



**INHERITED TRAUMA AND ENSLAVEMENT: A
PSYCHOANALYTIC EXPLORATION OF
MOTHERHOOD IN *RIVER
SING ME HOME* (2023)**

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Abstract

The trauma of living in bondage lingers more than in one nuclear family and spreads across generations. The inherited trauma of enslavement moves through the lineage of blacks. The descendants of blacks are subject to maternal wounds of child loss, forced physical exertion, and forced relocation that Rachel and other individuals of the black community endured through slavery. The major afflicted individuals of trauma of slavery are the mothering figures of the African bloodline. The offspring of the captives take on the psychological trauma through their lived realities and from their forefathers, which this research examines in Shearer's novel *River Sing Me Home*. The text is analyzed through Cathy Caruth's Trauma Theory, which scrutinizes the characters in subjugation of whites and studies the eternal ancestry trauma of slavery.

Keywords: *Black People, Cathy Caruth, Inherited Trauma, Motherhood, Psychoanalysis, Slavery.*

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

Slavery of Black lineage shatters the core of their upbringing that prevails their generational structure and effects the upcoming African communities. Slavery impairs the bondmen to be arising as powerful individuals for their children and for themselves. Machado (2023) in “Slavery, Motherhood, and the Free Womb Law” identified that the White ruling authority uses the Blacks childbearing as the wealth generation. Enslavement damages the birth process, child-rearing and infant feeding practices as motherhood in imprisonment faces the systematic dual barriers for a woman as a wife and nurturing authority. The primary domain is the mother that suffers and transmits the agonizing footprints of persistent White inhuman superiority over the generations of Blacks. Schwartz (2006) highlighted that in Southern community the women within the large farms who became the object of the subjugation not only used for work but also they considered for breeding and if they not accomplished in this then they accounted as an issue for the growth of the plantation.

Whites take the steps to penetrate their control through systematic activity as they take the children of Blacks by force from the womb and from the maternal protection. Children of indigenous enslaved undergo through racial discrimination and become forced manpower under oppression of Whites and they also experience the past recollections of their grandparents that flare up in their present day to day activities. Duyilemi (2024) in “Effects of Intergenerational Trauma on African-Americans and Interventions” focused that transferring mental wound sustained across the entirety in Black Americans. Clemmons (2020) as cited in Duyilemi (2024) cited as highlighted that post-traumatic stress is running as individual agency and as communal structure and compromises the mental condition of Black bloodlines such as the blood pressure and anxiety is more evident in Black Natives in response of U.S. systemic racism that is for years. Offspring get influential trauma and as infants they experience the scraping out of maternal custody that implements their psychological development and empowers their thinking patterns as collective woes of Black Natives.

The lineage connections experience the catastrophic unsafe situations that gradually exhibit the indigenous trauma of bonded mothers and children. Etzel et al (2020) as cited in Tanner (2024) pointed out that Whites purposefully regulate the Black servitude and get the full possession over Black lives that leads the hardships and cause never ending transmitting anguish in their bloodline. This organized domination over Black predecessors impacts the cognitive outlook and forms the ambitions of Black descendants as Black women are suffering the grief their foremothers had withstood. The solicit motherhood confronts the mental and bodily distress to awaken the mothering strength to reunite the descendants and heal the internalized historical pain because of maltreatment of White overseers. This study reveals the steady development of the driven mothering in the character of Rachel that highlights that Black woman evolves within the unfavorable

independence. This research examines that the Natives of this novel endure the collective agitation of previous life of plantation and slavery.

This study analysis the Black slave populace through the Rachel and other characters that deal with the fall outs of servitude of White masters. Gaines (2022) explained that Danielle one of the participants of this study discusses the encounter of beating as penalty for her from her mother to make her a disciplined girl was more than a practice of teaching her manners as Danielle associates it with the fearful concern of her mother about Danielle's image for racial systematic society that is completely the traumatic impact generational distress that is moving in their generations. Rachel and other women are the evident of wretchedness of maternal subjectivity of Blacks as they do not only suffer with bereavement of their children, but they are also wounded with same ravage enslavement, forced displacement, and labor exploitation at the hands of White slaveholders. McGuire (2004) as cited in Hampton (2021) stated that in the process of slave forced labor trade the abduction of African women was excessively doing. Black female bodies endured the aggressive torment of Whites as Masters got full command over mind and body of both genders of Black community. Whites enforced their supremacy over Black people through violating the female bodily authority in company of African women's family and this system was historically rooted under White power structure.

