

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST



ENSLAVED WOMEN'S TRAUMAS AND RESISTANCE TO SLAVERY:
A STUDY IN FOUR SELECTED NOVELS.

BY

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(AR/DLE/19/0001)

A thesis submitted to the Department of English, Faculty of Arts, University
of Cape Coast in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor
of Philosophy Degree in Literature

November, 2023



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DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I, Lydia Apio do hereby declare that this thesis is the result of research undertaken by me towards the award of Doctor of Philosophy in Literature in English. Except for the references of the work of other people which have been duly acknowledged, this work has never been submitted on whole or in part for any degree.

Candidate's Name: **Lydia Apio**

Signature..... Date.....

Principal Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this thesis were supervised under the guidance's supervision of the laid down dissertation by the University of Cape Coast.

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ABSTRACT

The thesis examines the trauma that enslaved women encounter at various stages of their capture and enslavement, the ways in which they resist the brutalities of slavery, and how these are represented in the four literary texts under study. The study is subjected through the lens of the psychoanalytic theory of trauma and Slaves resistance to enslavement. The study also employs a qualitative research by doing a close reading of the texts and enhancing the analysis with further information from texts books, journals and articles. Character is the tool used to answer the research questions. Critical analyses of the texts reveal that trauma is not only physical but psychological as well. The findings further suggest that trauma could be Transgenerational. Some female characters did not experience first-hand traumas from the Transatlantic Slave Trade but they are subjected to Transgenerational traumas from their enslaved parents and ancestors. In addition, another important finding is that enslaved women devise several forms of resistance to enslavement such as running away, committing suicide, infanticide, and using negotiation. The study concludes by recommending Africans to resist all forms of enslavement.

KEYWORDS: Women, Slavery, Traumas and Resistance

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to several sources for their invaluable support in the completion of this PhD thesis: It is believed that expressing gratitude leads to a joyful household. Firstly, I express my gratitude to the Almighty God and acknowledge his guidance and blessings throughout my academic journey, particularly for providing me with wisdom, grace, and inspiration for my thesis. I would like to sincerely thank my supervisors, Prof. Theresah P. Ennin and Prof. Moussa Traore, from the English Department of the University of Cape Coast, for overseeing my thesis and providing valuable guidance throughout the research process. I say to them 'ayikoo'! You have mentored, guided and coached me in this PhD research well. I appreciate your efforts and time invested in me and my work; I do wish you God's blessings. I also extend my gratitude to Prof. Kwadwo Opoku Agyemang who inspired and encouraged me to pursue this course. I extend the same thanks to my former Head of Department, Prof. Joseph B. Afful for his concern and goodwill towards my work. I cannot forget Dr. Samuel K. Nkansah who guided the proposal of this thesis successfully at the initial stage.

I am also indebted to my husband Pastor John Kennedy Akotia who has continually encouraged and supported me in pursuing this programme. I cannot forget my bundles of joy from God who daily pray and wish mom well. Seyram, Kafui, Elikan and Mawusi Yayre, I am grateful to you all for the endurance you have to go through in my absence.

Finally, my gratitude goes to my spiritual parents Rev. Eastwood Anaba and Rev. Mrs. Rosemond Anaba for their prayers on my life. I cannot

forget the love of my three brothers Alfred Apio, Edmond Apio and Dominic Apio, I am grateful to you all for all your efforts toward me.



DEDICATION

Dedicated to the memory of my beloved parents who have gone to be with the Lord, Nma Alberta Apio and dada David Apio continue to rest in perfect peace.



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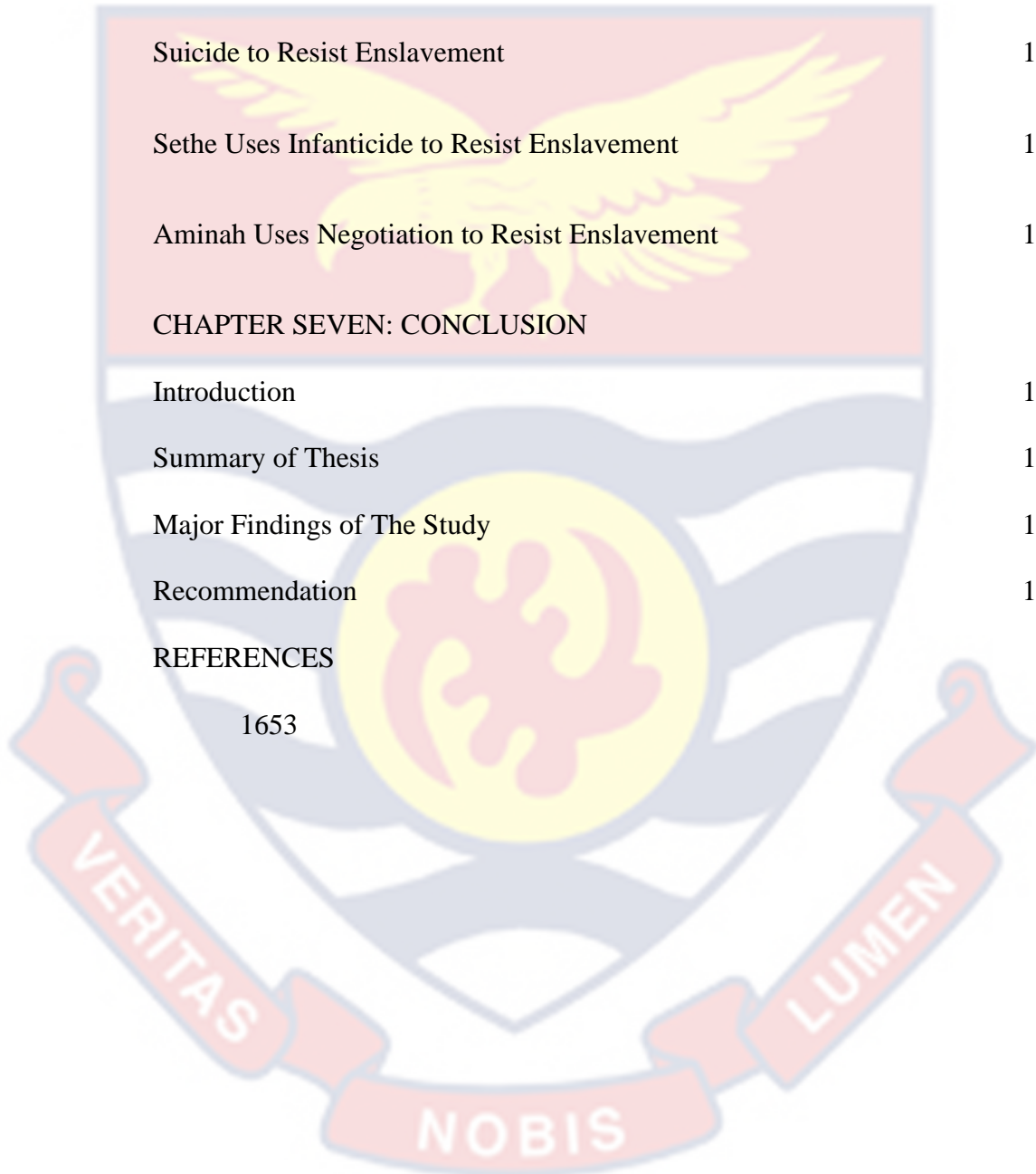
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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The thesis explores women's traumas and how they devise various ways to resist enslavement during the Transatlantic Slave Trade. The study is particularly focused on how the primary texts under study represent the reconstruction of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, where the texts juxtapose the lives of characters from Ghana, the Caribbean and South America and showcase how the Transatlantic Slave Trade was conducted. The authors have depicted the negative consequences of the Transatlantic Slave Trade in their novels. From their texts, it is clear that the Transatlantic Slave Trade was one of the unkind acts that were committed against humanity. It must be noted that the Transatlantic Slave Trade was met with resistance from enslaved victims due to its dehumanizing nature.

African and African –American writers have used the novel as a means to address the complexities of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, both inside Africa and outside its borders. These writers have used their writings as a means to explore the Transatlantic Slave Trade and its effects on humanity by depicting individuals in literary works. The main focus of most authors who addressed the Transatlantic Slave Trade was to highlight the detrimental effects the slave trade had on individual characters and their respective communities in their literary works. Toni Morrison, an African-American writer, has unequivocally lamented the detrimental impact of the Transatlantic Slave Trade on the Black community via her novels. Through her works, she has shown the psychological impact of slavery on the Black community. Lakshmi (2017) asserts that Morrison's brilliance as a writer resides in her

remarkable ability to seamlessly blend her social preoccupations with the artistic requirements of her writings. She has presented an ultimate solution of collective struggle to the problem of economic exploitation of Blacks in White America in her novels. Undoubtedly, Morrison's works establishes her as a prominent author of African-American literature, with a focus on emancipating the Black community from the shackles of their past and racial discrimination. Toni Morrison's literary career is a testament to her perseverance in the face of prejudice and hardship being a descendant of slaves. This has allowed her to give voice to the marginalised and descendants of slaves. Her works reveal how slavery has marginalised the Black race. She has also resolutely opposed the Euro-American narrative and undermined their misconceptions in her works, which vividly portray the hardships endured by African Americans. In her works, Morrison articulates the experiences of suffering and struggle endured by a traumatised self as a result of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, as argued by Kaushik (2021). Her writings portray the distressing reality of a troubled inner self via the characters' intense self-loathing and self-contempt, while also illustrating the lack of fulfilment in their personal and cultural identities.

According to Farshid (2012), Morrison's fiction effectively addresses and resolves the complexities of African-American history. She portrays enslaved individuals as chattels who undergo cruel mistreatment by slave owners as one of the worst facets of slavery. In addition, she demonstrates that due to the cruel mistreatment, the slaves who had been exploited for a long time were compelled to see their bodies as the possession of their masters, resulting in a lack of self-identity formation and development. Upon their

escape, they achieved freedom from slavery; nevertheless, because to the relentless dehumanisation they endured throughout their enslavement, they did not fully experience a sense of bodily autonomy. Morrison's novel *Beloved* illuminates the detrimental aspects of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Gyasi and Attah have indicated in an interview that Morrison's novel *Beloved* inspired them to write their novels on slavery.

Some writers have emerged in Ghana to add their voices to how the Transatlantic Slave Trade was conducted in Ghana and beyond. Ama Atta Aidoo and Ayi Kwei Armah have bemoaned the dehumanization of the Transatlantic Slave Trade through their literary writings in *Anowa* and *Two Thousand Seasons* respectively. In recent times other writers through the medium of the novel have registered their voice against the violence that was associated with the Transatlantic Slave Trade in Ghana. These recent writers are Manu Herbstein, Yaa Gyasi and Attah Harruna Ayesha. These writers have elaborated in their novels the evils of the Transatlantic Slave Trade to show that slavery was one of the most oppressive cankers that ever existed in the history of mankind in the entire world. As Canellas (2018) asserts "slavery has gone down history as one of the major catastrophes that men have ever done and the one that existed for the longest period since it began in the 15th Century. Slavery has tortured millions of people around the world for almost four centuries becoming one of the greatest horrors of humanity" (p.5). To expand further, Canellas argument shows that slavery has dehumanized and traumatized humans more than any canker that the world has ever known due to the inhuman treatment that slavery subjected its victim to.

The Transatlantic Slave Trade was morally reprehensible. Kasur (2019) demonstrates that slavery inflicted severe physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual harm onto its victims. He contends that slavery led to the erosion of one's sense of self and self-esteem. Consequently, the individuals who were enslaved, mostly of African descent, were not seen as human beings but rather as commodities that were exchanged for profit by their slave owners. Kankan (2021) concurs with the notion that enslaved individuals from Africa, who were traded as slaves elsewhere, endured various types of sexual assault and torture. He contends that the majority of these sexual activities were perpetrated with aggression, causing significant pain, anxiety, and trauma, particularly for enslaved women. Moreover, the apprehension among slaves intensified as they were being transported to an unfamiliar location, rendering the voyage across the sea to toil on their slaveholders' estates very distressing for several slaves. The slavery that occurred in Africa was a purposeful choice made by those of European descent to subjugate individuals of African descent to a continuous condition of inferiority, frustration, and scorn via the use of torture and mistreatment, with their skin colour being the target of mockery. Kankam (2018) asserts in his previous publication that enslaved Africans of various backgrounds often endured significant hardships when traversing the Atlantic Ocean to reach distant lands, where they were subjected to both personal and social trauma. Consequently, a significant number of individuals were intentionally cast into the sea, and those who managed to survive the voyage had enduring psychological distress. Nunn (2008) argues that slavery may be characterised as a kind of corruption, including acts of robbery, bribery, the exertion of raw force, and deceptive tactics. He contends

that slavery might be seen as a pre-colonial precursor to contemporary corruption, asserting that current bribery and corruption trace their origins back to the institution of slavery, as many slave owners resorted to using gifts to entice tribal leaders into capturing and selling captives to them. The majority of the chiefs succumbed to corruption as they gained political and economic influence.

Morrison, Herbstein, Gyasi, and Attah's works have effectively portrayed the atrocities of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, specifically focusing on its impact on Ghana and the diaspora. Furthermore, these writings represent current and noteworthy novels that focus specifically on the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Despite the literary criticism these novels have received, it is certain that there is still a significant amount of information that may be further explored from these writings. Once again, these literary criticisms have failed to acknowledge the profound impact of the Transatlantic Slave Trade generating various types of traumas on the characters' lives, including the physical, psychological, and Transgenerational traumas they experienced. Therefore, this study explores how these characters demonstrated various types of traumas they encountered and how they devised resistance in the face of enslavement. The disregard of this matter by researchers does not imply its insignificance, since the Transatlantic Slave Trade was associated with many manifestations of trauma. This undisputably brings a gap to the literature of the Transatlantic Slave Trade in literary texts which the researcher seeks to bring to light. The purpose of this study is to examine the various traumas that enslaved women were subjected to in Morrison's *Beloved* (1987), Manu Herbstein's *Ama* (2000) Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing* (2016) and Ayesha Harruna

Attah's *Hundred Wells of Salaga* (2018.) and also, how the female characters devised means to resist enslavement in the selected texts.

Statement of the Problem

There have been systematic efforts by scholars to interrogate the brutalities and horrors of the negative effects of the Transatlantic Slave Trade from Ghana, Africa and the diaspora through the novel. It must be noted that the four selected texts are novels that have delved deep into the conduct of the Transatlantic Slave Trade from Ghana to South America to illustrate the devastating nature of slavery to the lives of characters and society from the reviews of related literature: See for example (Decorse 2003; Xu 2014; Mohammed 2018; Gallego 2018; Hidalgo 2019; Lenherr 2019; Motahane et al. 2020). From my studies, I noticed that trauma is an integral part of the Transatlantic Slave Trade and also the Transatlantic Slave Trade generated various kinds of trauma such as physical, psychological and Transgenerational trauma. It is also an established fact from my research that enslaved women devised various means of resistance to enslavement.

Again, a sample review on related literature on the studies in the selected texts focused on slavery, feminism, oppression, exploitation and post-colonial issues in the selected texts. However, I also realised that the various types of trauma and how enslaved women employed ways of resistance to enslavement have not been adequately foregrounded by scholars in these texts and that is why I decided to explore enslaved women's traumas and resistance to enslavement in this study.

Research Objectives

The following are the objectives of the study

1. To examine how the physical trauma of female characters in the texts is enacted
2. To explore how the psychological trauma of the female characters in the texts is employed.
3. To interrogate Transgenerational Trauma of female characters in the selected texts of the study
4. To analyse how female characters devised resistance to enslavement in the study.

Research Questions

The study posed the following research questions to facilitate the discussion of the research

1. What constitute physical trauma to female characters in the study?
2. How did female characters experience psychological trauma?
3. How did female characters encounter Transgenerational trauma in the study?
4. What forms of resistance to enslavement were devised by female characters?

Significance of the Study

Even though studies on slavery are massive, but the various traumas of enslaved women and how they devised strategies to resist slavery are sparse from the related literature of the study. This study therefore adds to the scanty literary representation of how the Transatlantic Slave Trade traumatized female characters and how they employed varied ways to resist enslavement.

Also, except for Toni Morrison some of these Ghanaian authors are relatively new in the literary scene as compared to writers like Armah, Sutherland, Aidoo, and Darko, It is intended that this study will further stimulate debate in ongoing scholarship on, Herbstein, Gyasi and Attah to bring these authors to the limelight.

The Scope of the Study

The study is based on four selected texts written by Ghanaian and African-American authors. The study is particularly focused on enslaved women's traumas and how they enacted resistance to enslavement. Even though men were also traumatized in the selected texts the focus of this study is on enslaved women's traumas. Also there are gender violence and issues that affect women negatively in these texts of the study but the study limits itself to only how the Transatlantic Slave Trade generated physically, psychologically and Transgenerational traumas in the lives of characters and how they resisted enslavement.

Methodology

The thesis employs the qualitative research approach, where the selected primary texts are used as the main data for the research analysis. The study is also enhanced through relevant information from books, journals, articles and other secondary sources written by other writers. Characters in the texts are used as a tool of analysis to answer the research questions. The analyses are subjected to the theoretical lens of the Psychoanalytic theory of trauma and slave resistance to enslavement. Trauma theory started in the nineteenth Century and it relied on Freudian theory to develop a model of trauma in the 1990s. Trauma could mean physical pain or psychological pain

in this study, I contextualized trauma to represent any physical pain in the body and psychological wounds are generated from the minds of enslaved women. This theory is employed by the researcher to analyse female characters that went through physical trauma, psychological trauma and Transgenerational trauma. For example, the rape, whipping, torture, and long walk that slaves were subjected to and anything that brought pain to the bodies of female slaves is physical trauma. The psychological trauma is perceived in how the Transatlantic Slave Trade affected the minds of enslaved women and turned them insane, self-loathing and identity fragmentation. Also, psychological trauma is rooted in signs like excessive anger, shock, denial, fear, sadness and hopelessness. In addition, the enslaved women devised means like infanticide, suicide, running away and negotiating to resist slavery in the selected texts of the study.

Justification for Authors/Text Selection

To portray enslaved women's traumas and how they resisted these traumas, the study selected four texts. Three of the texts are from Ghanaian authors, who have bemoaned the negative impact of the Transatlantic Slave Trade on characters in their texts. One author is from the African-American society who has shown forth the experience of the African-Americans in slavery. The study looks at Morrison's *Beloved*, Herbstein's *Ama*, Gyasi's *Homegoing* and Attah's *Hundred Wells of Salaga*. These authors have been purposely selected because of the centrality of their novels on the Transatlantic Slave Trade. The Ghanaian authors' background gives an in-depth perception of how the Transatlantic Slave Trade was conducted in pre-colonial Ghana and how it traumatized characters. Again, the authors have

progressively given accounts in their novels of how the slave trade started in Ghana and how Ghanaian slaves were shipped to the diaspora to work in fields and mines. Also, the Ghanaian authors: Herbstein, Gyasi and Attah are relatively new in the literary scenes so analysis of their texts will bring their text to the limelight for critical reception. In addition, the Ghanaian authors have not received much critical attention due to their newness in literary study, so this work will add to the available research on Ghanaian novels. Toni Morrison as the only African-American cannot be left out of this study since Morrison is one of the literary icons who have continually highlighted the effects of the Transatlantic Slave Trade on the black American community.

Summary of Biography of Authors and Texts

This section focuses on the summary of the biographies of the various authors and their texts. The main significance is to provide the background of the authors as well as the story of each text being used for the analysis of this study.

Toni Morrison and Her Novel *Beloved*

Toni Morrison, born Chole Anthony Wofford, was an acclaimed American author. She was raised in the American Midwest by a family that had a strong passion for and deep admiration of Black culture. She was born in Lorain, Ohio, United States on February 18, 1931. During her childhood, Morrison developed a fondness for reading. As she entered her teenage years, she became aware of the urge to explore literature that had not yet been published. During her quest, she came to the realisation that she herself had the solution to her difficulty. Consequently, she made the decision to pen her desired narrative, ultimately establishing herself as one of the most

accomplished authors in the annals of African American history. Morrison's writings were on literary fiction and her notable works include *The Bluest Eyes*(1970), *Sula*(1993), *Song of Solomon*(1977), *Tar Baby*(1981) and *Beloved* (1987). Her novel *Beloved* is selected for this study. As a result of Morrison's hard work and determination in writing, she became the first African-American woman to win a Nobel Prize in 1993. She later on received another award from President Barack Obama, the award was as a result of the impact she has made on national issues through her writings. The time Morrison wrote her third novel *Song of Solomon*, her name had become a household name, and this encouraged her to do more. Toni Morrison's career as a writer was cut short when she died on August 5, 2019 at the age of eighty-eight.

Morrison's novel *Beloved*, published in 1987, serves as a representation of pain. Her story serves as a revelation of the brutality and terror inflicted upon the Black community throughout the Transatlantic Slave Trade. The story documents the experiences of Margaret Garner, an enslaved woman who lived in Kentucky in 1856, managed to escape from slavery as a result of the suffering she was subjected to. However, the Fugitive Act of 1850 stipulated that escaped slaves may be apprehended and returned. In order to evade recapture and return to a life of enslavement, she took the drastic measure of ending the life of her own child, as her slave owners relentlessly followed her to her place of refuge. Morrison's novel *Beloved* is based upon the narrative of Mary Garner. Therefore Morrison's text *Beloved* is rooted in history.

Sethé is the main character in Morrison's *Beloved*. She is a member of the African-American community. She is purchased and then sold several

times until she eventually arrives at Sweet Home, where Halle Suggs marries her after bearing four children with him. Through a retrospective scene, we learn that Sethe's upbringing as a little girl was in bondage. She is unaware of her mother's name due to her mother's own enslavement. Halle, one of the male individuals in Sweet Home, purchased Sethe and transported her to Sweet Home with the intention of securing freedom for his mother, Baby-Suggs. Sethe thereafter enters into matrimony with Halle, resulting in the procreation of four offspring. Halle flees from Sweet Home due to the dehumanisation and degradation inflicted upon the enslaved individuals. Subsequently, Sethe made the decision to escape from Sweet Home in order to evade the harsh treatment inflicted upon slaves by the new slave owner, Schoolteacher. The schoolteacher and his men chased Sethe in accordance with the Fugitive Slave Act, which stipulated that escaped slaves may be apprehended and returned to their owners. Upon the arrival of Schoolteacher and his men to reclaim Sethe, she deliberately took the life of her infant and inflicted injuries upon the other children in order to evade arrest. Schoolteacher and his men were aware that Sethe had become mentally unstable, prompting them to abandon her. They saw that they would not get any advantages from her or her children, since slave owners viewed the offspring of enslaved women as property that could be used for work and financial gain. Morrison then delves into a flashback that explores the narrative in which she exposes the dehumanising and traumatising effects of slavery on Sethe, her mother-in-law, Baby Suggs, her children, and the men who used to stay in Home Sweet Home. The deceased infant, Beloved, who was killed by Sethe, reappears to torment her relatives and the local

community, resulting in the departure of Sethe's two sons. Baby Suggs is experiencing profound melancholy since her offspring have vanished inexplicably. Consequently, when Baby Suggs eventually passes away, Sethe characterises her death as 'pleasant' due to the liberation it brought from the oppressive burden of servitude. After Baby Suggs's death, Sethe, Denver and Paul D. become the only victim of the ghost, Beloved. The ghost, known as Beloved, torments Sethe, Denver, and Paul D. as a representation of the enduring trauma experienced by former slaves. It serves as a metaphor of the lingering scars left by slavery, which often resurface to haunt their lives. The home at 124, where they resided, gets abandoned as the members of the neighbourhood choose not to engage with Sethe's anguish. Sethe and Paul D. contemplate their previous existence as slaves at Sweet Home, while Denver is deeply affected by the disturbing presence of the ghost. The narrative concludes with the community intervening to expel the apparition, so facilitating the tranquility of both the community and Sethe's kin.

Despite the extensive scholarly attention garnered by Morrison's *Beloved*, there is an inadequate analysis of the various forms of traumas experienced by the female characters. This research therefore examines the portrayal of women's trauma in Morrison's *Beloved* and explores the strategies used by the female characters to reject and overcome these traumas. *Beloved* depicts the profound psychological impact experienced by enslaved women due to the several horrific aspects of slavery, including forced relocation, social isolation, systemic subjugation, and physical brutality. Sethe's memories continuously cause her harm, and her unresolved agony emerges as a distressed state of mind that regularly torments her. Baby Suggs

and Sethe are subjected to dehumanisation, as Sethe recalls to Paul D. the severe beating she endured at the hands of Schoolteacher, resulting in a large laceration on her back that has since left a prominent scar like a tree. Sethe is subjected to inhumane treatment by the guys, who work for schoolteacher. They cruelly exploit Sethe, treating her like an animal by forcibly extracting milk from her. This experience leaves Sethe with severe psychological damage. It is revealed that Schoolteacher is a malevolent individual who mercilessly mistreats the characters staying in Sweet Home, subjecting them to physical abuse and excessive labour in the fields. The schoolteacher subjected his slaves to various forms of suffering for two primary reasons: firstly, to assert his dominance over them by demonstrating his ability to inflict physical agony, and secondly, to compel the slaves to unquestioningly adhere to his authority. Morrison reveals the horrors of slavery through a detailed portrayal of the physical and mental abuses suffered by Sethe, Baby Suggs, Paul D. and the other slaves in Sweet Home. The writer includes several events to illustrate the brutality inflicted against people by Schoolteacher, thereby highlighting his harsh disposition towards the slaves. When the whole of humanity experiences the aesthetic appeal, the enslaved people of Sweet Home are subjected to animal-like treatment by their owners. It might be hard for genuinely compassionate individuals to fathom comparing people to animals. Nevertheless, Schoolteacher draws comparisons between Sethe and animals, attributing her with animalistic traits. "This demonstrates the malevolence and brutality inherent in his character" (Sandamali 2021, p.339). The arrival of Schoolteacher to Sweet Home resulted in the cruel and degrading treatment of enslaved individuals.

Manu Herbstein and His Novel *Ama*

Manu Herbstein has a Jewish background; his grandparents migrated to South Africa in the 1890s where they gave birth to his parents. His father rose from a lawyer to a judge who was liberal in terms of White South Africans. Herbstein holds dual citizenship from South Africa and Ghana. He was born in 1936 in Muizenberg, a town near Cape Town, South Africa. He had his education at Cape Town University; Herbstein, later on, worked in several countries like England, Ghana, Nigeria, India, Zambia and Scotland as a Civil Structural Engineer. He later returned to Ghana in 1970 where he lived permanently with his Ghanaian wife. Herbstein has said in interviews that his zeal to write his novel *Ama* is rooted in the Nanumba and Konkomba's war in 1994 in which many people were killed and houses were razed down by fire. Herbstein then realised that this war was rooted in past events like the Transatlantic Slave Trade, in which one tribe captured people from another tribe to sell. So, Herbstein created *Ama* as the heroine of the story, his story is centred on the Transatlantic Slave Trade from the northern part of Ghana to the southern part and across the Atlantic Ocean. *Ama* narrates the events of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. In his text, he depicts the slave trade as one of the abhorrent occurrences that took place in Africa. He demonstrates the infringement of the rights of the victims by the slave trade.

The novel opens with a depiction of the tranquil everyday life in the hamlet of Bekpokpan, located in the northern area of Ghana. The population is fully absorbed in their serene routine. The first scene of the narrative portrays a society that is strongly united by affection and closely connected to cultural principles. The heroine, *Ama*, is first introduced to the reader as Nandzi, a girl

almost around fourteen years old who is left at home to take care of his younger brother Nowu while the rest of the family goes to bury Sekwadzim., Nandzi's grandfather. However, the serene atmosphere in this town is disrupted by the activities of slave raiders who invaded the town when the community was at the burial of Sekwadzim. The incursion of slave raiders into this hamlet marks the beginning of turmoil for the inhabitants of Bekpokpan, as they will inevitably suffer the loss of their beloved kin due to the actions of these raiders. Ama had been apprehended by a group of slave raiders who subjected her to sexual assault and abuse. Subsequently, her existence embodies the quintessence of distress, suffering, and humiliation as she experiences the several phases of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. From Bekpokpan, her enslavers transported her to Yendi, since it is the chiefs of Yendi who led and organised the actions of the slave pirates for his own gain and financial advantages. Ama and other slaves are sent from Yendi to Kumasi as part of the yearly tribute to the Asantehene. The Asantehene specifically demanded captives from these regions as a symbol of respect and loyalty to the Asante Empire. Ama assumes the role of a domestic servant inside the palace of the Asantehene, but her fate takes a different turn when the new Asantehene develops a romantic relationship with her. This connection alters her trajectory and ultimately leads her into the grasp of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, when the queen's mother discovers her affair with the king. She is falsely accused and then trafficked into servitude in Elmina Castle, where Ama assumes the role of the Governor's sexual consort, Director General De Bruyn. Their sexual relationship continued and upon the Governor's death, Ama is confronted with the ire of Jensen. Jensen, the newly

appointed Governor, who harbours envy towards Ama's association with his previous superior. Jensen's assumption as the New Governor bodes ill for Ama. With the intention of exacting retribution against Ama, he arranges for her to be embarked on a vessel destined for Salvador, where she would be forced to toil on the plantations.

According to Yildiz (2018), the 17th Century saw the start of the expedition era, during which African slaves were transported to the American Spanish Colonies. The enslaved individuals were brought to Hispaniola to cultivate sugar and extract gold, and were compelled to drain the small lakes of the Mexican plains. This demonstrates that enslaved individuals who were transported were compelled to engage in laborious work on the agricultural fields and estates owned by individuals of European descent.

Ama's existence in Salvador is characterised by arduous toil in the fields, sexual assault, and degradation due to her enslavement. In the latter chapters of the book, Herbstein depicts Ama's journey towards rebuilding her life and her subsequent marriage to Tambo, a character in Herbstein's novel. This union results in the birth of their son, named Kwame. Based on the literature reviews, it can be said that Herbstein's text *Ama* lacks sufficient emphasis on the traumatic experiences of enslaved women during the Transatlantic Slave Trade and their methods of resistance to enslavement. This study aims to analyse the different types of trauma endured by enslaved women and their strategies for overcoming these traumas as depicted in Herbstein's text.

