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**Trauma, Violence and Racism in  
Toni Morrioso's *The Bluest Eye* (1970) and  
Buchi Emecheta's *Second-Class Citizen* (1974)**

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## *Dedication*

I would like to dedicate this work to :

- My dear parents.
- My Brothers Walid and Yanis and my dear sister kenza.
- All my friends and relatives.

**Nadira**

I would like to dedicate this work to:

- My family and all my friends.

**Hayet**

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## Abstract

The present dissertation aims at analyzing the issues of racism and otherness, embodied in trauma and violence, in both Toni Morrison's novel *The Bluest Eye*, published in 1970 and Buchi Emecheta's *Second-Class citizen*, 1974. It represents the lives of the Blacks in two different White communities, the American and the British one. We intend also to show the devastating effects of this relation based on privileging one race on the detriment of the other. To reach our aim, we have compared the two works relying on Albert Memmi's theory *Racism*, 2000. This study highlights the major effects of history and society in promoting racial and gender racism and otherness, and how due to differences the whites gained supremacy over the blacks. In addition, it underscores the negative outcomes of mostly gender and racial otherness on blacks in general, and black women in particular who suffer from double marginalization, which led them to experience an aggressive and oppressive life both in the white and black communities. This study closes by shedding light on the psychological trauma of black women, who endured a set of bad experiences and circumstances. Through our analysis ,we have come to the conclusion that both novels reveal that racism and otherness are social and historical constructs aimed at sustaining the Whites' domination over the black race, and this domination has led to the creation of violent and aggressive behavior against the blacks who are conceived as being inferior. The second point we reached in this work is that the racism endured by the blacks reappeared within the black community itself .This domination of black women by black men caused harmful effects on black women who suffered from violence and trauma .

## **Introduction:**

The concepts of racism and otherness refer to attitudes or beliefs assigned to some social groups, considered as inferior. The inferior social group represents the segment of society that is conceived different in race and origin comparing to other groups. According to Paula Rothenberg, in her *Defining Racism and Sexism*, racism is a policy which is adopted by the White to subordinate people of colour. It is thanks to history that they, whites, were supplied with enough power and privilege to subjugate the blacks<sup>1</sup>. Accordingly, since history is implied, the assumption of racism can be traced back to the era of imperialism and colonialism, two terms used synonymously to refer to the practice of domination, which involves the subjugation of one people to another<sup>2</sup>; the fact that gave the whites an opportunity to enslave and oppress the Blacks and to erase their rights as humans.

Therefore, the relation between Whites and Blacks is that of binary oppositions characterized by the white's domination over the black race. As it is widely accepted, white people symbolise civilization, superiority and beauty; whereas black people refer to primitiveness, inferiority and ugliness. This categorization of people according to their skin colour, into superior or inferior, is not based on logical standards or truths. The two major factors which have determined this correlation are mainly the process of colonization and the ideology of imperialism, which shaped the history of the two races. This leads to the oppression of the non-white and their enslavement all over the world, where the two different races are compelled to co-exist. Accordingly, black people are always viewed as the “slaves” of the white “masters”, who have established the standards of perfectness in every aspect of life, such as: civilization, humanity, beauty ...etc.

It is worth to mention that the white race relies on the elements which preserve it in an idealistic image in the aim of justifying its power and its stratification in the top of the racial hierarchy. The aim is to Other the black race and to force them to accept the idea of their inferiority. Actually, the Other stands not only for inferiority, but also for all what is fearful and unacceptable. Gender Otherness refers to the process of othering women by men. In fact, a woman is considered as the inferior Other comparing to man and this kind of gender 'otherness' is more prevalent in black communities. So, the link between the black man and the black woman is altered. That is to say, the Otherness of black women is associated to their race and gender; and this is what makes them doubly marginalized. Accordingly, black women are the most ones affected by the negative outcomes of the world's unequal division. They suffer from double marginalization, which engendered violence and trauma.

Toni Morrison's and Buchi Emecheta's works are good examples that show how black women are doubly marginalized, in relation to their race and gender, in two different white communities; the American and the European. So, our work will be based on the double otherness experienced by black women, and our task is to draw a comparison on the major effects of this double otherness on them, which are mainly violence and trauma. Both works aim at mirroring the life endured by the blacks, especially black women in a white context, where racism and stereotype are prevailing. The two authors, through their works, try to show how the blacks in general and black women in particular are compelled to live on the margin of their society. In doing so, they have portrayed how black women have endured oppression, injustice and psychological trauma in both white community and within the black one as well.

Actually, the choice of the two authors stems from the affinities shared between the two cited works. In addition, being of black origins, both authors have endured and

experienced racism and otherness ,as a race and gender, and it is obvious that they conceive similarly the issues of race and gender. It is also worth to mention the importance accorded to racism as a social and historical construct by the two female writers.

### **Review of the Literature:**

The issue of racism and marginalisation in the two works has been discussed and tackled by several authors and writers. Indeed, Toni Morrison's and Buchi Emecheta's novels have attracted a large bulk of critics, concerning the study of race and otherness. Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*(1970) has been studied by Harold Bloom, in his book *Bloom's Guide, Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye*. Bloom affirms that Toni Morrison's novel is successful, and her early phase in writing bears canonical qualifications<sup>3</sup>. He has studied the novel in its socio-political dimension<sup>4</sup>, and he asserted that *The Bluest Eye* was written in a context characterised by active movements in the United States. They were movements which denounced racism and discrimination. Among them, “The Black is Beautiful” and “The Civil Rights” movements. <sup>5</sup>According to Bloom, Morrison produced her novel to reveal to what extent racial and cultural segregation overwhelmed the black existence, and how the standards of appearance, beauty and conduct ,set by the white, smashed the black female's belief in one's worthiness . Harold Bloom suggests that the claimed superiority and primacy of the white reinforced the assumption of the black ugliness, which resulted in sufferings and trauma within the black female psyche.<sup>6</sup>

Another critique is advanced by Tracy.L.Walters, who claimed that Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* recreates the mythic theme of patriarchal dominance and female oppression. Through the novel, the author does not focus on the physical abuse of the black female, but he rather examines the trauma experienced by young black girls. For Tracy.L.Walters, the novel explores the theme of psychological trauma as one of the damaging effects engendered by the perpetuation of the white aesthetic and Eurocentric

values. The critic claimed that this trauma is due to both “familial and communal-bred internalized racism”.<sup>7</sup> That is to say, the family or the man, who reduced the black woman and oppressed her is just a contribution to the efforts of the community to abuse and marginalize black women. This means that both family and society adopted the same principles in order to keep women on the margin of the white society and under the dominance of the black men. Accordingly, women were suffering from racial and gender Otherness or marginalization.

*The Bluest Eye* is also criticised by Yolanda Williams Page in her *Icons of African American Literature: The Black Literary World*. For her, Toni Morrison is at once a politically engaged writer and a philosopher, who explored the black psyche. The writer analyses the characters' psychological state in relation to such notions as love and hatred, identity and oppression, alienation and belonging, and religion and faith. Exploring the aforementioned themes, Toni Morrison, in her first novels *The Bluest Eye* (1970) and *Sula* (1973), tries to communicate the painful feelings that a black girl can afford when the mirror reflects her blackness and thus her ugliness. She exposes the devastating effects of blackness and ugliness on a young black female's psyche. The fact of being a counter image of what Western Civilisation has decided as beauty, whiteness, can offer a black girl two alternatives: either to keep herself away from the white or to imitate him. This imitation, however, is the most culminating point which can lead the black girl to death or madness, as it is the case of Pecola Breedlove in *The Bluest Eye*.<sup>8</sup>

Buchi Emecheta 's *Second Class Citizen* (1974) has also received a variety of critical views . One among the critiques is suggested by Y.Panirao in his article “*Gender and Racial Issues in Mariama Ba, Nadine Gordimer, Buchi Emecheta's Selected Novels*”, in which he examines Buchi Emecheta's works from a feminist point of view. He states that Emecheta is known for her vivid descriptions of female subordination and conflicting cultural values in modern Africa. Her Book, *Second Class Citizen*, displays the difficulties of Africans adapting to a life in London where eventually settled. He argues that ,in almost her works,

Emecheta's heroines overcome all their difficulties. For instance, Adah, in *Second Class Citizen*, can be seen to exert her invincible will and self-determination in order to break out the oppressions posed by a racial environment and psychological female dependency. He adds, Emecheta is regarded as a leading female voice in contemporary African literature; she has attracted international attention for compelling depiction of the female experience in African society.<sup>9</sup>