1.2. Research Questions

1. How does black slavery impact the motherhood in the novel *River Sing Me Home*?
2. How does a black enslaved community experience the generational trauma in *River Sing Me Home*?

1.3. Objectives of the Research

1. To explore the maternal sufferings among blacks in *River Sing Me Home*.
2. To identify the collective trauma of slavery in black people in *River Sing Me Home*.

1.4. Significance of the Research

This research highlights the internal generational trauma of slavery through characters' sufferings that helps to emphasize the agony of motherhood, being rooted out from family and homeland. This research is important to see how slavery destroys the social fabric of the whole black population through forced slave selling from their origins. This research examines the mental challenges of black mothers and their children through the Cathy Caruth's Trauma Theory that helps to understand the ancestral mourning and helplessness that execute the realm of mental subjugation despite of emancipation of Black Africans.

1.5. Statement of the Problem

This research is significant because it analyzes the ups and downs of maternal care in the enslavement of plantation under the White Masters. This study aims to examine the African captives such as mothers' and children's that endure the genetic trauma of

oppressed Africans. This study inquires through Caruth's Trauma Theory about the collective subjugation and its side effects in the form of racial psychological distress.

1.6. Delimitation

This study is limited to the trauma that outbursts in response to the imprisonment of overpowered by White enslavers. This research is limited to traumatic wounds of the characters of the Shearer's novel *River Sing Me Home* (2023) by applied Cathy Caruth's Trauma Theory.

2. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is grounded in Freud and Lacan's theoretical arguments from Cathy Caruth's Trauma Theory.

Caruth (1996) explains that Freud states about the double wound of the human mind that is as result of past unforeseen function that is dwelling in the mind of the sufferer and in akin scenario it sets off the past traumatic story and its implications on afflicted person. Tyson (2006) pointed out that psychoanalysis prepared the ground for reconcile of human emotions that are stemming from psychological struggles. Psychoanalysis emphasizes dysfunctional patterns that help out psychological distress that bring out the iterative undertakings through implicit cognition that enhance the mental difficulties of effected and bring them into reality of the sufferer. SIBI (2020) emphasized that Freud's Psychoanalysis theory highlights that behavioral responses of human that direct through the unconscious operations of the human psyche. He point outs the conscious and unconscious brain of a human that the distressful emotions of the human are directed through the explicit awareness of the human psyche while the conscious facet deals with the occurrences that are not consequential as opposed to conscious mind.

Impacted individual undergoes through distress episodes that are the reemergence of the unexpected prior traumatic experiences through disembodied spirits, flashbacks and traumatic dreams that indicate the mental injury that is indiscernible for the effected as he inadvertently experiences and carries the adverse ongoing effects of it. Recurrent exposures of distressful events induce resurfacing triggering memories, nightmares, and flashbacks that exert attention on continued survival. Freud explains the grief stricken impacts of repetitive events that a human being experienced. He calls drive to death the distraught that is compelled out of past ignorant mental injury and influences the responses of the affected. A victim of sudden trauma endures the impose of repetitive functions and loss of his opposing authority that Freud names as traumatic neurosis. Preceding separation that right then was hard to comprehend leads the sufferer to extreme torment as he reluctantly holds it. Freud says that historical anguish serves to figure out the surviving status of an individual with psychological distress that is incompatible for him because the agony of all is interrelated.

Lacan says that traumatic person not only struggle with what is from his past cause the frightening encounter, but he also deals with the ethical consideration of the self that

arises because of his emotional wound as it is not only crucial for getting through but also associates him with others.

3. Data Analysis

3.1. Rachel's Maternal Sufferings

3.1.1. Effects of Sounds

Traumatic memories trigger through various elements of the surroundings of the sufferer which impact on his thought pattern as Rachel's statement "Every snap of a twig sounded like a gunshot; the murmuring of cane toads became the distant cries of searching men" (Shearer, 2023, p.1) represents the horror of an escapee from her captivity as everything on her way seems like the grip of her slave owner on her. Each sound of her environment reminds her the brutal violent treatment for the runaways as enslavers punish them for their attempt to break the slavery. The harsh calling of the searching overseers heard in cane toads which is the inner fear of Rachel as she believes that Whites are looking for her after she runs away from the farm and this frightening emotion is in the result of the past traumatic experiences of Rachel in slavery and other slaves around her. The deadly consequences of escaping the subjugation has marked on the mindset of the slaves that Rachel thinks that every minor sound is a fired bullet from the searching men which is the trauma of her life under the enslavement for a long period.