Biography of Gyasi and Her Novel *Homegoing*

Yaa Gyasi is a contemporary young Ghanaian/American writer whose writings demystify occurrences in the past, such as the Transatlantic Slave Trade. She was born in 1989 in Manpong, a town in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. Her father Kwaku Gyasi is a French professor at a University situated in Huntsville and her mother Sophia is a nurse. Her family relocated to the United States in 1991 for her father to complete his Ph. D. Gyasi has stated in interviews that Toni Morrison's novels inspired her and helped her to become a writer. She has said in interviews that it was Morrison's texts that undisputably made her want to write passionate stories like Morrison. She has said that Morrison's novels made her fall in love with stories of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. As a Ghanaian who relocated to the United States, Gyasi has indicated in interviews how she suffered an identity crisis as a young woman in Alabama.

Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing* is derived by her journey to Ghana in 2009, during which she explored the Cape Coast Castle. The castles facilitated the Transatlantic Slave Trade, therefore the castles symbolise the slave trade in contemporary time. *Homegoing* is a story on Maame, a descendant of enslaved individuals, whose children endured the adverse consequences of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. The narrative starts with Maame delivering her baby, Effia. After Effia's birth, Maame deliberately ignites the whole dwelling of Cobbe and successfully flees from the state of being enslaved. Effia, the daughter, is subjected to mistreatment by her stepmother Baaba, who compels her to wed James Collins, a governor in Cape Coast Castle who trades in slaves.

Maame starts a new life in Asanteland, where she gives birth to her second child, Esi. Maame's spouse is often referred to as 'Big Man' and he is involved in the slave trade. A monstrous figure haunts the scene as 'Big Man' seizes Abronoma and captures her as a slave and subjects her to cruel treatment. Abronoma is assisted by Maame's daughter Esi and she communicates to his father about her location. Upon receiving the message, her father intervenes to save his daughter, but unfortunately, he ends up subjecting Esi to enslavement and then selling her into slavery. Esi is transported to the Cape Coast Castle and confined inside a dungeon. While Esi endures torment in the dungeon, her sister Effia resides with her husband in same Cape Coast Castle. Gyasi's *Homegoing* sheds light on the existential dilemma faced by African-Americans. The text has shown that both the oppressed and the oppressor in the Transatlantic Slave Trade endured the adverse consequences of slavery. Effia and Esi get intricately entangled in the Transatlantic Slave Trade, and Gyasi used them as examples to depict the manner in which the Transatlantic Slave Trade was carried out in both Ghana and America. In her text, Gyasi explores the direct repercussions of the Transatlantic Slave Trade by following the lineage of Maame for seven generations. *Homegoing* illuminates the cyclical nature of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, making it difficult for a descendant to emancipate themselves from the bondage of their enslaved ancestors. When an individual is enslaved, this condition is inherited by their offspring, as seen by the story of Effia and Esi. *Homegoing* also presents self-contained narratives tracing the family lines; people resurface to recount their experiences, as the storyline transitions from Cape Coast to Kumasi to Baltimore and Harlem, portraying instances of

brutality and dehumanisation inflicted upon the slaves by their oppressors. Gyasi's female protagonists experience various forms of dehumanisation and marginalisation throughout the Transatlantic Slave Trade. *Homegoing* also reveals the avaricious disposition of the Gold Coast leaders, whose pursuit of power led them to sell their people to the Europeans.

Despite Gyasi's *Homegoing* receiving some literary criticism, it is crucial to acknowledge that her novel has not received adequate scholarship on various types of trauma and how enslaved women devised strategies to resist enslavement. *Homegoing* effectively reveals the pernicious character of the Transatlantic Slave Trade and it also explores the transformation of the slave trade by Europeans into a more lethal form, while Gyasi emphasises the harrowing and dehumanising ordeal of Maame and her offspring. *Homegoing* adopts a comprehensive perspective by examining the system of slavery in both Ghana and America for almost 250 years, and the resulting pain experienced by slaves who were transported from Ghana to America. Esi is forcibly displaced from her native village in Asanteland, Ghana, and sent to South America to labour on the plantation. Esi experiences dehumanisation in the field as slave owners subject her to incessant whipping and physical punishment. Esi and her ancestors in South America are deeply affected by the slave trade, experiencing the appalling violence endured by enslaved Black people. Herbstein, Gyasi, and Attah have shown that the Ghanaian system of slavery was comparatively less distressing than the Transatlantic Slave Trade. The aforementioned authors have shown that the Ghanaian variant of slavery was the assimilation of slaves into households, where they were seized and compelled to work as domestic aides, as exemplified by Ama and Maame in

the writings of Herbstein and Gyasi respectively. Gyasi depicts the practise of slave owners arranging marriages for domestic slaves, as shown by Maame's marriage to Cobbe. In her novel, she asserts that the Ghanaian variant of slavery was relatively less dehumanising prior to the arrival of the Europeans.

This was because individuals who were enslaved either through war or due to their inability to settle debts were integrated into their masters' households and obligated to work for them as a means of repayment. Nevertheless, Gyasi's *Homegoing* effectively demonstrates that the lethality of slavery emerged when Europeans arrived and stimulated a strong desire for slaves. They enticed local chiefs with presents such as alcoholic beverages, tobacco, money, and destructive weaponry, encouraging them to participate in conflicts for the purpose of capturing slaves. The chiefs' persistent desire to obtain these gifts from the British, coupled with the economic and political influence they gained from the British, motivated them to transform slavery into a system characterised by horrific conditions. Under this system, slaves were captured and sold to white slave owners who subjected them to dehumanising treatment, treating them as subhuman beings. The Transatlantic Slave Trade rendered its victims handicapped and subjected them to deplorable conditions, ultimately resulting in the lethality of the trade. A significant number of individuals, who were sold as slaves by these tribal leaders, were unable to endure the severe conditions. Those fortunate enough to survive the Transatlantic Slave Trade were left with physical injuries. The Transatlantic Slave Trade, as shown in *Homegoing*, was a perilous and inhuman. White slave owners subjected Esi and other female slaves to maltreatment in the fields, illustrating the agonising nature of this kind of slavery. The slave trade

also violated human rights; it denied Esi and the other female slaves an education. They received daily punishment like whipping of slaves, and slaves being permanently separated from their families. The unsanitary conditions in slavery made the Transatlantic Slave Trade deadly.

Synopsis of *Hundred Wells of Salaga* and Its Author

Ayesha Harruna Attah, a Ghanaian author, was born in Accra, Ghana. According to Attah, her works have been shaped by the impact of two prominent individuals. She attributes her first development of writing talents to her parents, who greatly affected her via their publication 'Literary Imagine'. This newspaper had short tales, essays on arts, movies, literature and cartoons. As a young girl, these stories by her parents served as a profound source of inspiration for her. Toni Morrison thereafter became her source of inspiration when she encountered her text *Paradise* at the age of thirteen. She became captivated by Morrison's literary works, particularly her novels, which inspired her desire to create a literary universe populated by resilient female protagonists, like those depicted by Toni Morrison. In Hidalgo's (2020) account, Ayesha Harruna Attah asserts that she wrote *The Hundred Wells of Salaga* upon discovering that her great-great-grandmother had been enslaved in the Salaga market. Attah's intention for writing the novel is to depict the events that unfolded in Salaga during the slave raids. Attah's characters use art as a means to repair previous hurts; they are resilient individuals who liberate themselves from the external forces that are detrimental to their fate. Attah therefore becomes a voice for her grandmother by showcasing what happened in the past in Salaga during the slave trade. Attah's *Hundred Wells of Salaga* also bemoans the atrocities associated with

the slave raiding in Northern Ghana specifically Salaga and its nearby towns during the pre-colonial days. Attah is an author who wrote about the invasion of slaves in Northern Ghana and its neighbouring villages. Her work effectively portrays the slave trade that occurred in this region, providing valuable insights for the study of slavery in Ghana and beyond. Kamkam (2020) asserts that the enduring memory of the slave trade in Northern Ghana has the capacity to make a substantial contribution to the field of diaspora studies, both inside Africa and outside the continent (p.67). Attah's story unequivocally highlights the distinction between the Transatlantic Slave Trade and the local slave trade that occurred in Ghana. Her story signifies the period in which the slave trade was terminated in the European realm in 1807, due to its degradation of humanity and infringement against human rights. However, Attah's story clearly illustrates that despite the ban on the slave trade in Britain, it persisted in the northern region of Ghana as an internal trade until 1874, when it was ultimately prohibited on the Gold Coast. The two ladies depicted in Attah's story embody distinct conceptual frameworks. For example, Aminah in *Ayesha Hundred Wells of Salaga* exemplifies the trauma of the slave victims..

The story takes place during the pre-colonial era in Ghana, despite the fact that the slave trade had been prohibited in Britain at the same period. The practise of enslaving individuals persisted in Botu and the surrounding areas. The narrative starts by introducing Aminah, an adolescent of remarkable beauty, who diligently assists her mother in vending 'Maasakokodanono,' a delectable treat crafted from millet. Soon after, rumours circulated that individuals were vanishing inside the town, with their disappearances being

attributed to the actions of equestrians. The horsemen are often known to engage in the abduction of individuals. Subsequently, these equestrians would gain recognition as the perpetrators of slave raids. The marauders infiltrated Botu and burned several homes in order to apprehend slaves. Aminah's dwelling was infiltrated by these marauders, who ignited the structure, prompting Aminah and her siblings to flee, only to be subsequently apprehended and subjected to slavery. The other members of her family, including her elderly grandmother and her mother who was tending to an infant, were unable to escape and perished in the fire. Aminah saw the agonising demise of her mother and grandmother. Their death became a source of anguish to Aminah. Aminah and her siblings, along with other enslaved individuals, are shackled and forced to go a considerable distance from Botu to Yendi on foot. The enslaved individuals throughout the voyage are denied access to basic requirements, and are forced to relieve themselves while restrained in groups, resulting in a significant decline in their quality of life. As a result of the burdensome metal restraints and the extensive duration of the voyage, a portion of the enslaved individuals perished throughout the expedition. Aminah's younger sibling, Issa-Na, tragically perished and his remains were callously abandoned in the open, left to be devoured by vultures. The demise of Issa-Na greatly impacts Aminah's psychological well-being, as she is haunted by recurring visions of his exposed corpse. Aminah and her sister are purchased by Wofa Sarpong, a slave trader. Wofa Sarpong engages in the abhorrent acts of sexually assaulting and physically abusing his enslaved individuals, in addition to subjecting them to arduous manual work on his agricultural lands. Hussana, Aminah's younger sister, defies Wofa

Sarpong's authority, prompting Wofa to retaliate by selling her to another slave trader. Aminah is brought to Salaga market, where she is publicly displayed without clothing in order to attract potential purchasers. Salaga, a slave market, represents a location of disgrace and intense self-disdain to slaves. Wurche, a princess from a royal family involved in the slave trade, chooses to purchase Aminah. Wurche and Adnan, the prince of Dagbon, engage in a planned marriage only for the purpose of gaining political influence. Wurche runs away from the marriage and she decides to relocate Aminah, her son and her horse to another town called keta-Kachi. Aminah works under the authority of Wurche as her superior; however, she is dissatisfied due to Wurche's excessive control over her life and exploitation of her labour for personal gain. Attah's *Hundred Wells of Salaga* demonstrates that women were also slave owners during the pre-colonial period. Aminah develops romantic feelings for Moro, a slave raider. From there Aminah initiates negotiations with Wurche to secure her emancipation, so she can be with Moro, since it is unlawful to retain slaves due to the prohibition of the slave trade. Wurche learns about the conflict in Salaga via her romantic partner Helmut, who is a German individual. Wurche and Aminah hastily return home to ascertain the situation. The Germans have vanquished Wurche's father, who holds the title of Kpembewura. The novel concludes with Wurche emancipating Aminah from slavery. Wurche presents innovative strategies to reconstruct and bring together all the women of Salaga-Kpembe in order to develop the land.

Organization of the Study

The work is organized in seven chapters. Chapter One presents the introduction to the study. It provides a background to the study by looking at research works on the Transatlantic Slave Trade, the problem statement, the research objectives, the research questions, the significance of the study, the scope of the study, the methodology and the justification of the study.

Chapter Two discusses the reviews of related literature to the text and the theoretical framework of the study. The reviews of literature on the selected texts show that there is no adequate literary reception on the types of trauma that enslaved women experienced and how they enacted resistance to enslavement. The psychoanalytic theory of trauma is the lens through which characters in the selected texts are analysed. The psychoanalytic theory of trauma is used for chapters three, four and five. I have also theorised slave resistance to enslavement as a minor theory for this study and this theory analyses how women resisted slavery in the texts of the study and this theory is only used in chapter six.

Chapter Three examines various types of physical traumas that female characters were subjected to. Chapter Three is divided into four; the first section looks at rape and any sexual assault meted out to female characters by slave masters as a form of physical trauma. The second section of chapter three looks at

The traumatic journey of slaves, the third one deals with death, whipping and torture of slaves and the last part deals with all forms of deprivation that female characters were subjected to.

Chapter Four explores the psychological traumas that female characters encountered in the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Psychological trauma is shown in the behaviour and attitude of the characters. Female characters exhibit psychological traumatic signs like suicide, identity crisis, loss of self-esteem, the shock of the numerous deaths surrounding slaves, anger, shock, self-loathing, fear and loneliness are some of the characteristic shown by female characters that are psychologically traumatized. In this chapter the researcher interrogates three psychological traumas, insanity, self-loathing and identity fragmentation.

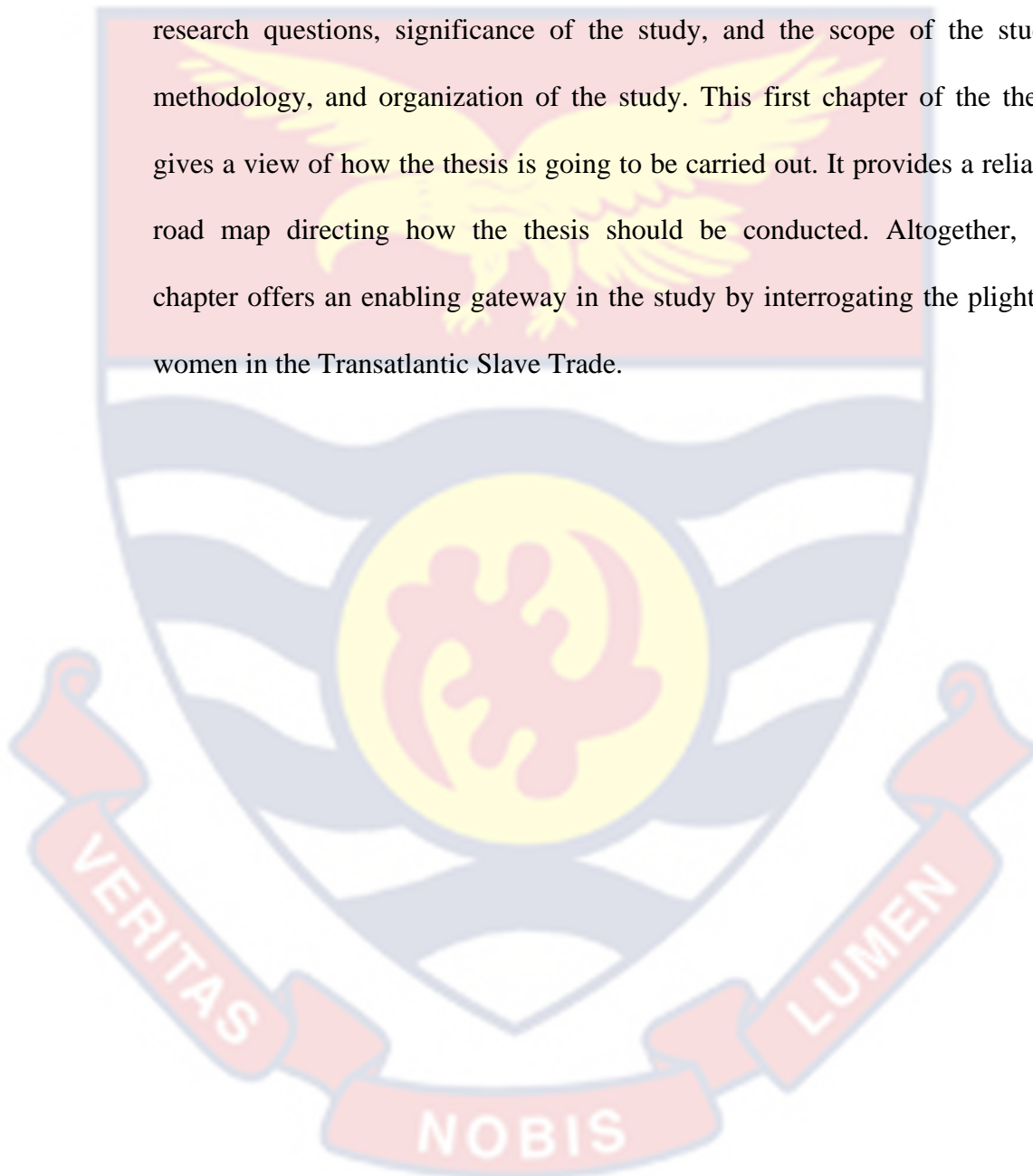
Chapter Five looks at Transgenerational trauma, here the researcher looks at how enslaved women inherited trauma from their parents and ancestors. This chapter assesses how enslaved women passed trauma to their children through the narration of their horrible experiences to their children. The chapter also examines the enslavers' Transgenerational trauma from their ancestors.

Chapter Six examines resistance to enslavement, where the researcher examines how enslaved women devised ways to resist enslavement like running away, suicide, infanticide, fighting back and negotiation.

Chapter Seven concludes the study. The study is summarized, the main findings of the thesis are established and the findings are further linked with the research questions. The chapter ends with recommendations.

Conclusion

The foregoing introductory chapter has attempted to place the study within a foundational frame by providing relevant information to the background to the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, and the scope of the study, methodology, and organization of the study. This first chapter of the thesis gives a view of how the thesis is going to be carried out. It provides a reliable road map directing how the thesis should be conducted. Altogether, the chapter offers an enabling gateway in the study by interrogating the plight of women in the Transatlantic Slave Trade.



CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

This chapter looks at review of related literature and the theoretical framework underpinning this study. The chapter is in two parts, in the first part, the researcher reviews the empirical studies related to the texts and the second part deals with the purpose of the theoretical framework of the study.

Review of Related Literature

The reviews of related of literature on the selected texts showcase what other scholars have done on these texts. The literature review section will help the researcher in two ways. First, the researcher will get to know what has been done in the selected texts. And then secondly, it will also help the researcher to identify the niche in which her work will be situated. It must be noted that the empirical review is on Morrison's *Beloved*, Herstein's *Ama*, Gyasi's *Homegoing* and Attah's *Hundred Wells of Salaga*.

Slavery is often seen as the most significant collective historical trauma. Furthermore, he asserts that slavery denotes a state when people are possessed by others and subjected to the authority of their possessors. Despite the abolition of slavery many years ago, the Black race continues to endure the anguish and psychological distress. Toni Morrison, a prominent writer, has played a pivotal role in shedding light on the oppressive nature of slavery and its profound impact on the black community's sense of self. Through her literary works, she has contributed to the discourse on the traumatic experiences endured by slaves. Morrison's literary works have exposed almost

three centuries of inequitable treatment manifested as slavery, segregation, and racial prejudice, which subjugated both males and females.

Toni Morrison's literary works have been unparalleled in their advocacy for the liberation of Black Americans, surpassing that of any other writer in history. Throughout her works, she consistently laments the profound psychological and emotional damage inflicted upon African-Americans as a result of slavery. According to Gallege (2019), the majority of Morrison's works revolve around the themes of black American enslavement and trauma. The author's text challenges the official historical account of slavery and also rejects the standard concept of Black bodies. The focal point of her works is on the themes of race, gender, and sexuality. As a writer, Morrison's writing focuses on the detrimental and degrading impact of the stereotyped categorization of enslaved women. Morrison employs political and literary interventions to aid in the restoration of the soul, while skilfully portraying themes of commercialization, exploitation, fetishization, and sexuality in her works. Morrison's literary oeuvre focuses on the experiences of African Americans and their historical context, with a predominant concentration on topics of racism, slavery, women's issues, and motherhood. She had the belief that any collective of individuals who are unable to recall their history are prone to encountering a dismal and unpromising future. This is because the past helps people to know where they are coming from, which is an essential point in their present lives and the future that is yet to come. Therefore, remembering the past is part of life in the lives of every human being.

Other scholars like Xu (2014) note that Morrison's writing is naturally influenced by the critical theory of new historicism. She is not interested in a

historical novel, for she knows the masks of the conquest of the American hegemonic discourse. The aim of her fiction is not just to recover details of African- American history but to choose which detail is useful for the transformation of the community wherein most of her writings create a new path that can enable African-Americans to have meaningful lives. That is why most of her works are centred on slavery and racism that left Black Americans with awful experiences; thus Morrison hopes to bring healing to the traumatized. One can therefore say that Morrison seeks to rewrite the horrifying stories of Black people, to showcase people who have been traumatized by systemic structures that were put in place by the White slave masters to sabotage the Black man. This also means that literature is like a realm where individuals' and groups' psychic phenomena are creatively represented, as a reflection of human history including all its collective and individual wounds. It, therefore, becomes a highly complex way to deal with a trans-generation transmission of the part that is painful (Lenherr, 2019).

According to Edwards-White (2012), Morrison has deliberately shown the atrocities of slavery in relation to the experiences of Black Americans. Through the depiction of her characters in her writings, she has effectively shown the harsh truths of slavery in America. She has shown the dehumanising ordeals endured by Black Americans under the control of their slaveholders. Her narratives portray the profound psychological anguish endured by the Black community under the institution of slavery. Sandamali (2021) agrees that Morrison included several situations and elements in her works that directly corresponded to the African-American community, where the lives of Black Americans were undervalued by White individuals for an

extended period of time. Morrison used various settings, personalities, and events to illustrate the extent of violence endured by the African-American community. Morrison's literary works have shown the detrimental impact of slavery on both civilizations and people.

Morrison's novel *Beloved* portrays the psychological distress caused by slavery on the lives of characters. Ojaide's (1992) demonstrates that Morrison's novel *Beloved* portrays the process of dehumanisation experienced by the protagonist Sethe as a mother. He asserts that Sethe endured severe torment at the hands of her slave owners, to the point that she resorted to infanticide in order to evade recapture into servitude. Consequently, Sethe's behaviour is seen as the result of her mental instability, and her slave owners assume that capturing a mentally unstable lady will not be advantageous for them. According to Al-Dmour (2019), Morrison's novel *Beloved* may be best analysed and interpreted using Freud's Psychoanalysis Theory. According to Al-Dmour Morrison's novel *Beloved* is widely regarded as one of the contemporary works that effectively use psychoanalysis theory to analyse Sethe's conduct. Finney (1999) corroborates the presence of trauma in Morrison's *Beloved* by asserting that Morrison adeptly incorporated slavery into a historical narrative, thereby personalising the experience. He asserts that Morrison's novel *Beloved* explores the repercussions of slavery on the characters of Sweet Home. He observes that Morrison aimed to investigate how individuals assimilate and retain knowledge on a personal level about a concept that is difficult to comprehend and internalise. Morrison's novel *Beloved* explores the interconnected themes of enslavement, racism, and domestic abuse, which have contributed to the devaluation of the Black

American identity. Toni Morrison's novel *Beloved* provides readers, particularly African Americans in America, with a vivid portrayal of the historical experiences, tragedies, and devastating impact of slavery on their lives

Beloved serves as a meticulous reimagining of Afro-American history. According to a research conducted by Gang (2014), Morrison's intentions were to re-establish the perspective of Afro-American slaves and advocate for black individuals whose narratives were suppressed or muted. Gang argues that Morrison successfully established a feeling of inclusion in the current time period for black history, while also highlighting the strong connection between black identity and many cultures. Gang further implies that Morrison's ideas imply that present-day Americans must directly face the historical impact of slavery in order to effectively solve its enduring consequences, which are evident in racial prejudice and social conflicts. Morrison deliberately portrays the historical experiences and current living conditions of African-Americans in her literary works.

Furthermore, Mohammed (2018) asserts that Morrison's novel *Beloved* prominently features emotional pain as a crucial component of slavery. Mohammed argues that slavery is shown as a state of severe physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual deprivation, akin to a hellish situation. The text examines how the culture of White racism not only established official practises, but also developed an intricate system of language, conduct, and social customs that aimed to justify and perpetuate White supremacy as a natural and unavoidable achievement. He observes that Toni Morrison depicted the dehumanising consequences of slavery in previous times by

means of her characters. Morrison's research demonstrates her commitment to ensure that the Black experience resulting from slavery is not only interpreted by Whites. His study reveals how physical and psychological damage inflicted on African-American slaves and how the past of the heroine acts as the destroyer of her motherly existence. Pass's (2006) research further validates that Morrison's text *Beloved* used the structure of human emotions in reaction to mourning and mortality, as established by Elizabeth Kubler-Ross. Kubler-Ross described five distinct phases shown by individuals nearing death based on her study of terminally ill patients. These stages include denial and isolation, rage, bargaining, sadness, and acceptance. She asserts that these phases faithfully depict the progression that the character Sethe undergoes in the text as she comes to terms with her daughter's demise.

Austine (2007) perceives Morrison's novel *Beloved* as a work that exposes the experience of trauma, a recurring theme in both narratives about slavery and discussions on the psychological consequences of trauma and its aftermath. She contends that the personal story serves as the foundation for the nineteenth-century narrative of slavery, giving it influence and credibility. Furthermore, she asserts that comprehending the occurrence of psychological trauma is contingent upon recognising the paramount significance of the personal narrative. According to Farshid (2012), Morrison's work highlights the cruel exploitation of slaves' bodies by heartless slave owners, who see them as just tools for production. This demonstrates the dehumanisation of slaves as mere property.

Morrison's story portrays the deep-seated sense of inferiority experienced by the Black community, a consequence of the devastating impact

and exploitation inflicted by slavery. Selfridge (2018) observes that Morrison's novel *Beloved* serves as a representation of women who have experienced trauma, such as Sethe and Denver. She contends that the complex trauma shown in Morrison's work showcases the deprivation of temporal and linguistic abilities, intergenerational violence, and obsession on vocal expression. The Sethe family has experienced intergenerational trauma that is permanent and inescapable, since Sethe and her daughters' lives are deeply intertwined with suffering. *Beloved* serves as a manifestation of the traumatic experiences endured by the female characters. Nyberg (2020) concurs with other academics in asserting that Morrison's *Beloved* is a psychological text in which the narrative emerges from the reader's encounters with trauma. Morrison employs a literary method that imitates the psychological processes regarding how trauma is communicated in awakening the state of the unconscious. In Cullhed (2022) analysis, Sethe Suggs, the central character in Morrison's novel *Beloved* is compared to Margaret Garner, the real-life figure upon whom the novel is inspired. In the mid-nineteenth century, an enslaved African-American named Garner murdered her daughter after being discovered by her previous slave owners.

The related literature review studies on Morrison's *Beloved* mostly focus on the dehumanisation, exploitation, oppression, and pain caused by slavery. Some critics argue that *Beloved* is a literary work that reimagines the perspective of African-American slaves and gives a voice to those who have been silenced. Furthermore, several scholars argue that slavery is intricately connected to racism, resulting in the devaluation of Black Americans.

Furthermore, other scholars claim that *Beloved* exposes the atrocities of slavery in relation to the Black community.

Manu Herstein originally comes from South Africa, but he has obtained Ghanaian citizenship via naturalisation. His work *Ama*, which narrates the events of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, has not garnered massive academic interest from the review of related literature. Oduwobi (2017) analyses Herstein's *Ama*, focusing on how the author uses a fictionalised neo-slave narrative to tackle the problem of sexual abuse against women. He emphasises rape in the Transatlantic Slave Trade specifically focusing on the aspects of race, gender, class, and religion. An examination of Herstein's depictions through the lens of Post-colonial Theory demonstrates his departure from the conventional portrayal of recounting the sexual assault of female captives and slaves during the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. Instead, Herstein constructs a vivid and explicit depiction of rape in his story. The study's results reveal that Herstein's text, when analysed using postcolonial theory, explores the depiction of rape and male sexual aggressiveness in literature. It sheds light on the historical and contemporary sexual violation of women.

Olaoluwa (2017) contends that contemporary African literature produced in the twenty-first century consistently challenges the prejudiced perception of women's role in resisting the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. In addition, he observes that the literature on the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade has made significant efforts to address the abhorrent trade and its detrimental effects on Africa and African people, both on the continent and in the Diaspora.

According to Decorse (2003), Herbstein's *Ama* is a historical fiction that offers the narrative of a young woman who is enslaved. Throughout her life, she develops several tactics to resist and overcome her bondage. She adeptly navigates between seeking refuge from oppression, challenging the power dynamics, and adapting to the harsh reality imposed by her oppressors. He contends that Ama's experience demonstrates the interconnectedness of race, class, and gender, whereby their overlapping and interlocking structures dictate the extent to which masculine dominance and authority may be exerted. Women's bodies are often used as sites of discourse in which women are subjected to oppression and their sexuality is commoditised. Moreover, within the chosen texts of the research, it is evident that all the enslaved women lack agency over their sexuality. Upon being enslaved, their bodies are reduced to mere instruments of gratification for their slave owners.

Kali (2011) argues that in African civilization, slaves were mostly used for domestic tasks and were often seen as integral members of the family, tribe, religion, or via matrimonial ties. He contends that in Manu Herbstein's historical fiction work *Ama*, which narrates the tale of the slave trade. Ama had several transformations of her identity throughout her enslavement. Upon her arrival in the Asante kingdom, her original name Nandzi is altered to Ama to accommodate the queen's native language, since she is unable to articulate the word Nandzi. Therefore, this first alteration of identity, in which Nandzi, now referred to as Ama, becomes an enslaved lady, and would ultimately have a detrimental impact on her life.