Another article written by Eno Ekpenyong Umanan, entitled “*Misogyny in Buchi Emecheta’s Second Class Citizen and Elsaadawi’s Love in The Kingdom of Oil*”, discusses the different forms of misogyny, its causes and women's reactions to it as portrayed in Emecheta's *Second-Class Citizen*. He states that the novel is semi autobiographical, and it tackles issues that oppose black women especially in the Igbo society, a patriarchal society, where the female is insignificant from its childhood. That is to say, a woman is considered as a second class human being. Besides, he asserts that Emecheta's *Second-Class Citizen* is a novel that depicts the exploitation and hatred of African women by African men. He adds that in her novel, Emecheta shows how the restrictions cause women to be submissive and docile, the case of Adah who is exploited by her parents and her husband Francis. Adah chooses to be obedient rather than rebelling against them, and it is until the end of the novel that she decides to no more accept injustice. Umanan points out that misogyny exists in *Second-Class Citizen* and the male hatred generates forms of oppression and marginalization of women.<sup>10</sup>

## **Issue and Working Hypothesis**

It follows from the above Review of the literature that all of the two works have been already studied, in relation to issues of gender, race and otherness, through different perspectives. Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* is rather studied in relation to race, Emecheta's *Second-Class Citizen* in relation to gender. Therefore the main concern of this dissertation is to study and compare Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*(1970) and Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen*(1974) in relation to the issues of racism and otherness and their effects on the black race mainly and black women particularly. Besides, this work will be based on the study of Otherness experienced by black women at the level of both their race and gender, in addition to all what is resulted from this double otherness, violence and trauma.

In fact, racism and otherness are among the crucial issues raised and discussed by many authors and critiques, each from his specific view. Relying on what has been said above, we deduce that the majority of the critiques have widely agreed that racism is a social and historical construct, which aims to dominate the Blacks all over the world. However, our aim through this dissertation is to show how racism and otherness are promoted through social and cultural differences. So, the goal of this comparison is to reveal how racism is used as a mean to denigrate and humiliate the Blacks in order to favour more the supremacy and domination of the whites. Furthermore, we will attempt to show the impact of racism in violating the rights of the Blacks in general and those of Black women in particular, through Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* and Buchi Emecheta's *Second-Class Citizen*, how Black man denigrates and humiliates the Black woman and compels her to live under his control and domination. As a consequence, being a black and a female, she suffers a great deal from both racial and gender racism. Finally, we will reveal how Black women, due to racial and gender otherness, suffer from whites' racist stereotype in the white communities, American and

British, and from black man's violence within her own community, and how all the harsh events in her life lead to her psychological distortion which is trauma. That is to say, how racism and otherness lead to violence against black women, and how this violence and marginalization engendered trauma in them.

## Methodological Outline

Our work follows the IMRAD method of writing. In addition to the introduction, in which we present the topic of our research which is about racism and otherness and their devastating effects on the blacks, who suffer from violence and trauma, especially black women, we have moved to the review of literature, then methods and materials we have relied on, and the results we reached through our analysis. Besides, in the discussion part, our work will be divided into two main chapters. The first one explains racism as a social and historical construct. This is shown through providing some illustrations from Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* and Buchi Emecheta's *Second-Class Citizen*, that demonstrate the Whites' superiority and the Blacks' inferiority in general. Then, the otherness of the blacks in two different white communities, the American one and the English. The goal is to provide a general view about the characteristics of the relation between the two races, white and black, and to explain what facts contributed in shaping this relationship, in addition to its impact on the black identity, through the analysis of the issues of racism and otherness within the two novels. The second chapter is devoted to the effects of otherness on black women who experience a double marginalisation in relation to both their race and gender. It also exposes how black women are subjected to men's domination within the black community. Finally, we will move to reveal how black men's domination turns into violence against black women who are exposed to physical and psychological constraints, that finally cause them trauma.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Rothenberg,P,S.(2005)*White Privilege :Essential Readings on the Other Side of Racism*.  
New York: Worth Publishers,pp.37-38

<sup>2</sup>Colonialism Vs Imperialism: International Relations, accessed on 02-November-2017 11 :33  
<http://internationalrelations.org/colonialism-vs-imperialism>

<sup>3</sup> Bloom, H.(2010)*Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretation: Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye:*  
*Bloom's Literary Criticism an Imprint of InfoBase Publishing ,132West 31<sup>st</sup> Street: New*  
*York, NY 10001.*

<sup>4</sup> Ibid ,13

<sup>5</sup> Ibid ,15,16

<sup>6</sup> Ibid,17

<sup>7</sup> Walters, Tracey, L.(2010)*Morrison's Use of the Persephone Myth. In: Bloom's Modern*  
*Critical Interpretation: Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye: Bloom's Literary Criticism ,an*  
*Imprint of InfoBase Publishing ,132West 31<sup>st</sup> Street: New York, NY 10001,pp.106-107-108*

<sup>8</sup> Page,Yolanda,W.(2011)*Toni Morrison. In :Icons of African Literature: The Black Literary*  
*World, Greenwood Publishing Group. California: Greenwood Icons,pp.265-266-267*

<sup>9</sup> Panirao,Y.(2014)*Gender and Racial Issues in Mariama Ba ,Nadine Gordimer, Buchi*  
*Emecheta 's Selected Novels: Research Journal of English Language and Literature (Rjelal), 2*  
*(4),pp.3-4-5*

<sup>10</sup> Umana, Eno, E.(2011)*Misogyny in Buchi Emecheta's Second Class Citizen and El*  
*Saadawi 's Love in the Kingdom of Oil: Knowledge Review,December,23 No,pp.2-3-4*

## Methods and Materials:

### Methods

#### ➤ **Albert Memmi's *Racism***

Racism is one of the most discussed issues among historians and thinkers in addition to a wide range of literary authors. Each of them has dealt with this concept from his own and personal perspective. Since our work is based on the two notions of otherness and racism, and trauma and violence as their effects, we find that Albert Memmi's theoretical contribution to the subject fits best our work. Albert Memmi is a Tunisian Jewish writer, theorist and essayist who was born in colonial Tunisia in December 1920. He was educated in a French primary school, moved to high school in Algiers, where he studied Philosophy, and finally joined the Sorbonne University, Paris. During his life, Albert Memmi was confronted to three different cultures with incompatible norms and values. Early in his life, Albert Memmi was aware of the divisions and the social categorizations of people. He witnessed the distinctions that existed among Jews and Muslims, Arabs and Europeans, and ghetto dwellers and the working class and the Bourgeoisie. Thus, the main subjects of his writings focus mainly on subjects which particularly treat human oppression, and his life witnesses urged him to tackle the issue of discrimination and racism<sup>1</sup>. His theory of *Racism* evokes the theme of discrimination based on a large variety of differences, in relation to race, gender, or any possible difference.

Therefore, to deal with our theme, which tackles the issues of otherness and racism, it occurs that the most suitable theory to apply is Albert Memmi's *Racism*, published in 2000. According to him, racism is based on differences among individuals, or

more broadly between two different races. Memmi suggests that racism is a social construct promoted by interaction between individuals or groups which are different, as he says “racism only becomes racism within a social context”.<sup>2</sup> In his view, racism encompasses two different meanings, the narrow and the large. In its narrow sense, racism refers to the rejection and domination of the other, who is biologically different ( skin colour, shape of the nose...). These biological differences serve to draw the line between the races, which are divided into pure and impure. The pure race , which is the white race, is characterized by its superiority and dominance. It considers the other races, black or coloured, as not belonging to the self, and so it denigrates them. Then, the superior race by its dominance imposes negative valuation and generalizes it on the other/different races.<sup>3</sup> By doing so, the white's superiority is paralleled by the non white's , more precisely, the black's inferiority. The relation between the two races is characterized by the fear of the other for the whites, and uncertainty about the self for the blacks. The broad sense of racism, labelled heterophobia by Memmi, refers to all racist attitudes based on any possible difference between people, and the differences are used to marginalise and humiliate the others.

Albert Memmi has defined racism mainly to reflect the relationship between two different races: white and black. The aim is to denounce the racist attitudes of the dominant Whites, and to expose the suffering and trauma of the Blacks. According to him, racism is a social construct that defines the relation between the superior white race and the inferior black one. To explain more, racism, as a man made construct, aims at denigrating one race in order to privilege another one. He claimed that the origin of this ideology, racism, goes back to some historical events as colonization, which explains the source of White's humiliation, hostility and marginalization of the blacks.