This line of the novel "The sound of footsteps behind them sent Rachel's heart racing" (Shearer, 2023, p. 37) shows that Rachel searches Mary Grace in Bridgetown and sees a White master of the farm she has escaped and tries to hide from him while a beggar aids her and she hears the voice of the footsteps in street and her fear increases. Only the idea of someone behind her makes her scare that she is under the trap of the slavery which she has escaped. With the approaching voice of the footsteps toward her she imagines that her slaveholder is reaching toward her to capture her which highlights the power of the trauma that even a slightest hint of the surrounding as a little sound is enough to make Rachel aware from the possible danger.

3.1.2. Reappearance of Trauma as Ghost

The pain of the separation of the offspring of the Rachel is evident in this line of the novel that "The hut filled with ghosts. All of Rachel's lost children, crouching in the shadows" (Shearer, 2023, p.9) shows that she sees her children in the form of ghosts which represents the trauma of Rachel as she is not accepting the parting of the ways of her and her lost children. Her offspring were taken from her forcefully and White master sold them and some of them were dead brutally which influenced the psychology of the Rachel and she thinks that her children are always with her as she can see them around her and they observe her. After finding Mary Grace she begins the hunt for her other children in Bridgetown and she sees the ghost of Cherry Jane her daughter as this line "Behind a market stall piled high with dead, glassy-eyed chickens, she saw Cherry Jane, staring at

her with a somber look on her face” (Shearer, 2023, p. 51) represents the haunting memory of Cherry Jane in dead chickens because Rachel is traumatized and she has fear that maybe her lost daughter has died as she sees that Cherry’s ghost is muted and looking toward her shows the trauma of the years she has spent without her child. Staring of Cherry Jane also points out toward the urgency of looking for her second daughter because Rachel has got Mary Grace back but Cherry Jane’s shadow is a flag of the necessity to discover another important part of the broken family of Rachel. In another statement Rachel sees her other children Micah and Mercy as “Walking on a bridge over Constitution River, she saw Micah and Mercy holding hands as they stepped off the side and were swallowed up by the waters below” (Shearer, 2023, p. 51) shows that instances of forceful separation of both children affected Rachel that even their ghosts alarming her about their death as she sees them drowning in water which highlights the consequence of the unsettled trauma as she imagines them leaving her not in the form of moving from one place to another but she thinks about the end of their life. The trauma of Rachel makes her feel that this world is like a river and she cannot find her lost children in it which is the traumatic reaction of slave trade of her children because masters did not inform her about the new place where her children were traded.

3.1.3. Flashbacks of Rachel

Trauma runs in the mind of the Rachel through flashbacks of the disturbing and frightening experiences she feels and hears as this statement of this novel “This memory—of Atlas, his flight, his capture and his agony—came to Rachel as she retched, the coarse cloth of the sack filling her nose and mouth” (Shearer, 2023, p.7) explains the sufferings of another enslaved person named Atlas. This painful memory visits her while she is running in the forest to hide from the overseer and tries to escape. When the tragic and horrible remembrance of Atlas comes and the shock of his story and similarity of Rachel’s effort with Atlas create a dreadful experience for Rachel. Atlas was a slave and he tried to flee but White master caught him and brutally tortured him as they cut his nose and after this flashback Rachel undergoes with the same powerful anguish of Atlas in her mind as she thinks that she will face the same consequences if the foremen arrest her for her attempt to get the freedom from slavery. Rachel gets another flashback of the traumatic happening of her past as this line “The faces of the children who might yet live—Micah, Mary Grace, Mercy, Thomas Augustus and Cherry Jane—were etched behind her eyelids” (Shearer, 2023, p.10) indicates her preceding memory of her offspring and she has no idea about them that where they are now which hurt her but she thinks that they are looking at her and she knows that they are the main purpose behind her escape. She sees her children’s faces in her memory as they were before leaving the plantation which highlights the traumatic fixed memory of her past life. One more time she sees “The image of Mary Grace flashed before her—a stronger, sharper picture than she had seen in years, more

solid now that Rachel knew she existed in a particular place” (Shearer, 2023, p.12) and this repetitive memory of her daughter shows that now she has the latest information about her daughter but her mind is still at the previous departing moment when they took Mary Grace to sellout as a slave as Rachel witnesses the flashback of her lost daughter which recollection is more clear than before.