Again, Kali (2012) explains how slaves were examined in a sickening and humiliating way. He suggests that enslaved African men and women

displayed various forms of resistance during purchase which helped slave masters to determine whether a slave needed much or little taming. For example, Tomba a character in *Ama* who is huge, well-built and possesses the body of a hero and the height of a baga cursed and struggled violently to show that he is a real African man so that slave masters perceived him as a riotous animal that needed much taming.

According to Perbi (2004), an interview with researchers reveals that Yitah considers Manu Herstein's narrative as a portrayal of a young Konkomba girl who is sexually assaulted by Abdulai, a slave raider from the Dagomba tribe. She contends that *Ama* undergoes a convoluted voyage from her place of origin to Kumasi, where she is ensnared in domestic servitude under the queen mother. Later, she finds herself in Elmina Castle, assuming the role of a mistress to the Director, who oversees the slaves, before being transported to South Africa. In this foreign land, she endures being called by different names, which ultimately triggers an existential crisis. Moreover, *Ama's* existence is characterised by a constant oscillation between indecision and determination, optimism and pessimism. Herstein, the author of *Ama's* account, vividly portrays the narrative of the African slave trade by depicting scenes of brutality, suffering, and hardship.

Herstein's novel was written in 2001 exactly fourteen years after Morrison's novel *Beloved*. It must be stated that *Ama* has not received as much scholarly attention as *Beloved*. The book chronicles the trajectory of the slave trade, starting from the northern region of Ghana, extending to the southern region, and ultimately leading to the diaspora. Herstein is the only male writer among the four books chosen for this research. This study aims to

juxtapose his perspectives with those of the female author about the impact of the Transatlantic Slave Trade on women's trauma. This study aims to comprehensively examine the perspectives and understandings of both males and females about the impacts of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, specifically focusing on its effects on women in Ghana. Herbstein is an exemplary writer who skilfully integrates his immigrant spirit into his works, allowing his readers to really experience the richness and variety of various cultures. The text *Ama* provides a complete and holistic perspective on how the masculine gender interprets the conduct of the Transatlantic Slave Trade in Ghana and abroad. Herbstein's *Ama*, aims to examine the women's contemplation of their traumas and their methods of overcoming the trauma endured during slavery.

Yaa Gyasi, a writer of Ghanaian-American descent, was born in Mampong, Ghana. She is the offspring of Kwaku Gyasi, a professor specialising in the French language at the University of Alabama in Huntsville, and her mother Sophia a nurse. She obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Stanford University, and a Master of Fine Arts degree from the Iowa Writers' Workshop, a creative writing programme at the University of Iowa. Gyasi has claimed that throughout her childhood, she experienced shyness and developed a strong bond with her brothers due to their shared experiences as young immigrants in Alabama. Additionally, she found solace in novels, considering them her closest companions. Gyasi's *Homegoing* (2016) drew inspiration from her visit to Ghana in 2009. This journey was her first return to Ghana since she left as a baby to Alabama. Her work *Homegoing* has established her as one of the emerging female African authors who have contributed their perspective to the atrocities of slavery.

Gyasi (2016) has garnered distinction as a young female African writer hailing from Ghana. Her text illuminates the participation of Ghanaian chiefs and Europeans in the pre-colonial slave trade in Ghana. *Homegoing* implies that the chiefs of pre-colonial Ghana, driven by their yearning for political and economic authority, betrayed their people.

Gallego (2019) explores the connection between sexuality and healing in the works of Toni Morrison and Gyasi. Upon analysing the literary output of these two female authors from Africa and African America descent, Gallego posits that their works are rooted in historical context. *A Mercy* by Toni Morrison and *Homegoing* by Yaa Gyasi examine the importance of a reconstructive narrative that challenges the official historical accounts of slavery, in order to provide a new perspective on Black identities. She contends that these two authors have used their artistic expression to establish a new manifestation of identity and empowerment for those of African descent. She contends that Morrison and Gyasi examine the harmful and demeaning categorization of enslaved women, highlighting the significant contributions of these authors in political and literary spheres by creating artworks that aim to establish a new sense of identity for the violated and objectified Black bodies. The objective of this thesis is to explore the many forms of trauma experienced by enslavement women, focusing on the connections between Morrison's *Beloved* and Gyasi's *Homegoing*.

Motahane et al. (2020) examine the concept of African identities in *Homegoing* by focusing on the metaphor of female descendants and their connection to the Trans-Atlantic routes. The authors investigate the prevalence of the metaphor of female lineage in narratives of female experiences among

Africans and African-Americans. This metaphor has the potential to highlight and reshape African diaspora identities, creating new identities for both the current and future African generations. Consequently, *Homegoing* serves as a valuable resource for researchers to question and reshape Black identities that were concealed and disregarded by the White race. Gyasi undertaking this endeavour ensures that the historical narrative of the Black race will be reinterpreted for future generations. It will serve to highlight that, despite the oppressive grip of slavery; individuals of African descent remain resilient and capable of rectifying the injustices of the past. Chwiggy (2021) argues that *Homegoing* explores the influence of the retention and loss of hereditary stones on the transmission of ancestral memory and cultural history across generations within the family of two sisters, Effia and Esi. Subsequently, the analysis focuses on the contemporary offspring of these individuals, who revisit their forefathers' native land in Ghana. Gyasi's trip, particularly to the historical Cape Coast Castle, significantly influences their recollection of their ancestral history. The study's distinctiveness lies in its lamentation of the historical darkness by simultaneously emphasising the Black woman's unwavering will for freedom as shown in the chosen novels. The major objective of this argument was to advocate for emancipation from enslavement.

In Sandbrook's (2017) study, the focus was on analysing the novel *Homegoing* by Yaa Gyasi, specifically exploring themes of slavery, endurance, and transcendence. The user suggests that the story portrays the initiation of the slave trade and sheds light on the inhumanity and brutality inflicted upon individuals, leading to their dehumanisation. The inherent

capacity for darkness that exists within all of us is a central theme in life. However, it is also important to acknowledge the novel qualities of generosity and hopefulness, which represent our highest virtues. Our goal should be to suppress our darker tendencies and emphasise these positive qualities. In the novel, the story of civilization is portrayed as a quest that serves as a reminder of this pursuit for fulfilment. Welnhofner (2017) examines *Homegoing* and explores how it portrays the structural oppression present in both American and Ghanaian societies. She argues that the book effectively illustrates the consequences of colonialist imperialism and slavery, highlighting the interconnectedness of contemporary struggles within the black community. She contends that *Homegoing*, suggests that the present-day suffering experienced by the Black race is mostly structural, stemming from their subjugation within a culture and society that disproportionately privileges white individuals over Black individuals. This study considers Gyasi's work to be a continuation of Morrison's *Beloved* because to the fact that almost all African-Americans can trace their ancestry back to Africa. The literary works presented in *Homegoing* depict slavery as an age-old institution intricately tied to Ghanaian chiefs, the exploitation of black individuals, the reshaping of black identities, and the prominence of enslaved female descendants in narratives of female experiences spanning from Africans to African Americans. Nevertheless, the primary objective of this research is to examine the trauma experienced by enslaved women and analyse their methods of resistance against such trauma throughout the period of slavery.

Ayesha Harruna Attah is a young Ghanaian writer who gained prominence after Gyasi's emergence. According to Attah's interviews, her

parents have been her primary source of influence throughout life. Ayesha encountered Morrison at the age of thirteen and became deeply engrossed in all of her literary works. The novel *Paradise* by Toni Morrison inspired her desire to create a literary universe populated with resilient female protagonists, like to those created by Toni Morrison herself. Ayesha has written three novels: *Harmattan Rain*, *Saturday's Shadows*, and *Hundred Wells of Salaga* (2018). Attah's works have a connection to the historical context of Ghana, and she adeptly depicts resilient female protagonists. According to Hidalgo (2019), Attah's works are deeply embedded in Ghanaian history, including strong and courageous female protagonists that defy patriarchal standards. Ayesha has successfully introduced a unique category of women who possess strength and adeptly navigate their sense of self within a male-dominated culture.

Attah's novel is one of the most current texts that focus on the slave trade in Ghana. Attah has provided an equitable portrayal of the participation of both Europeans and Ghanaians in the slave trade throughout the pre-colonial period. The inadequate academic attention towards *Hundred Wells of Salaga* might be attributed to the newness of the text. Nevertheless, a few studies have been carried on the text. The study conducted by Dolores and Hidalgo (2019) examines the theme of African feminism in Ayesha Harruna Attah's works. The researchers situate their study within the framework of African feminist ideas as they explore the connection between the historical context of Ghana and the live experiences of the key individuals. Attah's works are deeply grounded in Ghanaian history, with her female protagonists exhibiting resilience, strength, and a defiance of patriarchal standards.

Additionally, they analyse the significance of African feminism in Attah's novels and assert that certain women's movements in Ghana's post-independence history have had an impact on Attah's characters. They use many forms of African feminism advocated by African feminist academics such as Emecheta's activism, Ogundipe's stiwanism, and Nnameka's nego-feminism, with a particular emphasis on Nnameka's nego-feminism. Their analysis suggests that Nnameka positions Ayesha's characters within the framework of nego-feminism, since these characters lead their lives by embracing collaboration, negotiation, and balance in order to achieve empowerment.

In her work "Memory, Resistance and Resilience in Postcolonial African Women's Literature," Hidalgo (2020) argues that Attah's novel *Hundred Wells of Salaga* is set in pre-colonial Ghana. Despite the official abolition of slavery, Hidalgo suggests that the slave trade continued to flourish in the northern region of Ghana during this time. She contends that Attah explores the internal slave trade industry, the position of women in Muslim civilizations, and the interaction with indigenous religions. Attah's work effectively illustrates that despite the abolition of the slave trade in the eighteenth century, it persisted for a period of time until its eventual eradication in Ghana.

Furthermore, according to Brookman-Andoh (2022), the novel *Hundred Wells of Salaga* provides proof that slavery, as an economic association, has been an inherent African notion and Ghana is not an exception to this. She observes that Attah's work effectively portrays the pre-colonial Ghanaian society of the 19th century by using a parallel narrative that revolves

around two female characters, Aminah and Wurche. The narrative depicts Salaga as a vibrant town in Northern Ghana, housing both the infamous slave trade market hub and the hundred wells. Additionally, she contends that the wells at Salaga were intended to provide the slaves with a concluding cleansing before departing from the slave market towards the Coast for subsequent transportation across the Atlantic Ocean. It is crucial to acknowledge that Attah's novel is set at a time when the slave trade was prohibited, making the Atlantic Ocean unsuitable for transporting captives. Consequently, the Salaga market emerged as a new hub for the slave trade. Hence, Attah's story centres on the internal slave trade that occurred in the northern region of Ghana. In this investigation, the researcher aims to examine the physical and psychological pain experienced by the female characters as a result of slave raids in Attah's novel.

The few studies conducted on Attah's text include topics such as feminism in her writing, the depiction of resilient female characters, and the exploration of slavery as an economic activity. It is noteworthy that there is just a two-year difference between the novels of Gyasi and Attah. Both novels are authored by young female authors from Ghana who express their lamentation over the slave trade and its impact on Ghanaians and the diaspora. Attah's *Hundred Wells of Salaga* is the most recently released work in comparison to the other novels in the study. This work examines the many forms of trauma experienced by enslaved women and explores the strategies they developed to combat enslavement.

Psychoanalytic Theory of Trauma

The main theoretical framework used in this research is the Psychoanalytic Theory of Trauma. This theory is the primary theory of the study. The beginning of trauma theory may be traced back to the eighteenth century. The term “trauma” originated from the Greek language and it signifies an injury or wound. While the ancient Greeks used the word “trauma” to describe solely bodily afflictions, its modern usage include emotional traumas as well. The study of trauma first drew upon Freudian philosophy to construct a trauma model throughout the 1990s. The trauma theory focuses on the physical and psychological pain experienced by enslaved women.

The psychoanalytic theory of trauma has emerged as a prominent area of focus in the discipline of literary studies. Balaev (2014) asserts that trauma studies gained considerable importance with the release of Cathy Caruth’s seminal work, “Unclaimed Experience: Trauma and History.” This publication shed more insight on trauma as a theoretical concept. As a consequence, there was a significant surge in academic interest in the topic of trauma across several fields, with Sigmund Freud being widely recognised as the originator of the idea. Curnow (2007) contends that the term “trauma” originally referred to a bodily damage seen in a patient. However, Sigmund Freud subsequently expanded its meaning to include both physical and psychological injuries inflicted against an individual. A psychological wound refers to a disruption in an individual’s mental state that develops over time and has the potential to impact their conduct.

Apart from Freud other notable academics in the field of trauma emerged like Cathy Caruth, Dominick LaCapra, Dori Laub, and Shoshana Felman. These scholars introduced a new concept in the field of trauma studies. Caruth (1996) defines trauma as an overpowering encounter with a sudden or catastrophic event, where the reaction to the event manifests as delayed, uncontrollable, and repetitive occurrences of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena. Further to this concept, the experience occurs abruptly and unexpectedly, bypassing the individual's cognitive awareness and continually impacting their actions, resulting in a traumatised psyche. Caruth argues that the recurrent experience of trauma has a profound impact on the individual's life. The victim is haunted by the harsh reality of a traumatic meeting, which was both sudden and unexpected. Furthermore, the victim is tormented by the fact that the occurrence remains incompletely understood to him/her, this ultimately results in many distressing symptoms like restlessness, psychosis, agitation, and numbness.

Curnow (2007) asserts that after a stressful interaction, individuals often experience two distinct phases. The first phase is characterised by the rupture of the protective barrier as a result of trauma, whereas the subsequent phase entails a possible disruption of normal functioning that may have severe consequences. The author argues that an essential aspect of trauma is the expression of a need to recreate the traumatic event or experience, either via direct replication or symbolic representation. The aforementioned repetition signifies that an external stimulus has left a lasting impact on the cognitive faculties, subsequently undergoing the processes of assimilation and comprehension. According to Balaev (2014), trauma has the capacity to have

an impact on an individual's psychological state, since it engenders enduring damage to their sense of self. This phenomenon arises as a result of the neurobiological attributes of trauma that exhibit resistance towards representation and hence induce dissociation. Dissociation functions as a method for accentuating the profound distress induced by an external stimulus, whether it is the act of an individual or a society.

The psychoanalytic theory of trauma has emerged as a significant theory in the literature. Lenherr (2019) establishes a connection between the psychoanalytic theory of trauma and literature by highlighting the extensive and mutually influential relationship between psychoanalysis and literature. Lenherr notes that many of Freud's essays are employed to analyse literary works, and emphasises that the psychoanalytic theory itself originated from the concept of trauma. According to Caruth (1996), Freud connects trauma theory with literature by defining trauma as a bodily or psychological injury experienced by a character in a work. Consequently, this implies that trauma refers to the suffering experienced not only physically but also mentally. Heidarizadeh (2015) agrees that trauma is defined as a distressing occurrence that can be a single event or experience, impacting emotions. On the other hand, the psychoanalytic theory of trauma focuses on the enduring and detrimental effects of past trauma and the lingering memories that influence the psychological well-being of individuals. The causes of these abuses could be sexual abuse, employment discrimination, brutality, bullying and domestic violence. Hossain (2017) views the psychoanalytic theory of trauma in the re-narration of a person's life as giving much importance to the significance of the unconscious and thought process; they believe that an awareness of this is

therapeutic and vital to a healthy mind. Psychoanalysis emphasises motives, it focuses on hidden or disguised motives that help to clarify literature on two levels, the level of writing itself and the level of the character's action within the text. Thus Psychoanalytic theory of trauma emphasizes the relationship between meaning and identity as it relates to the psychic and cultural force in a text. Psychoanalysis has great importance in contemporary understanding by reading meaning into literature and it also looks for a psychological explanation of abnormality and how this shapes the identity and behaviour of characters in a text.

Trauma theory has been used in the fields of education, health, sociology and literature. For example, Bulnt (2019) uses Trend's Approach to trauma to investigate mental disorders, where he suggests that stress can trigger psychiatric illness in normal individuals, even though stress is not regarded as a mental health disorder. Thomas (2019) conducted a comprehensive analysis of literature on interventions implemented in schools to identify the prevailing framework for promoting and implementing trauma-informed care in schools. The study also assessed the effectiveness of school-based support for youth affected by trauma and drew implications for modifying current practises (p. 422).

Gerber (2019) argues that traumatic occurrences are widespread globally and have a harmful effect on health. It has enabled professionals in primary care, including nurses and their extended care teams, to comprehend the possible consequences of trauma on patients. Kossew (2012) argues that trauma in literary and historical novels have been extensively examined in trauma theories, which highlight the crucial role of the unassimilated nature of

trauma. This necessitates a persistent revisiting of the wound that symbolises the harm inflicted on the physical and mental well-being of characters in literary works. Balaev (2008) affirms that trauma theory in modern literature suggests that trauma generates an inexpressible struggle that fractures or annihilates one's identity (p.149).

The idea of trauma has been used in fictional novels to conceptualise and imbue more significance to distressing situations depicted in the texts. Canellas (2018) argues that the immense psychological impact of slavery on millions of individuals worldwide is immeasurable. However, the emergence of Trauma Theory in literary studies has provided writers with a means of conceptualising a distinct genre known as trauma fiction. Balaev (2008) argues that the word "trauma novel" pertains to fictional works that depict significant loss or severe dread experienced by individuals or groups. The trauma novel is characterised by the profound change in one's identity triggered by an external, often horrifying event. This transition sheds light on the journey of reconciling with the intricate workings of memory, which shape one's newfound understanding of oneself and the world. He further asserts that the novels illustrates how an experience disturbs an individual's understanding of themselves and their relationships with family and society, as well as the values associated with the traumatic event. This disruption is influenced by cultural factors both inside the world and the novel. By using the psychoanalytic idea of trauma, this research examined the physical, emotional, and psychological trauma experienced by women due to the oppression inflicted upon them by their slave owners.

I used the Trauma Theory to include all forms of physical and psychological suffering experienced by enslaved women. In this work, I used trauma theory to examine the concealment of physical trauma, such as rape, the harrowing experiences endured by slaves throughout their voyage, beatings, torture, and the deaths of slaves, as well as other types of deprivation to which slaves were exposed. Morrison's work is deeply influenced by the ancestral heritage of Black American women whose ancestors were held in bondage, resulting in Morrison's characters experiencing a multitude of traumatic experiences stemming from the institution of slavery. Herbstein's text *Ama* revolves around the anguish, brutality, and hardship that female characters endured as a result of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Gyasi's *Homegoing* delves into the physical and psychological afflictions experienced by the individuals. The *Hundred Wells of Salaga*, as shown by Attah, symbolises the physical hardships endured by enslaved women from the Northern Region. The researcher uses the trauma theory to discern and analyse all instances of physical trauma experienced by female characters such as Esi, Ama, Aminah, and Sethe in the texts. The study employs the trauma theory to examine the factors that contribute to changes in the behaviour of female protagonists who have experienced psychological trauma. Examples of such protagonists include Sethe, Baby Suggs, Esi, Ama, and Aminah, who display psychological trauma through manifestations such as suicide, shock, self-hatred, insanity, fear, loss of identity, loss of dignity, and anger. Additionally, the researcher examines Transgenerational trauma within the texts.

Theorizing Slave Resistance to Enslavement

Theorizing slave resistance to enslavement is an essential theory in this thesis. This theory serves as a framework to emphasise fundamental notions about the strategies used by enslaved women to withstand the many hardships encountered throughout the Transatlantic Slave Trade. The research incorporates the concept of slave resistance to slavery as a minor theory, namely in chapter six of the thesis. Chapter six includes a comprehensive examination of all the chosen texts in the research. This hypothesis is crucial in the context of slavery because to the extreme dehumanisation experienced by the enslaved individuals, which led them to employ various strategies to counteract the psychological impact immediately after their capture. The researcher opted to formulate a theory on slave resistance to enslavement since slavery was inhuman. The accounts of slavery would be incomplete without acknowledging the efforts made by the enslaved individuals to rebel against the cruel and degrading treatment imposed upon them by slave-holders. Enslaved individuals resisted the inhumane treatment imposed upon them by slave owners. The enslaved individuals used passive resistance as well as a relentless yearning to attain liberation from their captors. Slaves were seen as inferior beings, which led to their inhumane treatment. Consequently, they rebelled against the traumatic experience of slavery, which subjected them to subjugation and dehumanisation. Upon the time of their abduction, slaves were immediately subjected to cruel and dehumanising torture. Consequently, several slaves used various methods to oppose the hardships they endured.

The resilience of slaves to trauma may be traced back to the Seventeenth Century. Slavery stands as one of the most cruel and unjust

occurrences in the annals of human history. The slaves were severely harmed by the rudeness they endured, prompting them to utilise many strategies to express their dissatisfaction with slavery and liberate themselves from its hardships. From historical accounts, it is believed that the resistance of slaves to enslavement started with the capturing of slaves in the Northern part of Ghana. Slaves instinctively opposed the hardships of servitude due to the fact that slavery was inherently unnatural. The forms of resistance to trauma exhibited a range of variations, although the underlying commonality in all acts of resistance was an effort to assert a certain degree of autonomy in the face of a system that essentially categorised individuals as possessions. Therefore, the majority of resistance occurred in the workplace, when slaves resisted forced labour, sexual abuse, flogging, and cruelty. Slave-holders saw slaves as simply property and regarded them as inferior creatures.

Geggus (1983) further elucidates that slaves had a wide range of responses to the traumatic experiences of slavery. Slave resistance encompassed a wide range of actions, ranging from armed revolt to more subtle forms of defiance. These included satire, deception, feigning illness, working slowly, breaking tools, theft, escape attempts, strikes, self-mutilation, suicide, arson, poisoning, and physical assault. All of these methods were employed by slaves as a means to resist the hardships imposed upon them. It is important to acknowledge that this kind of resistance to trauma, while also demonstrating adaptation, fostered a shared spiritual existence that gave rise to increasingly intense acts of rebellion. Mensah (2008) provides more insight by stating that any kind of slavery limited the ability of the enslaved individuals to establish their own lives as human beings. As each action

elicited a corresponding response, it is evident that as the slaves experienced more intolerable tyranny, they actively sought the means to resist their enslavement. The enslaved individuals therefore protested their marginalisation by using a diverse range of strategies and tools to mitigate the terrible circumstances of their enslavement. It is important to acknowledge that the slaves were vulnerable and their desire to live was suppressed, since they were considered the property of their owners and had no personal autonomy.

According to Paquette (2017), slaves demonstrated resistance to slavery in many ways, either individually or as a collective. The individuals responded to trauma either by passive or violent means, sometimes through organised acts of collective resistance, in order to liberate themselves from the tyranny of slave-holders. Slaveholders insisted on complete obedience and self-degradation from their enslaved individuals, however achieving full submission was naturally difficult due to the severe mistreatment they endured. The enslaved individuals demonstrated their refusal to comply by abstaining from pleading for pity during whippings, resisting physical abuse, and, in the most severe cases, resorting to suicide as a form of protest against the traumatic conditions they endured. He asserts that slaves, being human, needed to maintain emotional and spiritual connections, as they were social creatures who should strive to live rather than just exist in servitude. This therefore gave many enslaved the power by redeeming themselves whether incrementally or abruptly from trauma from the theory and practice of social death. Johnson (2019) asserts that normally slaves employed various forms of collective insurrection like running away to individual acts of murder,

fighting, and negotiation to resist enslavement. The spectrum spanning from violence to acceptance has been a formidable challenge, to the extent that opposition is encountered. The tactics used by slaves often intersected, with their selection influenced by factors such as age, gender, expertise, and skin colour of the enslaved individuals, as well as the geographical location and time period of their enslavement. Mensah (2008) shares the same perspectives as other researchers, asserting that slave resistance to trauma encompasses all types of resistance save for explicit or suggested overt actions. This encompasses a wide range of behaviours and behaviours, ranging from secret acts of sabotage to the outward expression of internal rejection and alienation, as well as other types of concealed approval that may have been subversive in nature. According to Fioravanti (2015), slave resistance to slavery include a wide range of actions, including sabotage, arson, suicide, armed rebellion, escape, infanticide, and the refusal to show respect towards slave owners. These acts were used by slaves as a means to overcome the pain of their enslavement. Hence, the resistance shown by the enslaved individuals served as an initial means of expressing their discontent with the degrading nature of slavery. Furthermore, this resistance ultimately played a crucial role in facilitating the eventual eradication of the slave trade.

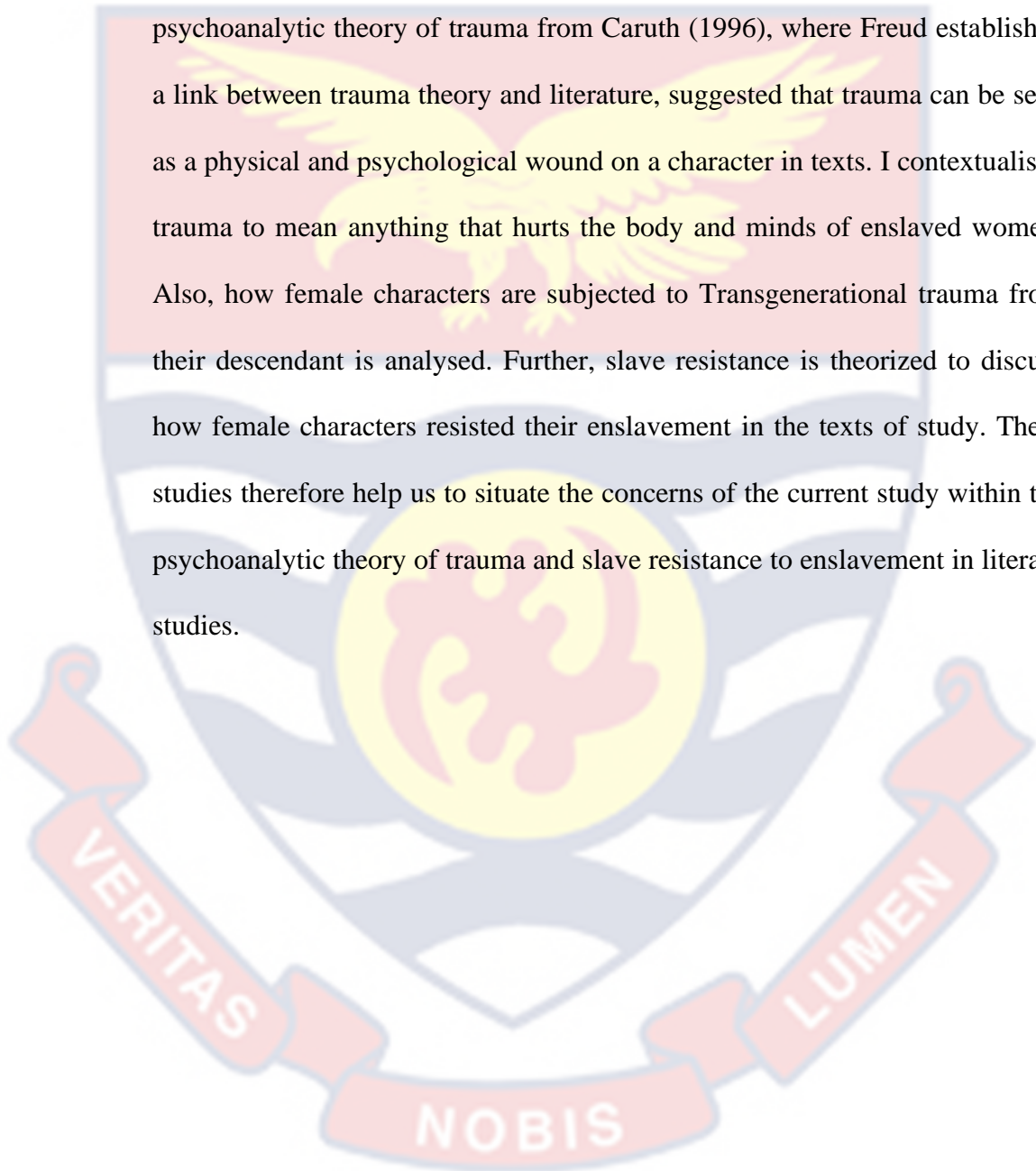
Based on the scholarly debates surrounding slave resistance to traumas, the researcher now presents her own definition of the slave resistance to trauma theory. This theory serves as a lens through which the researcher examines and emphasises the importance of slave resistance to trauma in this thesis. According to the researcher's perspective and the definition used in this thesis, slave resistance to enslavement encompasses various strategies

employed by enslaved women in the selected texts. These strategies include running away, infanticide, suicide, and negotiating for their freedom. Within the scope of this investigation, several enslaved women used various tactics such as elopement, self-inflicted demise, the killing of their offspring, and bargaining for emancipation as means to combat the psychological distress inflicted upon them. In Gyasi's novel *Homegoing*, the researcher examines Maame's escape and subsequent suicide as a kind of resistance against enslavement. In Herbstein *Ama*, Ama uses fighting back to resist enslavement. In Attah's *Hundred Wells of Salaga* Aminah uses negotiation to resist enslavement and in Morrison's *Beloved*, Sethe uses infanticide to resist slavery.

Conclusion

The empirical reviews have established that Morrison's *Beloved*, Gyasi's *Homegoing*, Herbstein's *Ama* and Ayesha Hurrana Attah's *Hundred Well of Salaga* have received some amount of literary scholarships on diverse topics such as slavery, feminism, racism, and post-colonial issues. But it is also evident that these novels are centred on the Transatlantic Slave Trade and there is no doubt that the Transatlantic Slave Trade was accompanied by trauma. The fact that the various traumas have not received adequate foregrounding is an oversight since physical and psychological traumas were integral parts of the Transatlantic Slave Trade and for that matter scholars should be interested in the various traumas enslaved women encountered in these novels. Also, many works on these texts have focused on the theme of slavery with little attention to the inherited traumas that slavery imparted on the lives of characters, therefore this conceivable dearth of literature on these

texts that is neglected is the concern of this study. The chapter also discussed the theories underpinning the study. I justified the psychoanalytic theory of trauma and also theorised how enslaved women enact various ways to resist their traumas in slavery as the most suitable theories for this study. The psychoanalytic theory of trauma from Caruth (1996), where Freud established a link between trauma theory and literature, suggested that trauma can be seen as a physical and psychological wound on a character in texts. I contextualised trauma to mean anything that hurts the body and minds of enslaved women. Also, how female characters are subjected to Transgenerational trauma from their descendant is analysed. Further, slave resistance is theorized to discuss how female characters resisted their enslavement in the texts of study. These studies therefore help us to situate the concerns of the current study within the psychoanalytic theory of trauma and slave resistance to enslavement in literary studies.



