. The sexual exploitation of enslaved people was inevitable. Enslaved men, women, and even children were sexually violated due to the absence of legal protection," the regulations of law, as to the white race, on the subject of sexual intercourse do not and cannot, for obvious reasons, apply to slaves; their intercourse is promiscuous" (Roberts 21). Sexual abuse was used to dominate and dehumanize African men, women, and children. A common sexual abuse practice was the forcing of the reproduction of enslaved people to fill labor shortages in the south caused by the abolishment of the Atlantic slave trade in 1808. Breeding farms were established to force enslaved women to have large numbers of children to sell and distribute throughout the south. They were also forced into sleeping with multiple men, and if they refuse, they would have to endure rape and sexual abuse.

Slavery was regulated by law that made it possible to own African men, women, and children to sell, beat, rape, kill, and discard. Colonial powers used torture. Forced labor, and murder to control any kind of resistance coming from the enslaved and to maintain order on the plantations. Slave abuse was frequently employed as a form of punishment or to reinforce the power of the slave owner, if a slave is working too slowly, stealing, or attempting to run away, they may be beaten or whipped, and most likely be killed. Appendix 3 shows a man

named "Whipped Peter", an African American ex-slave who escaped from Louisiana plantation in 1863. The picture shows his scarred back, the plantation owners who owned him had given him these horrible scars that became a symbol for the American Abolishment movement. These brutal acts affected Africans emotionally, and psychologically.

Africans resisted slavery through simple actions such as slowing down the rhythm of work and disobedience or through big actions such as killing their owners or their children. The more resistance was the more physical and sexual violence increase that inflated on their psychological well being. It has been well known that traumatic events can disrupt one's emotional and psychological well being and impose a threat to one's sense of self (Siegel and Solomon). The physical and sexual abuse that came with slavery inflicted negatively on slaves emotional and psychological state. Because there was no therapeutic intervention before, during, or after the institution of slavery came up Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) likely develop among slaves (Leary 40). The next section describes Post traumatic stress disorder and its prevalence among enslaved Africans and their offspring.

1.5 The emotional and psychological abuse of slavery:

Slavery had a big effect on slaves' emotional and psychological state of being. It left them struggling with mentally with their beliefs, view of life, and value, and psychologically, with serious psychological problems among many of them is Post Traumatic Stress disorder.

1.5.1 Post-traumatic stress disorder

Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a collection of signs and symptoms that may occur in people who have witnessed or been expose to a traumatic event. "Post traumatic stress disorder is a mental health condition that is triggered by a terrifying event either

experiencing it or witnessing it (“Post-traumatic stress Disorder (PTSD)-Symptoms and causes-Mayo Clinic”).

Although trauma, of any form, existed since antiquity it was until the 20th century when the study of trauma developed to become a relatively new field of study. One of the most devastating and well documented and community based trauma related event of the 20th century was the Holocaust survivors in world war two (Herman). The Holocaust survivors have carried an impossible burden of trauma that passed to their generations. Shmotkin et al. reviewed the literature on the long term effects of the Holocaust on survivors, their offspring, and their grandchildren. It included that although holocaust survivors, their offspring, and their grandchildren lead normal lives, the trauma affected the family dynamics and the intergenerational relations within the families, as well as the challenges of the aging process on the Holocaust survivors.

Another prominent event of the 20th century that received acknowledgement of the experienced trauma is the Vietnam War. After the end of the Vietnam War many veterans were plagued with Post traumatic stress disorder. The Vietnam experience study was a multidimensional assessment of the health of Vietnam veterans conducted by the Centers for Disease Control in 1988. According to the psychological assessment, Vietnam veterans had several psychological issues more frequently than other veterans. These issues included Post traumatic stress disorder due to the war.

Slavery affected enslaved human beings' mental health "people living in slavery have been totally dehumanized and treated as objects of another person's will (Anti-Slavery International).as a result of the trauma of sexual, physical, an emotional abuse that slaves endured, African Americans were left with profound psychological problems among many of them Post traumatic stress disorder due to the trauma of slavery an all the violence and

exploitation that came with it. However, "the direct trauma of slavery occurred long ago, perhaps too long ago to warrant diagnosing current African American with PTSD"(Dorothy 40).

According to Leary, the first generation of Africans who were enslaved in the United States (going back to the 16th century) developed what is known as Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). In Post traumatic stress disorder, as symptoms, developmental delays can occur, such as loss of language skills in young children. Auditory pseudo-hallucinations, such as sensory auditory experience, thoughts spoken in one or more different voices and paranoid thinking may occur. After long-term, repeated, and severe traumatic events (e.g., torture), the person may also have difficulty regulating emotions, maintaining stable relationships, or experiencing separation symptoms. When a traumatic event leads to a violent death, both symptoms and loss and PTSD are problematic (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th Edition: DSM-5).

Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome which is the result of sustained and unhealed trauma injured by the early generations of enslaved Africans. Enslaved African Americans of early generations developed maladaptive and dysfunctional patterns of thinking and behaving in response to the sustained PTSD, as a result Post Traumatic Slaves Syndrome or PTSS developed with time. In the next section, the researcher will talk about post traumatic slave syndrome theory.

1.5.2 Post-traumatic Slave Syndrome

Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome is a term that was coined by Dr Joy DeGruy Leary. DeGruy, author, an researcher described the multigenerational trauma and injustices experienced by African Americans in her book "Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome", PTSS is a theory that explains the origins of numerous adaptive survival strategies used by the African

American groups across the diaspora and the United States. It is a disorder that has plagued Africans and their descendants for many generations as a result of chattel slavery, a type of enslavement that was founded on the idea that African Americans were genetically and fundamentally inferior to white people (DeGruy). Pouissant and Alexander describe Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome as "the persistent presence of racism, despite the significant legal, social, and political progress made during the last half of the twentieth century, has created a physical risk for black people the virtually unknown to white Americans" (15). Post traumatic slave syndrome has been used to explain the multigenerational transmission of trauma, which includes behaviors associated with lowered self esteem, anger, a feeling of inferiority (DeGruy). DeGruy established criteria of diagnosis for PTSS as: "Multigenerational trauma together with continued oppression and **A**bse~~n~~ce of opportunity to access the benefits available in the society lead to... **P**ost Traumatic Slave Syndrome. **M + A = P**" (Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome).

Dr. Joy DeGruy explained in her theory multi generational trauma by focusing on the African American experience starting from slavery as sustained impact after 300 years. She found common adaptive behaviors among African Americans and she further explained them with an example of an African American mother denigrating her child when she is fact proud of him, connecting this scene to 300 years back when a black mother is also denigrating her child in front of her owner because she does not want her child to be enslaved. This behavior is called is called Appropriate Adaptation to protect their children. However, this behavior "has been subsequently transmitted down through generations" (DeGruy).

Slavery violated black families and communities, it denied their lives and identities causing intergenerational trauma and it is shown through symptoms of broken relationships, disconnected families, violence, suicide, substance abuse, and along with other serious mental and physical issues. Crawford et al. suggested that "the legacy of slavery has manifested in a

myriad of pathological behaviors familiar in the African American community"(265). Slavery did not only affect African Americans individually; it affected them collectively as well.

1.6 Intergenerational transmission of the trauma of slavery

Trauma affected communities, people, and nations leaving very deep and complex wounds passing it unknowingly to the coming generations. Intergenerational trauma is " a phenomenon in which the descendants of a person who has experienced a terrifying event show adverse emotional and behavioral reactions to the events that are similar to those of the person himself" the horrors of slavery that the enslaved human beings endured has a psychological impact on their lives passing it down through generations because" trauma does not stop at those who directly experience or witness the trauma"(Figley).