To support this idea, we borrowed the definition of racism , as it is given by Albert Memmi in his theory *Racism*, in which he affirms that:

Racism is a generalizing definition and valuation of differences, whether real or imaginary, to the advantage of the one defining and deploying them, and to the detriment of the one subjected to that act of definition, whose purpose is to justify (social or physical) hostility and assault.<sup>4</sup>

Accordingly, it is important to explain how the white race gained its supremacy and justified its dominance in relation to what Albert Memmi considers a division of races, pure and non pure. This division is primarily based on biological differences and later on expanded to a variety of other criteria which favour the pure race and denigrates the non pure ones. According to Albert Memmi, pure races are biologically distinct from others. This superiority includes psychological, cultural, social and spiritual aspects, all of which contribute to the justification of the dominance and privilege of the superior race . In this concern , he says, “Pure races are biologically superior to those that are not pure, and this superiority brings with it as well a psychological, social, cultural and spiritual superiority”.<sup>5</sup>

In addition, Memmi uses the term “Heterophobia”, which encompasses all forms of domination and rejection based on any kind of differences other than the biological one, to designate the domination that exists mainly between races, genders, origins, social categories<sup>6</sup>... “Heterophobia” ,as one of the crucial concepts in Albert Memmi's theory, refers to racism in a broader sense, but which still has the same goal, which is domination and control. Heterophobia is based not only on biological differences, but it is expanded to include all forms of differences which can result in any kind of domination. It is explained as fear, hatred and aggressiveness directed to the other, conceived as different from the self. It can be found in such relations between a white and a black, a native and an immigrant or man and woman. For Memmi, a woman is “othered” by a man, because she is different in gender. She, a woman, constitutes a source of fear for a

man. Heterophobia, according to Memmi, is an inevitable feature that characterises every relation between two different categories of people. These differences include race, gender, social classes and others. Albert Memmi affirms:

Heterophobia would designate the many configurations of fear, hate, and aggressiveness that, directed against an other, attempt to justify themselves through different psychological, cultural, social, or metaphysical means, of which racism in its biological sense is only one instance.<sup>7</sup>

Another important element that Memmi tackles in his theory is the effects of racism on the marginalized and rejected individual. One of the negative outcomes is the prevailing violence. Indeed, the phenomenon of violence can be considered as a social behaviour, which characterises most of the black communities. Its manifestations are clearly shown in Afro-Americans and Africans' reactions towards one another ;every black is concerned with the effect of racism and becomes aggressive towards others, especially the Black female .

The term violence is defined differently by scholars according to their fields of study. In general, the term originates from Latin “viotia”, meaning “vermence”, which designates an intense force.<sup>8</sup> It is the overt physical, psychological manifestations of force on individuals or groups. Besides racism, sexism, ethnic and religious persecutions are main sources of violence, involving constraints that abuse people physically and psychologically. According to Albert Memmi, this phenomenon is the legacy of racism. In other words ,it is the result of “dread ,terrible anxieties that arise in the face of otherness”.<sup>9</sup>Yet, that machine of racism practices “aggression” that leads to “hostility” and ‘violence’. He asserts:

The fact dread ,or terrible anxieties that can arise in the face of the otherness ,is a central component of racism .Even someone who is just

of another social class. And this just a few steps from dread to hostility, from dread to hostility, and from hostility to violence [...]racism not only produces aggression ,it's one of the manifestations of aggression, and aggression seems to be very common mode conduct for our species.<sup>10</sup>

In addition, Memmi states that racism is the very “negation”, because “it signifies the exclusion of the other, and his or her subjection to violence and domination”.<sup>11</sup> That is to say, racism has destructive effects on individuals; mainly in ‘body’ and ‘mind’. Memmi asserts that a man is the only “animal” who, in order to justify himself, “despises”, “humiliates”, and systematically annihilates other people. Racism constitutes a “permanent laboratory” in order to destroy the ‘other’, the adversary, psychologically and physically.<sup>12</sup>

Thus, Memmi argues that racism is regarded as a laboratory of destruction of the individuals; psychologically and physically. Indeed ,it is always both a “ discourse” and an “action”. It designates the verbal and physical violence. In this sense, we might identify that both Afro-American and African communities were victims of the legacy of racism ,mainly verbal and physical violence.

To sum up, it is worth noting that Memmi explains racism as a social, historical and cultural construct. He also attributes violence and trauma to racism. For him, otherness and alienation burst from the need to justify domination, control and resentment of the other who constitutes difference, who is at the same time a source of danger and fear.

## **Materials:**

### **Biographies of the two authors:**

#### ➤ **Toni Morrison**

Chloe Anthony Wolford ,later known as Toni Morrison, is an Afro-American writer who was born in 1931 in Lorain, Ohio. She grew up in times of the Great Depression which later drawn as a sitting in most of her literary works. Her family moved to Ohio from the South, left their home in reaction to hostile, racist culture and other oppressive acts. Morrison studied Literature and Art, and in 1953, she received undergraduate degree from Howard University. Morrison began her writing career by publishing her first novel *The Bluest Eye* (1970). In most of her literary works, Morrison narrates what she had witnessed in the United State of America, as its citizen and also as a part of its ethnicity. She was the first black woman to receive the Noble Prize for literature in 1993. The subject of her writings focuses on racism and discrimination. Among her other works: *Sula* (1973), *Songs of Solomon* (1977), *Beloved*(1987) and *A Mercy* (2008).<sup>13</sup>

#### ➤ **Buchi Emecheta**

Buchi Emecheta is an African writer; her full name is Florence Onyobuchi Emecheta. She was born in 1944 in Lagos, Nigeria, and she died in London in 2017. At the age of nine, she became an orphan, a fact that dismembered her family. As the Nigerian society values boys more even in education, Emecheta struggled to sit a scholarship examination for the Methodist Girls' High school, fueled by her dream to become a writer. When she was sixteen she left school to marry and she began working in an American library. Few years later, she traveled to London and once there, she was shocked by an advertisement 'SORRY NO COLOURED'. Therefore, she began writing about her experience, as an immigrant in

England. By the time Emecheta was twenty-two, she earned a degree in sociology and began writing fiction. Her first book is *In The Ditch* (1972). Emecheta's other works are: *Second Class Citizen*(1974), *The Bride Price* (1976),*The Slave Girl*(1977),*The Joys Of Motherhood* (1979), and *Head Above Water* (1984).<sup>14</sup>

### **Summaries of the two novels:**

#### ➤ ***The Bluest Eye* 1970 by Toni Morrison**

Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*(1970) narrates the story of an African-American young black girl, Pecola Breedlove, who suffers from both her community and family rejection and marginalisation. Seeing herself an ugly black girl in an American white society, she longs for blue eyes which she thought could supply her with the necessary beauty, in order to be accepted and admired by her family and society and to be saved from the stereotypical reactions on the behalf of her peers. In addition, Pecola's failure to feel her belonging to neither of the two races, black or white and the abusive temper of her parents and their recurrent violence, physical or verbal, pushes her to the extreme, and she ends in madness. Indeed, what leads to her demise and madness, is her father's violence and the fact of her being raped by him. The story then is a portrayal of the racist and violent attitude addressed to the black female; either from the white community or the black male. It sheds light on the effects of racism and marginalization on black women, on the basis of both their gender and race and all the negative aspects of it, including most importantly violence and psychological trauma.<sup>15</sup>

#### ➤ ***Second Class Citizen* 1974 by Buchi Emecheta**

Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class citizen* (1974) is another novel which deals with the issue of women alienation and otherness. It tells the story of Adah Ofili, a Nigerian

woman who immigrates to the United Kingdom. The story of Adah's childhood is set in a black Nigerian society, and her womanhood in England, a European white community. As a child girl, Adah experienced gender alienation and marginalization, because girls in her society are undesirable and rejected. As a woman, in a foreign white society, she suffers under a different shape of otherness and oppression, which is related to her skin colour and race. Thus, Adah, the black female, is oppressed and regarded as inferior and a second-class citizen as her husband tries to convince her. Francis, Adah's husband, fails to fulfil his studies and remains dependent on his wife. Accordingly, whenever she protests, he reacts violently and he rapes her just to keep her submissive. At the end, Adah gets divorced and succeeds to support her five children and to overcome gender and racial otherness in a European white country like the United Kingdom, and becomes a writer.<sup>16</sup>