CHAPTER THREE

PHYSICAL TRAUMA ON ENSLAVED FEMALE BODIES

Introduction

In the previous chapter, the researcher looked at related literature to the selected texts and also the theoretical framework which serve as lenses through which this study is analysed. I have contextualized my study within the psychoanalytic theory of trauma to include physical pain in the bodies and psychological pain in the minds of slaves. I use the psychoanalytic theory of trauma to analyse Chapters Three, Four and Five and the slave resistance to enslavement is used in only Chapter Six of this study.

This current chapter begins my analysis, I interrogate female physical trauma. Female physical trauma is divided into four parts. The first part deals with rape, the second part deals with the traumatic journey of slaves and the third deals with death, torture and whipping and the fourth part looks at all forms of deprivation that slaves were subjected to.

The Transatlantic Trade and Rape

It can be said that Herbstein's *Ama* symbolises physical trauma. The novel opens with Ama's painful encounter of rape with Abdulai. It must be noted that the name Nandzi refers to the same person as Ama in this study. Ama is described as a very beautiful girl with narrowed eyes and she is about fourteen years old. Ama's mother Tabitha has a small baby Nowu. Ama's mother asks her to take care of her younger brother Nowu while the entire village goes to bury her grandfather Sekwadzim. In the absence of Ama's family, Abdulai, a slave raider invades Ama's hut and brutally rapes her. Abdulai is a notorious slave raider who is merciless when it comes to the way

he handles slaves. The following extract depicts the rape scene and Abdulai's brutal attitude.

He compelled Nandzi to descend forcefully. Using his left arm, he immobilised her shoulders, pressing them firmly on the ground. Using his right hand, he inserted his penis into her vagina, experiencing pleasure as he entered her deeply. Nandzi persistently hurled verbal insults at him while vigorously resisting. However, he now had two hands-free devices to immobilise her wrists against the ground. Nandzi swiftly rotated her head and forcefully bit down on his plump index finger. Prior to hearing his scream, she had the sensation of the bone and the warm discharge of blood in her mouth.

You are being derogatory. You despicable, pestilent female. He forcefully expelled the words while forcefully removing his hand from her, stating, "I will educate you on the consequences of trifling with Abdulai." He displaced her wrists beyond reach and applied pressure with his elbows on her arms. Then he initiated penetration into her. He repeatedly pushed his spear into the body of a motionless victim, savouring the gushing blood, continuing to stab long after his opponent had perished. He forcefully positioned her hands behind her head and forced her to press her face into the floor while cleaning manure. 'I will instruct you.' I will provide instruction to you. I will impart knowledge to you. Recall my presence. I am called

Abdulai. Abdulai is a renowned military leader from the region of Dagbon. (p.8)

The above portrays the physical and psychological trauma that African slave women are subjected to by their slave masters in Herstein's novel.

Abdulai the victimizer is portrayed as the most powerful man as his penis is described as a spear, to signify the pain each of his thrusts causes to his victim Ama. Rape is associated with physical violence as displayed in this text above as he the victimizer employs all sorts of torture to inflict physical pain on his victims, so the victim will succumb to his powers. Each thrust of Abdulai's manhood into Nandzi's womanhood relishes a fountain of blood to give the reader a vivid picture of the torture and pain Nandzi has to endure. Herstein's language between the victim and the victimizer depicts the victim of the rape fighting to free herself from the clutches of Abdulai as she hauls abusive language and struggles with him to free her. On the other hand, the victimizer Abdulai is unperturbed, as he increases his strength to pin her down to teach her a lesson. Abdulai is a dictator and wicked fellow, who just does not only rape Ama but inflicts other physical pain on her body as well. Ama is unable to withstand the pain of the rape as she collapses getting to the end of the rape to demonstrate the physical harm Abdulai inflicts on her. Ama's physical pain in the rape is what Bhaumik (2022) asserts that rape is a sexual assault on a female by another person without her consent. It is an act of violence that causes serious physical damage in some women. Aduwobi (2017) supports the notion that sexual violence, such as rape, is deliberately used throughout the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade as a means of punishing female slaves and forcing them into obedience. Aduwobi's arguments highlight how Abdulai uses rape

as a means to exert additional control over Ama. The usage of words like ‘immobilised her shoulders’, ‘pressing them firmly on the ground’, ‘a motionless victim’, ‘savouring the gushing blood’, ‘continuing to stab long after his opponent had perished’. ‘I will instruct you’ ‘I will provide instruction to you’; ‘I will impart knowledge to you’ depicts the vulnerability of Ama who is subjected to the dominance and power of Abdulai. These words further help one to envisage Ama’s pain in the process of her rape. Rape is a fundamental aspect of the Transatlantic Slave Trade as shown in Herstein’s *Ama*. The narrative illustrates that slavery, whether it occurred in Ghana or elsewhere on the continents, was a system that infringed upon the sexual autonomy of enslaved women, as shown by Abdulai’s brutal act of raping Ama.

Rape is used to silence female captives in order to subject them to humiliation whereby they have no choice but to become subordinate to their authority. Herstein deliberately allows the reader to decipher the magnitude of psychological effects of rape on women as he portrays Ama’s rape getting to the end, where Ama loses consciousness to depict Ama’s vulnerability where she no longer has power, her will and personality become the property of her victimizer Abdulai. But on the other hand, Abdulai is much more conscious throughout the rape to display his masculine powers where he drives his dominance from and he uses this new source of power to control his victim Ama.

Herstein exposes the psychological torment female slaves are normally subjected to during rape in the hands of their slave masters, their faces are normally covered so that the slave masters could not behold their

black face which they described as ugly. It is clear from the novel that slave master like Jansen prefers to humiliate their enslaved women like dogs by sexually abusing them in the dark and taking them from the back just to humiliate and degrade them. Thus enslaved women are subjected to emotional torment during rape.

Other slave like Akwasi Anoma also uses rape to silence female captives in the process of slaves journeying from one town to another. The purpose of the rape is to subject female slaves to humiliation so that the pain on their bodies through the rape will serve as a deterrent to them not to rebel against slave masters. Ama's friend Esi is put to silence after her rape incident; she has no choice but to become subordinate to the authority of the slaveholders. As Harrison (2009) puts it, "enslaved women thrust into the bowels of domestic suffering were also faced with the stench of sexual assault... enslaved women spent their lives negotiating the atrocities of...slavery...a slavocracy latent with vile acts of brutal physical assaults and sexual tyranny" (p.71). It must be noted that slave masters have to beat enslaved women into submission during rape, which normally worsens their physical pain after each rape session.

Rape is detrimental to enslaved women in Herbstein's *Ama*. Ama encounters several instances of rape and sexual assault throughout her journey as a woman held in slavery. Ama experiences rape as a method of torment and physical retribution. These lines depict another instance in which Ama experiences sexual assault. "Kofi Kakraba firmly grasped Ama's wrists and, while stepping back to stabilise himself, restrained her arms by pinning them behind her back." She vocalised her distress, but he restrained her still and

vulnerable. Vroom raised his gaze and Jensen acknowledged with a nod. Vroom had a fair complexion. The Dutch referred to him as “Yellow,” deliberately avoiding using the name of his Dutch father. He forcibly spread Ama’s legs to have a better view of her intimate areas” (p.127). Vroom, a fair-skinned and slave overseer, sexually assaulted Ama in the presence of other slave owners, including Jensen. White slave owners take pleasure in sexually abusing black enslaved women. It serves as a form of entertainment to slave holders. Slave masters see rape as a means of exerting dominance, which brings them a perverse sense of satisfaction. While being raped, Ama expressed her agony via tears, while the other slave owners observed the sight as a kind of amusement. This gives the slave masters the power and authority to rule over Ama and to subject her to all forms of torture. One common thing that is realised is that female characters like Ama and Esi in Herbsein’s novel are wounded before they are raped to showcase the intensity of their physical trauma. Regarding higher-ranking employers in the slave trade such as Governor De Bruyn, it is necessary for a guard to openly inspect the breasts and genitals of the slaves before they are presented to the governor, in order to verify their health conditions. The enslaved women are subjected to degrading practises, as shown by Ama’s experience before being brought to De Bruyn, which highlights the profound psychological damage caused by rape. Harrison (2009) argues that under slavery, the penis served as both a tool and a weapon for sexual enjoyment, which in turn provides social and economic empowerment. The owners of the penis use it as a means to exert authority and control over the bodies of enslaved women. Herbstein’s novel, *Ama*, demonstrates that slave owners in the story use sexual acts as a means of

disciplining enslaved women, therefore degrading them and subjecting them to complete rule, without allowing any opportunity for resistance.

In his story, Herstein explores several manifestations of sexual assault. Both slave owners and male slaves perpetrate sexual assault on captive women. The guards approached swiftly. Among them are those who have experienced enslavement first hand, while others were born to parents who have been enslaved. “I desire a female companion.” “Arrange the women in a row so that I can select one” (52). It is important to acknowledge that enslaved women experience sexual harassment not only from their slave owners, but also from male slaves and sons of their colleagues, who exploit and mistreat female slaves via sexual harassment and abuse. Female slaves in Herstein *Ama* suffer more as compare to male slaves because of the additional burden of being subjected to dominance by both slave owners and their male counterparts who are also slaves. This susceptibility exposes them to the horrors of rape inflicted by both slave masters and fellow male slaves make their pain unbearable. Slave owners engage in sexual exploitation not just of adult enslaved women, but also exploit and sexually assault minor slave girls under the institution of slavery. Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that even young girls who are below the legal age are not exempt from this horrific rape. They are subjected to sexual assault by their slave masters, as shown by Ama’s account: “Akwas Anoma confidently walked along the queue, examining his victims, poking them with the end of his whip, and assessing the size of their breasts.” Amidst the absence of sound, he proceeded with his examination. He reached the last point of the queue and began to return. At the midpoint, he made his decision. The individual in question was a juvenile

female, not exceeding the age of a minor. He gestured towards her. A guard firmly seized her hand and forcefully carried her along with him... Minjendo sat by Nandzi's side, doing her best to comfort her Jaji the girl whom Nandzi had saved from Akwasi Anoma's clutches"(52). This indicates that slave owners engage in sexual assault not just against enslaved women, but also against their underage daughters.

In Herbstein's *Ama*, rape is the most agonising kind of trauma. According to Reema (2018), rape has degrading consequences, oppressive, and fear-inducing impacts that last long after the occurrence of a rape. Rape has a wide-reaching impact, not only on the victim but also on others in her social circle. Prolonged trauma from the incident may significantly damage her relationships with others, as shown by the subsequent actions of Esi and Ama in the instance of rape. They experience solitude and isolate themselves from their fellow slaves, leading lives marked by feelings of rage, astonishment, and apprehension. Rape survivors have significant challenges in their recovery process, and often their immediate social networks, including family and friends, also experience the impact of their trauma. Ama and Esi's existence are characterised by an oppressive and terrifying atmosphere, where they are seen as mere objects of sexual gratification by their slave owners. Rice and Waugh (1989) contend that literary history has portrayed males as the oppressors, since the inherent connection between philosophy and literature suggests that literature is dominated by philosophical and phallogocentric influences. In this, the philosophical construct itself with the abasement of women and the subordination of the feminine to the masculine order appears to be the condition for the functioning of the machine. It thus

proves that the phallus symbolises authority and power over women. In Reema's (2018) views on rape, he posits that slave owners who raped enslaved women have power over these women without being criminalized or without any legal recompense. What rape does to women is to kill their desire for sex. "As she scrubbed his back, Nandzi considered her position. She experienced no affinity towards this gentleman. She had abstained from any sexual encounters since Abdulai had sexually assaulted her. The act of rape extinguished her passion completely" (48). Ama experienced many instances of rape in Herstein's novel, which had a profound impact on her subsequent sexual relationships. Ama is unable to get pleasure from her sexual connection with a guy who desires a normal sexual relationship with her, since she has had several instances of rape that have caused physical harm to her body.

Also, enslaved married women are not respected. Slave masters do not respect enslaved women who are married as they equally subject married enslaved women to rape. Ama's marriage to Tombo did not stop the slave master from raping her as reflected in the following lines, "He rose and grabbed her at once by the shoulders, pulling her towards him. She struggled to free herself but he was too strong. He forced her lips apart and drove his tongue into her mouth. She tasted the foulness and the rum. Pulling her arms free she thrust his head from her" (361). Ama is not only raped but she is equally humiliated by Senhor, he beats her mercilessly. Rape, therefore has the power to deny enslaved women the pleasure of sex after they are liberated from slavery. Rape is foregrounded as one of the traumatic experiences of female characters that are enslaved. Slaves are merely perceived as objects of

slave masters' property since they have no power over their bodies. Therefore, their bodies become the embodiment of physical trauma through rape.

Gyasi's *Homegoing* depicts several manifestations of rape that have similar concepts in Herbstein *Ama*. Gyasi's work portrays Esi as one of the female characters who experiences sexual assault. Esi, the offspring of Maame and 'Big Man', gets ensnared into the institution of slavery. Upon Esi's arrest and enslavement, she maintained a positive outlook, believing that her parents' profound love for her would prompt them to rescue her. However, Esi's waiting to be rescued from his parents proved futile as the majority of abducted slaves embarked on an irreversible voyage. Esi and other female slaves are confined in the dungeon of Cape Coast Castle, where they endured a succession of sexual assaults perpetrated by the slave guides. Gyasi highlights sexual assault by portraying the atrocities of Esi's rape. Esi's rape exemplifies the physical anguish endured by enslaved women. Esi has a tranquil demeanour; her limited speech allows her to internalise her suffering and indignation. Esi's rape not only silences her, but also leaves her feeling disoriented and overwhelmed by the emotional distress caused by the ordeal in the dungeon. Esi's experiences of rape did only affect her physical health but also profoundly damages her sense of self. Consequently, in Gyasi's narrative, rape functions as a psychological injury that deeply wounds an individual's identity. Esi's sense of self-worth, which is closely tied to her resilient nature in the face of hardship, is shattered as a result of sexual assault. Gyasi reveals the dehumanising treatment of Esi by the slave owners, who intend 'commodifies' her sexual organs for their own pleasure and gratification. The slave owners in *Homegoing* see the black bodies as a means to be used for

their gratification and controlled for dominance. Aidoo (2018) supports this notion by asserting that rape plays a crucial role in maintaining slavery, serving as a brutal tool of power and domination used to humiliate and torment enslaved women. Slaveholders asserted their dominance by perpetually subjecting slave women to sexual abuse, so asserting control over their bodies. For instance, Esi in Gyasi's *Homegoing* becomes an object of pity as she goes through several sexual violations in the dungeons with marks on her body to showcase the physical and psychological trauma of rape. The following extract depicts Esi's rape.

He ensnared her in a folder trap, parted her legs, and penetrated her. She emitted a loud cry, but he swiftly covered her mouth with his hand. Subsequently, he inserted his fingers inside her oral cavity. Inflicting harm upon them seemed to provide him with satisfaction, prompting her to cease her actions. She shut her eyes, compelling herself to rely on her hearing rather than her sight, feigning that she was still the little girl in her mother's humble dwelling on a night when her father had entered, imagining that she was still gazing at the earthen walls, desiring to grant them seclusion, to distance herself. Seeking comprehension of the factors that prevent pleasure from transitioning into pain. Upon completion, he displayed a scared and disgusted expression towards her. He displayed a sense of loss as if he were the aggrieved party. "As if he were the one who had been subjected to a violation" (149).

From the above, words like ‘ensnared her’ ‘penetrated her’ his fingers inside her oral cavity’, ‘she shut her eyes’ from the excerpt reveals physical trauma. It is clear that enslaved black women are shamed during rape as though they are animals and not humans. Slave masters regard enslaved black women in the texts as mere objects of satisfaction, after satisfying their lust they turn to inflict more physical pain on the victim as though the victim is at fault. Esi as the victim of the above rape is perceived by her victimizer as horrible and disgusting as though she is the violent one. It must be noted that after enslaved black women are normally raped, their victimizers blame them and feel disgusted for mingling their bodies with black bodies since they feel that the black body is dirty and cursed. Esi experiences verbal abuse from her rapist through the language used. Bourker (2012) views rape as a violation of a woman’s sexual identity, causing a psychological injury that impacts women. This may result in a breach of one’s selfhood, since an individual’s identity is more prone to being delineated in relation to their sexuality. Consequently, the survivors of rape consistently exhibit diminished self-worth. This is evident in the cases of Mamme and Esi, who, when seen through a psychoanalytical lens, experienced profound psychological and physical distress as a result of their encounters with rape. Gyasi and other authors that emphasise the theme of rape in their works primarily focus on the dehumanising effects of sexual abuse on women, resulting in their enduring suffering.

Morrison’s novel *Beloved* effectively portrays the issue of rape under slavery by highlighting the character of Sethe. The individual in question assumes the role of the main character in the narrative. She is a lady who is profoundly affected by the Transatlantic Slave Trade, and her life is plagued

by the recollections of her past. Sethe, being the offspring of an enslaved woman, has never experienced any joy in her life. Morrison exposes the occurrence of rape throughout the Transatlantic Slave Trade by highlighting the sexual exploitation of Sethe and her mother by the slave owners, particularly when Schoolteacher assumed the role of the new slave master at Sweet Home, where Sethe was the only young girl. *Beloved* illustrates the use of rape by slave owners as a method to instil fear and exert dominance over slaves. Sethe and her mother are subjected to brutal sexual assault, and in addition, the slave owners verbally harass them throughout the rapes. According to Bhaumik (2022), rape might elicit several responses in the victim. The majority of rape survivors have compulsive symptoms that stem from feelings of guilt related to the traumatic occurrence. These symptoms may be attributed to post-traumatic stress resulting from rape, which is known as rape trauma syndrome.

Attah's *Hundred Wells of Salaga* has parallel instances of sexual assault. Attah reveals Wofa Sarpong as an avaricious affluent individual whose riches are derived from the toil of enslaved people. He exploits his household slaves by subjecting them to sexual harassment throughout the night. Aminah, a diligent and attractive young lady, is forcibly taken as a slave from Botu and subjected to sexual abuse at the house of Wofa Sarpong, as shown in the following lines: "Slinking out, the night, with a sense of weightiness enveloping every aspect of Aminah until morning arrived" (92). Attah reveals the sexual exploitation of female slaves by their owners at night-time, highlighting that whether in household settings or the Transatlantic Slave Trade, enslaved women are subjected to sexual violation. Aminah experiences

sexual harassment from her slave owner, Wofa Sarpong, throughout the night-time. During the day, Wofa Sarpong takes advantage of his slaves by subjecting them to hard labour and during the night, he illicitly enters their chambers to engage in sexual exploitation with them. Despite being married to many women, Wofa Sarpong believes that his female slaves are obligated to provide him with sexual gratification due to their status as his purchased property. Attah's portrayal of sexual exploitation in *Hundred Wells of Salaga* vividly illustrates the profound psychological and emotional damage experienced by enslaved women as a result of rape. Sexual harassment is a pervasive problem in the text *Hundred Wells in Salaga*. The guys displayed a lack of sympathy as the female slave vocalised her distress. The women experience profound psychological distress as a result of being objectified and subjected to sexual violence. Their trauma stems from the loss of agency over their own bodies, leading to a dehumanising experience. Enslaved women experience a decrease in their worth within the context of sexual interactions under slavery, since they are compelled into such partnerships. Typically, those who resist are subjected to intense physical punishments administered by their slave owners. According to Wan (2018), sexual assault is commonly recognised as a very painful experience. Some feminist therapists even believe that all women have post-traumatic stress disorder or insidious trauma as a result. There is a growing belief that all genuine victims of rape would need mental assistance (p.4). According to Bhaumik (2022), rape is a distressing incident that often leads to post-traumatic stress and disorder. This is the experience of Aminah's sister, who suffers continuous maltreatment from Wofa Sarpong. The occurrence of rape in her life triggered a mental condition

PTSD, which is a common feature of trauma in *Hussana*. As a result, she feels lonely and she detaches herself from others.

Sethe's mother, being an enslaved woman, endures significant suffering at the hands of the white slave owners who subject her to sexual exploitation on the voyage over the sea. The slave owners use rape as a means to inflict misery and degradation upon her, so ensuring that Sethe's mother will not defy their authority. The slave owners shown no compassion for Sethe's mother throughout the act of rape; they subject her to both physical and psychological anguish. A significant number of enslaved individuals use derogatory language during instances of sexual assault, which has a profound impact on the mental well-being of enslaved women as shown in the writings. The slave owners were aware of the influence of language, so they use derogatory terms towards the slaves to assert their dominance over their physical beings and to reinforce the notion of the slaves' insignificance to show that language is used to reveal trauma. The majority of enslaved individuals who conceive via rape often develop a strong aversion for their offspring born as a consequence of the assault. Similar to Sethe's mother, who selected Sethe to survive and made the decision to end the lives of her other children due to their origins as a result of the rape by white slave masters. Individuals who have had the traumatic experience of rape have significant challenges in their healing process, as seen by the lives of Sethe and her mother. A significant number of rape victims ultimately succumb to suicide, similar like Sethe's mother who is unable to escape the psychological impact of her rape. Rape trauma syndrome refers to the whole range of emotional,

physical, and behavioural responses experienced by those who have been victims of attempted or completed rape.

It is a distinct kind of post-traumatic stress disorder that occurs specifically after experiencing sexual assault (Bhaumik, p.2). Sethe's address to Paul D and Denver illustrates the manifestation of rape trauma syndrome in her life, characterised by feelings of rage, remorse, humiliation, and a desire for retribution. Sethe's mother suffers from rape trauma syndrome, which is caused by her seeking retribution by murdering all the children she conceived via rape. Sethe's mother's trauma is linked to the belief held by Freud that all hysterical symptoms are a result of childhood sexual abuse or molestation. This trauma leads to the formation of unconscious memories. During adolescence, when confronted with situations that resembled the initial trauma, these memories are normally triggered. The trauma consistently disrupts the ability to cope with further difficulties, causing the victim to relive suppressed memories as if they are happening in the present (Sefa 2019). It is evident from the aforementioned information that repetition may exacerbate the trauma experienced by victims of sexual abuse. This is because each instance of recurrence serves to continually remind the victim of the horrific event, hence reinforcing the association between the repetition and the underlying trauma. Rape is a prevalent source of suffering for enslaved women. The female characters that experience rape have challenges in recovering from their trauma. It is evident that the physical damage they endure leads to psychological trauma as well. Slaveholders see the bodies of slaves as mere instruments that they control to fulfil their own desires. This attitude shown by slave owners towards slaves can lead to lasting

psychological effects on the slaves, which makes many slaves to still suffer after they are emancipated from slavery. Ex-slaves in Morrison's *Beloved* are haunted by their past, the wounds of slaves are not easily forgotten. This is the reason why Sethe and Baby Suggs never enjoyed their lives after slavery. Their bodies cannot disassociate from the torture they were put in, their bodies and minds are still controlled by the bitter memories of slavery after the slave masters were far gone to illustrate the extent to which slavery tortured and dehumanized its victims in Morrison's *Beloved*.

Sethe embodies the profound psychological distress experienced by African-American women throughout enslavement. Lakshmi (2017) asserts that Sethe's maternal function is reduced to that of a breeder, since she is subjected to sexual exploitation akin to that of an animal. Sethe's humiliation reaches its zenith when she discovers that her husband Halle witnessed her rape and, feeling emasculated for failing to defend her, he left her. As previously said, rape is seen as a societal affront to its victim, causing not just suffering for the victim but also for their families. The rapist did not only inflict emotional harm upon Sethe, but also he caused significant distress to her husband, Halle. Halle watched his wife Sethe being sexually assaulted by a slave owner but he was unable to intervene due to their enslaved status thereby being unable to rescue his wife, Sethe. Halle's behaviour causes Sethe to experience feelings of disgrace. Halle's decision to leave Sethe is motivated by his inability to save his wife, which further exacerbates her psychological distress.

The Traumatic Journey of Slaves

Chapter three's second portion focuses on the harrowing experiences endured by enslaved women in the process of their journey. Enslaved women often endure physical harm while being transported from one place to another, sometimes restrained with chains. The slaves' trip, whether it is by foot or by sea, is often marked by excruciating agony. Attah reveals the manner in which the horsemen sometimes refer to as slave raiders, inflict bodily harm on their captives upon their abduction. The female characters who are enslaved are restrained with chains, as shown in the following passage: "The horsemen raided villages and brought their captives to an undisclosed location, where they were bound with shackles and chains around trees" (107). Children and women are tightly bound together, with their hands unrestrained. Slaves are subjected to the same treatment. "According to his account, more than fifty percent of the enslaved individuals aboard the vessel perished and are normally disposed of in the ocean. Upon reaching their destination, they endured the painful process of being marked with a heated brass instrument and subsequently sold, akin to the sale of livestock." Most raiders don't take people who are very old, or babies.' His voice was a whisper.' They leave them behind and then set everything on fire" (108). This dehumanization from slave raiders injured enslaved women and their children. Slave raiders did not regard enslaved women as human they treated them as sub-humans in Attah's *Hundred Wells of Salaga*.

Attah's text once again reveals the plight of female slaves who are shackled and forced to endure arduous journeys on foot. This undoubtedly inflicts physical damage on the slaves, since these journeys might linger for

months before they eventually reach their intended destination. The anguish experienced by males who are forced to see their wives and children being subjected to agony by slave raiders is profoundly distressing. During their voyage, when the horsemen reach a location where they need to attack other towns, they often restrain the captives by tying them to trees in circular formations, looking like offensive jewelry in the wilderness. This occurs when they return to the villages to capture further slaves, as depicted in Attah's novel, *Hundred Wells of Salaga*. Undoubtedly, this caused immense suffering for enslaved women.

Furthermore, Aminah and her siblings are subjected to a distressing expedition, compelled to travel from Botu to Kitampo on foot while restrained with chains. The voyage is often marked by anguish and humiliation, since slaves are shackled without clothing, regardless of their gender or age. Attah depicts the systematic raiding and enslavement of whole villages, where families are chained together. This results in immense suffering, as some families see their relatives struggling to endure the arduous trek. The enslaved ladies find the slave's trip excruciating due to the restrictive shackles that impede their mobility and cause many injuries. Aminah and her two other siblings had been restrained to the point that their skin adhered tightly to their bones. Additional women and children are tightly bound together, causing several slaves, particularly youngsters, to suffocate when their physical abilities cannot keep up with the adults they are shackled to. The equestrians often traverse on their steeds, brandishing their whips to incessantly strike indolent slaves who get fatigued and are incapable of swift movement. Rebellious slaves are subjected to severe beatings, as shown in the case of

Aminah's sister Hassana, who is almost beaten to death by horsemen when she refuses to eat. She endures days of excruciating agony and anguish. From this, her sister Aminah becomes helpless; as she finds out that she cannot help her sister leaving both of them in pain. Muhammad (2003) asserts that the use of chains, shackles, and iron cuffs to restrain slaves and impede their escape becomes too onerous, causing many slaves to be unable to withstand the weight of these metallic restraints.

Additionally, Attah reveals the cruel and dehumanising behaviour of the slave pirates towards their enslaved captives. The slaves are expected to consume food and relieve themselves while being restrained by chains fastened around their necks. The majority of enslaved individuals are compelled to simultaneously excrete urine and faeces, so endangering their lives while in bondage. Aminah and the other slaves undergo significant weight loss during their arduous weeks-long voyage, since there is normally little opportunity for respite. The following paragraph effectively portrays Aminah's anguish. Aminah becomes fatigued by the arduous river crossing, prompting her want to vociferate at the riders and question their motives. She ambulated, but had a sense of detachment from her physical self. She desired to be summoned by the ground, just as it had summoned Issa, due to her weariness (78). The arduous forced march endured by Aminah and her fellow slaves instill in many of them a desire for death, since the walking is physically exhausting and compounded by the cruel lashings inflicted by their slave-holders. A significant number of these enslaved individuals often perished before reaching their intended location, while those fortunate enough to survive have profound scars, lacerations, and ulcers as a result of certain

chains, iron restraints, and shackles being embedded in their flesh. Despite surviving the walk, Aminah and her sister experienced significant bodily stress.

In Herstein's *Ama*, there are similar physical traumatic depictions in the lives of female slaves that are captured. Ama's capture into slavery is rooted in brutal violence and torture which leads to her trauma. Ama is apprehended; she and the other female enslaved individuals are bound together by a cord and forced to go extensive distances, enduring extreme thirst, hunger, fatigue, bodily harm, and the distress of uncertainty about their destination. Their destiny is marked by perplexity and distressing along the course of the voyage. Ama and the other enslaved individuals endure relentless suffering inflicted by slave raiders. In these lines, Herstein vividly portrays the physical suffering endured by slaves during their journey. The slaves are shackled together in pairs by blacksmiths, with their wrists bound tightly. They are then arranged in six pairs, each pair separated by a stride, and connected by a heavy chain. At daybreak, the female slaves provide each chain gang with two small bowls of gruel. The enslaved individuals are normally compelled to travel and carry out various tasks, such as cooking and bringing water, while restrained by chains. As stated by Muhammad (2003), the slave owners use these iron shackles to fasten the arms and legs of the captives, preventing their escape. Certain iron structures are designed to be secure by physically tethering prisoners to the limbs of other slaves. It is clear that the slaves are not only constrained by the burden of their motion but also that of any other slave to which their bondage chains are linked. The use of iron shackles, ankle restraints, and neck collars on enslaved individuals causes

intense physical suffering, leading to substantial bodily injury. The profound distress endured by female characters that are subjugated to captivity is clearly apparent in the following remarks. The enslaved persons are restrained by chains and shackles, unable to move, and experiencing emotions of sorrow and apprehension over their future fate. Traders originating from the coastal states would come and buy the merchandise. Afterwards, the persons would convey the slaves to the southern area, either to vend them to the European settlers who confined them in their subterranean penitentiaries, or to await the arrival of a passing ship whose captain would be inclined to buy them at a reduced cost.