Scientifically, the trauma passes down biologically through generations. There have been a lot of studies that support this claim Youssef et al. showed evidence that suggested psychological trauma can affect the biology of the individuals, and it could even have biological and behavioral consequences on the offspring of the exposed individuals. Another researcher that goes by the name of Jana Švorcová, investigated the evidence of intergenerational inheritance due to trauma exposure on the epigenetic mechanism of DNA methylation in humans that suppresses gene expression in various ways, and she found an accumulating amount of evidence of an enduring effect of trauma exposure to be passed to offspring transgenerationally via the epigenetic inheritance mechanism of DNA methylation alterations and has the capacity to change the expression of genes and the metabolome. These findings suggest that children whose parents have experienced severe trauma had DNA methylation changes in behaviors. These changes are linked to trauma and PTSD and there is a chance that PTSD will be handed down through the generations.

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Trauma may also occur in children through familial transmission because children acquire their parents' beliefs, worldviews, behaviors, and life skills from interacting with them, and through their parents' patterns of emotions, thoughts, and behaviors, therefore, trauma is also passed down through parents' parenting skills, and so on, trauma passes from one generation to the next. Leary supports this claim and argue that PTSD is passed on to children through social learning, parenting practices, and socialization processes. She reported:

The individual and the families that survived the slave experience reared their children while simultaneously struggling with their own psychological injuries. They often exhibited the typical symptoms associated with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. The children lived and learned the behaviors and attitudes of their often injured and struggling parents.

In addition to biological and familial transmission, trauma can also be passed down through community practices, beliefs, and values, the African American community survived the historical trauma of slavery through adapting patterns of behaviors that could protect them and their children from the external threat, but not from the psychological damaging effect. For example, physical punishment was an acceptable and expected method of teaching behavior in the African community "so they would never make the mistake of standing their ground with a white person in authority"(DeGruy). This gave the African American community the feeling of inferiority and "Today, the African American community is made up of individuals and families who collectively share differential anxiety and adaptive survival behaviors passé down from prior generations of African Americans, many of whom suffered from PTSD".

1.7 Conclusion

Overall, this chapter provided a brief historical background on slavery, focusing on slavery in America. Moreover, this chapter shed light on the physical and the sexual abused

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that the African captives endured In America. This chapter also described the emotional and the psychological effects of the trauma of slavery and how trauma transmitted through generations.

CHAPTER TWO

1. Introduction

One of the contemporary theories used in the English language literature is psychoanalysis. It is a theory that serves as a guide for psychoanalysis and is regarded as a theory of personality organization and the dynamics of personality. According to psychoanalysis theory, defense mechanisms are subconscious psychological mechanisms that protect anxiety-including thoughts and feelings related to inner conflicts and environmental stressors. This chapter represents the theoretical aspect of the work. First, it briefly introduces Sigmund Freud and his theory of psychoanalysis. Second, this chapter talks about the defense mechanisms as well as coping mechanisms, discussing their overlapping systems and their prevalence among enslaved Africans.

1.2 A brief overview on Sigmund Freud's life

Sigmund schlomo Freud, an Austrian neurologist and founder of psychoanalysis, was born to middle-class Jewish family in 1856. Freud began studying medicine at the University of Vienna in 1873. He began working at the Vienna General hospital after graduating. He worked with Josef Breuer to treat hysteria using hypnosis recall of painful memories. In 1885, Freud moved to Paris to study under neurologist Jean Charcot. He established a private practice specializing on nerves and brain disorders. Freud proposed the hypothesis that humans have an unconscious in which sexual and violent urges compete for dominance with the defenses against them. In 1900 Freud released his seminal work "The Interpretation of Dreams" which was the landmark study of psychoanalysis (BBC-History-Sigmund Freud).

1.3 A brief overview on the theory of Psychoanalysis

Psychoanalysis is the psychological study that focuses on the personality of human beings. It is a method of therapy for personality disturbances and techniques for investigating an individual's unconscious thoughts and feelings (Hjelle 86). Psychoanalysis is the

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psychological study of personality of human beings that will bring the mentally repressed to a state of consciousness.

Sigmund Freud's theory of psychoanalysis illustrates the complexity of the human personality; Tyson states that each individual in psychoanalysis has a unique psychological history that starts with familial experiences as a child, with patterns of teenagers and adult conduct that are a direct result of those early experiences (12). Freud divided the human personality into three levels : the conscious, this refers to the thoughts, emotions, and memories that are in existence at any given moment, the pre-conscious that describes anything that a person is not currently aware of but could at any time become aware of. And the unconscious which is the region of the mind that holds all of the ideas and sensations that are not conscious. Later in 1920s, he introduced a three-part structural model of personality: Id, ego, and superego (view Appendix 4).

1.3.1 Structural model of personality

Sigmund Freud divided human personality's consciousness into three levels of the awareness: the conscious, the preconscious, and the unconscious. These levels line up with his Concepts of ID, ego, and superego and overlap with each other.

1.3.1.a ID

The ID is made up of all the irrational and illogical urges and impulses that push people to seek pleasure, it means that people do what they do because they like and enjoy it. The animating force behind the ID is the Pleasure Principle. The pleasure is the most fundamental human motivation and the guiding principle of the ID. It is the desire tension or suffering (Hockenbury 423).It means being motivated to pursue pleasure and to avoid tensions and discomfort is what powers the ID.

1.3.1.b The Ego

As it is shown in appendix 4, the ego is above the water and it makes up part of the iceberg. Unlike the ID, the ego is motivated by the reality principle that rationalizes and controls actions and behaviors that involve the outside world by delaying gratification until a suitable time. These certain instinctual ID impulses must be restricted by the ego, which must also treat them as threats (S. Freud, *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* 141). For example, if you want to eat candy, your ego will prevent you from stealing your friend's candy and forces you to wait till you can purchase your own. This is a form of defense mechanism. The ego defense mechanisms include repression, displacement, sublimation, rationalization, projection, reaction formation, denial, undoing, and regression (Freud 44).

1.3.1.c Superego

The superego is the third and last part of the human mind to develop. It exists in all the three levels of consciousness. Sigmund Freud states that the superego serves as the internal embodiment of established standards of morality and judgments. Since the superego strives for perfection rather than pleasure, it reflects the ideal world as opposed to the real world (Hall et al.35). The ego is the responsible part that produces defense mechanisms to protect itself from anxiety threats. Before we talk about defense mechanisms, It is important to learn what exactly anxiety is.

1.3.2 Anxiety's threat to the ego

Anxiety is the body's natural response to stress. It is the feeling of fear, dread, and uneasiness that may occur as a reaction to stress (“NCI Dictionary of Cancer Terms”). Freud defines anxiety as a felt, affective, unpleasant state accompanied by a physical sensation that warns the person against impending danger. He states:

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Anxiety, then, is in the first place something that is felt. We call it an affective state, although we are also ignorant of what an effect is. As a feeling, anxiety has a very marked quality of unpleasure. But that is not the whole of its quality. Not every unpleasure is anxiety, for there are other sensations, such as tension, pain or mourning which have the quality of unpleasure. Thus anxiety must have other distinctive features besides this quality. (pp.; 96-97)

He suggested that birth trauma serves as the model for all anxiety (Schultz and Schultz 47).

Anxiety is a complex response to threats, involving cognitive, physical, and Behavioral changes. When encountered with a dangerous situation, the adrenaline is triggered causing reactions or defenses as a response to the situation. The Surge in Adrenaline causes the individual feel Restless and tense, and have a rapid heartbeat along with other symptoms when faced with a difficult situation. For example, before taking a test, or before meeting new people.