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Albert MEMMI, Tunisian novelist: Britannica. <http://www.britannica.com/biography/Albert-Memmi> [ accessed 31 October2017, 14:49]

<sup>2</sup>M, A.(2000)*Racism*: the University of Minnesota Press: USA: Steve Marinot,32

<sup>3</sup>Ibid ,5-6

<sup>4</sup>Ibid ,100

<sup>5</sup>Ibid,5

<sup>6</sup>Kwame,A,A.(2000) Foreword. in: M, A. *Racism*. The University of Minnesota Press: USA,Steve Marinot, *IX*

<sup>7</sup>Ibid, 118

<sup>8</sup> Krause ,K.(2009)*Beyond definition: Violence in a Global Perspective* ,Global Crime,October,10(4),P.338-339

<sup>9</sup>MEMMI,A.(2000)*Racism*: the University of Minnesota Press: USA: Steve Marinot,138

<sup>10</sup>Ibid ,138,139

<sup>11</sup> Ibid,164

<sup>12</sup> Ibid,142

<sup>13</sup> Li, S.(2009)*Toni Morrison: A Biography* ,Oxford :Greenwood Press,P.3-6-7

<sup>14</sup> Hallet ,G.(2017)*Buchi Emecheta: Bibliographie sélectives* ,Bibliothèque Centrale De France, Département Littérature et Art ,p.1-5

<sup>15</sup> Bloom, H.(2010)*Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretation: Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye: Bloom's Literary Criticism* an Imprint of InfoBase Publishing ,132West 31<sup>st</sup> Street: New York, NY 10001,p27-63

<sup>16</sup> Abioseh,M.(1988)Second Class Citize:The Point of Departure for Understanding Buchi Emecheta's Fiction,*The International Fiction Review*,15,No,p.124-126-127

## Results

In our dissertation, we tried to compare two novels written by two Black female writers. The two novels are Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, 1970, and Buchi Emecheta's *Second-Class Citizen*, 1974. Our comparison focuses on racism and otherness experienced, in two different white communities: the American and the European one, by the blacks in general and black women in particular. So, we have relied on Albert Memmi's theory *Racism*, 1984 to show how differences at the level of race, origin, culture, .... are used by the whites to subjugate black people. Memmi reveals that those differences are initially the creation and promotion of stereotypes, alienation and oppression of the weak by the powerful.

After the discussion of the two sections of the present research paper, we have come to the findings that racism is a social and historical construct that exists thanks to the interaction between people belonging to two different races, white and black, the fact that paves the way for exploitation, ill treatment and denigration of the Blacks who are conceived as an impure and weak race by the whites who represent power or what Memmi labels the pure race. Actually, this is what is proved through the works of Toni Morrison and Buchi Emecheta, mainly by the main characters of the two novels: Pecola Breedlove in Toni Morrison's *The bluest Eye* and Adah Ofili in Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class-Citizen*. Both authors revealed that the white race, by faith and conviction created by history and society, denigrates and humiliates the black race and considers it an inferior race that should remain under its domination.

Another important point reached through our analysis is the fact that the white's marginalisation and otherness directed to the blacks is recreated by the blacks themselves. This recreation of alienating and othering appeared under another shape in both Morrison's novel and Emecheta's as well to mirror the life of black women. Indeed, the black man

adopted the position of the dominant and assigned the role of the dominated to the black woman. Accordingly, black woman found herself in front of a double marginalisation, racial and gender. This explains the violence, whether, verbal or physical, directed from the black man to the black woman which is originally one of the devastating effects of racism and otherness.

Finally, it occurred that the violence endured by the black women generated trauma. This trauma has subverted women self-confidence and faith in themselves, and pushed them to choose either submission or rebellion. Toni Morrison shows that being passive and ruled leads to black woman's decimation, the case of Pecola who ends up in madness. Emecheta , on her behalf, affirms that unless black woman protest, or object, she won't get rid of black man's oppression and humiliation, a truth shown by Adah the main character in *Second-Class Citizen*.

## **Discussion**

This section is devoted to the analysis of racism, as portrayed by the two black feminine writers: Toni Morrison and Buchi Emecheta. Both of them try to mirror life of the blacks in two different white communities. Toni Morrison in the American community, through her novel *The Bluest Eye*, and Buchi Emecheta in a European community, through her novel *Second-Class Citizen*. The two writers reveal the conditions under which the blacks in general conduct their lives in white communities, which are characterized by racism, otherness, alienation and subjugation. Then, this work will be focused on the effects of racism and otherness on black women who suffer from double otherness, violence from both the whites and the blacks, which at the end resulted in trauma for them.

### **Chapter One: Racism in Relation to Albert MEMMI's Division of Races in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* and Buchi Emecheta's *Second-Class Citizen***

#### **1- The Whites' Supremacy**

##### **a. The Whites' Supremacy in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970)**

As it has already been mentioned, racism has been an important issue for a large amount of writers, particularly the black authors, who experienced and witnessed such kind of behaviour and attitude from the whites, as it is the case of Toni Morrison. In her novel *The Bluest Eye*, the Afro-American writer tries to mirror the reality of African-American life through revealing the anomalous relationship between the Blacks and the whites. She reveals the extent to which the blacks in general are humiliated and alienated. In doing so, she explains to the reader, mainly through her main character Pecola, how a black

American citizen is judged in relation to his race and origin, and marginalised on the basis of his skin colour and his physical appearance. Morrison says:

As long as she (Pecola) looked the way she did, as long as she was ugly, she would have to stay with these people. Somehow she belonged to them (Breedlove family). Long hours she sat looking in the mirror, trying to discover the secret of her ugliness, the ugliness that make her ignored and despised at school, by teachers and classmates alike. She was the only member of her class who sat alone at a double desk.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, it is obvious that black people are extremely denigrated and ignored by the whites due to their blackness. Indeed, the physical difference between whites and blacks is always used to isolate the blacks and recall them that they belong to the inferior race which is not allowed to interact and integrate with the superior white race.

Actually, Morrison affirms that racism is merely a social and historical phenomenon. She claims that the white's superiority bursts from their belief that they are the unique source of civilization and greatness. That is to say, a white individual is born with a full conviction that he belongs to the powerful and dominant race. Consequently, whites are convinced that it is up to them to lead the world and to take control. Morrison adds that their belief in being a superior race helped them to be successful in all domains. For Morrison, the success and good performance of the whites over the blacks are achieved thanks to their overconfidence in the myth of their superiority. This is shown in her saying:

With the confidence born of a conviction of superiority, they performed well at schools. They were industrious, orderly, and energetic, hoping to prove beyond a doubt De Gobineau's hypothesis that all civilizations derive from the white race, that none can exist without its help, and that a society is great and brilliant only so far as it preserves the blood of the noble group that created it.<sup>2</sup>

Therefore, "Whiteness" is an influential notion that stresses the white's superiority. Toni Morrison has used this feature to reflect how the whites have used their skin colour to justify their humiliation and denigration of the blacks. For the whites, black people represent savageness and uncivilization; they are conceived as objects or nothingness. So, the white, whatever his job or his social status, does never consider a black as equal to him, just because the white belongs to the "pure race". Therefore, the way they treat the blacks always mirrors the white's hostility and denigration of them. All this is justified by the fact of being a member of the dominant community. Wherever a black person is compelled to be in contact with a white, he is always reminded of his inferiority in a humiliating way. In *The Bluest Eye*, Toni Morrison shows it, through Pecola, the main character:

At some fixed point in time and space he (a white store-keeper) senses that he need not waste the effort of a glance. He does not see her (Pecola), because for him there is nothing to see. How can a fifty-two-year-old white immigrant storekeeper with the taste of potatoes and beer in his mouth, his mind honed on the doe-eyed Virgin Mary, his sensibilities blunted by a permanent awareness of loss, see a little black girl? Nothing in his life even suggested that the feat was possible, not to say desirable or necessary.<sup>3</sup>

Then, it is clear that a black person is unworthy of respect or the least consideration from a white. In addition, for the whites, a black person is unable to take the right decision. He/ she is an ignorant and a weak person easy to be manipulated. The aim behind this kind of attitude is to dominate the inferior person and to keep him under control. Albert MEMMI, in his theory, asserts that "Whatever its little detours may be, ultimately, the goal of racism is dominance".<sup>4</sup> This is demonstrated through a variety of scenes, where the author tries to show how white people exploit and dominate the blacks. It is basically to reveal how the Whites are blinded by the assumption of their superiority. In addition, the author depicts the submission of the blacks. To illustrate this idea, the author's description of Pecola's mother, Polly, who is a servant in a house of a white family, is used. Morrison

writes: “Hearing, “We'll never let her go. We could never find anybody like Polly. She will not leave the kitchen until everything is in order. She is the ideal servant”.<sup>5</sup>

### **b- The Whites' Supremacy in Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen* (1974)**

As far as *Second Class Citizen* is concerned, Buchi Emecheta, has also revealed the white's superiority in her novel. As Toni Morrison, Emecheta also stresses the importance of being a white, especially in a white community. According to her, all positiveness resides in the fact of being a white person, that is to say every good quality must necessarily be attributed to Whites. The writer, in her novel, shows through Adah, the main character, how the Blacks are aware of their being different and unequal to the whites. The author voices Adah's thoughts and says: “She was now learning to suspect anything beautiful and pure. Those things were for the whites, not the blacks”.<sup>6</sup> It is obvious then that the writer shows how the whites are considered as the pure race, who, thanks to their biological differences have gained superiority and became the dominant race. It affirms at the same time the view of Albert Memmi, which states that the superiority of the whites is originally a result of their biological differences.