In Herstein's text, slaves experience excruciating agony as they are forced to go long distances while shackled together in a chain, with one slave's leg bound to another's. This is shown by the following description: "There, the blacksmiths bound them together in pairs, connecting their wrists with handcuffs. Six pairs were evenly spaced, each pair standing a step away from the next, all linked by a sturdy chain." The ladies carried burdens on their heads, consisting of baskets filled with guinea corn and millet for the trip, as well as bundles of cotton and silk material that were intended as a kind of tribute to be given to Asante" (p. 37). Herstein's novel exposes the genesis of anguish and torment that is an essential component of the Trans-Atlantic Slave trade. According to Muhammad (2003), captives are subjected to a customary process in which their captors inflict severe injuries, mutilation, torture, or even death on African slaves in order to compel their compliance with the slave trade. This is the method used by slave owners to compel slaves to submit, preventing them from questioning the actions of their masters. In

Herbstein's work, *Ama* and the other slaves endure physical pain, resulting in the formation of sores that leave indelible scars on their bodies.

In Herbstein's *Ama*, the enslaved women endure double the adversity and retribution compared to their male counterparts. *Ama*, the central character, serves as a prime example of the physical distress linked to the Transatlantic Slave Trade. *Ama*'s existence is centred on anguish as she traverses the narrative as a woman in bondage. *Ama*'s trauma represents the suffering and inhumane circumstances caused by the Transatlantic Slave Trade in the lives of Ghanaians from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century. This highlights the Transatlantic Slave Trade as one of the most devastating problems that affected the African continent. These female slaves are required to bear the burden of carrying huge quantities of food on their heads, while also carrying infants on their backs and wearing chains on their legs and necks. It is important to acknowledge that the enslaved woman, burdened by several shackles, is compelled to serve the male slave, as shown by Herbstein in his work. In the specific passage, she imitates him by saying, "woman, bring me water." "I am not your subordinate or servant, you should be aware of that." "We are all currently in a state of enslavement, my sister," he remarked with exhaustion, raising his handcuffed wrist and causing the chain to make a rattling sound. "Kindly fetch me some water." Consequently, this demonstrates that enslaved women had more suffering throughout slavery compared to males, since enslaved men still relied on women to fulfil their service in servitude. Despite her exhaustion after the day's march, *Ama* is obligated to coordinate the female slaves in their duties of serving the men. Her duties includes providing them with water for drinking and washing,

delivering food, and tending to the festering sores caused by the continual rubbing of their shackles. The women have to also cook for the slave-holders and the other male slaves in the process of the journey, this plight of enslaved women in the Transatlantic Slave Trade increased their pains. As Chambers (2019) asserts the trauma of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade where he argues that, European slave masters most often relied on native Africans or middlemen to penetrate the interior of the continent to capture men and women to be sold along the Coast. Many did not survive the journey from the interior to the Coast. Several individuals perished on the journey, while others were too malnourished and feeble to withstand the transatlantic trip. Oduwobi (2017) concurs by saying that upon the acquisition of slaves, the Africans were compelled to undertake a lengthy journey to the Coast in the form of walking caravans or coffles, where they would be received by European dealers at the slave factories. Upon arrival, both male and female slaves were completely disrobed and subjected to a thorough medical examination to detect any potential ailments or disorders on their bodies.

Historically, slaves were not seen as individuals with human rights, but rather as chattel owned by others, obligated to comply with the wishes and demands of their masters. Ama and other enslaved women are shackled together by their legs and necks, while carrying heavy burdens on their heads. Due to the perception of slaves as just commodities by their owners, their emotions are disregarded and they are subjected to dehumanising treatment. The cruel mistreatment, along with the oppressive iron chain, hindered their progress as they travelled. The slaves encountered wild animals that attacked most of the slaves in the process of their journey, and as they are chained they

cannot defend themselves. From *Ama* the journey is normally characterized by physical and psychological torment, slaves are only given a little time to rest, and some spend months in the ship. Many slaves also died on the ship as a result of poor living conditions and those who managed to reach their destination are normally physically and psychologically injured.

In addition, Herbstein's novel showcases how female slaves are subjected to severe traumatic agonies in the process of transporting slaves across the sea. Before slaves are normally put on a ship to travel, the guards have to carefully re-examine each slave naked to ensure, "that the faulty goods be sent back to the vendor" (222). Consequently, those who are found to be at fault are either executed or returned to the dungeons to meet their demise. Only slaves who possess strength and good health are allowed to travel in Herbstein's novel. Qualified individuals among the slaves are given a piece of tin that is engraved and attached to their legs with iron chains for identification during travel. This is the distinct numerical value used to distinguish an African name for the purpose of easy identification prior to their embarkation, as described in Herbstein's novel. Herbstein reveals the ship's frequent overcrowding, prevalence of disease, and very terrible heat conditions. The absence of proper sanitation and overcrowded circumstances facilitated the rapid transmission of diseases such as dysentery, smallpox, and other infectious illnesses among the enslaved individuals, as seen in the following lines. "The floor was full of women, women squatting, woman lying down, one or two standing with their heads just grazing" (226). *Ama* and the other slaves are discomfited with their conditions on the ship, while the crew lives in luxury. The voyage is often marked by apprehension as the slaves remain

uncertain about who would be the next one to be thrown overboard the ship. The slaves' dread serves as a catalyst for the slave owners' ego, as they see that the more they torment and afflict the slaves, the less opposition they would encounter throughout the trip, as shown in Herstein's *Ama*. According to Muhammad (2003), the migration of slaves throughout the middle passage resulted in the disruption of familial and cultural connections, as well as causing severe and lasting emotional and psychological harm. The slave ships were ill-equipped to securely convey the large number of slaves as passengers. "Due to limited headroom, slaves on most ships were compelled to assume cramped postures throughout a voyage that lasted for many weeks" (896). This posture inflicts harm to several slaves, leading to fatalities among their ranks. According to Muhammad (2003), slaves who defied or revolted against their masters while on the ship were often executed and their bodies were disposed of in the sea. This was done to intimidate and prevent other slaves from rebelling. It must be noted that there are similar insurrections in Herstein's text where Ama and other slaves agitated against the unbearable suffering of slaves in the hands of the slave masters. The slave masters term them as disobedient slaves and some of the slaves were thrown into the sea as a form of punishment. This resulted in the painful death of many of the slaves. At other times, the European crew would force other slaves to eat the flesh of slaves who died from punishment. Ama in Herstein's novel had her share of trauma when her rebellion to free herself and other slaves did not succeed. Her other rebellious colleagues were killed and their hearts plucked from their bodies and given to Ama to eat. This is not only a physical punishment to Ama but a psychological trauma as well. Also, during the voyage disobedient slaves

are normally fed to sharks to serve as a deterrent to the rest as reflected in the following: “Ama screamed. All at once the water was alive with sharks, tearing the remaining corpse apart in a frenzied orgy of competition. The sea was threshed red; severed heads, limbs and human guts were everywhere as they tore the flesh apart” (258). The number of dead slaves that are normally thrown into the sea during the journey across the sea is uncountable; it makes the other slaves fearful since they know that they could easily fall prey to death at the hands of the slave masters. This is the technique slave masters use to force slaves into submission. Ama and the other slaves are filled with anxiety and fear, as they journey across the sea.

Herbstein’s *Ama* reveals the anguish that is associated with the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Herbstein illustrates the connection between the Transatlantic Slave Trade and the biblical concept of hell, where those who do not repent are tormented by the devil. Consequently, hell and the Transatlantic Slave Trade might be considered interchangeable terms. Both of them inflict anguish onto the human race. Hell is described as a realm where individuals endure pain inflicted by the devil, whereas the Transatlantic Slave Trade exposed captives to comparable agonies akin to those experienced in hell by their slave owners. Thus, Herbstein’s *Ama* depicts the slave owner as inherently malevolent, merciless, and indifferent towards slaves, as seen in the subsequent verses. “What actions have they committed that resulted in the loss of their lives?” Which transgression may warrant such a severe penalty? “The deity worshipped by the Caucasian individual must possess an absence of mercy and compassion,” she pondered (166). It is important to acknowledge that the slave owners portrayed a deity whose actions did not correspond with

the actions of the slave masters. According to the text, Europeans exhibited a lack of respect for Africans, seeing them as inferior and disregarding their rights. This was evident in their practise of enslaving Africans and subjecting them to dehumanising treatment. In Herbstein's *Ama*, De Bruyn and his troops derogatorily label Africa as a "desolate continent". Consequently, this perception led them to see slaves as subordinate individuals and mistreat them in a manner devoid of respect. Herbstein illustrates De Bruyn's portrayal of the slave trade as a transaction where slaves are treated as commodities, akin to goats or poultry confined in a market corral awaiting sale. The slave masters use unkind words to refer to the slaves they are dealing with; this traumatized the slaves both emotionally and psychologically since words have the power to affect the psyche of man.

Death, Torture and Whipping of Slaves

This chapter's third section examines the demise, torment, and lashing endured by captive women. Slave raiding is characterised by its aggressive and ruthless nature, often leading to the death and injury of several slaves. In Herbstein's *Ama*, slave raiders like Abdulai are equipped with powerful weaponry to terrorise and capture captives, as shown by the mention of "Elephant guns, dane guns, flints, fire steels, land shot, sword, Gunpowder" (177). These weapons are used by slave raiders to harm captives while capturing them. In Attah's novel, *Hundred Wells of Salaga*, slave raiders infiltrated Botu with the intention of capturing slaves. However, their method of attack inadvertently resulted in the deaths of several individuals, as they ignited the huts of the local population. Aminah's mother, Na, a nursing mother and her grandma, Eyeah, tragically perished in the fire that engulfed

their dwelling. Aminah vividly describes the excruciating agony of losing one's life in a fire, as she narrates the harrowing experience of her mother and grandmother, who fought desperately amid the flames without any assistance. The actions of the slave pirates in enslaving women cause significant physical anguish, as seen by the seized slaves expressing their suffering in the subsequent lines: "The village was burning up. 'They felt the heat even after the tallest tree appeared to be the size of a small branch. Nothing would survive a fire like that. Aminah choked up. She had intense nausea as she imagined them perishing in flames (57). The anguish experienced by Aminah and Husseina stems from their profound sense of powerlessness as they see their family being completely destroyed by fire, reduced to nothing but ashes. Attah reveals the heartless and malevolent nature of slave raiders in their methods of capturing slaves, invading villages, and setting fire to people's homes. The agile young individuals who attempt to flee are caught and bound to trees, while the defenceless individuals who are unable to escape the flames are incinerated. Attah's work emphasises the torment that female characters endure when they are captured. Aminah and her sister are emotionally overwhelmed, symbolising the helplessness of enslaved individuals who are unable to express themselves due to the restriction of their rights. Slaves are often apprehended in a distressing manner, while the raiders, referred to as the horsemen, typically stealthily approach villages throughout the night on their horses, taking advantage of the fact that people are inside and asleep.

Rebellious slaves are publicly executed, causing significant psychological distress to both the one being punished and the other slaves who are compelled to witness the public execution. The act of executing slaves is

seen as the most severe manifestation of physical punishment, resulting in a death characterised by violence. Both the sufferer and the viewer get deeply absorbed in the emotional intensity of the situation. In Herbstein's *Ama*, slaves are subjected to execution by use of axes, resulting in a most agonising death.

Observing the public execution of fellow slaves is an immensely distressing event that will deeply affect an individual's psychological well-being in the future, as shown in Herbstein's novel, *Ama*.

Aminah and Husseina symbolise the many enslaved Africans who were forcefully torn apart from their beloved families and forced into a life of servitude. Attah's work emphasises the torment endured by female characters upon their arrest. Aminah and her sister are emotionally overwhelmed, symbolising the helplessness of enslaved individuals who are silenced due to the restriction of their rights. Aminah and Husseina are caught in a really distressing manner. Aminah's anguish stems from witnessing the incineration of her grandmother, mother, and nursing infant when slave raiders attacked their dwelling. Aminah's anguish is evident in her persistent contemplation of the incident when her loved ones got lost in the fire. Aminah consistently displays signs of despair and melancholy throughout her regular interactions with her siblings. She is plagued by a persistent sense of guilt for her inability to save her family members from the fire, which always puts her in a state of emotional distress. However, Aminah has not yet experienced the most excruciating death of her younger brother Issa, who perished as a result of the oppressive shackles placed around his neck by the slave raiders. Issa's corpse is liberated from the restraints and thrown into the open, intended as sustenance for the vultures. The extract below depicts Aminah's pain

The sun ascended to its zenith in the sky and radiated intense heat onto them, like to a manifestation of fury. The rain clouds swiftly converged, releasing their contents onto them before dissipating just as quickly as they had appeared. What was the identity or nature of this location? For what reason had they all been subjected to such punishment? That was the one rationale Aminah could conceive of for their predicaments. Each individual had committed an offence against someone, prompting the question of whether death was preferable to continuing to live in their current state. This existence did not qualify as a life. “Not a predetermined fate (794).

The above vividly depicts the extreme cruelty inherent in the slave trade, to the point that enslaved individuals would rather die than endure the horrors of slavery. This serves as a poignant illustration of the profound despair experienced by those who are enslaved. Aminah and her sister Hassana witnessed the scene with anguish as the birds voraciously consume the remains of Issa. At the age of nineteen, Aminah has experienced the loss of all her family members. She recounts to Jaji the events of her father’s abduction, being abducted by horsemen, the tragic loss of her siblings, her time spent in the jungle, and ultimately finding herself at the Salaga market. The woman’s tears had caused her eyesight to become blurry, and she brushed them away using the edge of her veil”. (184). Consequently, Aminah’s whole family is eradicated as a result of the actions carried out by the slave raiders. Aminah emerges as the only survivor in her family, which accounts for the profound anguish that permeates her existence. Hence, Attah’s work illustrates

the agonising demise of several slaves. The surviving descendants of deceased slaves also experience profound psychological distress, since it is often hard to accept the untimely death of a family member. Aminah is immersed in anguish as she did not only lose a single family member, but her whole kin is eradicated due to the actions of slave raiders. Aminah therefore experiences depression and tension, longing for death to relieve her suffering. Aminah's scenario exemplifies the anguish of trauma.

In, Gyasi's *Homegoing* she exposes how Esi is an embodiment of physical trauma. She is forcefully abducted from her exquisite residence and confined to a dungeon, where she endures daily lashings and torment. Esi and the other enslaved individuals are confined inside a dimly lit dungeon, where the dungeon guards administer punishment to these individuals. Esi and the other women endure brutal physical abuse, resulting in lifelong scars on their bodies. The slave guards are assigned the task of inflicting daily beatings and torture on the slaves, with the intention of instilling terror in them. The slaves are subjected to regular beatings by slave guards as a means of disciplining them and asserting dominance. This practise leaves the slaves unable to resist or defy the commands of their lords.

Again, Gyasi's *Homegoing* refers to the Transatlantic Slave Trade as hell. Both slavery and hell exemplify places of suffering and torture. Gyasi's usage of the term hell to describe the slaves' living conditions evokes a vivid depiction of anguish and torment among the people in the text. Gyasi's protagonists, like Esi and Ness, endure anguish and suffering inflicted by white slave owners. Gyasi's use of the term hell to depict the living circumstances of slaves serves as a symbolic representation of the malevolent

impact of the Transatlantic Slave Trade on the experiences of female characters in *Homegoing*. The term hell is used as a metaphor to draw a comparison between the actions involved in the slave trade and the intense torment experienced in the concept of hell. Gyasi and Morrison have shown in their literary works that the anguish caused by slavery is perpetual, which explains why Sethe, a character in Morrison's novel *Beloved*, continues to be plagued and tortured by her history even after escaping slavery. According to Welnhofer (2017), Gyasi portrays the slavery business and its participants in a negative light by likening it to Hell. Ness, who was born into slavery, serves as the main character through which Gyasi depicts the experiences of a slave. Gyasi depicts Ness's contemplation on the inherent wickedness and dehumanising nature of slavery in the following passages, 'The plantation was Hell, 'the sun-scorched cotton so hot it almost burned the palms of your hands to touch it. Holding those small white puffs almost felt like holding fire, but God forbid you let one drop. The devil was watching'' (8). Thus, Gyasi's vivid description of what she refers to as hell for the enslaved resonates with the images that the bible paints about hell, a place of unending suffering, pain and torment. To show that slaves are tasked under the hot sun to work on the field without rest and as they work, 'the devil is watching', the devil here refers to the slave masters to show that slaves have to work in fear and intimidation because the devil is ready to punish any slave who disobeys. Some slaves are whipped to death on plantations just to put fear in the other slaves. Gyasi's *Homegoing* is equivalent to the hell the Bible describes since slavery subjects its victims to torture and unending torments. Slavery also leads to trauma,

therefore the two, hell and the Transatlantic Slave Trade are inseparable since they both invoke physical trauma.

Attah's *Hundred Wells of Salaga* exposes how Wofa Sarpong exemplifies those rich men who exploit the labour of slaves to build their wealth. Wofa Sarpong buys Aminah and her sister as domestic slaves; and puts them on his farm to work in the field for long hours with little food for them to eat. Other slaves like Sahada are used to pay the debt his father owed Wofa and could not pay. Sahada will have to work for Wofa to set his father free from debt. Aminah and the other slaves in Wofa's house are exploited with hard labour on the farms to cultivate the soil for him. Wofa subjects Aminah and Hassana to hard labour both at home and on the farm while his wife and children live in luxury to enjoy the hard labour of the domestic slaves. These slaves normally worked themselves to death. "People like Wofa were the greedy folks who wouldn't let the slaves go scot-free; 'people aren't allowed to buy, sell or own slaves here'" (98). Attah portrays how Wofa has to change all the names of the slave women in his house to Asante's names; he adopts all these slaves and gives them his surname even at a time when it is unlawful to keep slaves. Wofa had to lie that they are his distant relative children just to cover up when he was confronted by a Police Inspector. When Hassana was questioned by the inspector and she could not speak Wofa's language, this exposed Wofa to the police Inspector and when the Inspector left Hassan was beaten nearly to death by Wofa. 'He hesitated before unleashing the next lash. Aminah watched motionless as Wofa Sarpong continued to whack Hassana. When he stopped, he was drenched in sweat, his clothes bunched at his feet. Gruffly, he pulled up the cloth...Aminah dashed to

Hassana, coiled on the ground, blood soaking through her wrapper” (101). These inhuman treatments are to serve as a deterrent to the other slaves. Hassana felt half dead after such a beating, her young body at twelve could not endure such physical torment. Her sister Aminah on the other hand seems as if she is losing control of herself, she thinks of going insane, Aminah thinks suicide is the only way to escape the physical pains of being a slave.

In Morrison’s *Beloved*, she showcases how slaves are perceived as animals. Schoolteacher who is a slave master subjects his slaves to scrutiny of their physical features as a form of marked. His studious ways of detecting slaves’ corporal traits of slaves’ abuses their humanity. Morrison exposes the abusive and authoritative nature of the Schoolteacher who perceives slaves as inhuman. Schoolteacher compares Sethe to an animal to showcase how lowly slaves are perceived. Sethe and the other slaves have to endure hard labour on the plantation of the slave masters; the work on these plantations is normally supervised with whips in their hands, the least provocation a slave commits or when a slave mistakenly drops something on the ground, the slave is normally beaten in the open to serve as a deterrent to others. The argument is that the brutal forms of punishment of slaves in the text are in the form of beatings, amputation and torture which the slave raiders use to control the slaves. The captured slaves are forced to perform gruelling labour, subjected to mental and physical degradation, and denied their most basic rights. Enslaved men and women are beaten mercilessly, separated from loved ones arbitrarily, and regarded as sub-humans who need to be treated as property in Morrison’s *Beloved*. Sethe is constantly whipped and punished by her slave master during her pregnancy; slave masters beat pregnant women with whips not only to

torture the pregnant woman but to torture the growing foetus as well. Therefore it is not only Sethe who is traumatized but her unborn babies as well, as this trauma will later on showcased in the life of Sethe's children.

Herbstein's novel exposes the severe whipping that is meted out to slaves. "She seemed to have shut herself off entirely from the outside world. That was not surprising. Such a lashing as Williams had inflicted upon her was a traumatic experience. As a doctor, he could manage the physical recovery, but the healing of the psychic wounds was beyond the compass of his skill" (275). Apart from the daily whipping of slaves, slaves who attempt to run away and are caught are normally executed to serve as a sign of warning to other slaves. "A recaptured runaway slave is good for only one thing. "He drew a finger across his throat and chuckled. "To serve as an example to her brothers and sisters. "The penalty for attempted escape was death. By rights you should be executed as an example to your fellows" (35). This shows that many slaves died a painful death; some of the slaves in Herbstein's novel are executed with heavy axes crushing their skulls, while their colleague slaves watched on helplessly. This is a great source of pain for slaves.

Again, in Herbstein's *Ama*, it is realised that all enslaved women are dehumanized. With the coming of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, the activities of the slave trade changed drastically. Slaves became the property of the slave-holders and had no willpower over their lives. This is seen in Ama's reflection: "They brought us here for one purpose and one purpose only: to work us to death making their accursed sugar, that useless rubbish" (328). Slaves are required to work all day with no rest at all; slaves who are seen conversing in the process of work are severely beaten by their slave-holders.

The tedious work on the plantation weary slaves and some worked themselves to death from Herbsein's *Ama*. Apart from slaves virtually working themselves to death, those slaves who openly rebel against the slave masters are normally subjected to inhuman treatment, just like how *Ama* is forced to eat a fresh liver of a dead slave. *Ama* closed her eyes and she is on the point of losing consciousness. Her head is forced back and she feels the raw meat slither down her throat. Involuntarily she retches. The piece of a liver shot out of her mouth and hit Knaggs in the face. The seamen laughed at his discomfiture. *Ama*'s body sagged and Knaggs assistants have to hold her up" (270). The most traumatizing part of *Ama*'s pain is eating the flesh of a dead colleague while the other white crew feast their eyes on *Ama*'s punishment as a source of entertainment.

Slaves and Deprivation

The fourth part of this chapter deals with the deprivation of slaves. Aminah and her family are deprived of a father due to their father's disappearance as the result of slave-raiding activities in Botu. Aminah as a child is loved by her father, but his disappearance troubled and traumatized her. According to Wan (2018), trauma can be caused by the separation of parents from children. Aminah becomes an embodiment of physical trauma in Attah's novel. The greatest outcry that the slave trade caused in the lives of people is the physical trauma it subjected people to as reflected in this statement: "And while she was grieving Baba's absence" (49). Aminah grieves over her father's absence; the thought of who will take care of the family makes Aminah depressed since her mother, grandmother, and siblings look up to her to shoulder the responsibility of her father in his absence. Aminah at the

age of fifteen years is mandated by her grandmother, Eeyah, to take care of her mother who is nursing a baby and her siblings as a result of her father's disappearance. Aminah welcomes this unpleasant new role in grief, as her life is characterized by stress. Aminah and her entire family live in fear and trauma not knowing where their father is. Attah discloses this information via a sequence of nightmares experienced by Aminah's siblings on a regular basis, which revolve on their father's vanishing. The loss of Baba causes significant stress to Aminah's family, leading to a detrimental impact on their lives. Aminah's mother has regular bouts of weeping and adamantly abstains from nourishment and rest, resulting in a transformation of the formerly joyful household into a despondent one where communication is avoided by everybody. Aminah's family experiences the trauma of paternal deprivation, which leads to a profound and enduring feeling of grief and hopelessness. Aminah's trauma is shown in symptoms such as decreased appetite, sleeplessness, anhedonia, anxiety-driven restlessness, apathy, obsessive thoughts of suicide, a desire for death, and a general lack of interest in all activities. Again, Ama and her friend Esi are paraded in Manson's market like animals for sale and this is seen as a kind of deprivation of their humanity. All eyes are fixed on Ama and her friend as they are chained and their master is waiting for buyers for them. The fact that slaves sit in these markets depressed showed that they are uncertain of what is going to befall them and this is worrisome and stressful on their bodies. Manson's market marked the end of Ama and Esi as domestic slaves as they encountered a more severe form of slavery after they are bought by the Germans who occupied the Elmina Castle. Ama and Esi have to go through pain, torture and emotional trauma in the

dungeons of Elmina as they are deprived of basic needs of life like food and shelter. They are put in a dark dungeon with no trace of hope of survival. Ama and Esi realise that the animals in their villages are better treated than slaves in the dungeon. This is seen as a serious form of blow to their image as humans.

Life in the dungeon is normally characterized by loneliness, hopelessness and sadness for the slaves.

Herbstein's *Ama* exhibits comparable forms of deprivation. Herbstein's work depicts the severe deprivation of food experienced by several enslaved individuals. Slaves are restricted to consuming a meagre amount of sustenance, just enough to sustain their existence, since slave owners are apprehensive that well-nourished slaves may acquire the strength to defy their commands. In order to maintain perpetual enslavement, it is necessary to deprive slaves of sustenance. "The fertility of the slave women was low. The reasons were not far to find, had the Senhor only to look: poor food: long hours of exhausting work: that widespread incidence of venereal and other diseases" (347). This incidence shows enslaved women and children face a more dire position. The most distressing aspect is seeing enslaved women observe their children deteriorate into mere skeletons, malnourished, sometimes too weak, lifeless, or even unable to sit due to starvation; this causes anguish for both the imprisoned moms and their children. The pain that accompanies the Transatlantic Slave Trade is reflected in the following lines: "Van Schalkwyk had painted for her a vivid picture of hell, the destination of all unreformed sinners when they died, he said. These slaves were clearly all in hell already, and yet they were still alive. The living dead, she thought" (163). The extra heat for slaves with the combination of hard labour and new

diseases causes a lot of death among the new arrivals of slaves. Records show that every three African slaves died within three years of arrival in the Caribbean (Kaye, 2005). Consequently, the system of slavery has resulted in the deaths of several individuals from Africa. The exploitation of enslaved women by slave owners on plantations for their own gain is evident, and harsh punishments are imposed on slaves who engage in conversations with other slaves. For example, the judicial system allowed for the imposition of flogging, branding, burning, and death penalties, often for minor transgressions. Fugitive slaves might face capital punishment upon apprehension. Slaveholders subject slaves to dehumanising treatment akin to that of animals. Esi symbolises the count of women who were forcibly abducted from their indigenous homeland in Africa and forced to go on a treacherous voyage across the Atlantic Ocean. A significant number of individuals are unable to endure the voyage across the sea from Esi's storytelling to her daughter Ness. Even the slightest provocation from a slave would result in their being cast into the sea. During the voyage, deceased individuals and living slaves are stacked on top of one other on the ship, which undoubtedly have psychological ramifications for the slaves. The treatment of slaves is based on the perception of the enslaver, who did not see the enslaved individuals as human beings and hence denied them any rights of their own. They are seen as chattel by the slave masters. Esi's outcry in *Homegoing* is an outcry rooted in pain and shame, the Transatlantic Slave Trade is an affront to human life.

Afua in Gyasi's *Homegoing* goes through a series of deprivations in the slave trade. Afua a nursing mother is captured and thrown into the Cape

Coast Castle with her baby. Afua and her baby are locked in the dungeon and deprived of food for several days just to showcase that slave masters are not interested in the well-being of slaves. Afua is unable to bear the anguished cry of her baby as she joins her baby to cry as reflected in the following lines.

“The smell was unbearable. In the corner, a woman was crying so hard that it seemed her bones would break from her convulsions. This was their desired outcome. The infant had soiled itself, and Afua, its maternal figure, lacked lactation. She was unclothed, save for the little piece of material provided by the dealers to clean her nipples as they discharged fluid, but their estimation was incorrect”(17). The mother didn’t have any food; it also indicated that the baby didn’t have any nourishment. The infant’s impending scream would soon be muffled by the mud walls, blending with the multitude of women’s wails that enveloped it. Afua has been deprived of food for many weeks, resulting in her inability to make breast milk. This is because lactating women need enough nutrition in order to produce breast milk. The lack of essential resources results in the distressed vocalisation of both the maternal figure and the infant. Afua, the mother, is also distressed by the idea that her baby is on the brink of death and she is unable of rescuing her child. The slaveholders deliberately provide limited food rations to enslaved women with the intention of weakening them, so facilitating their control and exploitation. Enslaved women, while weakened, possess little or no physical power to resist or combat slaveholders. Consequently, this enables slave owners to assert dominance over the slaves, resulting in psychological distress for female slaves.

The dungeons that the slaves live in are not habitable for humans. Gyasi depicts life in the dungeon as a source of deprivation of the well-being of all slaves, since the conditions in the dungeon are unbearable for humans to live in. “The mud walls of the dungeon made all-time equal. There was no sunlight. Darkness was day and night and everything between. Sometimes there were so many bodies stacked into the women’s dungeon that they all had to lie, stomach down so that women could be stacked on top of them “(30). Gyasi’s novel exposes the living conditions of slaves in the dungeon as depressing for slaves as Gyasi describes the dungeon as dark without sunlight, and slaves have to urinate and pass faeces in the dungeon. “Now the waste on the dungeon floor was up to Esi’s ankles. Esi could hardly breathe, but she moved her shoulders this way and that until she had created some space. The woman beside her had not stopped leaking waste since the last time the soldiers fed her” (48). Life in the dungeon for slaves is disgusting and unbearable. The slaves have to endure these unhygienic conditions in addition to constant beatings, torture, and sexual violence in the dungeons. The inhuman nature of the slave masters to the slaves showcases the Transatlantic Slave Trade as one of the most destructive institutions that ever existed in the world. This inhuman treatment of slaves caused the death of many slaves in the dungeon since many could not endure the hardships in the dungeon from Gyasi’s text.