1.3.2.1 Types of anxiety

Freud proposed three types of anxiety: neurotic anxiety, which is the result of the ego's dependence on the ID; moral anxiety, which is resulted by the neurotic anxiety's dependence on the superego; and the realistic anxiety which is the result of moral anxiety's dependence on the outer world. (Feist and Feist 34).

1.3.2.1.a Neurotic anxiety

To begin with we need to understand what neurotic is." neurotic is a word to describe mental, emotional, or physical reactions that are drastic and irrational (Key). Neurotic behaviors are shown to manage deep anxiety. According to Sigmund Freud, when an individual is feeling anxious, or in other terms they feel like their ego is threatened, they will experience neurotic anxiety inside.

1.3.2.1.b Moral anxiety

Moral anxiety is based on a Feeling that one's. Internalized values are about to be ("Psychology History Timeline"). This may include the feeling of excessive concern about getting in trouble whether it is financial, familial, ethical, or more that may go against a person's morals and values.

1.3.2.1.c Realistic anxiety

Unlike moral anxiety that occurs in humans from an internal threat, the realistic anxiety occurs when a person senses dangerous external threats. For example, when a person encounters a dog they will get scared and anxious that the dog might bite them. Anxiety alerts the ego of any possible neurotic, moral, or realistic anxiety and then the ego produces defense mechanisms to defend itself from the anxiety. The following section will talk about defense mechanisms as well as coping mechanisms and their overlapping characteristics to understand the difference between them and their prevalence among enslaved people.

1.4 Defense mechanisms against anxiety

The ego establishes defense mechanisms in order to avoid and defend itself from the anxiety of sexual and aggressive impulses because it is the part that feels and produces anxiety (S. Freud, *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety* 57). Defense mechanisms are strategies employed by the ego to protect itself from the anxiety brought on by daily confrontations (Duane P. Schultz, Sydney Ellen Schultz. 49). According to psychoanalytic theory, a person's defense mechanisms are psychological techniques use by the unconscious mind to alert, deny, or distort reality in order to counteract emotions of anxiety and undesirable urges and to preserve one's self-schema. However, the outcomes of frequently using them maybe beneficial and unhealthy at the same time depending on the situation. Freud introduced the

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concept of defense mechanisms in his 1926 book "Inhibition, Symptoms and Anxiety" and then his daughter Anna Freud refined the concept in her 1946 book "The Ego and the mechanisms of Defense"(view table 1 below).

Table 1 :

Repression : involves unconscious denial of the existence of something that causes anxiety

Denial: involves denying the existence of an external threat or traumatic event

Reaction formation: involves expressing an id impulse that is the opposite of the one truly driving the person

Projection: involves attributing a disturbing impulse to someone else

Regression: involves retreating to an earlier, less frustrating period of life and displaying the childish and dependent behaviors characteristics of that more secure time

Rationalization: involves reinterpreting behavior to make it more acceptable and less threatening

Displacement: involves shifting id impulses from a threatning or unavailable object to a substitute object that is available

Dissociation: involves disconnecting from the self and the world around

Some Freudians defense mechanisms

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Suppes and Warren attempted a new means of generating and classifying the defense mechanisms by using mathematical models. The results were presented in form of actor_ action _objects. And it works as follows: When the elementary transformation on the actor, the action or the object of the unconscious proposition is introduced, the defense mechanisms are then systematically generated (view table 2 below).

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Table 2:

Mechanisms	Number of transformations	Propositional form in consciousness
1. Displacement	1	Self + A + Y
2. Turning against the self	1	Self + A + Self
3. Reaction formation	1	Self + Opp A + X
4. Reaction formation & displacement	2	Self + Opp A + Y
5. Reaction formation & turning against the self	2	Self + Opp A + Self
6. Intellectualization	1	Self + Neut A + X
7. Intellectualization & displacement	2	Self + Neut A + Y
8. Intellectualization & turning against the self	2	Self + Neut A + Self
9. Denial	1	Self + Denial A + X
10. Denial & displacement	2	Self + Denial A + Y
11. Denial and turning against & self	2	Self + Denial A + Self
12. Affectualization	1	Self + Intensif A + X
13. Affectualization & displacement	2	Self + Intensif A + Y
14. Affectualization & turning against the	2	Self + Intensif A +

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self		Self
15. Projection	1	Other + A + X
16. Projection & displacement	2	Other + A + Y
17. Projection & turning on & the self	2	Other + A + Self
18. Projection & reaction formation	2	Other + Opp A + X
19. Projection & reaction formation & displacement	3	Other + Opp A + Y
20. Projection & reaction formation & turning on the self	3	Other + Opp A + Self
21. Projection& intellectualization	2	Other + Neutral A + X
22. Projection & intellectualization & displacement	3	Other + Neutral A + Y
23. Projection & intellectualization & turning against the self	3	Other + Neutral A + Self
24. Projection & denial	2	Other + Denial A + X
25. Projection & denial & displacement	3	Other + Denial A + Y
26. Projection & denial & turning against the self	3	Other + Denial A + Self
27. Projection & affectualization	2	Other + Intensif A + X
28. Projection & affectualization &	3	Other + Intensif A +

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displacement		Y
29. Projection & affectualization & turning against the self	3	Other + Intensif A + Self

The 29 defense mechanisms generated by elementary transformations from unconscious propositions of the unconsciousness from self + action + objet.

1.4.1 Defense mechanisms used to cope with change

No man ever encounters major changes in their lifetime. However, naturally we try to resist and defend our minds from the change especially if it was significantly traumatized and distressing. Bovey and Hede offered an investigation into the role of adaptive and maladaptive defense mechanisms in individual resistance. Bovey and Hede obtained 615 survey responses from employees in nine organizations undergoing major change. The results of the study yielded that five defense mechanisms were employed, namely, projection, acting out, isolation of affect, dissociation, and denial. On the other hand the negative defense mechanism that was used was humor. The previous findings suggest that employees use more adaptive defense mechanisms to cope with major change and only one maladaptive defense mechanism that could harm the individual. Humor can be an affective coping mechanism to ease anxiety and tension, but if used aggressively it can be harmful and cause more anxiety in the situation because each person has a favorite humor style, some prefer dark humor and some get easily triggered by dark humor, in that, using humor with consideration of cultural, social backgrounds of others can be unhealthy. On the other hand, using projection, acting out, isolation of affect, dissociation, or denial could seem negative, it is the way that the mind protects itself from major traumatic change.

As a result of slavery experience, Africans who were oppressed and their descendants developed personalities that were essentially through fighting off repressive influences. Richardson and Wade felt that they have lost what it is like to live without rippling stress without even recognizing how it happened. For many black women and men, life-threatening stress has become the usual psychological condition. Much of the stress that black people face is directly tied to how systems of dominance, particularly racism, sexism, and capitalism, interfere with our ability to fully exercise self-determination. It is a cruel irony that racial

integration has caused an increase in worry and stress among black people (54). In other words due to the trauma and oppression endured during slavery. Naturally, enslaved Africans developed constant fear and anxiety that has resulted in building self-destructive and self-defeating behaviors, these excessive and inappropriate responses are defenses against the constant anxiety that will become a part of the person's personality. Wilson stated:

Consequently, the personalities of many, if not most, subordinated Afrikans are little more than elaborate defense mechanisms against oppressive anxieties and stresses. These mostly unconscious defense systems against oppressive anxieties have been so organized and automatize that the "normal" subordinated African experiences relatively little overt or conscious anxiety. (Pp.129-130)

As a result of the constant state of anxiety that the Africans lived with, they developed excessive and inappropriate responses as defense mechanisms.