Another important point stressed by Albert Memmi is the rejection of the "other" on whom a negative valuation is imposed. The Other is rejected because his difference is perceived negatively, and generalized on all the blacks. For Memmi, “to generalize people is simply enough to characterize them as “not like us”, “not from here” that is, to see them only with respect to us and not to their own being”.<sup>7</sup> Within the same context, Buchi Emecheta reveals how the whites reject black people and refuse to accept them, because they are different. She goes further to show how even a White person humiliates and denigrates the Blacks. This marginalization of Black people in a white community is mainly a feature which emphasises the superiority of the whites. So, the inferiority of the blacks is just a weapon to valorise the whites and to reflect their dominance and superiority. Emecheta explains this through Adah, in a scene that faced her in England, when she was looking for a

house. She with her husband were rejected and refused by an old white woman, just because they belong to the superior race, and they, they belong to the inferior race. She writes:

Adah had never faced rejection in this manner. Not like this, directly. Rejection by this shrunken piece of humanity, with a shaky body and mopy hair, loose, dirty and unkempt, who tried to tell them that they were unsuitable for a half-derelict and probably condemned house with creaky stairs. Just because they were blacks?.<sup>8</sup>

Again the division between the two races, pure and non pure, or white and black, is referred to by Emecheta in her novel. She falls within the same stream of thought with Albert Memmi. She suggests that this division is merely a social construct whose aim is to guarantee the continuity of the white's superiority and dominance. Indeed, the line between the two communities and their members is so obvious and undeniable. The Blacks were separated from the Whites, and the difference in their lives is paramount. The whites are characterized by power, wealth and beauty. From the other side resides the blacks to whom poverty and ugliness is ascribed. She adds that separating the blacks' house from the whites' is merely to refer to the social division between the two different communities. Emecheta writes:

There was a mighty building curving right into the middle of the street, shutting away the cheerful side from the gloomy one, as if it were determined to divide the poor from the rich; the houses from the ghetto, the whites from the blacks. The jutting end of this building was just like a social divide, solid, visible and unmovable.<sup>9</sup>

This highlights the assumption that the whites are civilized and considered the source of richness, leadership and superiority. Accordingly, this remains a tool to make the difference between the two races more apparent, and of course to support the whites' superiority ,a negative valuation of the blacks is needed.

## **2. Negative Valuation of the Blacks**

### **a- Negative Valuation of the Blacks in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye***

Considered as the descendents of an impure race, the blacks are given a very negative description and portrayal. They are considered as inhuman, ignorant and savage. This stereotypical view is applied to all the members belonging to the impure race, be it a man, a woman or a child. All of them are given an animal like description, or referred to as nothingness. Terms; such as “monkey-like”, “this ugly thing”, “black devil”, “black cow”, and so many others are mostly used to describe the blacks. The aim of such kind of description is mainly to designate the devalorization of black people in relation to the whites. Toni Morrison through her novel, *The Bluest Eye*, sheds light on this assumption. One among the crucial points which she has provided is the association of blackness to ugliness. Everyone belonging to the black community is inevitably out of the norms of beauty. This is what she has transmitted via her description of Pecola's family, the Breedloves. She asserts that their ugliness is issued from the fact of their being blacks. Morrison says: “...But their( Breedlove family) ugliness was unique. No one could have convinced them that they were not relentlessly and aggressively ugly”.<sup>10</sup>

Another significant feature attributed to the Blacks is illiteracy and ignorance. These people are considered as primitive, indecisive and unable to behave in a correct way. So, the whites have to guide and orient them, through teaching the blacks how to get rid of their animal like behaviour, and how to be orderly in order to serve the whites and to guarantee perfect and good services. This again gives the image of the black servant of the superior white and insists on the wide difference that exists between the whites and the blacks. All these attributions contribute to the denigration of the blacks and to their

classification in the lowest degree of civilization and humanity. In this concern, Toni Morrison writes:

They(the blacks) go to land-grant college, normal schools, and learn how to do the white man's work with refinement: home economics to prepare his food; teacher education to instruct black children in obedience; music to soothe the weary master and entertain his blunted soul. Here they learn the rest the rest of the lesson begun in those soft houses with porch swings and pots of bleeding heart: how to behave. The careful development of thrift, patience, high morals, and good manners. In short how to get rid of the funkiness. The dreadful funkiness of passion, the funkiness of nature, the funkiness of the wide range of human emotions.<sup>11</sup>

As it is explained in the above quotation, black people have always been conceived as animal-like, which means they are not full humans, and this is reflected in the attribution of impurity to the black race.

Therefore, the division between pure and impure races is another point investigated by Toni Morrison. According to her, the white race, which represents purity and nobility, is charged by what MEMMI labels Negrophobia, which is to despise and fear the blacks, and ethnophobia which, according to MEMMI, “has the advantage of referring to the exclusion of a group as a whole, one of the central characteristics of racist practice”.<sup>12</sup> Accordingly, for the whites, negroes are a source of danger and fear, so they must be kept away from them. This supports the idea that black people derive from impure races, which reflect savageness and barbarity. Toni Morrison has referred to this perception through Cholly, Pecola's father, who frightened the white woman who owns the house where his wife works. From the first sight of the black man, the white woman has turned red and upset, because of her fear. Morrison says: “When that white woman see him, she turned red. She tried to act strong-like, but she was badly scared”.<sup>13</sup> This explains to what extent blacks are conceived negatively, even before any harm comes from them.

## **b- Negative Valuation of the Blacks in Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen***

Analogically, in another country but within the same context, Buchi Emecheta analyses the same issue relying on her own experience, both in Nigeria, her native African country, and in the United Kingdom. She revealed how black people are classified in the lowest scale of beauty. Just like Toni Morrison explained the white's association of ugliness to blackness, Buchi Emecheta too has referred to the same point through explaining how the whites have linked ugliness to blackness. However, she has rather reversed this link by associating whiteness to beauty. As it is largely believed, the notion of whiteness is coupled with that of beauty. That is to say, to be beautiful, one has necessarily to belong to the white community. Whiteness is and remains one of the principal elements which represent beauty. Adah, the main character in Emecheta's *Second-Class Citizen* voices this idea. According to her, if a person is black, he is inevitably ugly, this is a conviction and a belief engraved in the deep psyche of the blacks. In this context, the writer says, "Well, all this seemed logical to Adah. If the man was as black as the devil, it followed that he would be as ugly as hell".<sup>14</sup>

Emecheta reports how lack of motivation, illiteracy, and laziness are important features assigned to black people. Indeed, they are portrayed as being uncivilized and ignorant. The difference between them and the white race is manifested in every aspect of life, like education and self instruction. White people's process of instruction is characterized by perseverance and hard work, contrary to the blacks who hardly ever make efforts to improve their education. This mirrors mainly the difference in their mental abilities, which stands for the biological differences between the two races as it is suggested by Albert MEMMI. Accordingly, this again refers to the belief that the white race is the source of civilization and enlightenment, whereas the black one is the incarnation of ignorance and

primitiveness. Within the same thought, Emecheta sheds light on the reality that black people are less motivated comparing to the whites, who are more interested in reading and borrowing books. A conclusion based on Adah's comparison between the library in her native country and the one where she works in the United Kingdom. She says:

Soon she(Adah) had settled down to work, She hardly ever sat down, and this was purgatorial to her feet. Only God knew what the people of North Finchley did with all the books borrowed. The queue sometimes stretched so far that some people have to stand outside waiting, just to borrow books. This was a big contrast to the library she had worked in before. At the consulate, they had to bribe people to make them read fiction. They were only keen on reading text-books in order to raise their status economically.<sup>15</sup>

Therefore, it is necessary to note that the white race has always been praised, contrary to the black one which is viewed as an unworthy race. It follows from that the necessity to set limits between the two races, as a kind of division between them. This division is, in fact, applied to every aspect of the blacks' life. Indeed, black people are perceived similarly to animals. They are not considered full humans, and on this basis they are deprived from the least standards of good living conditions, mainly and more apparently in a white community, and also in their own native country under the presence of the whites. The fact that Adah sees Mrs Noble, her white patron, giving biscuits to her dog makes her recollect the memory of her father. He was bringing biscuits of animals to her and her brother. She says that those biscuits were the same offered to the blacks when the war was over. To illustrate more, Emecheta says:

She remembered looking at some of the biscuits Mrs Noble was giving Kimmy, her black dog. She had touched the biscuits and, had it not been for the fact that people were watching her, she would have tasted one. Were those not the very same type of biscuits sold to people in Africa, and were those not the very ones her Pa and uncles used to bring for her and her brother from the army barracks when the war was over?<sup>16</sup>

This shows to what extent the blacks are perceived inhuman and considered like animals. It foreshadows more the separation of the blacks from the whites, as two different races. So, the blacks are not allowed to have a similar and equal lives as that of the whites, in other words,

blacks are not accepted as a social group. Accordingly, even their identity is denied and refused.

### **3- Black Identity in a White Community**

#### **a. Black Identity in a White Community in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye***

Following what has been said above, it becomes obvious that the blacks in general, and everywhere around the world haven't been recognized as full humans, and they have always been “othered” by the whites. All the black minorities have been subjected to the same rejection, alienation and humiliation, wherever they live among the whites. Accordingly, the black identity is negatively affected. One's identity reveal who the person is, his race, ethnicity, culture, beliefs and other crucial elements that determine ones' essence and explain his way of behaving , thinking and conceiving things<sup>17</sup>. Black people are treated on the basis of their black identity. As MEMMI argues, once the negative attributions of the inferior race are defined, they are generalized on its whole members, and oppression and subjection of one race by the other becomes inevitable. All this hinders the formation of the black identity and its perpetuation, which leads to identity crises. This issue has been revealed in both Toni Morrison's and Buchi Emecheta's novels.

Toni Morrison, through her *The Bluest Eye*, sheds light on the trouble a black person may meet in a white society at the level of the process of his/her identification. Pecola, the main character, has failed to identify herself to neither her black identity nor to the white one. Her being out of the standards dictated by the white community made her an insane person, who faces rejection from both communities. The effect of this alienation persuades her that imitating the whites may allow her to integrate in their community, and thus to become of a white identity. However, Pecola's physical appearances are so obvious to be ignored by the whites, because the standards determined by them exclude blackness. Consequently, Pecola wants to get blue eyes as a mean which, she thinks, would permit her

to obtain a white identity. This means that her wish to have them, blue eyes, mirrors her inability to accept her origins and to develop a black identity based on African American culture and tradition. This is primarily due to the rejection of the blacks in a white community. As Bloom claims:

The text( *The Bluest Eye*) re-enacts the white constructions of beauty, order, and family to illustrate how the imposition of these standards on blacks prevents the development of a black identity based on African American cultural rituals. As a result, white consciousness confine black consciousness.<sup>18</sup>

At the familial level, the Breedloves, reveal how the black family is fragmented and lacks harmony among its members. Cholly Breedlove, the father, is a drunken man unable to support his family. Pauline, the mother, flees her house during the day to make the Fisher's house her refugee. Sammy, the brother, tries repeatedly to escape from his familial house . Indeed, the family is supposed to be the first place, where a person form his identity, which later on prepares him to social interaction and integration. Under such circumstances, Pecola fails to shape her identity and to identify herself to her family. Actually, the lack of consideration, the rejection and humiliation of Pecola starts under the roof of her family. There is no security, no protection, and no communication among the family members. Accordingly, Pecola, like any other member of her black family, has not succeeded to confirm her black identity in a white American society. In this concern, Toni Morrison affirms:

Cholly Breedlove, then, a renting black, having put his family outdoors, had catapulted himself beyond the reaches of human consideration. He had joined the animals; was, indeed, an old dog, a snake, a ratty nigger. Mrs Breedlove was staying with the woman she worked for; the boy, Sammy, was with some other family; and Pecola was to stay with us. Cholly was in jail.<sup>19</sup>

Another element that conveys the weakness of the black identity in the white community is the failure of the black members to construct a shared sense of belonging to one community, which is a significant and basic feature on which a social identity should be

founded . It is obvious, then, that there is no solid ground for the black identity. That is to say, black people are not concerned with one another; there is no collective events that bring them altogether . There is a kind of separation between the individuals themselves and between them and their community. They don't have common interests, everyone lives in a sort of isolation from both his family and society, and the relation between the individuals of the same community is characterised by indifference and selfishness. They conduct a life on the margin of society and refuse to proclaim their identity, as it is the case of the Breedlove family, which is portrayed without a fixed place, they are outdoors, a word which represents fear and terror for the blacks, because it means “If you are outdoors, there is no place to go”.<sup>20</sup>

### **b- Black Identity in a White Community in Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen***

As far as Buchi Emecheta is concerned, her *Second-Class Citizen* recreates the same themes tackled by Toni Morrison and discusses the issue of identity. The author, through her portrayal of the blacks, proves that the life of a black in England is not different from the American one. Black identity is not recognized anywhere; it is neither accepted by the whites nor confirmed by its black members. The situation of Adah, Emecheta's main character in the novel, shows that a black person who lives in a white man's country becomes uncertain and ashamed of his identity. Adah, when she wanted to rent a house, has tried to imitate a white woman through pressing her nose to sound like an Irish or Scot or any white woman. She has worked on her voice and accent, and tried to imitate the whites in order to get a chance of renting a home from a white old lady.<sup>21</sup> The accent is one of the elements that can reveal one's identity, and Adah the black woman, persists to hide it. This means that she buries her identity, and refuses to confirm it in front of the white people.

Analogically to Toni Morrison, Emecheta has depicted the dislocated family. It is clear that a black family is deprived of living in harmony and peace with full rights as the

whites. The family of Adah demonstrates this. It is a family which lives in daily conflicts and fights between the woman and her husband. In fact, Adah's husband, Francis, is a lazy black man who fails in his studies in the alien country. As for Adah's children, they are sent to a white babysitter who doesn't care a bit about them, because they are black. In fact, the family has not provided a sense of identity for its members. They live in a state of loss and desperation. So, in place of constructing and inserting their black identity, they have destroyed it.

From all what has been said above, we deduce that racism as a behaviour goes back to facts and convictions constructed by society and history, promoted first by theories on biological differences, between a variety of races existing in the world. Later on, this conception of difference is given a broader meaning to include any difference among people at any possible level, among them race: white Vs black, gender: man Vs woman, native Vs immigrant, and so on. All these elements worked together to denigrate the blacks and to leave them without status comparing to whites. The effects of such division are obvious and left damages on the black identity and way of living, especially in white communities, like the American and the British. In addition, the way white people used racial difference to dominate the blacks and to keep them under their control, this is through humiliating and othering them. Moreover, racism has also led to the marginalization and humiliation of black women vis-à-vis the black men. This is what we are going to explore in the following chapter. In addition, we will try to show the harmful effects of black men's denigration of the black women which results in violence and trauma.