It is also clear that slaves’ unsanitary conditions in Herbstein’s novel deprived slaves of their self-worth. Herbstein displays how slaves are exposed to unhygienic environmental conditions on the ship where all the slaves are supposed to defecate in a bucket which is described as disgusting. According

to Muhammad (2003), the little space in the ship often compelled slaves to lie in their own or other bodily excrements without the opportunity to clean themselves. Since the slave masters wanted to transport as many slaves as possible to ensure a higher profit, these slaves are hoarded in great numbers in the holds of ships. The overcrowding forced the African slaves to endure unbearable heat and poor ventilation. These conditions lead to excessive perspiration and consequently dehydrated the slaves and caused massive death. Conditions on the ship are depressing as stated in the following lines, “The smell struck her and she wanted to vomit. The air was unpleasantly hot and humid, yet the floor she lay on was cold and damp dungeon of the female slaves, to the darkness, the fetid smell of stale piss and septic shit, the dump, shared misery of hundred women without hope” (127). Slaves are regarded as the property of the slave masters in Herstein’s text and once they are chattels their lives and living conditions did not matter. Their lives on board worsened since there is little ventilation in the ship for the female hold. More and more women are crowded into small spaces. It is worth mentioning that the air at midnight is quite noxious, making it hard to inhale. Additionally, during the early morning hours, the stench emanating from the buckets becomes overwhelming. Slaves are trapped in a desperate condition throughout their voyage, which leads them to describe the white man as a demon in the subsequent words. The following extract depicts the deprivation of slaves

The white devil marks us with his metal, removes our garments, confines us in that wooden enclosure, devoid of air and water.” He provides us with food that I wouldn’t even give to a swine. He subjects us to a

lifestyle akin to that of pigs. Would you reciprocate the same treatment towards a dog as he exhibits towards us? “What actions have we taken to warrant this treatment towards him? (245).

It is important to acknowledge that the circumstances of slaves, whether they are aboard the ship or across the sea, are same. Enslaved individuals are compelled to engage in arduous work under degrading circumstances. Muhammad (2000) asserts that slaves endured prolonged durations, intense heat, and abysmal living circumstances. The dwellings inhabited by slaves were dilapidated shanty shacks that were unsuitable for human use. These circumstances resulted in several enslaved women experiencing compromised health. ‘The reasons were not far to find, had the Senhor only chosen to look: poor, lack sufficient food; long hours of exhausting work; the widespread incidence of venereal and other diseases; and the absence of any form of medical treatment beyond that which the other slave women could provide’ (347). Slaves are merely fed just to let them survive so that they could be exploited and it is the same way that the health of slaves is not a thing of concern to the slave masters. This worsened the living conditions of many slaves and many slaves died as a result of limited medical care and food.

Moreover, the argument is that slavery stripped its victims of their inherent worth and respect. According to Muhammad (2003), the Transatlantic Slave Trade infringed upon human dignity and exploited Africans, therefore constituting an international crime against humanity. An individual’s dignity is often shown in their discernment of moral rectitude. However, in the context

of Esi and other enslaved women in Gyasi's *Homegoing*, their existence is subject to the control of their slaveholders, who manipulate these women into engaging in exploitative employment, while also subjecting them to mistreatment and denying them their fundamental human rights. Slave-holders have a singular desire to maximise their wealth from slaves, which greatly harms the lives of the enslaved individuals. Boxill (2019) acknowledges that slavery is an unjust practise that imposes unfair limitations on the freedom of slaves and violates their rights. Furthermore, slavery is exploitative and often involves cruelty, which is offensive and detrimental to the self-respect of slaves. Additionally, "it undermines their self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-reliance" (102). Slavery deprived its victims of their self-esteem, since psychoanalysis affirms that every individual has an ego which is crucial for their success and well-being. It is a kind of fuel that powers an individual's life, instilling a sense of self-worth and self-assurance. However, when the ego of individuals like Esi, Ness, and Tansi in Gyasi's *Homegoing* is deeply affected by trauma, these enslaved women see their existence as devoid of value. Consequently, the strength required for such individuals to continue living becomes an overwhelming weight. As Kamkam(2020)suggests that millions of descendants of black slaves became foreigners in foreign countries because of slavery. Though these people are free today from the slave trade however they are still faced with different forms of discrimination that their ancestors suffered during the era of slavery, this is the situation of Marjorie as she finds herself in the Black-American community.

It is clear that slaves died in the dungeons and the ship as a result of suffocation; malnutrition and disease that easily spread and killed the slaves

due to unsanitary conditions. Many children did not survive after they were chained with grown-ups and put on long journeys without food and water. Many children died on the way and are often thrown away in the open without proper burial since slave masters focus on profit and not loss. Slaves are also killed when a royal person died and I find this as a deprivation of the rights of slaves. “They say it is an honour to go and serve the Asantehene in the next world” (81). It is clear that when the Asantehene died a lot of slaves were executed and their heads were used to accompany the king and this is a source of deprivation of life to slaves.

Offspring of enslaved mothers are bereft of maternal affection. The Transatlantic Slave Trade undermines the institution of motherhood when Maame fled and abandoned her daughter Effia. Maame, a household servant at Cobbe’s home, managed to flee the hardships of enslavement. However, her daughter Effia bears the consequences of her mother’s deeds, enduring frequent physical abuse and being denied essential necessities by her stepmother Baaba. Baaba’s malevolence towards Effia inflicts anguish and psychological distress upon her; Baaba robs Effia of her genuine affection and cunningly coerces her into a forced marriage with the British governor for her own selfish motives, since offspring of enslaved women are seen as mere property. It therefore shows that slave trade resulted in the severance of familial bonds and led to the disintegration of family units. The division between families caused significant distress, as seen by Effia’s anguish upon discovering that her biological mother is an enslaved woman, prompting her to flee in order to save her own life. The source of her anguish lies in her inability to connect with her biological mother. The worry of never having the

opportunity to establish a relationship with and physically encounter her mother is the cause of her distress. Effia's trauma is similar to what many African-Americans are going through, since many of them cannot trace their ancestry which has ignited identity issues in their lives. One can therefore say that slavery is like a wall that divides families and loved ones as is seen in the case of Effia and Maame, who are both born by the same mother but have to be separated as a result of the slave trade. Then later on in slavery, Esi gets separated from her only daughter, Ness. Thus, Effia is tormented when she realises her mother got separated from her as a result of the slave trade. Effia and Esi exemplify the many children who are separated from their families as a result of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. According to Wan (2018), separation from family leaves children more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. It must be noted that when children are traumatically separated from their parents, this can lead to toxic stress in children and adolescents that can profoundly impact their development. What made the separation of families during the Transatlantic Slave Trade psychologically traumatizing is the fact that you never get to meet your family again once you are shipped across the sea just like the case of Esi in Gyasi's *Homegoing*.

Tansi in *Homegoing* is deprived of staying with her family after she was caught in adultery. Tansi's predicament reiterates the adulterous woman's story in the Bible that was caught in the very act of adultery but her accusers summoned her to be punished and the man was left to go free. It is clear that Tansi's story illustrates clearly how women are more deprived in slavery than their male counterparts since society let go of the man and decided to punish the woman. Tansi's narrative exemplifies the persistence of gender prejudices

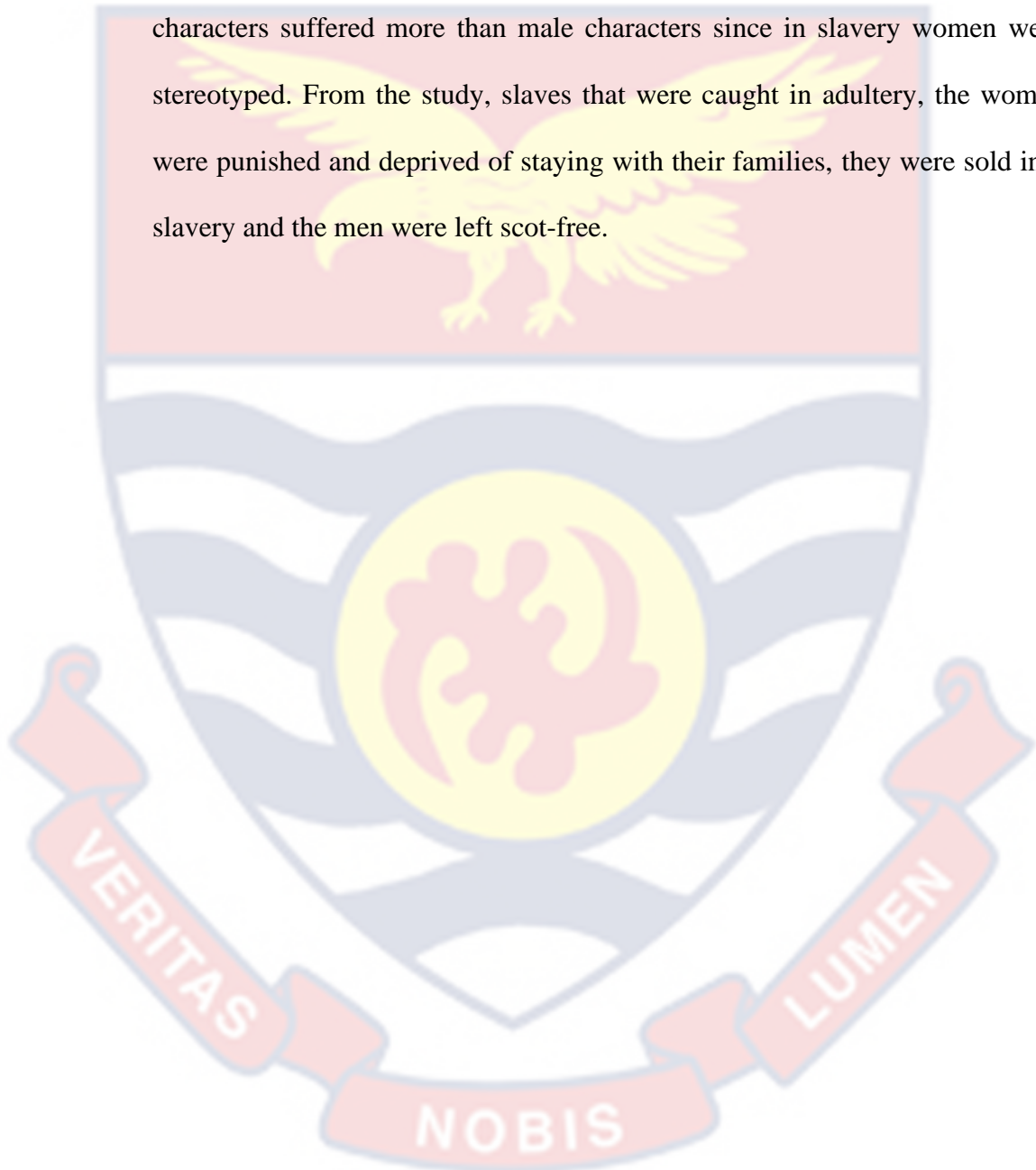
within the context of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Tansi is exiled from the community and compelled into servitude due to her act of adultery, resulting in her separation from her family and loved ones. From a psychoanalytic standpoint, the family plays a crucial role in an individual's development. Displacing an individual from her cherished ones and relocating her among those who despise and deny her basic needs and treating her badly, had a harmful effect on the person. The profound anguish experienced by the majority of enslaved individuals stems from their forcible separation from their beloved kin, knowing they would never have the opportunity to be reunited with their relatives. Mandelbaum et al (2016) argue that family psychoanalysis provides insight into the psychological dynamics among relatives experiencing trauma, enabling a better understanding of violence. Thus the psychic dynamics of Tansi's family are difficult to understand since they could not liberate their daughter from being punished by the entire village and she has to be sold into slavery and the man who impregnated her goes scot-free.

Conclusion

What this chapter sought to do was to assess the physical trauma that female characters were subjected to through the lens of the psychoanalytic theory of trauma. I contextualised trauma in this study to mean anything that brought pain to enslaved women's bodies. I paid attention to the ways slave masters used rape and sexual violence to demean female characters and subject them to silence and domination. I demonstrated that slaves were captured painfully since slave raiders were given deadly weapons by the chiefs for their slave raiding expedition. This resulted in massive deaths of people

during raiding because the slave raiders invaded whole communities, set people's huts on fire and those who ran out were captured into slavery, the vulnerable who were unable to run out were burnt to ashes. I have also shown the physical suffering experienced by slaves during their journeys between towns, since they were shackled with iron chains around their necks, wrists, and ankles. This impeded the progress of the enslaved individuals, leading to the death of many, while others who managed to endure the voyage were debilitated due to the prolonged exposure to the weighty metallic restraints they had to endure for weeks. I also demonstrated how the dungeon, where slaves were confined prior to their transportation, stripped them of their liberty and fundamental necessities. Enslaved women suffered from deprivation of food and lack of hygienic conditions, leading to the death of many. Furthermore, I expressed that the existence of slaves aboard the ship during the journey was marked by profound sadness. Slaves endured immense suffering, and slave owners shown a complete lack of concern for their well-being, since they saw them only as property. Consequently, the female characters aboard the ship were subjected to dehumanisation. Slaves who defied their slave owners, such as the character Ama in Herbstein's text, were provided with the remains of deceased slaves as sustenance. The chapter was divided into four parts; the first part looked at rape and any sexual violence that slave masters committed against female characters. The second part looked at all forms of traumatic journeys that female slaves experienced. The third part dealt with how slaves were whipped, tortured and subjected to violent death and the fourth part looked at the deprivation of enslaved women. I showcased in the study that enslaved female characters were deprived of

raising their children and this affected them psychologically since every mother perceived motherhood as a higher calling that every woman cherished therefore female slave characters that were separated from their children were devastated and depressed. I have further demonstrated that enslaved female characters suffered more than male characters since in slavery women were stereotyped. From the study, slaves that were caught in adultery, the women were punished and deprived of staying with their families, they were sold into slavery and the men were left scot-free.



CHAPTER FOUR

PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I have shown how physical trauma was a prevailing issue in the Transatlantic Slave Trade. I have foregrounded how slave masters used rape to subject enslaved female characters to domination. I have also demonstrated that slaves were subjected to a traumatic journey in the slave trade. Many slaves were tortured and whipped and some slaves were subjected to violent death. I have shown that slave masters used dehumanization, and all forms of violence to punish slaves and also to subject slaves under their authority so that the slaves would fear them. I have indicated that slaves were perceived as mere objects and chattels by their slave masters who profited from their labour in the fields which resulted in massive deprivation in the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

In this chapter, I demonstrate how the Transatlantic Slave Trade generated psychological trauma which is evident in all the selected texts. Psychological trauma in this chapter is deduced from the behaviour of the enslaved female characters since psychological trauma is a hurt in one's mind and is rooted in a person's behaviour or perception of things in this study. Enslaved women who exhibit psychological trauma show signs of the following characteristics such as anger, depression, mood swings, shock, insanity, anxiety, fear, guilt, shame, self-loathing, denial, self-blame, disbelief, feeling sad and hopelessness in this study.

Slaves Insanity

Sethe in Morrison's *Beloved* exemplifies psychological trauma. Her psychological trauma is rooted in insanity or unstable mind. Sethe an enslaved woman in Sweet Home faces the highest form of maltreatment from her master Schoolteacher which informs her decision to run away with her children to escape the torture and violence meted out to slaves in Sweet Home. In the process of Sethe and her children escaping, Schoolteacher decided to pursue them and bring them back to Sweet Home where he could profit from the labour of Sethe and her children since the Slave Fugitive Act permits slave masters to recapture runaway slaves. Sethe encounters Schoolteacher and his men in her voyage of running away, the mere sight of Schoolteacher and his men intensifies Sethe's anger and Sethe's irritability rises to the point of insanity when she grabs her baby and slaughtered her and wounded the other children. Sethe acts like a Medea in this context. Sethe's actions are rooted in psychological trauma where anger leads her to commit such an atrocity against her children she loves. Sethe's insanity is as a result of the pain she has been subjected to in Sweet Home which makes Sethe to act in an irrational manner since her aim of escaping from slavery is to be a good mother to her children. The following is an extract from the novel to depict Sethe's insanity towards her children.

The slave catcher dismounted off his horse and joined the rest of the group. The schoolteacher and the nephew relocated to the left side of the house, while the sheriff and himself went towards the right side. An elderly individual of unsound mind was positioned inside the stack of firewood, with a chopping

tool. His evident insanity was immediately apparent due to his peculiar behaviour of emitting low, feline-like grunts. Approximately twelve yards away from that individual was another individual—a lady adorned with a flower. Similarly, she seemed to be in a state of madness, as she too stood still, but vigorously waved her hands as if clearing away imaginary spider webs. Both individuals, however, were fixated on the same location—a little building. The nephew approached the young African American youngster and retrieved the axe from his possession. Subsequently, all four individuals proceeded towards the shed. Within the premises, two little boys were bleeding on the sawdust and mud, lying at the feet of an African-American lady who was cradling a youngster bathed in blood to her bosom with one hand, while holding a baby by the heels with the other... The user did not give any text. Right from the start, it was clear, especially to Schoolteacher, that there was nothing there to claim possession of. The three (now four, since she was pregnant when she cut) pickaninnies they had anticipated to be alive and in good health, with the intention of bringing them back to Kentucky and raising them appropriately to fulfill the much-needed labour at Sweet Home, were unfortunately not living. Two individuals were lying with their eyes open in a pile of sawdust. Another person was injecting blood into the clothing of the main individual. This main individual was the lady that Schoolteacher boasted about.

According to Schoolteacher, she was skilled at making high-quality ink and delicious soup. Additionally, she meticulously ironed his collars to his liking. Schoolteacher also said that she had at least ten more years of reproductive capability. However, she had become unruly as a result of being mishandled (149)

The above depicts Sethe's madness when she killed her baby and wounded her other children to protest against slavery. These statements, "she was skilled at making high-quality ink and delicious soup... she meticulously ironed his collars to his liking and she has at least ten more years of reproductive capability"(149) depicts Sethe as a profitable slave who brings gain to his master. It is the economic value Sethe brought to Sweet Home that made Schoolteacher and his men to go after her. Sethe's behaviour made Schoolteacher realised that Sethe is insane, therefore his idea of perceiving Sethe and her children as chattels failed. The objective of Schoolteacher and his companions in their pursuit of recapturing Sethe and her children was to reclaim them and exploit their work. However, upon seeing that there was no longer any benefit to be derived from Sethe after she committed infanticide, Schoolteacher and his associates disengaged from Sethe's state of insanity.

Following this abhorrent act, Sethe's previous experiences resurface to torment her. As Sefa (2019) states that Freud posited that repetition serves the purpose of achieving mastery in any traumatic events. However, contemporary clinical research has shown that this outcome is seldom achieved. Instead, it is considered that the phenomenon known as "repetition compulsion" is an effort to convert a passive painful experience into an active one. Upon departing

from Sweet Home, Sethe's trauma undergoes a transformation from a passive state to an active one, resulting in her post-slavery existence seeming more perilous than her time in bondage. Morrison elucidates the perils inherent in the Transatlantic Slave Trade, highlighting the enduring and arduous process of healing the traumas inflicted upon the lives of enslaved individuals. Despite Sethe's emancipation of herself and her children by the singular act of murdering her newborn and injuring her other children, she is unable to detach herself from her previous existence as a slave and fully embrace her newfound freedom. Her previous experiences of trauma greatly impact her whole existence, as Austine (2003) aptly describes Sethe's recollections as a continual cause of harm, resulting in an afflicted state of mind and a haunting present. Consequently, Sethe assumes a subordinate position at 124 Bluestone Road, relinquishing all possessions, including her two sons, and experiencing an inability to recover from her previous traumas. Sethe's daily discourse with Paul D. and her daughter Denver is replete with poignant recollections of her mental anguish, physical abuse, and dehumanising mistreatment endured during her time as a slave at Sweet Home. These experiences have left her bereft of everything that once surrounded her. Sethe, as a victim of slavery, was unable to surmount the anguish and torment she endured at Sweet Home. Once more, Sethe experiences severe psychological trauma as her deceased infant, Beloved, reappears as a spectral presence. Sethe's two sons are taken away from her due to the persistent haunting, causing her to dread the spirit that torments her and her family. Sethe is overwhelmed with terror and astonishment as the intensity of the ghost's presence escalates. The following extract depicts what happened in Sethe's home 124.

124 exhibited malicious intent. Rife with an infant's poison. Both the mother residing in the home and the children are aware of the situation. For years, both Sethe and her daughter Denver endured the maliciousness directed at them, until eventually, by 1873, they were the only targets of this hostility. The grandmother, Baby Suggs, had passed away, and the boys, Howard and Buglar, had fled when they reached the age of thirteen, triggered by specific events: Buglar's departure was prompted by the shattering of a mirror upon his gaze, while Howard's decision was influenced by the appearance of two little handprints on a cake (5).

From the above it can be said that Sethe experiences profound shock, anxiety, and shame as she is unable to subdue the ghost that has disrupted her household, resulting in a profound sense of isolation that causes her neighbours to distance themselves from Sethe and her daughter Denver. The presence of the ghost in 124 engenders feelings of solitude, despair, and sorrow in Sethe and her daughter Denver.

Another character that experiences insanity is Baby Suggs. As Sandamali (2021) asserts that Baby Suggs is the biological mother of Halle, a guy from Sweet Home who was chosen by Sethe to be her spouse. As a mother, she assumes many tasks and fulfils various obligations. Nevertheless, the impact of slavery on Baby Suggs prevents her from fully embodying her position as a dignified mother within the family. Baby Suggs has a profound state of despair as a result of this failure, marking the conclusion of her life's journey. Baby Suggs has a melancholic existence marked by emotional

instability and mental derangement, oscillating between childlike behaviour and moments of anguish from her traumatic background. Sethe contemplates the psychological distress experienced by Baby Suggs. Anyone that Baby Suggs was acquainted with, and even those whom she had affection for, “who had not fled or been executed, were subjected to being leased, borrowed, purchased, retrieved, stockpiled, pledged as collateral, acquired via victory, stolen, or forcibly taken. Baby Suggs has a total of six different dads for her eight children. The author refers to the unpleasantness of life as the sudden and distressing event of her two young daughters being sold and separated, both of whom had not yet grown their permanent teeth”(23). Baby Suggs is unable to bid farewell to her children. She is compelled to engage in a relationship with a supervisor who assured her that she could retain custody of her third kid. However, the child is ultimately exchanged for timber during the spring. Baby Suggs, having seen the multitude of hardships inflicted upon her family by slavery, has a profound sense of sadness that significantly impacts her psychological well-being. Despite Halle granting her mother autonomy by way of Sethe, this gesture has no significance for her since she remains discontented and continues to see herself as trapped by her previous experiences, resulting in a state of sorrow and despair. Baby Suggs finds herself in a psychological traumatic situation that affects her mind. Caruth (1996) defines trauma as an intense and abrupt incident that leads to uncontrolled and recurring hallucinations and intrusive experiences. Consequently, Baby Suggs is unable to fully appreciate the freedom her son secured for her, since her existence remains entangled with the painful memories of her time in slavery. Baby Sugg’s persistent delusion of a painful

history prevents her from fully embracing her current freedom. According to Caruth(1996), “a state of being in which an individual experiences the recurrence of a distressing occurrence until it can be transformed into a version that is acceptable to the conscious mind.”(p.3&4) In order for trauma to be present one’s life. It must first be outside of our awareness to the extent that the intense occurrence was excessively intense or occurred with great speed, rendering it incapable of being comprehended by the conscious mind. As a result, it is excluded from being retained in the memory of the waking state. Baby Suggs have seen the dehumanisation and torment of her kids by white slave masters, who treated her children as if they were animals and as a mother, she endured the anguish of seeing these atrocities. When Halle eventually purchased her own freedom, she effectively secured five years of uninterrupted leisure for herself. A twenty-year-old man so in love with her mother he gave five years of Sabbaths just to see her sit down for a change was a serious recommendation. But Baby Suggs could not enjoy this liberty her son Halle gained for her, though the son has shown her so much love the fact is that she is still haunted by the clutches of slavery. She lives a sad life and feels life is worthless. She attempts to conceal her history by delivering sermons to others, although her past remains indelible. Slavery is an extremely dehumanising institution that often leaves its survivors unable to fully recover from the traumatic experiences they endured. This is exemplified by the character Baby Suggs, who continues to be haunted by her past even after being liberated from slavery. As stated in the quote, her past remains unbearable, and she recognises that death does not offer an escape from these memories. Baby Suggs, burdened by the profound loss inflicted by slavery,

eagerly anticipated death as a means to escape the haunting memories of her agonising past. Upon Baby Suggs's demise, Seth conveyed to Paul D that her death was akin to a soothing cream, symbolising her death came as a release from all her torment. The instability of Baby Suggs's mental state therefore demonstrates that slavery inflicted a greater degree of suffering than death. To her surviving was the challenging aspect of existence. "Unfortunately, you failed to encounter her (7). Sethe's reaction to Paul D indicates that the only difficulty Baby Suggs had was being alive. The aftermath of slavery inflicted a profound sense of worthlessness and anguish onto its victims. Baby Suggs experienced dehumanisation at Sweet Home, seeing her children being subjected to torture and humiliation by white slave owners, which ultimately led to their escape and absence. This traumatic event became the foundation of Baby Suggs's psychological distress. Though Baby Suggs was granted freedom after slavery, "she lived like a child. All her children are dead. Claimed she felt each one go the very day and hour" (8). Slavery deprived Baby Suggs of the joy of motherhood. Her depression is therefore rooted in the fact that once her children left, they never returned nor did they communicate with her where they were, so she assumed her children were dead. This led to her loneliness, she felt rejected in life which resulted in her depression in life. As Selfridge (2018) puts it that, *Beloved* is one of the very examples of literature that is written in the maternal voice of the few female slaves narratives, even fewer strive to represent the unique struggles of mothers within slavery. Both Sethe and Denver experience a psychological split, simultaneously embodying their able and traumatized selves. While Sethe inhabits a state of total dissociation, Denver is trapped in a terrifying

childhood. Baby Suggs's death therefore resonates with peace, since in death one forgets everything, which means she will forget all her sorrows in slavery that is why Sethe equates her death to that of sweetness.

Ama's psychological trauma increases to insanity when Itho her lover's head was crushed in front of her. Ama becomes guilty and blames herself for Itsho's death since her lover Itsho met his untimely death when he tried to save her from slave raiders. This leads to Ama unstable mind as she keeps seeing Itsho's dead body in the open with birds feasting on his body in her dreams. Ama's pain intensifies to the state of insanity as she keeps hallucinating about the presence of Itsho in her room. Ama is overwhelmed with fear as she believes that Itsho is not resting peacefully since his body was not given a befitting burial. Ama's shock and fear are rooted in the fact that she is disconnected from her lover through death. As Tyson (1999) puts it, "fear of abandonment also plays a role when we fear the death of others, when children lose a parent or when adults lose a spouse; the overwhelming feeling of loss is often a feeling of abandonment. How could you leave me? Don't you love me whether we realised it or not, the death of a loved one pushes our guilt buttons" (p. 25). This is the guilt Ama is faced with as her emotions are reiterated in what Stroebe et al (2010) assert that, "the loss of a partner leads to deficits in areas that can broadly be characterized as loss of instrumental support, loss of validation support, loss of emotional support and loss of contact support" (p.4). Ama's pain is rooted in a feeling of loneliness and hopelessness as the only person who could rescue her is killed by a slave master.

Akua, a character in Gyasi's novel *Homegoing*, serves as a prime example of psychological trauma stemming from a state of mental instability. Akua is seen as a deranged individual in her society owing to her peculiar conduct that baffles everyone around her. Asampasah et al (2021) reported that Akua has a sequence of distressing dreams characterised by fire, in which the fire engulfs and destroys everything, spreading from the coast of Fanteland to Asante. In her nightmares, the fire is manifested in the form of a mother cradling two infants close to her chest. Due to these recurring nightmares, she develops a schizophrenia disorder which leads her to intentionally ignite her room one night, resulting in the death of two of her children and leaving a permanent mark on one of them, Yaw, who is a teacher. Consequently, the locals saw Akua as mentally unstable and labelled her as the Crazy Woman. Akua, being a descendant of slave merchants experiences the full weight of the responsibility for slavery and endures the consequences of her ancestors' transgressions. Akua has a recurring vision of a female figure engulfed in flames throughout her dreams, which continues to disturb her during the night. Akua's mental state is adversely affected by the recurrence of this dream, rendering her mad, since she is the only one who perceives the firewoman. This has a detrimental impact on her psychological well-being, since she is the only one who witnesses the fire incidents. Consequently, the community she resides in labels her as the 'mad lady'. Akua's manifestation of insanity is deeply connected to her ancestral ties with Maame, a lady who was subjected to enslavement. Maame deliberately ignited the forest in order to escape from enslavement in Cobbe's dwelling. However, when faced with the prospect of being recaptured and returned to servitude in Asanteland, she chose to take her

own life. The two children she is holding in the fire represent her two daughters (Effia and Esi). Maame's spirit is so much alive as the spirit tries to communicate with Akua, but this leads to Akua's madness since she is unaware of her ancestor Maame, Akua was born after the Transatlantic Slave Trade was stopped. This shows the African belief that the dead and the living are connected, where Akua's ancestor Maame tries to communicate with her. But these series of dreams from the fire woman affects Akua and her children negatively to show that slavery was the unkindest thing that happened to the human race: The following is an extract to showcase Akua's madness

“Akua, the Crazy Woman! Akua, the Crazy Woman?”

She felt the sound of her name in the growing pit of her stomach.

The weight like worry. Her eyes began to open, and she saw Edweso around her. She was being carried. Ten men at least, lifting her above their heads. She registered all of this before she registered the pain she was in, looked down to see her burned hands feet.

“The wailing women were behind the men. “Evil woman” some of them cried. “Wicked one,” said others.

Asamoah was behind the wailing women, hopping with his sick, Trying to keep up.

Then they were trying her to the burning tree. Akua her voice.

“Please, brother. Tell me what is going on!

Antwi Agyei, an elder, began to bellow. “ She wants to know what is going on?” he cried to the men who gathered.

They wrapped the rope around Akua's wrists. Her burns screamed and then she Antwi Agyei continued.

"What kind of evil does not know itself?"

He asked, and the crowd stomped its many feet against the hard earth.

They slug the rope around Akua's waist.