1.4.2 Coping mechanisms used by enslaved individuals

As previously mentioned in the previous chapter, Dr Joy DeGruy described the multi-generational trauma that is experienced by African Americans in her book "post traumatic slave syndrome. She identified common adaptive behaviors that are used by African Americans to cope with the effects of enslavement. Researcher, Campo attempted to identify the shared coping mechanisms employed by enslaved individuals to handle physical, social, and psychological stress of enslavement through analyzing 19th century slave narratives using "The Coping Theory" which was conceptualized by Lazarus and Folkman as a process (Garcia). As a result, the researcher found that enslaved African Americans of Virginia in the last decade of the 18th century through 19th century utilized activities of religion, Community involvement, and appropriation of food, avoidance, and ownership to cope with stresses of enslavement. Generally people use coping skills in their everyday lives to deal with hardship. Enslaved African Americans used simple coping mechanism that helped them evolve and survive. However, using them too much can be unhealthy for the long run.

1.4.3 Difference between coping and defense mechanisms

Although coping mechanisms and defense mechanisms sound similar, in fact they are different. However, they share some similarities." Coping mechanisms are ego processes that involved the full use of cognitive and emotional capacities. In contrast, defense mechanisms lack the full use of cognitive abilities, distort reality, and are covert in impulse expression"(Diehl 4).

A research was conducted by Kramer on the difference between coping and defense mechanisms based on Cramer's review involving psychological processes with acknowledging their mutual overlapping. The researcher conducted his research theoretically with no empirical evidence. The results of the research yielded that fear differentiates defense from coping mechanisms, and that stability over time is theoretically related to defense mechanisms as a personality related concept. On the other hand, change is related to coping mechanisms as a situation inducted adaptational process. In other words coping mechanisms are relevant to short-term changes in patience undergoing psychotherapy, and defense mechanisms are relevant to long-term changes. These previous findings suggested that people use coping mechanisms to cope with stress from a situation for a short period of time. However, defense mechanisms are used for long period of time to live with big traumatic distress.

1.5 Conclusion

Overall this chapter provided a brief overview on Sigmund Freud and his theory of psychoanalysis as well as the defense mechanisms which are going to help in interpreting the novel *Beloved* by Toni Morrison, as well as differentiating defense mechanisms from coping mechanisms and discussing their prevalence among enslaved people.

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Psychoanalysis is the most suitable theory used to interpret texts. It argues that literary texts, like dreams, express the secret unconscious desires and concerns of the author. The next chapter will attempt a psychoanalytic criticism of the novel *Beloved* by Toni Morrison.

CHAPTER THREE

1. Introduction

Beloved is one of the most powerfully depictions of slavery and its aftermath inasmuch as it was inspired by the true story of Margret Garner who escaped from slavery with her family in 1856, Margret Gardner murdered one of her daughters rather than have her sold into slavery once more. The novel *Beloved* is set in the years following the American Civil War, it centers on a dysfunctional family of free slaves whose Cincinnati home is cursed by an evil ghost. Toni Morrison introduced through her novel the traumatic neo slave narrative exploring the psychological, physical, and sexual abuse of slavery.

To end the path this dissertation started, this chapter attempts to psychologically analyze the characters Sethe and Denver using Sigmund Freud's theory of psychoanalysis to detect the defense mechanisms they use to cope with their traumas and to find defense mechanisms of intergenerational trauma through the novel.

1.2 Sethe's Defense Mechanisms against Trauma

Sethe is the main character in "Beloved." She is an escaped slave who "claimed herself" when she escaped Sweet Home, the plantation farm in Kentucky, where she was subjected to sexual, physical, and emotional abuse (Morrison 183). Sethe, at this level, "has only twenty-eight days of unslaved life" at 124 Bluestone Road in Cincinnati, the house in which Baby Suggs, her mother-in-law, lived with her family, "followed by eighteen years of disapproval and solitary life" (Morrison 183, 326). After twenty-eight days after Sethe fled Sweet Home, the schoolteacher arrived at 124 Bluestone Road to reclaim her and her children and return them back to the plantation farm; however, Sethe would rather kill her children than have them subjected to slavery. Sethe successfully killed her oldest daughter, and her

other children survived. Sethe knew if she let the white guys from the plantation farm take her children, they would suffer the same fate as hers; therefore, she tried to kill them; however, this act freed their bodies but not their souls. The ghost of her oldest daughter and the nightmares of slavery never let her go.

Sethe suffered great trauma at Sweet Home as a slave. She was tortured, raped, and mistreated. Slavery dehumanized her motherhood love; her love towards her children became "too thick", Sethe's motherhood love in the novel was proven to be powerful and destructive at the same time; she wanted to protect her children, but she killed them (Morrison 314). Another reason why she tried to kill her children is because "she was trying to out hurt hurt" (315); if "they ain't [her children] at Sweet Home, schoolteacher ain't got them" (447), and they would not suffer what she suffered. Such behavior is known as the "trauma response." Typically, trauma survivors frequently resist mourning, not only out of fear but also out of pride. She may consciously refuse to grieve as a way of denying victory to the perpetrator" (J. Herman). Sethe may have denied mourning to protect herself from the trauma of the situation of killing and losing her child, A. Freud states that the ego uses denial as a last resort to avoid being aware of some unpleasant outside impression (The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defence 89).

Herman explains that "equally as powerful as the desire to deny atrocities is the conviction that denial does not work" (J. Herman). Sethe seems to deny all the traumatic truths of her past, trying to live as if nothing really happened. She denies the fact that she was brutally abused and witnessed her loved ones get abused as well. However, the atrocities of slavery still there, exist in her life in the form of good memories such as her marriage to Halle back at Sweet Home and bad memories such as the physical, emotional, and sexual abuse she experienced there. "The traumatic past in *Beloved* has not been forgotten, nor is it accessible only indirectly. It is strangely concrete, forcefully present, literally there, not past at all"

(Morgenstern 103). She is forced to remember her past; whenever she looks at her scarred back, she remembers. Whenever she thinks of her oldest baby, "Beloved," she remembers whenever she goes outside her house, she remembers. Although she denies her past, it always seems to find its way back to her.

Although, Sethe repressed her past memories "there it was again"(Morrison 5). Flashbacks from her traumatic past always seem to come back to her because "memory is figured as a menacing force is Sethe's life - it seems to stalk her - and she works hard to avoid it" (Plasa 73) because "the hurt is always there" and "every mention of her past life hurts" (Morrison 133). In spite of everything bad that had happen to her at the plantain, she always remembers the "shameless beauty" (8) of sweet home. This is a form of denial and repression; she only wants to remember the good parts of her past life at sweet home but blocks all the bad memories of her trauma events and she denies them as if they never happened. Repression is a defense mechanism that may exist in people who have no memory of traumatic event, despite being conscious and aware during the event and consciously suppressing undesirable thoughts or impulses (bailey).Sethe was present and fully conscious during her traumatic experience at Sweet Home. However, she suppressed and denies her bad memories until *Beloved* appeared and started to remind her of memories that she never thought she had.

Slavery destroyed the concept of motherhood and family structure. Mothers were discouraged from bonding with their children because they were typically taken from them and sold to another slave owner for profit. Motherhood was destroyed; enslaved mothers were forced to mass produce and to sleep with multiple men. This destroys any kind of normal family structure.