3.1.4. Traumatic Experience of Separation

This statement from the text “The sight pleased Rachel but unnerved her, too. It was the body of a young woman, not of the child who had been taken from Providence, all those years ago” (Shearer, 2023, p. 41) points out that when Rachel meets with Mary Grace after years at Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong’s place then she recognizes her daughter at first glance but she is in shock as the daughter in front of her has disastrous impact on Rachel because she understands that the years of Mary Grace’s childhood has passed without Rachel’s presence. The moment of brutal displacement of a child was traumatic for her mother but their present gathering is no less than a mental wound for maternal love as the pain of separation to an offspring increases when Rachel observes the loss which is obvious in the physic of her daughter. One side she gets her missing daughter back and on the other side the brutal face of slavery has stolen that little Mary Grace and all her growing years from her mother which leaves the feeling of agony for Rachel.

When Rachel finds Mary Grace then she tries to ask her about her life spent without her mother but Mary Grace does not show any response because she has lost all her courage to speak because her past traumatic life has impacted her mind and made her quite. Rachel encourages her to narrate the part of her side of the duration they both were separated in different places but Mary Grace’s reaction to Rachel’s effort is same which is the traumatic influence on herself. This line “Rachel turned over onto her side. Her mind filled with memories of Mary Grace as a child with serious eyes and a bright smile” (Shearer, 2023, p. 49) expresses the sadness of a mother that she gets flashbacks of her daughter’s childhood with a happy and confident Mary Grace who loved to interact to people and was full of life as she was curious about different things but now the spark of her inner self has dull due to her trauma which makes Rachel realize that she has lost her old daughter. The past of Mary Grace was not only traumatic for her but it was also shocking for her mother as Rachel herself gets the recurrences of the good time of Mary Grace’s childhood which she has lost.

Another place where Rachel undergoes from the traumatic pain of separation is this line from the novel “She felt the ghost of the cord that Great Polly had helped her cut—the connection that had never quite left her, after all these years—evaporate, sending a shaft of sharp steel up between her legs until it cleaved her heart in two” (Shearer, 2023, p. 114) which shows that when Rachel finds out about the death of Micah from Orion then she feels that she has lost Micah from the time of his birth as the “ghost of cord” was the

invisible source of their bonding which indicates that Rachel felt him with her even when he was fiercely ripped apart from her maternal warmth because she thinks that the cord was never cut between them. For Rachel only death has taken away her son Micah from her and now she cannot get him back which is traumatic for her as she experiences the anguish that now their link has broken for forever. Similarly, this line from the novel “She had no more tears left to shed, so she let herself feel her chest vibrate and her throat constrict as though she, and not Mary Grace, was able to cry” (Shearer, 2023, p. 134) highlights that sufferings of mother and sister of Micah which they experience after his death as they not only lost Micah but the pain of failure of their reconnection with him also has traumatic influence on their hearts. They waited so long to meet with him and the news of his cruel death makes them anxious as they cannot express their grief because enslavement not only taken him from them but it also left a deep scar on their hope as they believed that the lost one can rejoin them and their sufferings can be end after their struggles. Slave trade of Micah wounded Rachel psychologically and the death of him left no strength in her to mourn his loss.

3.1.5. Rachel’s Startle Motherhood

This statement of the text “Guilt inched over her, day by day, starting deep in her gut and crawling through her veins. She was aware of what was still missing, the emptiness that Mary Grace alone could not fill” (Shearer, 2023, p. 51) shows that Rachel sees dreams in which she gets hints about her pending task which is to find the other children of her. Rachel decided to reunion with her all the lost children but she only finds Mary Grace and her purpose haunts her through nightmares which constructs her identity as her nightmares influence her current mental state that she has to begin the journey of searching Micah, Thomas, Cherry and Mercy because only Mary Grace is not enough to heal the trauma of Rachel she endured when white masters ripped away her children from her. Her nightmares of her children gives her the reality check that the project of binding her shattered family is not complete yet. Here Rachel’s reoccurring nightmares aware her about the requirement to move on from the anguish of the memories of forced displacement of her offspring in their childhood. She feels as a culprit to not take any effort against this intolerable loss.