## End notes

<sup>1</sup> Morrison ,T.(1970) *The Bluest Eye* :A division of Random House, Inc.New York: Rinehart and Wintson .45

<sup>2</sup> Ibid,168

<sup>3</sup> Ibid,48

<sup>4</sup> Memmi,A.(2000)*Racism*: the University of Minnesota Press: USA: Steve Marinot.55

<sup>5</sup> Morrison ,T.(1970) *The Bluest Eye* :A division of Random House, Inc. New York: Rinehart and Winston .188

<sup>6</sup> Emecheta, B.(1974) *Second Class Citizen* :A Division of Reed Publishing.US Allison and Busby Ltd .71

<sup>7</sup> MEMMI, A.(2000)*Racism*: the University of Minnesota Press: USA: Steve Marinot.9

<sup>8</sup> Emecheta, B.(1974) *Second Class Citizen* :A Division of Reed Publishing.US Allison and Busby Ltd .79

<sup>9</sup> Ibid,90

<sup>10</sup> Morrison ,T.(2007) *The Bluest Eye* :A division of Random House, Inc. New York: Rinehart and Wintson .38

<sup>11</sup> Ibid,83

<sup>12</sup> MEMMI,A.(2000)*Racism*: the University of Minnesota Press: USA: Steve Marinot.120

<sup>13</sup> Morrison ,T.(2007) *The Bluest Eye* :A division of Random House, Inc. New York: Rinehart and Wintson .120

<sup>14</sup> Emecheta, B. (1974) *Second Class Citizen* :A Division of Reed Publishing. US Allison and Busby Ltd .144

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 42

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 108

<sup>17</sup> [www.criticalmediaproject.org/about/key-conceptes/](http://www.criticalmediaproject.org/about/key-conceptes/)

<sup>18</sup> Bloom, H. (2010) Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretation: Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* :Bloom's Literary Criticism an Imprint of InfoBase Publishing ,132 West 31<sup>st</sup> Street: New York ,NY 10001.83

<sup>19</sup> Morrison ,T. (1970) *The Bluest Eye* :A division of Random House, Inc. New York: Rinehart and Wintson .18

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, 17

<sup>21</sup> Emecheta, B. (1974) *Second Class Citizen* :A Division of Reed Publishing. US Allison and Busby Ltd .74

## **Chapter two**

This second chapter is reserved to the analysis of heterophobia, a term which designates racism in its broad sense. Then, we are going to explain how, due to gender otherness, black women suffer from both black men's alienation, subjugation and violence. Finally, the impact of all these on the female psyche will be included, which is mainly the psychological damages engendered from man's violence and alienation of women.

### **Albert Memmi's Concept of “Heterophobia” in Relation to Black Women And Its Effects on Them**

#### **1. Gender and Racism**

Heterophobia in its broad sense has negatively affected the relation between the white and the black, and the racist attitudes and behaviour directed to the blacks in general has even worsened the link between a black man and a black woman. Actually, the relationship between a black male and a black female is characterized by denigration and subjugation, just as the relation between a white person and a black one . In relation to a black man, a black woman is regarded as a different person who is less important; a person who is there to serve him and to satisfy his personal needs. Consequently, black women suffer from both racial marginalization and gender otherness. This issue has been revealed by both Toni Morrison in her *The Bluest Eye*, and by Buchi Emecheta in her *Second Class Citizen*.

### **a. Gender and Racism in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye***

Women in general are considered inferior to men. However, this is more prevalent in black communities. In this community from their early existence, women are considered as a deception to the family. They are portrayed as a shameful creature that is undesirable to come. Indeed, as babies, they are never welcomed conveniently. Girls are always considered the last ones to deserve consideration or attention. They are generally talked of in earnest as to illustrate that they are unworthy to be mentioned. They are designated as objects. Indeed, Toni Morrison emphasises the marginalisation of black female from their early age. The best example is when Pocola's friends: Claudia and Frieda, are introduced to Mr. Henry. In fact, they are pointed out with lack of consideration and respect. In this context, the author says:

Frieda and I were not introduced to him-merely pointed out. Like, here is the bathroom; the clothes closet is here; and these are my kids , Frieda and Claudia; watch out for this window; it don't open all the way.<sup>1</sup>

It is worth noting that the Black female in general, girls or women, are viewed as the servants of both the whites and the blacks. Actually, they have to respond and to serve them constantly without having to rebel or to complain. They don't participate in decision making and they don't have the right to intervene in men's talk. Black women receive orders and they have to apply them without any objection or questioning. Whether they are convinced by men's decisions or not, they don't have the opportunity to express their own views. Toni Morrison, in her description of black women, argues that everybody in the world is able to issue orders for them. Whites: men, women and children, and black men as well, all of them acquired the right of ordering them. The writer, however, asserts that only black children are out of this convention against black women. This means that black women must be subjugated and submissive to the whites and the blacks alike.<sup>2</sup>

Black women are also alienated, since the tradition puts men in a position that denigrates them. The black society adopts a patriarchal system, which favours the superiority of man and offers him absolute power and authority. As such, women are considered as the Other even comparing to the black man. And the Other is always in a lower position. This perception of women as being in a second position in relation to men can be considered a cultural and historical construct. It remains an important component of the black community.

### **b- Gender and Racism in Buchi Emecheta's *Second-Class Citizen***

The Nigerian community is not different from the African-American one. This means that black women are treated and viewed in the same way everywhere. Buchi Emecheta has also approached the same theme from her own perspective. Likely to Toni Morrison's description of a girl child birth in negative terms, Buchi Emecheta has basically used a similar description to refer to the birth of Adah, who is described in such humiliating terms like “little, damp, monkey-like thing”.<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, the rejection of a female child is a major feature, which characterises the black community. This expresses the hatred of female members, who are considered insignificant comparing to men. The author has referred to this fact in her saying: “She was a girl who had arrived when everyone was expecting and predicting a boy”. She continues by asserting that the girl baby was a disappointment not only to her parents, but also to her community as a whole. To express more the rejection of black women, she says that Adah's birth was “so insignificant”.<sup>4</sup>

The hatred of black women and their marginalisation is also mirrored in the field of education. Since women are believed to be less intelligent, they should remain subjected to the black male whose aim is to dehumanize them and to make them his property. Consequently, black women are deprived of the privileges enjoyed by black men. Unlike the black man's unquestionable right of education, this right is something that has nothing to do with the black woman. That is to say, education is solely reserved to the black male and it is

not expanded to the black female. According to the black community, money should not be wasted on girls' education, because they are supposed to stay at home and serve their fathers, husbands or brothers and do housekeeping. Buchi Emecheta explains that even if girls are sent to school, they are allowed only a short period as far as they could write properly their names and count. In this concern, the author says:

School-the Igbo never played with that! They were realising fast that one's saviour from poverty and disease was education...Boys were usually given preference, though. So even though Adah was about eight, there were still discussion about whether it would be wise to send her to school. Even if she was sent to school, it was very doubtful whether it would be wise to let her stay long. 'A year or two would do, as long as she can write her name and count. Then she will learn to sew.'<sup>5</sup>

It is obvious from the ideas discussed above that black women are not given an equal position with the black man. They are relegated to an inferior position so that even the black man could humiliate and denigrate them. They are excluded from decision making and reduced to such roles as that of a wife and a mother. They have to work hard in order to satisfy their husbands and to rise up their children, in addition to providing the house with its necessities. This is what makes a black woman enslaved by her husband, who perceives her as an inferior creature. Black women in their society should be submissive and obedient; they are not allowed to challenge men's decisions or authority. They receive orders issued by men and execute them without questioning. Emecheta supports this idea by writing: "She(Adah) hated being treated like a native woman who was not supposed to know the important happenings in her family until they have been well discussed and analysed by the menfolk".<sup>6</sup>

Therefore, it is worth noting that black women, being the "other" of the black man, are marginalized on the basis of their gender, which, due to culture and society, is considered inferior. Women come in the second position comparing to men that is what justifies men's denigration and humiliation of women. This alienation of black women has altered the relation between them and men, be it their father, brother or husband. The relationship between the two genders, male and female, is not only featured by men's

dominance. Yet it is characterised by violence in all its forms, verbal and physical. Actually, violence is one among the important aspects revealed by the two authors, Toni Morrison and Buchi Emecheta. The following part is devoted to the analysis of violence in both novels.

## **2. Violence**

Our concern in this part are race and gender violence ,defined as a verbal and physical harm that inflicted on the individuals on the basis of their race and gender or sexual orientations. We tend to show that both Toni Morrison and Buchi Emecheta display in their works the phenomenon of violence as the effect of racism and sexism, with its different forms. Morrison's and Emecheta's works vigorously illustrate the suffering of women in the patriarchal society as well as the effect of racism on them and the prevalent violence as one of the consequences of racism in both communities ,the afro American and the African one . Indeed , all the stereotypes associated to the black race had a great impact over their minds and thus over their behaviours; they grew up with them and educated their children to believe in them. Therefore, these stereotypes plant in black men's minds, caused damages to their psyches and personalities. Thus, they were traumatized to the extent of turning their anger towards the black female. While the white believed in the inferiority of black, the latter believed in the inferiority of black women. Indeed, the black men in their turn, showed their power through oppression and violence with all its forms against black women.