Sethe does not recall much about her own mother, because she did not have a strong bond with her when she was little. However, she recalls few things about her like the brand upon her breast her mother showed her and told her to recognize her through it because she did not memorize her mother's face and when her mother was hanged Sethe searched for the mark afraid that her mother was hanged before Nan, another enslaved woman at Sweet Home, yanked her away. Sethe also remembers the story Nan told her about her mother, that she “threw them all away but her” (Morrison 122) “them” refers to the other children her mother had from white men who raped her during the journey through the middle passage; however only Sethe was given “the name of the black man”(122) this means that Sethe was born with love and she was wanted by her parents even if she did not feel that love.

As a child Sethe was “unimpressed” with her mother's love , but “as a grown up woman, Sethe was angry” because she finally understood her mother's love towards her and it seemed that Sethe has the same kind of love towards her children because “they seemed little and far away ”(Morrison 122) .traumatized parents frequently unconsciously recreate their past traumas in their integrations with their children in an effort to cure or undo those traumas, and many end up becoming the aggressors in the process.(Shabad 70).

Sethe lost herself due to the trauma of slavery. She dissociates to disconnect herself from the world around her. For her, time is “so hard to believe in it”, as if she is fragmented into pieces wondering if Paul D, a fellow escaped slave, “bathes her in sections, will the parts hold” “to keep them from flying away”(Morrison 70-179-133). This is a form of dissociation which is a defense mechanism where a person withdraws from their healthy sense of self and the world around them and enters a state of daydreaming in an attempt to protect themselves from traumas. What Sethe experienced is a type of dissociative disorder which is called Depersonalization, and according to the Diagnostic and Manual of Mental Disorders, depersonalization is experiences of detachment from one's surroundings, such as the

perception of people or things as dreamlike, lifeless, hazy, or visually distorted and the symptoms of Depersonalization are characterized:

By a feeling of unreality or detachment from, or unfamiliarity with, one's whole self (criterion A1). The individual may feel detached from his or her entire being (e.g., "I am no one," "I have no self"). He or she may also feel subjectively detached from aspects of the self, including feelings (e.g., hypoemotionality: "I know I have feelings but I don't feel them "), thoughts (e.g., "My thoughts don't feel like my own," "head filled with cotton"), whole body or body parts, or sensations (e.g., touch, proprioception, hunger, thirst, libido). There may also be a diminished sense of agency (e.g., feeling robotic, like an automaton; lacking control of one's speech or movements). The depersonalization experience can sometimes be one of a split self, with one part observing and one participating, known as an "out-of-body experience" in its most extreme form. The unitary symptom of "depersonalization" consists of several symptom factors: anomalous body experiences (I.e., unreality of the self and perceptual alterations); emotional or physical numbing; and temporal distortions with anomalous subjective recall. (pp. 302-303)

1.3 Denver's Defense Mechanisms against Trauma

Denver, Sethe's youngest child, lived in 124 Bluestone Road house with her mother. Although she is eighteen years old, she does not leave the house and has no friends because she broke up with her community over what happened in the past. She lives her life "in emptiness, as an unsatisfiable longing related to grief" (Kolmerten 205). When Sethe tried to kill her and her sister, that traumatizing incident affected greatly on her, despite the fact that she was just a baby at the time of the incident, however it is proven that babies get traumatized as well. According to the Diagnostic and Manual of Mental Disorders, Posttraumatic Stress Disorder occurs in children of 6 years and younger, and one of the many symptoms that is portrayed by children with PTSD is persistent avoidance stimuli , which is the act of avoiding activities, places, people, conversations and interpersonal situations that could reminded them of the incident (273). Denver avoids going outside her house to her community and friends to not remember the incident.

To repeat, Denver suffers from the traumatic incident of witnessing her mother murder her sister. However she does not quite comprehend this incident, yet she knows how bad and traumatizing it was that is why she went deaf before she could hear her mother's answer on the question she repeated from her classmate Neldon Lord asking " didn't your mother get locked away for murder? Wasn't you in there with her when she went? (Morrison 203). Denver's hearing loss is a trauma response due to stress because " too much stress can weak havoc on your health and your hearing "(Neil Sperling, MD). As mentioned in the above paragraph, Denver was trying so hard to avoid anything that could remind her of the incident, however when she confronted her mother about it her body responded with hearing loss to block remembering the incident.

Although Denver is eighteen years old, she acts much younger than her age. Such regressive behavior is a result of untreated trauma, a defense mechanism known as regression (Freud 181). Under intense environment, one adult may curl up into the fetal position, another adult may go back to their mother, and a third adult may respond by spending the entire day in bed, protected from the outside world's cold and danger (Feist 42). Denver isolates herself inside the 124 Bluestone Road house far away from the dangers of the outside world.

Additionally, Denver is living in paranoia scared from the " world outside the porch "(Morrison 470) that caused her and her family to suffer greatly. Denver's traumatic experience made her feel "utterly abandoned, utterly alone, and a sense of alienation of disconnection, pervades every relationship from the most intimate familial bonds to the most abstract affiliation of community "(J. Herman). Denver finds company in the baby ghost haunting 124 Bluestone Road house who " held all the anger, love and fear she didn't know what to do with it "(200). This behavior is a trauma response because Herman explains that " traumatic people feel that they belong more to the dead than to the living "(52).

In part one of *Beloved* the narrator describes Denver's loneliness after her grandmother died due to depression shortly after her two brothers ran away from the ghost of Sethe's dead daughter, Beloved, this loneliness affected her. "Denver was lonely, all that leaving: First her brothers, then her grandmother - serious losses"(Morrison 23). All this leaving gave her abandonment issues; afraid that Beloved would leave her when she came back to their lives "afraid the thing that happened that made it all right for her mother to kill her sister could happen again" (393). In chapter twelve of part one of *Beloved*, Denver and Beloved go to get the cider jug from the cold house, the door closes, in the complete darkness Denver searches for Beloved following her voice saying "come find me"(233). When she opens the door "Beloved is not there"(234). The loss overwhelmed her "She feels like an ice cake torn away from the solid surface of the stream, floating on darkness, thick and crashing against the edges of things around it."(235). Denver's response to her sister's disappearance is a form of dissociation; a defense mechanism against painful and unbearable experiences (Department of Health and Human Services).

1.4 The Meaning of Beloved's presence in the novel

Beloved is the oldest daughter of Sethe, she was murdered by her mother when the white men from the plantation came to reclaim Sethe and her children. Beloved's baby ghost haunted 124 Bluestone House since the incident. In chapter five in part one of *Beloved*, Beloved came back in the form of grown woman. She came back to exact revenge on her mother for killing her by reminding her of her traumatic past life wounds, "Beloved ate up her life, took it, swelled up with it, grew taller on it, and the older women yield it up without murmur"(Morrison 474). Because she is an embodiment of the past so "she acts as an unconscious imp, stealing away the volition of the characters, and as a Psychoanalytic urge, she pries open suppressed memories and emotions" (Krumholz 114).

In chapter eight of part one of *Beloved*, Beloved and Denver were playing and dancing in the room, till they collapsed and they had the following conversation:

"What's it like over there, where you were before? Can you tell me?"

"Dark," said Beloved. "I'm small in that place. I'm like this here. "

She raised her head off the bed? Lay down on her side and curled up.

Denver covered her lips with her fingers. "Were you cold?"

Beloved curled tighter and shook her head. "Hot. Nothing to breathe down there and no room to move in."

"You see anybody?"

"Heaps. A lot of people is down there. Some is dead."(144).

This suggests that *Beloved* survived the Middle Passage hence she is a physical manifestation of generations of dead slaves. *Beloved* is also the "guilt, a symbol of an unrelenting criticism of the dehumanizing function of the institution of slavery"(Rushdy 47). She did not come back only to torture her mother by reminding her of her past traumas, she came back to remind the African community of the "unspeakable" atrocities of slavery because they were purposely forgotten "like a bad dream" however "the hurt is always there"(Morrison 383-522)no matter of denying it.