This line from the novel “This time, he answered. “Freedom.” Rachel looked at the dead forest around them. “No. This not how me did imagine it, either” (Shearer, 2023, p. 181) points out toward the realization of Rachel about her desire to go further to meet her two daughters Cherry Jane and Mercy as she has found Mary Grace and Thomas Augustus and she knows that Micah is no more with them as he was killed by White soldiers in result of his resistance against slavery. So her nightmare shows Micah who tells Rachel about her motif to rebuild her own world which was snatched by enslavers. Her dream warns her about the present condition of Rachel as she cannot be there in runaways’ place as it does

not sound like her courageous identification which she has obtained through her tough journey to contact her scattered blood relations. Micah in Rachel's dream indicates that the loss of one son is not the end of a maternal love and she still has the rebellion power of motherhood in her which will take her to her actual authorization on her life and loved ones. The traumatic damage of the death of Micah reminds Rachel about her reason to start and to continue her struggles of independence.

3.1.6. Dissociation

In several places Rachel feels disconnected from her actions and her decisions as she is not sure about them and she continuously investigates her choices. Her past traumatic encounters made her existence a confusing matter for her as she is not clear about her next step and choices she makes as she wants to break the cycle of her narrow living under the domination of her White master but persistent controlled routine made her lose the concept of being free. This statement of Rachel "Was this freedom?" (Shearer, 2023, p.1) explains that when she gets the chance to achieve the aim of her to break the never ending violent phase of the White superiority over her then she realizes that her sense of independence is not in her control as she is still looking for it while she has escaped the subjugation. The devastating traumatic result can be seen in her character again as she once more tries to perceive the actual essence of the moment of being under the opportunity of running away from the Plantation where she was under the slavery since so many years that affected her sense of worth that she does not know that how her liberated soul should make out about her flee from slavery. "In the forest, Rachel asked herself again: Was this freedom?" (Shearer, 2023, p.3). Rachel does not know about her present responsibility towards her future as she is incapable of the awareness of being release from the captivity of White masters.

The deadly rule of the masters over enslaved people make their condition worse and slaves force themselves to move and get the place from where they can join the chances of living a controlled free life which shows in the statement of Rachel as "The empty forest. Her fleeing, sick with dread. Was this what they had hoped for, all along?" (Shearer, 2023, p.2). Here Rachel is observing the fearful feeling of herself which is becoming a question mark for her as after moving far away from the farm she is still under the dreadful emotions of being caught and she is recalling the intense determination of the enslaved people to achieve the chance to flee which she has got but she sees that she has only forest to go which triggers her trauma as she is not sure to go anywhere else that is because the past trauma of subjugation of Rachel shattered the self-esteem of her. Rachel's statement not only represents her but the collective disconnection of sense of identity of Black people in enslavement which is a response of the traumatic experiences of slavery. Rachel is not processing her thoughts about the independence she got as her current emotions are not cooperating with her which highlights the dissociating emotional

condition of her traumatic mind.

3.2. Maternal Collective Grief

3.2.1. Loss of Offspring

Mrs. Armstrong tells Rachel about her inability to fulfill the desire of being a mother as this statement from the text “On the plantation, one of the other women used to prepare herbs for those who . . .” She sighed. “They worked, but they’ve gone on working, all these years” (Shearer, 2023, p. 58) highlights that she says that she cannot experience motherhood because in her past she was a slave and she used that herbs which enslaved women used to prevent birth but the effects of that drug is still effecting the lives of Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong. Rachel feels the loss of Mrs. Armstrong because somehow she is also facing the same sufferings of Mrs. Armstrong as her children were displaced and sold by slaveholders. Rachel undergoes with dreadful traumatic pain because brutally taken away children from their mother is worse than having no child because every passing moment without them kills Rachel and she feels guilt and agony. Trauma of not having a normal family because of the cruel ruling whites links the grief of her with Mrs. Armstrong. Similarly, another statement of the text “For once, Hope was still. No clapping hands, no cocked head, no laughter. Wind whispered over the waves. Around Hope’s throat, the ruffles on her dress danced in the breeze. She dropped her gaze” (Shearer, 2023, p. 72) points out toward the anguish of another mother Hope who has lost her daughter. Through the interaction of Rachel and Hope about the reconnection of Mary Grace with Rachel the trauma of Hope’s daughter triggers and she explains that if she can mend the broken pieces of her past then she rebelliously searches her daughter against her fears and slave masters. Hope tries to increase the willpower of Rachel through expressing her own side of story of the suffering of the loss of a child. The unspoken pain of Hope related her to the wound of Rachel when she met with her but now she openly confesses about the invisible connection between two mothers that their sufferings are not individual but it is shared maternal anguish which connects them to each other emotionally. Another character Tituba shares the maternal sufferings of the separation of children as this statement “All grief has power, but the grief a mother feels for a child is the strongest of all” (Shearer, 2023, p. 180) indicates that Tituba questions Rachel about Micah’s death and she says that it is not easy for Rachel to overcome. Tituba does not narrate her loss to Rachel but Rachel knows that she has also experience this tragic emotion in her life as Rachel witnesses the signs of motherhood around Tituba’s belly which reminds Rachel that her pain needs no words to convey the violent and inhuman action done to her by enslavement. Both women felt the intensity of the anguish of being left in a mourning state in which enslaved mothers helplessly endure the loss of their beloved offspring which develops a relation between them.