"We have known her as the Crazy Woman, and now she has shown herself to us. (148)

The above portrays the insanity of Akua who sets fire to herself and her children. Akua's madness is perceived as a psychological trauma that is rooted in her great ancestor Maame. Akua's situation exemplifies the many Black descendants who are psychologically traumatized due to the involvement of their ancestry in the Transatlantic Slave Trade. The insanity of Akua is what many Blacks are witnessing now. Even though they didn't taste slavery but the consequences of slavery transcended generations to show the evils associated with the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Akua's mental state resonates with the Black American community, where many of these Americans are psychologically traumatized due to an ugly past life of slavery. The danger with the Transatlantic Slave Trade is that it did not just end when the slave trade was abolished, it pains and traumas still linger on to the next generations. Akua madness is therefore a collective madness that represents the Black community whose ancestors were enslaved. The burnt marks on Akua and her son Yaw symbolise the scars of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. The scar portrays the past wounds of slavery and how slavery is still affecting the descendants of those who were enslaved.

Gyasi's novel *Homegoing* reveals Esi's mental instability. Her life is influenced by a volatile mental state, as she is described as a serious lady who is never known to recount a joyful tale. Esi's distressing narratives about her daughter stem from the profound psychological trauma inflicted upon her by the Transatlantic Slave Trade. She has always failed to recount any tale that evokes joy or contentment. Ness's bedtime tales exclusively revolved on what Esi referred to as 'the large vessel'. Ness would go into slumber while envisioning mankind being cast into the Atlantic Ocean, like to anchors devoid of any attachments: no land, no individuals, and no value. Esi said that in the spacious vessel, individuals were arranged in vertical stacks of ten. She vividly described how the unfortunate event of a person's dies on top of another would exert pressure on the stack, much to the force used by chefs when crushing garlic. "Ness's mother is referred to as Frownic by the other slaves due to her perpetual lack of smiles" (70). Esi's life has been profoundly influenced by the mental instability she experienced due to the cruel mistreatment inflicted upon her by her slave owners on her journey across the ocean. The distressing and alarming images aboard the ship had a profound impact on Esi's psyche, transforming her into a sombre lady who seldom displayed a smile. The expression of displeasure on her face stems from a state of inner turmoil and dissatisfaction with both herself and her surroundings. Esi inadvertently transfers this psychological anguish to her daughter, Ness, via the horrifying bedtime tales she narrates. The problem with psychological trauma is in its detrimental impact on the individual's mental state, causing significant distress for others in their vicinity.

Esi's volatile mental state is shown at the Alabama plantation when her daughter, Ness, is forcibly taken from her and sold into slavery by another slave-owner. Esi experiences profound anguish as she is deprived of the opportunity to become a mother to her only offspring: "Upon the sale of Ness in 1796, Esi's lips remained tightly pressed together, reflecting her distress." Ness vividly recalled her attempt to grasp her mother, vigorously swinging her arms and vigorously kicking her legs, resisting the man's attempt to separate her from her mother. Nevertheless, Esi's lips remained still and her hands refrained from extending. She remained steadfast, unchanged, just as Ness had always perceived her to be" (87). Esi's silence in response to Ness being sold into slavery may be attributed to her profound anguish, rendering her unable to utter a single word. Esi's profound lack of understanding is seen when her daughter is forcibly taken from her and sold into slavery. This serves as a reminder of the immense influence of slavery as an institution that suppresses and silences its victims. Esi's psychological anguish is evident in her profound grief and overwhelming sense of despair at Ness's separation from her. The anguish of being permanently separated from her own daughter fills her with rage as she realises that they would never see one other again. The fact that enslaved women are not allowed to raise their children is a source of psychological trauma. Gyasi exposes how from Mamme, Esi to Ness, all these women could not raise their children because of the Transatlantic Slave Trade; their children are snatched from them due to slavery. This therefore affected their motherly role to their children. The experiences of these women illustrate how slavery destroyed the concept of motherhood and denied children motherly care and love which affected the children psychologically. The

enslaved women are psychologically traumatized by the fact that they are unable to take care of their children. It must be noted that unborn babies are not spared from this psychological trauma. According to Muhammad (2003), pregnant slaves have to endure horrendous injuries as a result of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. Since, Europeans valued pregnant slaves because they viewed the unborn babies as chattels. “Thus, a pregnant female slave increased the wealth of slave masters, since slave master perceived slaves and their future progeny as merely forms of chattel and not human beings” (p.901). This is the rationale for the constant whipping of pregnant women by slave owners, aiming to instil terror in the developing foetus. The objective is to ensure that once the kid is born, they are easily controlled by the slave masters, similar to the situation of Esi. Esi endured continuous lashings from her slave masters during Ness’s gestation, resulting in Ness inheriting her mother’s psychological distress upon birth. From a psychoanalytic standpoint, the familial link is robust; hence any factor that undermines this relationship among family members should be disapproved of. Hence, even though slavery has been abolished for several years, Africans and black Americans families continue to lament their enduring anguish caused by the slave trade. A significant number of African Americans lack the ability to trace their ancestral origins to Africa and this ongoing trauma continues to afflict them. Esi’s tragic experience is shown as that of an oppressed woman who has relinquished all hopes and means of existence, yearning to be liberated by external forces.

Self-Loathing of Slaves

Again, Ama's deformity in one eye as a result of the slave trade affects her ego and makes her detest herself. Ama's one eye is removed as a way of punishment when she disobeyed her slave masters during the voyage across the Atlantic Ocean. Ama begins to indulge in self-loathing in Salvador as she is mocked and subjected to name calling by the people around her which puts her in a state of anger and depression as reflected in the following lines 'one eye woman or ugliest woman'. "Bring me," she instructed Vasconcellous, "the six ugliest wenches you have". Naturally, the information spread widely: there were very few undisclosed matters at the Engenho de Cima. Upon discovering that her name was included on the list of unattractive individuals, Ama had a profound sense of devastation. She swiftly made her way to her cabin, where she proceeded to conceal her face behind her blanket and weep till she reached the point of emotional exhaustion" (315). Ama is filled with a sense of guilt, grief, and rage due to this problem. Ama thus experiences psychological anguish and a severely diminished sense of motivation.

Anna in Gyasi's *Homegoing* is subjected to self-loathing as a result of the slave Fugitive Act. Kojo Freeman is an enslaved descendant of Esi. He and his pregnant wife Anna managed to flee from slavery in South America. However, their happiness is short-lived as the Fugitive Act of Slaves comes to force, allowing slave-holders to recapture runaway slaves. Unfortunately, Anna is apprehended and forced back into slavery, transforming their once joyful home into a psychologically traumatising environment. This distressing situation occurs due to Anna's abduction under the Fugitive Slave Act. Anna is once again been subjected to the act of being sold into slavery after her

recapture. She is unable to endure the agony and psychological distress that followed after experiencing a certain degree of liberty with her family subsequent to their escape from enslavement and her status as a slave now consequently; she chooses to end her own life, and her baby H is delivered via caesarean section. In Gyasi's *Homegoing*, suicide is seen as a manifestation of mental distress. Anna's emotional distance from her beloved family results in her intense self-disgust, since she never experienced happiness again after being taken back into custody. Her family's absence led to a profound self-hatred that compelled her to contemplate suicide while she was still pregnant. Ronnigstan (2009) argues that suicide can be attributed to an individual's differentiation between the 'Paranoid-Schizoid' and depressive positions. This differentiation leads to the paranoid-schizoid position, characterised by projecting self-hatred onto oneself, resulting in a persecutory and all-powerful perception. This projection onto oneself triggers intense anxiety about self-disintegration and loss of identity. This explains why enslaved individuals may choose to commit suicide rather than submit to enslavement. The paranoid schizoid individual induces both internal and outward fear in others, which subsequently results in the development of a depressed state. The perpetual torment, humiliation, physical abuse, and suffering endured by slaves' results in the development of dread, internalisation, and loss of self. When this occurs, the individual starts to see suicide as a superior alternative to life. In Anna's situation, she was abducted, forcibly separated from her beloved husband and eight children, who were her only source of happiness and welfare. The combination of her grief at losing her family, the ongoing torment and distress inflicted by her new slave owners, and her pregnancy

pushed her to take her own life. Just like what Shechter et al. (2022), suggest that the “central psychoanalytic approach to suicide has understood the patient-internal subjective experience of unbearable emotional or psychic pain and the urgent need for relief” (p.1). Emotional pain can also include intense effects such as shame humiliation, self-hate and rage. From Mamma to Anna in Gyasi’s *Homegoing* who committed suicide are women who have gone through psychological trauma which has resulted in self-loathing. The shame and pain of slavery which made them wish for death than life is rooted in their mental unstableness due to the dehumanization they are subjected to in slavery. Therefore the actions of these women to commit suicide in *Homegoing* depict the many women from Africa who did not survive slavery and had to end their lives through suicide. Slavery in any form should be condemned by all and those who have tested slavery will need to be encouraged to heal from the past. The past is important as Kaye (2000) quoted Maya Angelou, ‘History, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be unlived, but if faced with courage, need not be lived again’ (p.1).

Attah uses the hundred wells that were dug in Salaga to depict self-loathing. Salaga is a place where slaves are assembled and subsequently transported to other parts of the country, Salaga symbolises a place of self-hatred since Salaga as a town is showcased in Attah’s text as a place where slaves are shamed and subjected to humiliation to the extent that they hated themselves for what they have been through. The term Salaga continues to evoke anguish and sorrow among the people from the North who suffered the loss of their ancestors to slavery. Salaga served as a hub for the enslaved individuals who were taken from the northern region of Ghana. The distress

experienced in Salaga is linked to the collective memory, a kind of recollection that shaped the development of the Salaga community's identity. The impact of Salaga extends beyond personal trauma, including a cultural trauma that is intertwined with the formation of a shared identity and the establishment of collective memory among the residents of Salaga. Salaga serves not just as a symbol, but also as a metaphor in which Attah draws a comparison between the experiences of slaves in Salaga and psychological trauma. Before being sold, slaves in Salaga were publicly shown in a state of nudity to potential purchasers. Slaves were seen as commodities, with slave owners openly showcasing them for potential purchasers to inspect and choose. According to Johnson (1986), Salaga was a prominent slave market in West Africa during the 1880s. Kali's writings depict the events that transpired in Salaga. Upon the arrival of slaves in Salaga, they were transported to Onuamkam Bayou, a location that translates to "bathing" in the local language, with "bayou" referring to the state of being enslaved. Essentially, it refers to the act of washing a person who is enslaved. Ouamkam Bayou served as the location where the slaves were cleansed and coated with various types of shea butter to enhance their lustre. Salaga served as the location where slaves were permitted to cleanse themselves, and the many wells in Salaga were specifically excavated for this purpose. Every slave after they had their bath they were given Shea butter to smear on their bodies to moisturize them for a higher profit, and after that, they were paraded in the Salage market naked for buyers to make their choice. Just like how Attah describes how Aminah and other slaves are paraded at the Salaga market for sale in her novel. The following lines demonstrate the process slaves were subjected to in

the Salaga market. The following is an extract to exemplify Salaga as a place of self-loathing.

Maigida ordered her into a pond that held only one girl.

Aminah peeled off her wrapper and lowered herself into the water. Shivering. She washed. The water had barely touched her skin when it began to evaporate with the harmattan dryness. As the girls finished they climbed out of their ponds and were met by women clutching huge calabashes of shea butter. Aminah got out and an unsmiling woman gave her a dollop of shea butter. Which she spread on her arms and belly and down her legs. The woman gave her another dollop. It was too much, but she jutted her chin forward, instructing that Aminah add another layer of oil. When satisfied, the woman signalled to Maigida and grabbed her wrist and they went back in the direction from which they'd come. Aminah pictured her discarded cloth, bunched carelessly on the grass, and wished she could go back and get it. But Maigida's grasp was unrelenting. Instead of heading to his building, they stopped at the open market just before it. He took Aminah to a tree, shackled her ankles, and pointed to a large stone. She tried to make eye contact with him, but he wouldn't look at her.

'Please, Aminah begged. Please, clothe me. Please, not this. He said nothing else. Other raiders bought their captured people and sat them by her. She bent her head and saw her breast, her black bushy triangle. This was the most exposed she'd felt

since her exile from Botu. Even when she'd had a wrapper, she'd attracted people like Wofa Sarpong and the turbaned man of the caravans. What would her nakedness bring (138).

The wells in the extract signify a place of cleansing. Words like naked in the extract symbolises shame, as Aminah is subjected to humiliation in the Salaga market as she is paraded naked. She is bathed in the open and is chained to a tree naked to attract potential buyers. This activity makes Aminah develop self-hatred for herself which is a characteristic of psychological trauma. Salaga is a place of torment because when slaves get there and they are displayed at the market for sale it means 'no return' of the slave to their family. "Salaga is a town known for its abundance of one hundred wells," said Wurcher. What is the reason for the abundance of wells in this location? Inquired Aminah. "They were constructed to cleanse slaves following arduous voyages," Wurche said. Aminah believed that a town that was established for the purpose of trading human people. Such a community would be incapable of thriving. The reason for Salaga's many conflicts is likely explained in the novel (6). Attah reveals the cause for the current dismal and abandoned state of Salaga, highlighting the town's curse for its historical involvement in the inhumane practise of selling people. Salaga therefore symbolises a site of agonising detachment between the enslaved individuals and their loved ones, as well as a site of disgrace. Kali (2011) argues that the majority of captives who arrived in the Slave Coast passed via the slave market of Salaga, located in present-day northern Ghana. Salaga is home to several descendants of these enslaved people. The following is Shaibu Inusah's viewpoint: The operations here were mostly characterised by slavery. All residents of Salaga are

descendants of slaves, with the exception of those who have recently relocated. However, many are reluctant to openly discuss this matter. Currently, many are still experiencing psychological distress as a result of the events that took place in Salaga involving enslaved individuals some years ago. The present inhabitants of Salaga are direct descendants of those who were involved in the slave trade. The inhabitants of Salaga struggle to discuss their history due to the ongoing anguish they experience, as shown in Attah's novel.

Attah exposes the psychological effects of slavery on Aminah's character. The night that horsemen invaded Aminah's hut, the family was indoors. Hassanna and Issa heard the noise from outside and drew Aminah's attention. Aminah and her siblings became frightened not knowing the mission of the horsemen. All of a sudden, they realised an explosion of fire on their roof top. Issa, Hassanna and Aminah ran outside and escaped the fire. Aminah's recurring nightmares of the traumatic death of her parent's on the night the slave raiders set their hut on fire keeps tormenting her mind. The horrifying scenes of how her parents' died keeps repeating in her dreams, this reiterates Freud's assertion of psychological trauma in Aminah's life. Caruth (1996) argues that Freud posits that psychological trauma does not necessarily align with the physical experience of a life-threatening situation, such as bodily harm. Freud observes that, from the perspective of consciousness, survival does not appear to be a familiar experience. When the traumatising experience resurfaces, it may seem a vivid recollection, yet it may only manifest as a symptom or a dream. Aminah is now experiencing a persistent recurrence of trauma in her head, which is causing her focus to be constantly disrupted. The

following is an excerpt illustrating the assault and subsequent capture by the horsemen.

The family made for Na's hut, but a horse burst through the entrance with a rider dressed in black, billowing clothing. He seemed to be floating in the air, a winged figure with a roaring fire behind him. He swivelled a long-barrelled gun above his head, in a display that would have dazzled at another time and place, but in that moment made Aminah, want to cover under a rock. He knocked Eeyah down with the barrel, pointed the muzzle at the children, and commanded them towards the entrance. Issa stood rooted, shaking. Aminah picked him up and grabbed Hassana's wrist. Hassana took Husseina's hand.

'There is nobody else present.' Aminah vociferated, in a state of agitation and urgency, yearning for them to refrain from disturbing their huts, uncertain if they have the ability to communicate effectively. If she had the ability to save anybody, her desire was for it to be Na and the infant.

The horsemen departed from Eeyah, who remained still, and led the children outside, where numerous other horsemen were escorting individuals out of their homes. They gathered all individuals and secured them together by tying ropes around their waists, without regard to gender or age, thereby intermingling men, women, girls, and boys. It was inconsequential. Family units were disrupted and intermingled with other family units. Aminah released Issa and firmly

grasped his hand, while ensuring a secure grip on Hassana's wrist. She was aware that her actions were causing them pain, yet she felt compelled to maintain their unity. Everywhere, individuals wept and pleaded. Aminah glanced towards the house, seeing that Na and the infant had not yet emerged. She had a sense of relief when the infant was unable to withstand the harsh handling. Aminah hoped that Na was in a state of profound slumber, as she sometimes tended to be. "If she perceived the disturbance, she would undoubtedly emerge" (55).

The extract shows that horses were used as a means of transportation for slave raiders. In the Northern part of Ghana it was only the rich who could afford to use horses as a means of transportation. The horsemen are the same as the slave raiders and they were the affluent people in the society. They invaded the hut of Aminah's family and captured them and reduced them to goats, since goats are tied just like the way Aminah and her siblings are tied in the extract. The language use in the extract also depicts sorrow and pity about Aminah and her siblings as they find themselves in bondage. The horsemen are depicted in the extract as men of authority and callous fellows who have no mercy towards their victims. Aminah develops shock and fear which damage her psyche after living through an extremely frightening and distressing event that resulted in the death of her entire family. Aminah becomes disconnected from her family, developed self-hatred and finds it difficult to cope with normal life after such calamity in her family. Aminah's psychological trauma is characterised by loneliness and regrets as she

continually blames herself for the calamity of her family. After Aminah's traumatic event, her situation is what Caruth (1996) puts it that a lot of people normally take time to comprehend and accept their traumatic experience. Aminah's mind becomes a playground where those painful images lodge, thereby controlling her entire life and making her emotional.

Identity Fragmentation

Identity fragmentation is another psychological trauma in *Beloved*. Balaev (2012) says that modern literary trauma theory generates a silent dread that separates identity. All the female characters in Morrison's work have shattered identities as a consequence of the trauma they are put through. According to Ron (2001), it is observed that cultural trauma lingers and continues to form African- American identity. In this emerging identity built via trauma, slavery does not correlate to an event, simply to a site of birth. But it is that place of genesis from which the construction of black identity in America has developed. This means trauma can reshape one's identity as is portrayed in the lives of all those who are enslaved in Morrison's *Beloved*. It must be noted that one of the major destructions that slavery left with its victim is a fragment of identity. Your identity is who you are but slaves could not actualize their identity since slaves are regarded as the property of slaveholders and this affect their inner self and ego which undisputably leave them with a broken image. The will of a slave is controlled by the slave owners which is why slaves in Sweet Home all exhibit fragmented identities just like how Paul D buries his identity crisis in smoking. His language shows his self-worth has been stripped off, and he has become a shadow of himself that is

why he has relationship problems with Sethe: The following is an extract to showcase identity crisis.

Toni Morrison's *Beloved* explores the psychological state of its protagonists, who have previously been enslaved. Slavery has inflicted profound physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual damage upon people. These individuals remain enslaved even after gaining freedom, unable to escape the haunting effects of their past. The deleterious consequences of slavery have profoundly affected African-Americans, resulting in a loss of their identity. Instances of self-alienation may be identified throughout the work. Regarding Paul D, it is evident that he lacked the ability to discern whether the screaming he perceived was originating from himself or whether it was a figment of his imagination. African-Americans are dehumanised and used as commodities for commerce. They lacked the ability to comprehend their worth as a human being. Paul D too has the same fear, always questioning his own humanity. The evidence indicates that they were consistently regarded as animals rather than human beings (Kesur 2019, p.824).

Paul D has a series of identity crises as he reflects on the Schoolteacher's treatment: "Schoolteacher changed me. I was something else and that something was less than a chicken sitting in the sun on a tub" (73). Thus, Paul D. was continually treated less than a chicken and this had a huge negative impact on his identity. Paul D. and Sethe too has a fragmented

identity so when they met again after being freed from slavery they never enjoyed their love lives due to that identity crisis; as Paul D. keeps telling Sethe that he cannot give his whole self to Sethe since he feels one should love nothing in intensity. This mind-set makes them think nothing is worthy to be loved deeply, that is why Paul D. cannot decide whether it is Sethe he loves or is her returned daughter Beloved. In *Beloved* slaves are treated like animals or sub-humans which has an impact on the lives of slaves. Sethe grabbing her two-year-old baby and slaughtering her like an animal shows how Sethe's mind is hypnotized and paralyzed by her slave masters. Motherhood is a higher calling so for Sethe to kill her baby shows how she has been traumatized by her slave master. Sethe's identity as a mother at this stage is lost. After killing her infant child she develops hatred for herself. This shows that Sethe killing her baby did not prove that she loved her baby less but rather the pain of slavery made her commit such a crime against her own child. Morrison therefore uses *Beloved* to bemoan how black identity has become fragmented as a result of the self-hatred that black feels for themselves as a result of the behaviour of white slave masters. As a consequence, African-Americans have inherited a heritage of suffering due to their marginalised status during the slave trade, which is seen in Morrison's novel *Beloved*. The intergenerational transmission of physical maltreatment experienced and seen by Black slaves has occurred. This has caused enduring harm to the self-esteem of the Black community, leading them to develop self-loathing tendencies. Morrison's female characters experience a range of psychological distress, including wrath, self-hatred, terror, shock, sadness, hopelessness, denial, and social isolation.

Ama's identity crisis is a result of the psychological trauma she has been put through throughout her journey as an enslaved woman. Ama's journey in the slave trade crushed and reshaped her identity negatively thereby leaving her psychologically traumatized. Fearon (1999) asserts that personal identity is a set of attributes, beliefs, desires, or principles of action that a person thinks to distinguish him/her in society in a relevant way and that the person takes special pride in it. Personal identity is embedded in a person's qualities and beliefs, which projects the person in a unique way different from another person. Identity loss is destructive to a person's personality. I find out that Ama's identity is fragmented as Ama is adopted into other strange cultures with people who demean slaves. Ama is left with no true identity of her personality and no place to belong in society; Ama exemplifies a woman whose self-esteem is destroyed as a result of verbal and physical abuse from slaveholders. Ama's life started in the Northern part of Ghana, Ama was formerly known as Nandzi and born in the Bedagbam village where her cultural practices differs from that of the Asantes who bought her as a slave. As an enslaved woman, Ama is denied the culture of her people and throughout her journey in slavery she cannot identify herself with the people she is living with, this distorts her identity leaving her psychologically traumatized. This shows that slaves are despised. Therefore, Ama has a fragmented identity. She finds herself in a new culture that places a limit on her identity and values because she is an enslaved woman. Ama is sent to the Elimina castle and her name again is changed from Ama to Pamela to suit her slave masters who perceive her as a lover but they exploit her sexually to satisfy their sexual lust without considering her psychological well-being.

Ama throughout the novel goes through several changes including the change of her name from Nandzi- to Ama- Pamela. These frequent changes come with a distorted identity that denies Ama to truly figure out who she is. Ama's identity crisis is also affected as a result of the movement the Transatlantic Slave Trade presented to her. For instance, from the northern part of Ghana to the southern part and finally, across the sea, each movement presented hardship to her. Ama's identity crisis is evident in her reaction to other characters in the novel as reflected in Augusta's assertion of Ama, Augusta perceives Ama as one who accepts every form of tag or instruction given to her without questioning further to depict her shallowness and confused state of mind. Bussi (2007) reflects that trauma can change one's identity and leave such a person in an identity crisis. I realised the inhuman treatment of Ama and the other slaves in Herbstein's novel resulted in an identity crisis for them. In each sexual assault, that Ama is subjected to; she is beaten, tortured and humiliated by her slave masters and this leaves her in a sad and hopeless situation.

Conclusion

The chapter looked at female characters in the selected texts that were traumatized psychologically. I indicated that the Transatlantic Slave Trade also psychologically traumatized enslaved women as well. I have shown that enslaved women exhibited psychological traumatic signs such as insanity, self-loathing, identity fragment, anger, irritability, mood swings, shock, anxiety, fear, guilt, shame, denial, self-blame, disbelief, disconnected, feeling sad and hopelessness in this study. I looked at how dehumanization in the Transatlantic Slave Trade led to the insanity of many enslaved women from

the texts. I also demonstrated in the selected texts that slave masters' perception of slaves as animals, sub-humans and chattels affected the ego of slaves and devastated their well-being. I have also demonstrated in the study that death was one of the common things that led to the psychological trauma of enslaved women. The psychological trauma of death happened in three ways in the selected texts, some enslaved women lost their loved ones as a result of slavery, some of the enslaved female characters witnessed the open executions of their colleague slaves and disobedient slaves were forced to eat the flesh of dead slaves. This had negative consequences on enslaved women as their lives were characterised by psychological signs of repeated nightmares of traumatic events in the night, hallucinations, speaking with ghosts, anger, guilt and sadness. Again, I have demonstrated that trauma generated identity crises among some of the enslaved female characters, Identity crisis reshaped the identity of slaves in the negative, and it broke their ego and made slaves fragile which affected their self-worth. In addition, I have indicated that slavery connoted hell and it subjected enslaved female characters to exploitative labour on the field that damaged the dignity of slaves. I have demonstrated that the higher form of psychological trauma was perceived in enslaved female characters who could not endure their trauma therefore they decided to commit suicide. I have further demonstrated that slavery lowered the dignity and self-worth of slaves and I have shown that this is why female slaves who came out from slavery were still haunted by their past to show that slavery was a powerful institution that left its victims with Post-Traumatic Slave Syndrome.

CHAPTER FIVE

TRANSGENERATIONAL TRAUMAS

Introduction

What the previous chapter has demonstrated in the study is that the Transatlantic Slave Trade psychologically traumatized enslaved female characters across all the selected texts. I have demonstrated in the previous chapter that the psychological trauma dealt with the minds of enslaved women and it was perceived in the behaviour of the enslaved female characters. I have demonstrated that psychological trauma generated identity crisis where the self-worth of enslaved female characters was lost; some of the enslaved female characters who could not bear their trauma opted for suicide to end it all. Further, I have indicated that psychological trauma was also characterized by signs like insanity, self-loathing, anger, loneliness, sadness, hopelessness and loss of dignity.

In this current chapter, I am looking at Transgenerational trauma in some of the selected texts. Transgenerational trauma is passed down from a previous generation to subsequent or current generations. With the Transgenerational trauma, I focus on female characters who inherited their trauma from their ancestry or parents. Some female characters who are descendants of the enslaved did not encounter first-hand slavery but their traumas are traceable to their enslaved parents or ancestors.

Akua's Inherited Trauma

I realise that Akua in Gyasi's *Homegoing* inherited her trauma from her great ancestor, Maame. Maame's trauma as an enslaved woman is handed down to the seventh generation of her descendants. Maame, as an enslaved

woman in Cobbe's home, set fire to the wood and escaped slavery the night that she gave birth to Effia. Though Maame successfully escaped slavery, shortly her descendants will be subjected to physical and psychological trauma in slavery. Maame's two daughters (Effia and Esi) symbolise two institutions in slavery: Effia stands for the enslaver and Esi stands for the enslaved. From the text, I realised both Effia and Esi's descendants inherited trauma from slavery. Akua is one of the products of Effia's descendants. Akua did not encounter slavery but she suffered from the consequences of slavery under the transfer of trauma in her lineage. From Akua's mother, Abeena, to Akua's Grandfather James Collies, they all suffered a series of bad luck and curses which can be related to their involvement in slavery. The fact that their lineage was privileged to enslave other people across the sea did not exempt them from the traumatic experience of slavery. Akua's grandfather, James, was described as a man of bad luck by the entire village since nothing worked for him and his wife. Their daughter, Abeena, also went through similar sufferings before giving birth to her daughter Akua. Akua, therefore, becomes an embodiment of psychological trauma because the missionaries that delivered her during her mother's labour kept whipping her daily to repent since she is a sinner because her mother gave birth to her out of wedlock. This attitude of the missionaries forced Akua out of the mission house into marriage with Asamoah. Though Akua's marriage with Asamoah produced two lovely kids, Akua was never at peace. Every night she encounters a firewoman in her dream believed to be her late ancestor, Maame, who torments Akua psychologically. Akua's encounters with the firewoman increases her trauma daily and the people around her did not understand Akua's behaviour since the

firewoman was visible only to Akua. In the following extract, Asempasah et al (2022) depict how trauma can be inherited.

Maame, who had ignited a massive fire in the forest and bravely fled through it to escape from slavery, Akua has a sequence of distressing dreams characterised by a raging fire that engulfs and destroys everything in its path, extending from the coast of Fanteland to Asante. Within her nightmares, the fire manifested in the form of a mother embracing two infants close to her chest. Due to these recurring nightmares, she develops a schizophrenia disorder which leads her to intentionally set her room ablaze one night, resulting in the death of two of her children and causing a permanent scar on one of them, Yaw, who happens to be a teacher. Consequently, the locals saw Akua as mentally unstable and bestowed upon her the nickname “Crazy Woman.” Akua, as a descendant of slave merchants, carries the weight of responsibility for the wrongdoing of slavery and experiences the consequences of the actions committed by her ancestors (Asempasah et al. 2022, p.9).

Even though Akua loses two children in the fire, her son Yaw is rescued by the villagers. Yaw will, later on in life, have to live with the scars of the fire to symbolise that slavery was a kind of fire that swept across the lineage of a family when it visited one: Though the fire of slavery has been quenched through the abolition of the slave trade, the marks or scars of slavery are still visible on the descendants of those who are enslaved as showcased in

Akua's son. Gyasi uses Akua and her family to foreground the concept that slavery is like a wound and even after it has been healed its scar will remain with its victim for the rest of their lives. This concept highlights the current situation of the Black Americans who were once enslaved in the past, though they are free today, the pain and trauma that their great-grandparents went through remain a scar in their lives, and many of these African Americans are finding it difficult to trace back to their root and that alone is a huge psychological and emotional trauma to them. The fact that Maame's daughter, Effia, is privileged to marry an enslaver does not exempt her grandchildren from trauma; even though her children did not experience first-hand trauma like Esi's grandchildren who are severely tortured and dehumanized in the slave trade. However, Gyasi exposes how Effia's grandchildren are equally psychologically and emotionally traumatized since the evil spirit of the Transatlantic Slave Trade did not only haunt the enslaved but equally haunted the enslaver as well.