1.5 Defense Mechanisms of Intergenerational Trauma

As previously discussed in the first chapter, trauma can be passed down to generations through biological, familial, and communal transmission. Researchers who study trauma believe that defense mechanisms are at least partially to blame for the generational transfer of

stress. (Davidson 93). People who experienced trauma use defense mechanisms to cope with the uncomfortable or traumatic situations or emotion. However, unhealthy using defense mechanisms as a way of avoiding feelings and emotions can lead to developing self destructive behaviors. Parents who experienced traumatic events turn to defense mechanisms and the latter affects every aspect of their lives including their parenting styles then the trauma gets projected onto their offspring, who in turn develop thoughts, feelings, and behaviors as if they directly experienced their parents' trauma (Maker and Buitenhuis).

In the novel *Beloved*, Sethe suffers from Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, she portrayed denial, repression, and dissociation and she used these defense mechanisms to avoid feeling and remembering her traumatic past. On the other hand, Denver also suffers from Posttraumatic Stress Disorder inasmuch as she biologically inherited it and directly experienced it as well. Denver employed avoidance, regression, and dissociation to cope and deal with her trauma. Since Denver was transmitted her trauma through her mother Sethe and the latter was transmitted the trauma and directly experience it as well, therefore both Denver and Sethe portray intergenerational trauma defense mechanisms which namely are: denial, repression, dissociation, avoidance, and regression.

1.6 Conclusion

Overall this chapter attempted to psychologically analyze the characters Sethe and Denver using Sigmund Freud theory of psychoanalysis, and it detected the defense mechanisms they used to cope with their traumas. This chapter concluded with the defense mechanisms of intergenerational trauma of slavery.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

General Conclusion

Although slavery itself has ended, its effects still linger. Africans in the United States experienced vicious treatments; physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological trauma for decades. This continuous and untreated trauma affected and changed their genes, consequently passing down the trauma through generations, continuing the cycle. Many authors talked about slavery and its traumatic impact. For instance, Harriet Beecher Stowe in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and Alex Haley in *Roots: The Saga of an American Family*.

Toni Morrison, an influential author, devoted her writing to exploring the history and identity of her people. She revived the lost history of African Americans and portrayed the true traumas, horrors, and atrocities of slavery through fiction. *Beloved*, her most famous work, dealt with the effects of slavery on different aspects of life. The novel *Beloved* showed how slavery changed the dynamics of African American family, beliefs, culture, and identity.

In this vein, this dissertation aimed to find out the defense mechanisms that the characters Sethe and Denver used to deal with their repressed traumas. By analyzing the characters of the novel *Beloved* using the theory of psychoanalysis and focusing on defense mechanisms, this dissertation will attempt to discover the defense mechanisms of the intergenerational trauma of slavery.

Significantly, this dissertation was divided into three chapters. The first chapter was the thematic aspect of the work , and it provided a brief historical background on slavery in America, discussing the physical and sexual abuse that was endured by the Africans in America and how it psychologically affected them. This chapter showed how big the trauma of slavery in America was and how it affected the Africans psychologically to the point that it was transmitted through generations.

General Conclusion

The second chapter was the theoretical part of the work, and it briefly introduced Sigmund Freud and his theory of psychoanalysis, focusing on defense mechanisms. This chapter differentiated defense mechanisms from coping mechanisms and discussed their prevalence among enslaved people.

The third chapter attempted to analyze Sethe and Denver, two of the main characters of *Beloved*, using Sigmund Freud's theory of psychoanalysis. It detected the defense mechanisms they used to cope with their traumas, and it showed the defense mechanisms of the intergenerational trauma of slavery. This chapter showed that Sethe used the defense mechanisms of denial, repression, and dissociation. And Denver used the defense mechanisms of avoidance, regression, and dissociation. Moreover, this dissertation showed that Sethe and Denver inherited the trauma of slavery through biological, familial, and communal transmission. In this sense, this dissertation showed that the defense mechanisms of intergenerational trauma from slavery are denial, repression, dissociation, avoidance, and regression.

Moreover, this dissertation showed that Sethe used denial, repression, and dissociation to cope with her past with slavery, which she experienced both directly and indirectly, and that it affected her life and her family as well. Denver did not experience the trauma of slavery directly; however, she experienced it indirectly, and this dissertation showed that the indirect effect of slavery is as traumatizing as experiencing it directly. Denver used avoidance, regression, and dissociation to deal with her trauma. This dissertation proved that trauma can be passed down through biological, familial, and communal transmission. In this sense, it can be concluded that both Sethe's and Denver's defense mechanisms are defense mechanisms of intergenerational trauma from slavery.

General Conclusion

To better understand the implications of these results, future studies could analyze Toni Morrison's unconsciousness and her anxieties towards slavery through her literary works, because psychoanalytic criticism argues that literary texts are interpretations of the author's unconsciousness.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 : Twenty and odd Negroes

JANUARY, 1619/20

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made her passage to Newfound-land in less then 3. weekes, and was at the banck amongst the french fishermen in 14. daies. She came back + hether againe in 3. weekē, wth bare wyndē, and brought so much fishe as will make a saving voyadge, w^{ch}, besidē the greate releif, giveth much content to the wholl Colony.

The Sturgeon shipp and the Triall departed hence togeth⁹ about the five of July. M^r Pountys hath taken greate paines in fishing, and toward Michellmas (the weather being somewhat temperate) made some good sturgeon. He hopeth by the spring to be better fitted, wth Cellars and houses, and to do some good therein.