3.2.2. Trauma Arises with Similar Wound

This statement of Rachel “He had the same feverish sheen of Samuel and Kitty as they slipped into death, the same shallow breaths” (Shearer, 2023, p. 16) represents the re-experience of the pain she felt while her two children Kitty and Samuel died because the child of a woman living in Mama B’s house is suffering with the same fever which Kitty and Samuel had. Similar sufferings of the mother of the child and sick child’s pain arises the past wound of the Rachel and it triggers her fear of death as she thinks that she is going to lose the child as she had lost her own children which means that her mind has deep effects of their death which made Rachel traumatized. She has lost hope in getting recovery as she thinks that fever only can bring death to the child and his pain will never end just like her children and this awaking sufferings of Rachel in familiar circumstances are representing the history of the traumatic encounter of a helpless and hopeless mother with her children’s illness. Another character of the novel undergoes from the similar event where she remembers the pain of the separation of her daughter when she witnesses the anguish of the loss of the children of Rachel as this line “I had a daughter once but she died. Not even a year old. Just before I ran away.” (Shearer, 2023, p.34) highlights. She feels the same painful emotion again while explaining this to Rachel which means that the moment of the loss of her daughter did not leave her mind but its hidden pain reappears with a single reminder.

Similarly, the maternal trauma of Black groups is not based on individual but it is also common as this line from the novel “Rachel imagined the grief his mother must have felt, sending him off to freedom while knowing she would never see him again” (Shearer, 2023, p. 76) points out that one mother Rachel knows the loss of her five children due to slave trade identifies the similar wound of another mother. Nobody is far away from his mother because by sending him at unknown place she has earned the independence of her son. Rachel and the mother of Nobody are suffering from the same pain as both are the victims of slavery because both have faced catastrophic maternal life.

3.2.3. Drive to Death a Traumatic Reaction

This statement “Rachel thought about what Mama B had told her—about the wild Hope, destined for death, trying to hurl herself into the waves” (Shearer, 2023, p. 34) highlights that Hope was very disappointed from her life in subjugation that she decided to end her painful journey of being a captive through ending her life. Hope was about to jump into the water to get rid of the oppressive life she was living but Mama B rescued her. This line from the novel represents the traumatic influence of slavery on Hope as she wants to live a normal and bondage free life but she unconsciously attempts to end her life which is the result of the trauma which impacts her decision making ability. This act of Hope shows that Hope has lost the sense of clarity about her self-image. Trauma of enslavement moves Hope toward a hopeless end of the cycle of her sufferings.

The statement of the novel “She turned her eyes to the river. She noticed that, if she let the corners of her vision blur, she could imagine that it was the water that was fixed, and that she was the one drifting slowly toward the sea” (Shearer, 2023, p. 168) indicates the emotional damage of Rachel as Thomas Augustus starts explaining his views about the journey of all the miserable happenings of his and his siblings then Rachel’s traumatic experiences occupies her existence and she starts to consider herself moving toward the water of sea near them which explains the psychology wound of Rachel which force her to quit the depressing situations of her life through death.