Ness's Inherited Trauma

Once again, Ness acquired her psychological distress from her mother Esi. Gyasi's work explores the profound and enduring adverse effects experienced by its victims and their offspring, as shown by the characters of Esi and her daughter Ness. Esi was a serious and dependable lady who was seldom known to share a joyful anecdote. Ness's bedtime tales exclusively revolved on what Esi referred to as 'the large vessel'. Ness would go into slumber while seeing men being cast into the Atlantic Ocean, akin to anchors devoid of any attachment to land, people, or value. These men were piled in layers of ten, and as a man died and was put on another, his weight would

compress the pile, much like chefs crushing garlic. The distressing accounts of Esi's experience in the Transatlantic Slave Trade, relayed to her daughter Ness, undoubtedly inflicted lasting psychological distress upon her. Thus, Ness's trauma during the Transatlantic Slave Trade was passed on to her by her mother, Esi. From an early age, Ness experienced deep emotional distress due to the narratives her mother shared on the transportation of enslaved people from Africa to South America. According to Kaye (2005), the mortality rate of African slaves on the transatlantic voyage was incalculable. This assertion reiterates Esi's stories of slavery to Ness. I find out that Ness doesn't just inherit her mother Esi's trauma but she goes through similar suffering and torture just like her mother to show that when the evil clutches of slavery visit an individual it turns to affect the descendants of such a person. Mamme and her entire descendants are engulfed in the traumatic experience of the slave trade. I find out that Gyasi believes that she has a duty to the many enslaved, whose voices were silenced and traumatized during the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Her novel *Homegoing* is geared towards exposing the evils of the Transatlantic Slave Trade and giving voice to the many voices like Esi that were downtrodden during the slave era. Therefore, in *Homegoing* Gyasi does not just revisit the concept of slavery on two descendants but also displays how this slavery affected seven generations of Effia and Esi's descendants to show forth that even though slavery has been abolished but its consequences will keep on affecting so many generations that are yet unborn, making trauma inheritable in Gyasi's *Homegoing*.

Sethe's Family Repetitive Trauma

In Morrison's *Beloved*, we see comparable instances of Transgenerational trauma. The trauma within Sethe's family is hereditary, since there is a recurring pattern of trauma stemming from the institution of slavery that is prevalent throughout Sethe's whole ancestry. Sethe discovers from her mother's acquaintance that she was raised by a mother who callously got rid of all her previous infants since they were the result of sexual assault by White slave owners. This implies that Sethe's act of killing her own child is foreshadowed by her mother's actions. Sethe's grandmother, an enslaved lady, took her own life by hanging. Similarly, Sethe's mother also committed suicide, highlighting the Transgenerational trauma within Sethe's family line. This demonstrates that Sethe's whole lineage is subject to the curse of slavery, since there is a recurring pattern of pain inside the family. The text portrays Sethe's trauma as re-memory, a recurring experience. This is reinforced by Caruth's reference to Freud's observation of patients experiencing severe traumatic incidents. Readers connect with the re-memory of the horrific occurrence by listening to how Sethe's personal trauma tale unfolds via her deep affection for her baby daughter. Sethe's anguish reaches its zenith when she makes the decision to murder her infant, Beloved, and injure her other children as a means of evading recapture and returning to a life of enslavement. Sethe's activities are driven by psychological trauma, as described by Bloom (1999), which happens when a person is subjected to abrupt, unexpected, and emotionally intense situations that overwhelm them. These traumatic events rapidly become ingrained in the individual's memory. Sethe's response to the arrival of the schoolteacher and his men, who came to

take her away, was immediate and instinctual. The deeply ingrained trauma of slavery in her psyche compelled her to fatally harm her own baby and injure the other children without hesitation. Sethe was overwhelmed by a profound emotional impact. Muhammad (2003) suggests that female slaves increased the wealth of slave masters and the slave trade since their children were also seen as forms of chattel that could bring in profit to slave-holders. Psychoanalysis of trauma perceives Sethe's deeds as one that is sparked by her previous life, as Sethe's past life was so dehumanizing and treacherous, that she seeks to protect her children from such a life that she considers traumatic. As Nybery(2020)puts it "trauma plays a strong role in Sethe's decision to grab her four children and run to the shed to kill them after she realises her master has come for them"(P.9). It is there that she killed her baby, who comes to be known as Beloved later on. The other three children are spared only because of Sethe's lack of time. This means that though Sethe got away from slavery by running away she finds it difficult to overcome the trauma of slavery and the following is an extract to showcase it.

The circumstances surrounding Sethe's act of killing her child significantly overshadow the factors that contributed to the infanticide in the Margaret Garner case. Both women, who had previously been enslaved, took the lives of their own young daughters upon learning that their former owner was coming to reclaim them and their children, subjecting them once again to a life of servitude. Both women were motivated to prevent the reestablishment of the dehumanising and brutal circumstances that support slavery, leading them to resort to extreme

measures of murdering. The infanticides were not a manifestation of aggression, but rather a response stemming from unresolved trauma. These women committed these acts to save their kids from being subjected to more harm. Both Margaret Garner and the fictional character Sethe experienced trauma (Nyberg 2020, p.5).

From the above both Sethe and Margaret Garner action are rooted in the trauma they suffered in slavery. Sethe's trauma is also passed down to her by her mother. Since Sethe's enslaved mother also committed infanticides against all the babies that were born of her as a result of rape. Sethe is her only survived child but she equally suffers from Transgenerational trauma.

Denver, Sethe's daughter exemplifies Transgenerational trauma in Morrison's *Beloved*. Denver's trauma increases with the return of Beloved, she gets to know Beloved is her sister who was killed when her mother tried escaping from slavery. Nyberg (2020) states that according to Caruth, trauma is characterised by a referential recurrence, which is manifested via the singular image of Beloved (p.17). Denver's anxieties heightened as she persistently immersed herself in her mother's distressing experiences. Denver experiences trauma manifested via her dread of her mother, which in turn triggers nightmares during her sleep. In these dreams, she is gripped by terror at the prospect of her mother decapitating her and thereafter bringing her severed head downstairs to style her hair (162). Denver is among the offspring of enslaved women who did not directly experience the horrors of slavery, but they did suffer the long-term effects of trauma as a result of their mothers' enslavement. Denver acquired her trauma from her mother Sethe as she

overheard their conversation with Paul D on the dehumanising experiences inflicted upon them by the white slave owners. Denver is overwhelmed by anxiety and panic due to the tales she hears. Denver's apprehension intensifies upon discovering that the apparition haunting them is her deceased sibling, who was tragically killed during the era of enslavement. The return of Seth's murdered baby Beloved to haunt the entire family signifies how enslaved people and their families were tormented by their past lives after they came out of slavery.

The malevolent infant ghost returns to disrupt a household, where Denver has experienced the departure of her two brothers, Buglar and Howard, who choose to go from home due to their inability to tolerate the vengeful and maleficent spirit who returned to terrify them. 124 exhibited a malicious and vengeful nature. Replete with an infant's toxic substance. Both the ladies residing in the home and the children were aware of it. For many years, both Sethe and her daughter Denver endured the maliciousness directed against them, until by 1873 they were the only targets of it (1).

The extract shows that Denver experiences a profound sense of isolation as she resides in house number 124 with her mother. She has been abandoned and neglected by the entire community. This serves as a poignant illustration of how individuals who were once enslaved are often shunned by the society they once belonged to. Those who have not personally endured the trauma of slavery struggle to comprehend the deep emotional scars it inflicts upon its victims, much like Sethe and her daughter Denver, who continue to

suffer from the wounds of their past. It is important to acknowledge that ex-slaves face rejection in the communities where they reside. This is seen in the example of Sethe and her daughter Denver, who are abandoned by their community due to their history as former slaves. The extract below depict how

Denver and her mother are abandoned by the people living around them

Sethe quickly approached the stove, but before she could forcefully grab Denver's collar, the girl leaned down and started crying.

"What is wrong with you? "I have never witnessed you exhibiting such behaviour before."

"Let her be," said Paul D. "I am unfamiliar to her."

"That's just it. She lacks any justification to behave disruptively against an unfamiliar individual. What is it, my dear? Has anything occurred?"

However, Denver was trembling intensely and crying uncontrollably, rendering her unable to articulate her words.

For a span of nine years, she refrained from shedding tears, but now they flowed down her mature chest. "I can't no more, I can't no more"

"What is it that you are unable to do?" What is it that you are unable to do? I am unable to reside in this location.

I am uncertain of the destination or course of action, but it is imperative that I relocate from this place. We are not engaged in any conversations. No visitors arrive. I am not favoured by boys. Girls do not either.

“Honey, honey,”

“What is she referring to when she says that nobody speaks to you?”

Inquired Paul D.

This is the home. Individuals do not..

“ It’s not! It’s not the house. It’s us! And it’s you!”

“Denver!”(14)

Denver becomes emotionally traumatized with the use of words like ‘ I can’t no more’ to suggest her anguish since her house is abandoned by her neighbours. Nobody in her neighbourhood wants to associate with her because of her mother’s past. Denver’s trauma is rooted in the fact that she is treated as an outcast and wants to leave the house so she can find peace. But her mother reiterates to her that it is not the house that is the problem but it is they. To showcase the fact that it is her mother’s past life of slavery that has returned to haunt them, not the house. Once the problem is not the house wherever they go they have to face their troubled past life. Denver must bear the psychological distress caused by her mother’s previous experiences, leading her to live a marginalised existence as the daughter of an enslaved woman, resulting in her being ostracised within her society. Consequently, Denver assumes the role of a physical manifestation of the distress that she has received from her mother, Sethe, and her grandmother, Baby Suggs. According to Selfridge (2018), the underlying violence in this novel intensifies the difficulties in the familial connections, as shown in the brutal murder of Beloved and the fear that Denver experiences in her interactions with Sethe (p.70). According to Canellas (2018), trauma may be transmitted from one

individual to another without the need for direct personal experience. The existing body of literature on Transgenerational trauma and identity has mostly centred on Toni Morrison's novel *Beloved* (1987). This work effectively employs the concept of trauma to commemorate the African-American history of slavery (p. 10). Therefore, Sethe's trauma is a collective trauma for African-American society and also Transgenerational trauma from her lineage.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have assessed Transgenerational trauma in some of the selected texts. I have looked at how some of the female characters in some of the selected texts were subjected to Transgenerational trauma either from their parents or ancestors. I have demonstrated that the Transatlantic Slave Trade generated trauma that transcended one's generation. Enslaved female characters transferred their trauma to their descendants and the commonest way this trauma was transferred was the repeated horrible stories of the Transatlantic Slave Trade that parents told their children. In the case of Sethe, it was her mother's friend who told her of her mother's trauma that affected Sethe's life. But Akua's trauma was psychological trauma and it was rooted in her ancestor Maame. Maame's descendants both the enslaver and the enslaved suffered the Transgenerational trauma of the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

CHAPTER SIX

ENSLAVED WOMEN'S RESISTANCE TO ENSLAVEMENT

Introduction

The previous chapter dealt with how female characters were subjected to Transgenerational trauma from their enslaved mothers or enslaved ancestors. I have demonstrated that trauma from the Transatlantic Slave Trade transcended beyond one's generation. Also the children of enslaved women got traumatized when their mothers recounted their trauma in slavery to them. I have also demonstrated that Transgenerational trauma was not only limited to the enslaved but the enslaver suffered from Transgenerational trauma in Gyasi's *Homegoing* as well.

This current chapter focuses on how some of the enslaved female characters enacted resistance to enslavement. The female characters enacted resistance to enslavement by running away from slavery, fighting back against slavery, committing suicide, committing infanticide and using negotiation to resist the traumas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade in this study.

Slavery was the most heinous crime that was committed against humanity since it dehumanized its victims and left them with identity fragmentation. Due to this many slaves fought back to resist and liberate themselves from the traumas of slavery. Sweet (N. D) posits that slaves naturally resisted the traumas of enslavement because slavery was fundamentally unnatural. He argues that slaves used slowing down of work, running away, resisting rape, suicide, silence, infanticide, and sabotaging production as some of the techniques to resist the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Slave resistance to enslavement started with the first slave that was captured

since the human tendency is to resist every form of inhuman treatment. According to Kali (2011), Africans were fighting back from the start. As Marcus Rediker, author of *The Slave Ship: A Human History* wrote, enslavement produced immediate and spontaneous resistance to enslavement especially when the mode was raiding or kidnapping.

Maame Flees from Slavery

In Gyasi's novel *Homegoing*, Maame, the mother of Effia and Esi, flees from Fanteland to Asanteland in order to defy the hardships of servitude. Upon Effia's birth, she ignites a fire in the woods and flees across the forest to Asanteland, where she establishes herself as an emancipated individual. Despite the brevity of her freedom, it is crucial to note that Maame successfully defied the psychological distress of slavery in Cobbe's household by escaping. Both domestic and Transatlantic Slave Trade inflicted severe anguish onto its victims. Maame's decision to prioritise her own independence within the confines of slavery, even at the expense of caring for her own child, unequivocally demonstrates the overwhelming and insufferable anguish inflicted upon enslaved women as a result of the slave trade.

Ama, in Herbstein's text, employs fighting back slaves to resist the traumas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Ama's assertiveness to fight for liberation is rooted in the maltreatment she is subjected to by all the slaveholders. Most of the slaveholders violated and sexually assaulted her several times in the novel. She, therefore, decides to fight physically with anyone who tries to rape her or the other slaves. And this is one of the ways Ama used to resist the oppressive rule of white slave owners over her life and some of the

enslaved female characters: The following is an extract to show how Ama fought with her slave masters to resist slavery.

Ama was filled with intense fury. She experienced an increase in her heart rate. Had she had a knife, she would have forcefully plunged it into him, causing his abdomen to tear apart. Observing his vulnerability, even if only temporarily, she seized the one opportunity available to use her superiority. She firmly grasped his penis and forcefully twisted it as if attempting to detach it from his body. He let out a loud scream. Knaggs was unable to respond due to his current state. He was kneeling, clutching himself and weeping. His pal became distant. Ama retrieved her fabric and enveloped herself with it. She circumvented Knaggs and ascended the stairs to the quarter-deck. Williams was positioned near the railing. Subsequently, she had a sudden weakness in her knees, causing them to give way and collapse (236).

Fighting back against slave masters is what Ama employed to save herself and the other slaves from continuous rape and mistreatment from slave masters. This words in the extract, ‘forcefully plunged it into him’, abdomen to tear apart’, ‘she firmly grasped his penis and forcefully twisted.... Detach it from his body’ ‘he was knelling clutching himself and weeping’ depict Ama’s revengeful nature of using fighting to resist enslavement. Ama did not only fight for herself but she equally fought for the other enslaved women as well. On their way to Kumasi when she was still known as Nandzi, she saved a young enslaved woman from one of the slave masters who tried to rape her.

Ama fights with Akwasi Anoma who tries to rape a child. After Ama hauled abusive insults on Akawasi, he became ashamed and let go of the child. “Beast”! Nandzi came to the aid of a minor girl who was dragged by Akwasi Anoma, a slave master, to be raped. Nandzi’s displeasure is registered when she refers to Anoma as a beast for wanting to rape a child. Nandzi is not perturbed by Akwasi Anoma’s position as the slave master. He intensified her insults: You are a drunken beast, a stupid drunken beast; I curse you, “cried Nandzi. We all curse you” (53). Ama, who was then called Nandzi employs fighting back to fight the slave masters in order to resist slavery. As Ama employs fighting back against their slave masters as a way of resisting rape from the slave masters, the number of rape incidents decreases. The slave masters realised Ama has become a more resilient and assertive woman who will not only fight for herself but fight for the other enslaved women who are faced with rape. Ama is a fighter and on the ship across the sea, Ama staged a revolt with Tomba to free themselves from slavery, even though the revolt failed and they were caught and punished but they succeeded in putting fear in the slave masters as they witnessed. Ama’s revolt in the ship led to the death of some of the slave masters. Even though some of the slaves also lost their lives but the lesson this revolt left with the slave masters is that they sensed an agitation of an uproar mounted by the slaves to demand for their liberation. Even though the slave masters punished those who were the leaders of the revolt (Ama and Tombo) the slave masters started treating the slaves with a little respect.

Suicide to Resist Enslavement

Female characters in Gyasi's *Homegoing* and Morrison's *Beloved* used suicide to resist the trauma of slavery. Suicide was a pervasive component of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Certain enslaved women used suicide as a means of opposing and defying the institution of slavery. According to Harlin (2020), Fairbairn suggests a new definition of suicide as "an intentional and voluntary act, whether done by oneself or by someone else, with the purpose of causing one's own death because one desires to die or desires to experience the specific manner of death they carry out" (p.1). Gyasi's *Homegoing* and Morrison's *Beloved* depict the use of suicide by some oppressed female characters as a means of resisting the psychological distress caused by slavery. In Gyasi's *Homegoing*, Maame first fled to escape the distress caused by slavery. However, when slave raiders intruded upon her dwelling and arrested her daughter Esi, Maame decided to take her own life. Maame's decision to terminate her life in order to escape the agony of slavery may be linked to her first-hand experience as a former slave and her awareness of the profound suffering inflicted by the slave trade. In the novel *Homegoing*, Anna, who is H's mother, similarly used suicide as a means of resisting the psychological distress caused by enslavement. Anna and her husband Jo managed to emancipate themselves from slavery in Baltimore after the enactment of the Fugitive Slave Act. This legislation stipulated that any captured runaway slave might be forcibly returned to the Southern plantations to resume their labour. Anna goes out one day to buy things and she never comes back, per the law it is later discovered that Anna is recaptured back to slavery. Anna is heavily pregnant with her child H, Anna's disconnection from her family coupled with

the trauma of the Transatlantic Slave Trade makes her commit suicide. But her son H is lucky to survive as they cut Anna open to remove the baby. According to Emmanuel (2018), Jo and Anna's son H, is born on the plantation, and his mother commits suicide, so before H is born Anna is cut open to bring H. In Morrison's *Beloved*, Sethe's grandmother and mother used suicide to resist the trauma of slavery. Kali (2011) puts it that slaves prefer to die rather than to be slaves, so suicide is employed by some of the slaves to escape the trauma of slavery. Since slaves' belief in the idea that death would be better than the pains that comes with slavery comes from a commonly held West African Spiritual belief that after your soul migrates back to your home, death is a less daunting and more promising than the current situation of slavery that slaves are in. Consequently, the dehumanisation inherited in the Transatlantic Slave Trade led enslaved individuals to see suicide as a desirable action that would free their spirits from the repercussions of servitude. Maame, Anna, Sethe's maternal ancestors, have endured several instances of sexual assault and degradation throughout their enslavement. These treatments inflicted severe emotional and psychological stress on these women, leading many to choose suicide as a means to escape their misery in servitude.

Sethe used Infanticide to Resist Enslavement

Sethe in Morrison's *Beloved* used infanticide to resist the trauma of slavery. Sethe escapes from slavery successfully but The Fugitive Slave Act catches up with Sethe, per this law when slaves escape, the act requires that slaves be returned to their owners, even if they are in a free state. The act also makes the federal government responsible for finding, returning and trying escaped slaves. Sethe's slave-holder Schoolteacher returns with his men to

capture Sethe back to slavery, but Sethe murdered her baby and wounded her other children upon seeing her former slave-holder Schoolteacher. Schoolteacher and his men run away after Sethe's bloody action and this save Sethe's other children. Later on, when Sethe ghost child returns, Sethe convinces Beloved that she killed her out of love, once Sethe has tasted the bitter aspect of slavery and knows that enslaved women and their children are perceived as chattel by slave masters and also the fact that enslaved women could not train or determine what happened to their children in slavery she decided to fight Schoolteacher. So Sethe felt going back to slavery where she has no control over her children would be a disaster, therefore she decided to use infanticide to avoid being captured back to slavery with her children. Once Sethe's slave master Schoolteacher realised that he would not benefit from Sethe and her children, since Sethe is mad and there will be nothing to gain from Sethe, Schoolteacher abandons his mission and leaves with his men.

Aminah uses Negotiation to Resist Enslavement

Aminah uses negotiation to free herself from the trauma of slavery. Even though slavery was outlawed the time Ayesha wrote her text's *Hundred Well of Salaga*. There were still people who treaded in domestic slaves in the northern part of Ghana. Wurche enslaves Aminah as a domestic slave to serve her and subjects her to her authority in Attah's novel. When Aminah realises that the slave trade was abolished, she asked Wurche to release her but Wurche refused and demanded Aminah to work for her a little longer. Aminah therefore decided to work hard for Wurche with the hope that she would release her to freedom from the traumas of domestic slaves. When Wurche realised she could not keep Aminah as a slave any longer she released her to

go. Therefore, Aminah used negotiation to liberate herself from the traumas of the slave trade in Attah's *Hundred Wells of Salaga*.

Conclusion

This chapter sought to look at the various ways female characters enacted resistance to enslavement. I have paid attention to how female characters used to fight back slave masters to resist the trauma of slavery. Slave masters underrated enslaved women and subjected them to several forms of subjugation. When the trauma meted out to the female slaves was unbearable, slaves realised that the only way to resist the traumas of slavery was to fight slave masters back. I have indicated in the study that the trauma associated with slavery was too much to the extent that some of the enslaved women like Maame in *Homegoing* decided to run away to escape the slave trade. I have showcased how Aminah in Attah's *Hundred Well of Salaga* used negotiation to resist the trauma of slavery. I have also demonstrated that slaves believed that when a person dies he/she is free from the torments of slavery, so enslaved women that could not bear the trauma of slavery decided to use suicide to end their suffering in slavery. I have further demonstrated that slavery was so dehumanizing that ex-slaves would do anything to set themselves free from the tortures of slavery. Sethe in Morrison's *Beloved* used infanticide to escape the traumas of slave

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

Introduction

This chapter provides a conclusion to the discussion of this thesis by presenting a summary of the study, a summary of the research findings and some recommendations for further research.

Summary of Thesis

This study explored how to foreground enslaved women's traumas and resistance to these traumas in slavery in four selected novels. The premise of the study sought to examine the negative impact of the Transatlantic Slave Trade on the lives of enslaved women in the selected texts namely; Morrison's *Beloved*, Manu Herbstein's *Ama* (2001), Yaa Gyasi's *Homegoing* (2016), and Ayesha Harruna Attah's *Hundred Wells of Salaga* (2018). I argued that the Transatlantic Slave Trade which is the centre of the selected texts generated physical, psychological and Transgenerational trauma. Also, I showcased that slavery was so dehumanizing that enslaved women enacted various resistance to slavery. To do this, I employed the psychoanalytic theory of trauma as a lens to analyse the selected texts. Trauma could be a physical or psychological hurt from its definition; therefore, the study was premised on physical, psychological and Transgenerational trauma that female characters were subjugated to. Also, I theorized slave resistance to slavery as a framework to conceptualize how female characters enacted resistance to slavery. The purpose of the study is to fill the niche by examining enslaved women's trauma and how they enacted resistance to these traumas in the Transatlantic Slave Trade in the selected texts.

The study is structured in seven chapters. Chapter one covers the introduction to the thesis; it lays the foundation of the study by looking at the general overview of the study through the background of the study. I looked at how throughout the years the novel has become a medium to bemoan social cankers, like slavery in Africa. I also looked at the need to examine the kinds of trauma enslaved women in the selected texts were subjected to and the various ways of resisting enslavement in the Transatlantic Slave Trade in the selected texts.

Chapter Two focused on the review of related literature and theoretical review of the study. I engaged with this literature for two purposes: The first was to ascertain what has been done by previous scholars regarding the texts and the second was to negotiate the importance of my study by taking advantage of what has been ignored or under-foregrounded in the texts of the study. From the literature reviewed on the selected texts, it was realised that many scholars interrogated slavery as a concept, feminist issues, and racism and a few scholars who attempted issues of trauma were only limited in Morrison's *Beloved* and the trauma was only ascribed to the character, Sethe; unlike this study that elaborated on the various forms of traumas in the texts and how enslaved women resisted enslavement in the study. I then realised that my study was significant in the sense of demonstrating enslaved women physical, psychological and Transgenerational trauma. The researcher dedicated four chapters to the analysis of the texts of study by drawing attention to physical trauma, psychological trauma, Transgenerational trauma and how enslaved women enacted resistance to slavery.

The third chapter of the study looked at the physical trauma that female characters were subjected to through the lens of the psychoanalytic theory of trauma. I divided chapter three into four parts, the first part of chapter three dealt with how female characters were raped or sexually assaulted by slave masters in the slave trade. I demonstrated rape and sexual violence was an integral part of slavery which all four writers of the selected texts portrayed in their novels. Slave masters used rape to subjugate enslaved women to domination where slaves were afraid to question the authority of their slave masters. The second part of Chapter three looked at the traumatic journey of enslaved women. Where slaves were restrained with chains and shackles and put on the road to walk for long distance. The third part looked at the torture slaves were put through. I have showcased from the texts that slaves were perceived as animals, chattels and the property of slave masters. Slave masters wanting to control slaves dehumanized them and subjected them to various forms of violence. The well-fare of slaves and the unsanitary conditions that slaves lived in were not a concern of slave masters since all that slave masters were interested in was to profit from the labour of slaves in the selected texts. And the last part looked at all forms of deprivation enslaved women were subjected

In chapter four the study investigated how slavery traumatized female characters psychologically.

The psychological trauma of female characters was perceived in the behaviour of the enslaved women. I demonstrated how psychological trauma affected the behaviour of the female characters which undisputable had negative consequences on the lives of the characters. I have demonstrated that

psychological trauma generated identity crisis where the self-worth of enslaved female characters was lost; some of the enslaved female characters who could not bear their trauma opted for suicide to end it all. Further, I have indicated that psychological trauma was also characterized by signs like insanity, self-loathing, anger, loneliness, sadness, hopelessness and loss of dignity. I have suggested that slaves' insanity, self-loathing and identity fragmentation were the major form of psychological traumas in this study.

Chapter Five analysed how female characters were subjected to Transgenerational trauma from either their enslaved parents or ancestors. I indicated that descendants of enslaved women suffered from the same trauma their parents were subjected to. Their parents thought they were narrating their ordeal in slavery to their children but unknowingly the enslaved women transferred their traumas to their children by recounting their horrible experiences in slavery to them. I have also demonstrated that is not only the descendants of enslaved women that inherited trauma, descendants of the enslaver likewise experienced Transgenerational trauma as well.

The sixth chapter of the study looked at how female characters enacted resistance to the Transatlantic Slave Trade. I have demonstrated that slavery was so dehumanizing that some enslaved women enacted various resistance like running away. Enslaved women decided to run away to other towns to start and live a new life of liberty since they realised slavery violated their human rights. Female slaves also employed various techniques to fight back against slave masters' to liberate themselves from enslavement. When the female characters decided to fight back against slave masters, the slave masters became afraid of the slaves and they reduced the violence they meted

out to the slaves. Some other characters in the texts went to the extreme by using suicide to end their trauma in slavery; those who opted for suicide believed that after death the soul would be at a place of rest. Other characters did not kill themselves but they decided to kill their infants to avoid recapture back to slavery. Other female characters employed negotiation with their slave-holders to resist the trauma of slavery.

Major Findings of the Study

The study has demonstrated that physical trauma is an integral part of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Physical trauma is anything that brought pain to the bodies of female slaves. Physical trauma took the form of rape; enslaved women were subjected to series of rape by slave-holders. Rape was used by slave-holders to control slaves and subject them to all form of domination. Rape was also seen as a form of entertainment where slave-holders used it to amuse themselves. Slave-holders 'commodified' enslaved women's sexual organs for their gratification and pleasure. The language that slave-holders used during rape was a form of abusive to enslaved women, this left slave women psychologically tormented. The traumatic journey of slaves, was not easy for enslaved women, they were restrained with chains and subjected to long walk. The chains impeded movement of slaves and caused sores on their bodies. Many slaves did not survive the long journeys. Slaves were also tortured, whipped and put to death, since torturing of slaves was a daily routine employed by slave-holders to discipline slaves. All slaves in the selected texts were faced with all forms of deprivation that enslaved women were put through.

Again, all four novels chosen for this research have demonstrated that trauma is not only physical but also psychological. The study has clearly shown that psychological trauma is anything that disturbs the minds of enslaved women. Psychological trauma is perceived in the behaviour of slaves which is characterised by psychological signs like insanity, self-loathing, anger, hopelessness, sadness, shock, fear, suicide, infanticide, loneliness, depression, identity crisis, and loss of dignity and self-worth, which was one of the key findings of this research. Some enslaved women like Sette demonstrated insanity by murdering her baby and other female characters like Baby Suggs depression led to her insanity. The study also showed that female characters like Ama indulged in self-loathing when she lost one of her eye and she was always daily mocked by slave-holders. All enslaved women suffered identity fragmentation, because slavery negatively affected their personality.

Again, the research has shown that trauma can be Transgenerational. From the novels, I realised that enslaved women transferred their trauma to their children merely by engaging in retelling their horrible encounters in the Transatlantic Slave Trade to their children. The study has also showcased that trauma was not only transferred to descendants of the enslaved but the enslaver as well. From the study it is realised that descendants of slaves are still battling with Transgenerational trauma.

Also, the study has demonstrated that resistance to enslavement takes many forms such as running away, fight, suicide, infanticide and negotiation. Maame in *Homegoing* decided to run away in order to resist enslavement. Ama's body was exploited and shamed in slavery, so she then realised that the only way to regain her liberty and resist enslavement was to fight slave

masters back. The fighting she indulged in gave her the liberation she needed. Aminah in Attah's novel decided to negotiate her freedom in slavery by suggesting to her slave-holder Wurche that it was time for her release from slavery so she could go back and rebuild her life. Other characters like Maame, Anna, Sethe's mother and Sethe's grandmother could not bear their trauma, they lack the courage and boldness to fight the slave master and therefore they succumbed to suicide to end their enslavement. As for Sethe, she decided to commit infanticide in order to resist slavery.

Also, trauma changes a person's identity. All the enslaved women who were subjected to inhuman treatment, they had a fragmented identity which affected their psyche. That is why some of the enslaved women who were later set free from slavery never enjoyed their freedom. Though their bodies were freed from slavery their minds were not. They still dwell on their bitter past as is seen in their conversion.

Recommendation

The Transatlantic Slave Trade was one of the unkindest things that happened to the black race. The Transatlantic Slave Trade generated physical, psychological and Transgenerational trauma among enslaved women. Many descendants of enslaved people are still bemoaning their trauma that was handed down to them by their ancestors. Even though slavery is abolished in the world, Africans are still suffering from mental slavery which affects as negatively. I therefore recommend that Africans should rise up and resist any form of slavery, whether physically or mentally.

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