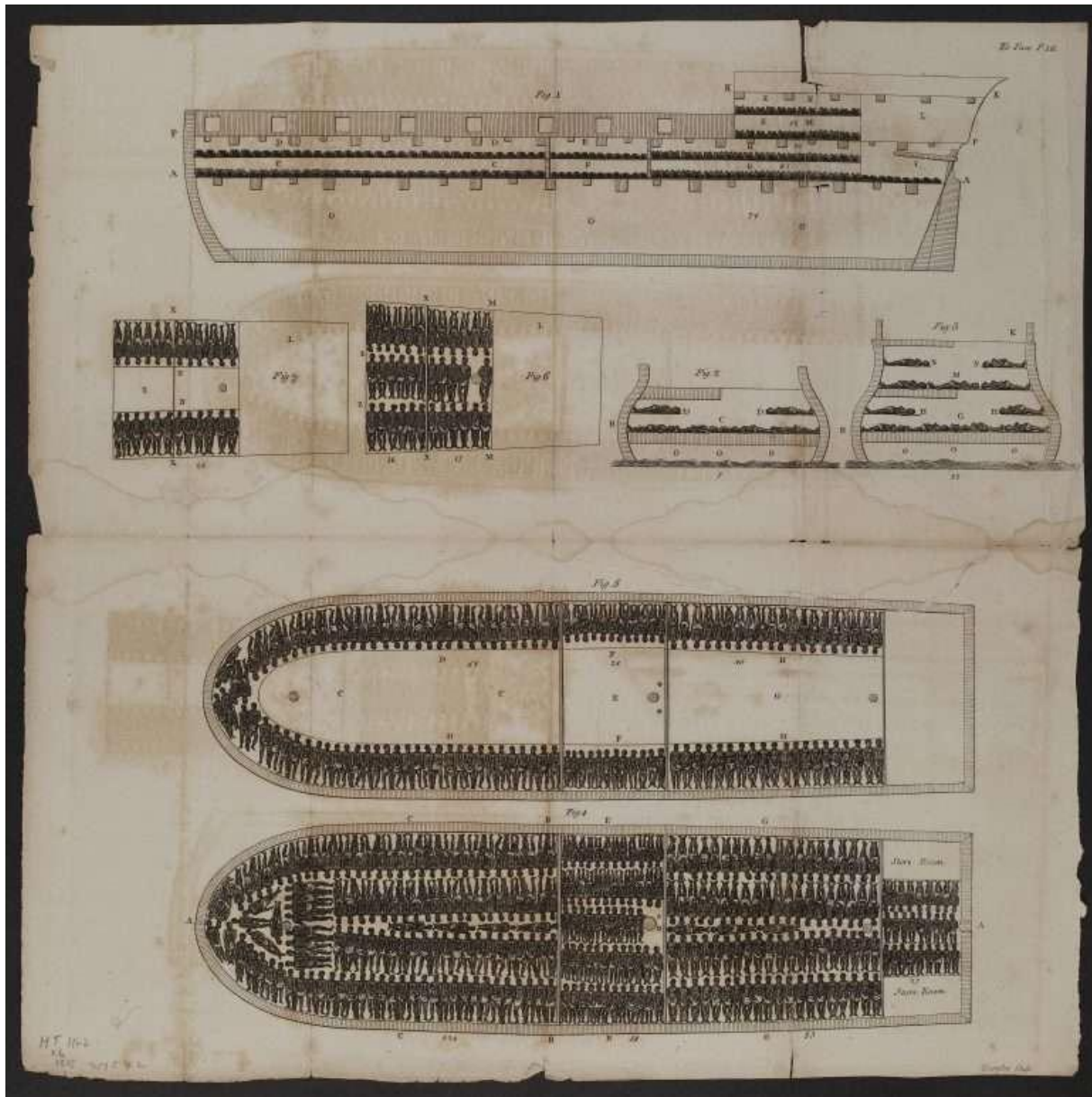
The Cattle in the Triall came exceeding well, and gaue the Colony much ioy and greate incouragem^t. Both they horses and Mares wilbe very vendible here a long tyme, the Colony increasing wth people as of late.

About the latter end of August, a Dutch man of Warr of the burden of a 160 tuñes arriued at Point-Comfort, the Comando^{rs} name Capt Jope, his Pilott for the West Indies one M^r Marmaduke an Englishman. They mett wth the Trēr in the West Indyes, and determyned to hold consort shipp hetherward, but in their passage lost one the other. He brought not any thing but 20. and odd Negroes, w^{ch} the Governo^r and Cape Marchant bought for victuallē (whereof he was in greate need as he p^ttended) at the best and easiest ratē they could. He hadd a lardge and ample Co^mys^sion from his Excellency to range and to take purchase in the West Indyes.

Three or 4. daies after the Trēr arriued. At his arriuall he sent word p^rsently to the Gou⁹no^r to know his pleasure, who wrote to him, and did request myself Leiften^ante Peace and M^r Ewens to goe downe to him, to desyre [2^a] him to come vp to James Cytie. But before we gott downe he hadd sett saile and was gone out of the Bay. The occasion hereof hap- pened by the vnfrendly dealing of the In^hitantē of Keqnoughton, for he was in greate want of victuallē, wherewth they would not releive him nor his Company vpon any termes. He reported (whilst he staied at Keq- noughton) that if wee gott not some Ordⁿance planted at Point Comfort, the Colony would be quyte vndone and that ere long: for that vndoubtedly

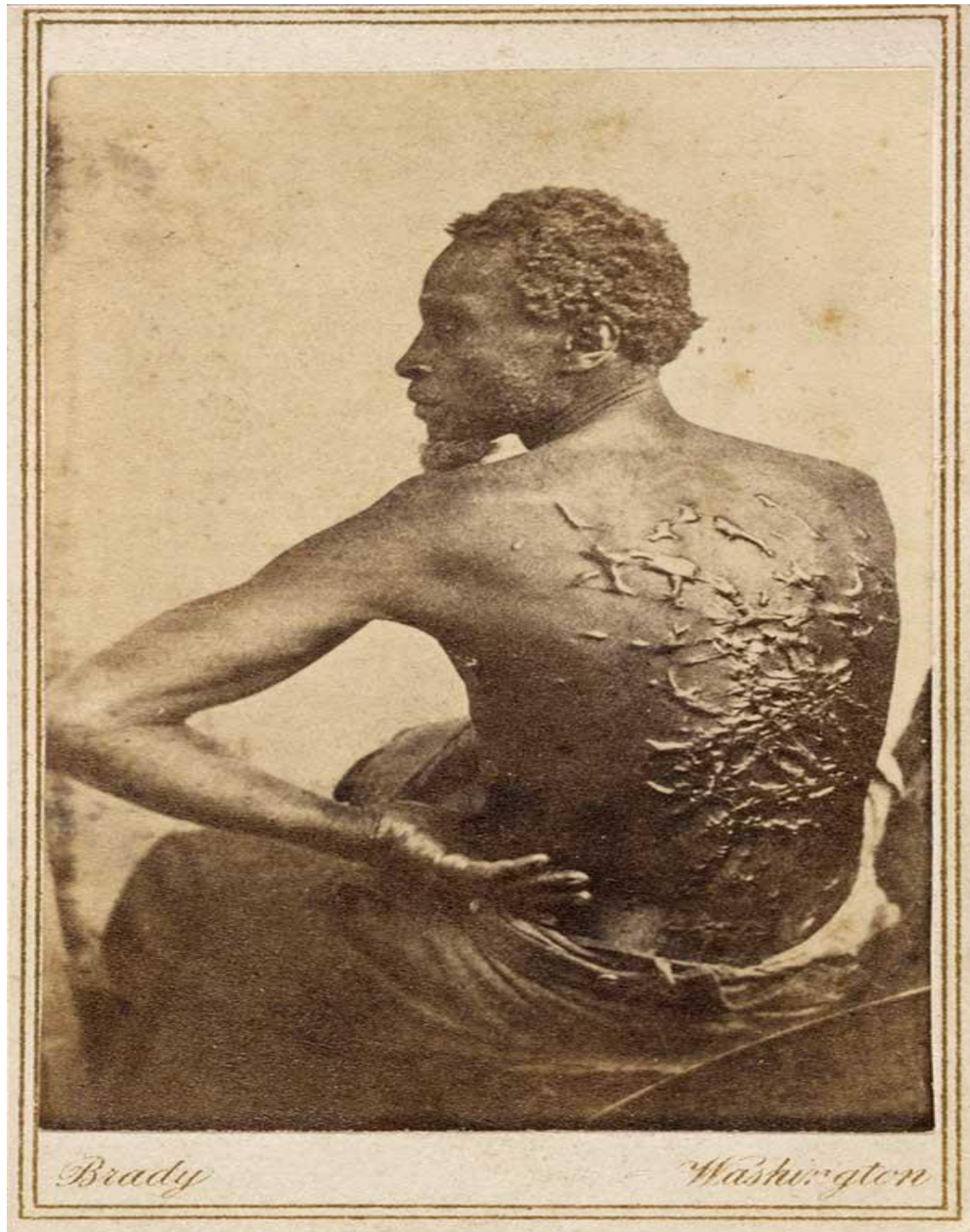
This picture represents an excerpt from a letter from Jhone Rolfe to Sir Edwin Sandys letting him know that 20 and odd Negroes arrived.