3.3. Distress of Displaced Enslaved Children

3.3.1. Nightmares of Protagonist as a Forced Uprooted

Black people underwent through many ruthless acts of Whites which influenced on the psychological condition of the Black captives. The trauma of the black enslaved people come back again through their dreams and tell them about the harsh realities of the previous lives from which they are ignorant. As Rachel’s nightmare represents the past trauma of her from which she is unaware as “In sleep, she dreamed of her mother” (Shearer, 2023, p.3) but she does not recall her properly because her memories have faded in Rachel’s mind as she does not have any record of her maternal figure in her consciousness. But her dream shows the traumatic happening of the departure of both of them in past as she sees in her nightmare that her mother is not with her and she is on the other side of the sea which presents the history of the slave trade of her in her previous life. As this line “But this other name—this was hers. Rachel repeated it. The syllables felt strange in her mouth” (Shearer, 2023, p.3) highlights that Rachel has traded in another reign where her identity has changed and the appearance of her mother in her dream recalls her the forgotten previous life which is stored in somewhere in Rachel’s consciousness as she unconsciously recalls her name which represents the hidden unresolved trauma of her past leaving from her root. The separation from her mother and the strange new association of her new name by her owner marked her mind with a wound which reappear with the memory of her mother through a nightmare. This revisiting mental anguish represents the hidden secrets about the traumatic history of Rachel as the description of the dream “When she was gone, the soil glistened a deep, rich red” (Shearer, 2023, p.3) shows the traumatic experience of Rachel’s past as the “rich red” is representing the history of the violence which Rachel and her mother have endured. It is explaining the blur memory of Rachel about the brutal encounter of Rachel in her previous life. The red color is also showing the fear which is hidden under the nightmare of the Rachel as her dream is indicating the forceful separation of the mother and child which Rachel herself has also experienced and it can be the sign of her past frightening emotions about the loss and murder of her lost children.

3.3.2. Trauma of Thomas Augustus as Slave Traded

Another character of the novel Thomas Augustus the son of Rachel undergoes with similar condition as this line “Me was getting ready to give up and die when me see a village across the river” (Shearer, 2023, p. 166) explains that he escaped from the enslavement of White men but after that he was confused about his life as he did not have any place to go and the terror of slaveholders made him sick that he decided to took his life. Thomas Augustus also wants to spend his life in his own terms like Hope but the brutal experiences shatter his courage and he for once thinks to devastate all the possible ways of his desired life by ending it tragically which points out his trauma.

3.4. Communal Loss and Grief

As this line of the novel “On Providence, every goodbye had felt like an almost-death—a passing out of each other’s lives, likely forever” (Shearer, 2023, p. 44) shows that Mama B is saying a causal goodbye to Rachel but Rachel’s painful recollection of the separation of her children appear in alike situation. The mental state of the Rachel considers everyone’s leaving as a separation for a lifetime as she has experienced this with the departure of her children in Providence.

Another line of the novel points out that “Rachel’s nostrils filled with the sickly smell of blood from an open wound” (Shearer, 2023, p. 48) which expresses Rachel’s past experiences of torture she faced in her enslavement as Mrs. Armstrong discusses with Rachel about her mother who has went through the brutal beating in captivity which triggers the prior experience of Rachel of getting hurt by the harsh labor and punishments of the slavery in Providence. When she hears about the story of the mother of Mrs. Armstrong and the cruelty she has endured then she remembers the stink of the blood of the wounds Rachel has got in subjugation. This comeback of the memory is due to the listening of the similar happening to the previous traumatic experiences of Rachel.

In this line of the novel a character is expressing the common pain of loss as “I hope you find them, Rachel. I hope you find them all” (Shearer, 2023, p. 73) which shows that Mrs. Armstrong shows her inner intentions for Rachel that she should find out her children because Mrs. Armstrong herself is aware of the sufferings of the loss of a loved one as her mother was dead before she went to rescue her from the harsh life of a slave. In search of Rachel Mrs. Armstrong wants to see a different ending as she expresses her grief with a fresh hope that this time the consequences of the struggle should be different. Pain made Mrs. Armstrong suffer but her will power to change the cruel fate does not dim which relates her to Rachel as both women have lost their family and both are brave to accept the challenges of white masters’ violent nature.

This line “Me hope the next ship that come in is hers” (Shearer, 2023, p. 88) represents the similar feeling of shared suffering which is evident in Rachel’s character as she meets with a father and his son who have lost a family member of them as boy tells Rachel that his mother will come through a ship and will contact with her family. But they

are looking for her since a year which makes Rachel sad because she knows that the result of their wait can be a tragic one as slaves lost their lives far away from their family which fears Rachel as she is also looking for her children without knowing that who has survived from them and who did not. Their loss and their quest are placing them equally and Rachel wish that everyone reunite with all shattered family members at the end of their wait.

This statement from the text “He kept any trace of emotion out of his voice, but Rachel could see in the way he drew his arms across his chest the ache of rootlessness that was so familiar to her” (Shearer, 2023, p. 145) explains that Nuno has lost all the members of his community as when he goes back to his village then he realizes that he cannot see anyone of them as he left them behind when he moved with his father because there was a deadly disease in this village. He says that they have displaced or maybe they did not bear the sickness which shows that he is the only one remaining in his hometown which is traumatic for him. He does not present his sadness but Rachel identifies the silent sufferings of him as she is aware of the displacement which her children and she has experienced. Still Rachel is moving from one place to another in the search of her offspring which is also a displacement by force as she does not want to go but she does not have any other option left for her maternal agony. Rachel and her children are slaves and a slave does not have any home as whites never allow him to stay at one place and Nuno is also a native and he experiences the same displacement which slavery brings for every captive which means their loss and their way of living is occupied by the white authority in a same manner which create a link between them. Another family meets with them as this line from the novel “He says there were many of them in his village once, but now it is just him, his wife and the child” (Shearer, 2023, p. 157) explain that these people have similar anguish of death and movement from one place to another because whites make them captive. The head of this family explains that they have lost all people who associated with their town and they are running to save themselves from white masters. This statement represents that Nuno’s individual traumatic experience relates to this family and Rachel’s family which form an understanding and trust between all of them and bond them. This line of the text “When Nuno was finished, not a single eye around the fire was dry. Pain, loss, dislocation, a search for home—each one of them knew these, too, in their own way” (Shearer, 2023, p. 164) highlights that Nuno narrates all his difficulties and calamities which he has faced as he tells the community of runaways that his father became addicted of drinking and leads him toward his murder and his mother dead and his sister eaten by crocodile calls caiman in his native language and the way they move place to place to find a secure place where they can start a life where whites cannot imprison them. Every person who is present in this gathering has endured all these emotions which seems the regular part of the life of an enslaved as slavery left no choice in front of him except surviving through it or to resist against it. On psychological level they are more or less damage to

each other but they can comprehend a mutual sense of emptiness which they fill through sharing their sorrows to each other.

4. Conclusion

This research identified that the overpowering fright and experiences of Rachel's enslavement developed her perception of present reality. This study explored that psychological effects occurred when she feels herself in the same triggering points which continuously captures her sense of danger. This research highlighted through the character of Rachel that captivity dominate the psyche of slaves that even after getting escape whenever enslaves sense the repetition of similar sounds and familiar moments they feel intense alertness that reflects their trauma.

Traumatic happenings established the restiveness in Rachel's personality as she observes the invisible connection through nightmares and figments of her dead and lost children that forces her to begin her search. This study pointed out the grief of a mother that suffers in disconnection of reality and this discomfort causes the expedition of a mother who herself is a runaway but still she is unwavering in front of triggering and vulnerable conditions because she has affirm belief that peace will be occurred through reintegrating her sold out children and that's is the continues spring back moments of Rachel's maternal fierce devotion.

For Rachel the traumatic thralldom and separation of her children as result of violent human trafficking is not only the paddle that is forcing her to move further in her way of getting a bondage free place but her own past as an enslaved traded offspring of slaves reconnect her with generational trauma. Amidst the mission of a mother to rejoin her sold children Rachel's progression assembled the people of her community that has underwent through slavery and the process of being unwilling the workforce for White power. The mothers of Black community met Rachel on the way had encounter with loss of child and motherly space and these events helped the researchers to see that all the enslaved Blacks are living in transmitted wounds of forefathers. The helplessly grieving women and children highlight that slavery, slave trade and forced displacement are not the matter of one plantation or a one time exploitation of a generation but this is a collective mourning that Black lineal descendants live and suffer twice as they are also bond within entrenched systematic White sovereignty over Native lineage. Native mothers endure three times more strong impacts of slavery as first they endure transgenerational trauma of enslavement, second, they are also surviving as slaves and the third is the hurtful motherhood as their helpless matriarchy in enslavement left deep scares on their mental wellness.

The inevitable slavery stifles the enslaved Blacks but deep down they all are living in a battlefield against their captives. The repression of loss, violence, broken families, and generational separation from beloved ones do not work when Natives meet each other

because trauma of slavery divulges through their reactions, and narrations. The entrapment leads the mother and children remarkably to similar ruminative thoughts such as helplessness and suicide that can be a result of passing trauma through generations. Enslaved sold children look for the maternal bond. The effect of racism destroyed the motherhood as the forced departure of children in their early years deprived the nurturing touch children needed and after escaping the bondage the emotional impact is difficult to be cease because it is moving in bloodlines of Black Natives.

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