Appendix 2: A diagram of a slave ship



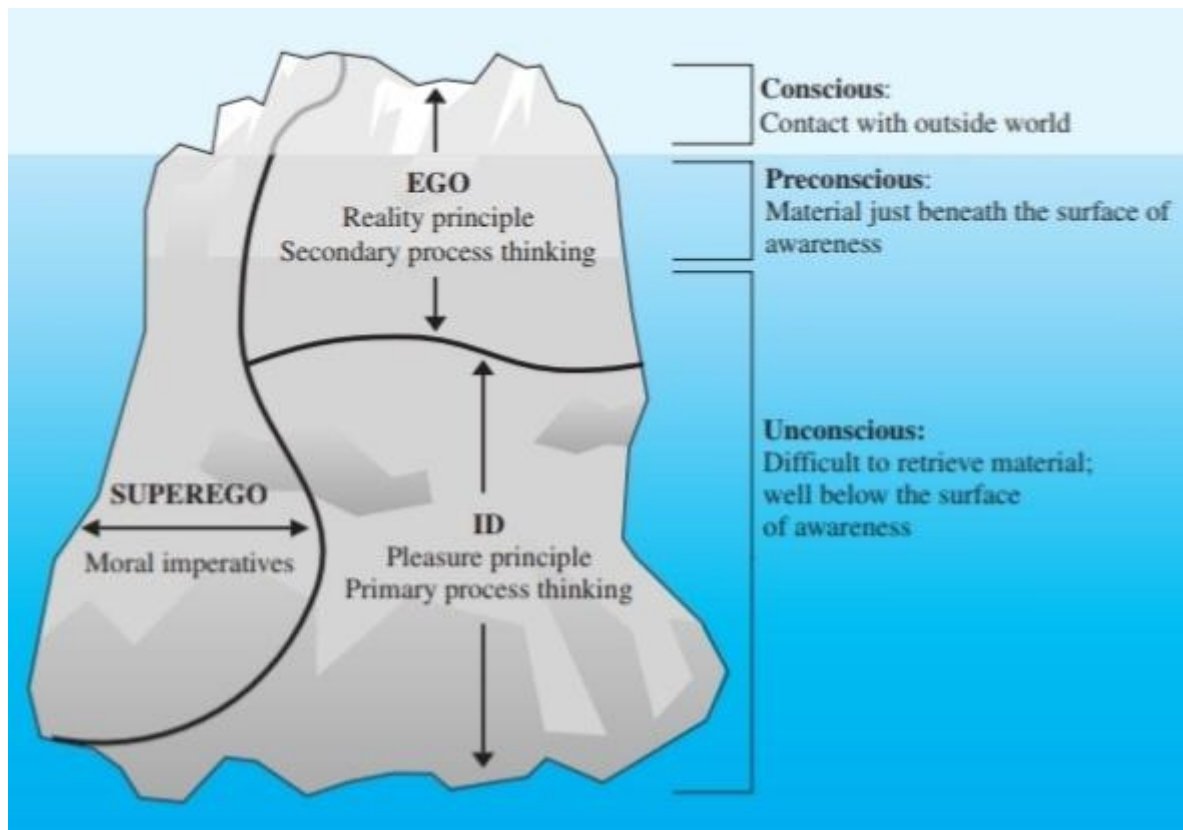
This picture represents a diagram of a slave ship that was used to transport enslaved captives through the middle passage.

Appendix 3: « Whipped Peter »



This picture presents an ex slave Gordon showing his scarred back that he got from extensive physical abuse from his previous masters during slavery.

Appendix 4 : A diagram of Sigmund Freud's levels of personality.



This picture represents the levels of the human personality presented by Sigmund Freud.

Biography: Toni Morrison



Toni Morrison is one of the most recognized writers of African American descent in contemporary literature. Morrison engaged with the African American literary legacy specifically and with American literature in general. She was given the name of Cloe Anthony Wofford when she was born in Lorain, Ohio in 1931. Her parents George Wofford and Ramah Willis have taught her and her siblings about Africa, planting in them love and respect for their cultural heritages and precepts. In addition to their grandparents, John Solomon Willis and Ardelia Willis, exposing her and her siblings to stories about the great migration and the south after the reconstruction. In 1958, She married Harold Morrison, a Jamaican architect, and had two children Harold Ford and Slade Kevin, however she divorced in 1964.

Morrison studied Latin and English and she earned her Master's in English from Cornell University in 1955 and she had a distinguished academic career. She published eleven novels winning numerous prestigious literary prizes. Her 1970 book *The Bluest Eye* was the first novel she published, it tells the story of a little black girl named Pecola who longs for blue

eyes. Coming up after is her 1973 book *Sula* which was nominated for winning National Book Award Fiction. For her 1977 book *Song of Solomon*, Morrison was honored by the National Book Critics Circle and the American Academy Institute of Arts and Letters. Another one of her books, *Tar Baby*, was published in 1981. Then comes one of her best works *Beloved* was published in 1987. Then Jazz in 1992, Paradise in 1997, Love in 2003, Mercy in 2008, Home in 2012, and God Help the Child in 2015. In 1993 Toni Morrison won the Nobel Prize in literature.

The gone but not forgotten, the so called freedom icon, died at the age of eighty eight years old, at Montefiore Medical Center in The Bronx, New York City, on August 5, 2019, from complications of pneumonia. She was the first African American woman and the eighth African woman to win a Nobel Prize in literature.

Résumé

Les Afro-Américains ont subi le traumatisme physique, sexuel, émotionnel et psychologique de l'esclavage qui s'était transmis de génération en génération. Dans la vision de *Beloved*, Toni Morrison parle du traumatisme de l'esclavage et de la façon qui a affecté eux qui l'ont vécu directement et indirectement. Cette thèse analyse les personnages de Sethe et Denver du roman *Beloved* en utilisant la théorie psychanalytique de Sigmund Freud, en mettant l'accent sur le concept mécanismes de défense au traumatisme de l'esclave intergénérationnel. De plus, cette thèse utilise des méthodes de recherche qualitatives pour atteindre son objet. Cette thèse conclut que Sethe utilise le déni, la répression et la séparation, Denver utilise l'évitement, la régression et la séparation. Ce sont des mécanismes de défense contre le traumatisme de l'esclavage intergénérationnel parce que Denver a subi indirectement le traumatisme de l'esclavage qu'elle a hérité de sa mère, Sethe, et a été affectée par le traumatisme de l'esclavage de sa mère, qui en a été directement témoin.

ملخص

عانى الامريكيون من الاصل الافريقي من الصدمات الجسدية و الجنسية و العاطفية و النفسية بسبب العبودية و التي مرت عبر الاجيال تتحدث توني موريسون في رواية المحبوبة عن صدمة العبودية و كيف تؤثر على كل من الذين عانوا منها بشكل مباشر و بشكل غير مباشر تحلل هذه الاطروحة شخصيات سيث و دينفر من رواية المحبوبة باستخدام نظرية سيقموند فرويد للتحليل النفسي , مع التركيز على مفهوم أليات الدفاع , علاوة على ذلك , يريد الباحث اكتشاف اليات الدفاع ضد صدمة العبودية بين الاجيال , با الإضافة الى ذلك , تستخدم هذه الاطروحة طرقا نوعية للبحث للوصول الي هدفها تستنتج هذه الاطروحة ان سيث تستخدم الانكار و القمع و الانفصال و تستخدم دنفر التجنب و الانحدار و الانفصال و هذه اليات دفاعية ضد صدمة العبودية بين الاجيال لان دنفر عانت بشكل غير مباشر من صدمة العبودية , التي ورثتها من والدتها سيث و سيث قد تأثرت من صدمة العبودية من والدتها و كذا شهدتها مباشرة