### **a. Violence in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye***

In *The Bluest Eye*, Toni Morrison demonstrates the plight of the African American women. The suffering of the black woman is twofold in the novel. She is the first victim in the black community and the American society as a whole .She undergoes the whites' injustice and black men's violence. The author says:

[...] Everybody in the world was in a position to give them orders. White woman said, "Do this". White children said, "Give me that".

White men said, “Come here”. Black men said, “Lay down”. The only people they need not take orders from were black children and each other. But they took all that and re-created it in their own image. They ran the houses of white people, and knew it. When white men beat their men, they cleaned up the blood and went home to receive abuse from the victim.<sup>7</sup>

In the quotation, the author reveals that black women were doubly subjected; they did not only suffer from racism because of the skin colour, but they suffered from sexism by whites and by black men alike. They were regarded as slaves, obeying men’s orders. Besides, they have to be under the mercy of men: their husbands and fathers. The black males reproduce whites’ attitudes towards “petty thins and week people”,<sup>8</sup> being affected by whites’ ideas and visions. They use to oppress their wives, mothers, and daughters. The following instances reveal the author’s aim to show the plight of the black female from violence, verbal and physical.

The most important representation of violence in *The Bluest Eye* is the one in Breedlove’s family. The daughter Pecola is the principal victim of this abuse. When Pocola is introduced in the story, she is referred to as a “Folks”, by Claudia’s mother. The victim has been reduced to a nameless thing, Claudia and Frieda’s mother is angry at Pocola for drinking all the milk. In this regard she says:

[...]As if I don't have trouble enough trying to feed my own and keep out the poorhouse ,now I got something else that 's just going to drink me on in there[ ...]Don't need three quarts of milk. Henry Ford don't need three quarts of milk. That's down right sinful.<sup>9</sup>

The passage foreshadows the anger that the mother display verbally, lashing out at the girls. It reflects her indignation with Pocola's father, who abused her daughter. In addition, Pecola is always victim of cruel and brutal jokes, which are usually due to her blackness and her poor and dismembered family. For instance, once in the playground, four young black boys hold her hostage inside a small circle that they formed, they were insulting her by chanting about her blackness and father's supposed habit of sleeping naked. Morrison writes:

They had extemporized a verse made up of two insults about matters over which the victim had no control: the colour of her skin and speculations on the sleeping habits on an adult, wildly fitting in its incoherence. That they themselves were black, or that their own father had similarly relaxed habits was irrelevant. It was their contempt for their own blackness that gave the first insult its teeth.<sup>10</sup>

In this quotation, Morrison demonstrates through this incident the suffering of black female from their own race. The self loathing of the boys emerged from their blackness, leads to the oppression of someone more vulnerable than themselves. In this sense, Memmi argues that “If one is strong enough, the assault on and oppression of other is permissible”.<sup>11</sup> This form of violence here increases a psychological effect on Pecola, which is one of the causes of her destruction.

Besides, Morrison has displayed the physical violence in her novel. As it has already mentioned above, racism “once internalized [...] results in auto-aggressive acts within the black community”.<sup>12</sup> In other words, all feelings of inferiority were shown through the black males as violent attitudes towards the black females. Rape and incest are the common methods of their repression and subjection. Black women were suffering, because they were humiliated and raped by blacks and whites alike. Morrison presents rape as a social phenomenon that destroys the black community. She provides the history and experience of Cholly in order to show at what extent black males are affected by whites' mistreatments and humiliations. As a consequence, they behave violently with any weak black woman. Cholly reflects the African American men who are affected by racism and oppression of the whites. He witnessed a traumatic experience of slavery in his childhood. He was the victim of two white men; who caught him with Darlene, a little girl, and forced him to rape her. This situation made Cholly hate every black woman, instead of hating the hunters, the whites, because she made him appear weak. The author says:

[...] Never did he once consider directing his hatred toward the hunters. Such an emotion would have destroyed him. They were big, white, armed men. He was small, black, helpless. His subconscious knew what his conscious mind did not guess--that hating them would have consumed him, burned him up like a piece of soft coal, leaving

only flakes of ash and a question mark of smoke[...]he hated the one who had created the situation ,the one who bore witness to his failure ,his impotence .The one whom he had not been able to protect ,to spare ,to cover from the round moon glow of the flashlight. The –hee-hee-hee's.[sic]<sup>13</sup>

This instance explains why Cholly takes his anger on Mrs Breedlove and mistreats her ; “she was one of the few things abhorrent to him that he could touch and therefore hurt ,he poured out on her the sum of this inarticulate fury and aborted desires” .<sup>14</sup>In addition, Cholly cannot show affection to his family, and has no idea to love or raise children “[...]he could not even comprehend what such a relation should be” ,<sup>15</sup>because he had never experienced the taste of real family in his childhood. Consequently, Cholly, the abusive child, turns to an abusive parent, whose daughter Pecola becomes victim of his confused sensations. Being abused by both parents; by Cholly raping her and her mother not believing her, the victim was traumatized. This rape and incest has left the victim with no self .The oppressive structures of either race or gender in society can generate irreparable harm on the psyche of the children, as the case of Pocola who is subjected to all of them.

## **b. Violence in Buchi Emecheta's *Second -Class Citizen***

Similarly to Morrison, Buchi Emecheta shapes her novel with a set of descriptions which show the different forms of violence in the African community .She presents the black woman's oppression and marginalization, which are based on race and gender .The following instances demonstrate the plight of woman in the racist and patriarchal society.

The author portrays her protagonist Adah as a victim, orphaned in her childhood, exploited by a substitute family of an uncle and his children, and finally abused and mistreated by a selfish and insensitive husband. Throughout the story of Adah, Emecheta encapsulates the predicament of the African woman ,who faces double marginalization in terms of race and gender. At first, women are alienated in Africa because of their gender. They occupy the lowest rank in their society .And in London black women are marginalized for being black. In other words, black women ,especially in western countries ,are not only

placed at the lower stage of social hierarchy, but also all the negative stereotypes are attributed to them. The following instances demonstrate the phenomenon of violence in *Second Class Citizen*. As it has been already mentioned previously, Emecheta exposes woman's oppression through her prototype, Adah. The latter has undergone many setbacks, firstly at her home land Nigeria and secondly in the alien land, London. Besides, the author displays Adah's story as the mirror of the experience of African woman, struggling to assert herself against historically determined insignificance, "a self constituted through the suffering of every form of oppression that human society has created".<sup>16</sup> Adah's suffering begins from her childhood. When she struggled to acquire an education by her individual efforts, she undergoes a physical punishment for diverting two shilling; instead of buying meat for the family, she pays her entrance examination fee to secondary school:

All she needed to take the entrance examination to the school of her dreams was two shillings [...] she knew what was going to happen to her, the cane [...] meanwhile her cousin Vincent's anger increased he caned her wildly, all over her body.<sup>17</sup>

Another incident, which shows the oppression of woman under the gender discrimination in the patriarchal society, where boys are privileged while girls are oppressed, when Adah was unjustly punished by her headmaster in school:

The boy who was doing the backing, happened to be closet victim, so he had to take it. Adah felt that she was being unjustly punished. She had been smiling at the presence, not the headmaster, and she suspected that the headmaster knew she was telling the truth; he had simply wanted to cane her, that was all.<sup>18</sup>

The author depicts the blacks' hard living conditions under the apogee of racism in the western world, London, where they struggle against all kinds of discrimination and marginalization in order to claim their identity. The black woman is marginalized in terms of race and gender, like Adah, who is the bearer of the effects of racism and sexism in the hostile world. Indeed, the black people in London are regarded as "Second Class Citizens, this is the most thing that worried Adah because her husband becomes conditioned by this phrase and enjoys it".<sup>19</sup> Besides, all the discriminations and racist attitudes had a psychological effect

on her. For instance, when she looks for renting an apartment, all the notices she finds mentioned “Sorry, no coloured”. The author says:

[...]she was beginning to learn that her colour was something she was supposed to be ashamed of. She was never aware of this at home in Nigeria ,those whites must have had a few lessons about colour before coming out to the tropics ,because they never let drop from their caution mouths the fact that in their countries ,black was inferior[...]she was now learning to suspect anything beautiful and pure .Those things were for the whites ,not the blacks .This had a curious psychological effect on her .<sup>20</sup>

Another instance of racist attitude when Adah finds that her sick son is taken to hospital ,named “Royal Free”. This is ironic since the treatment they are going to give is “royal” and “free”, but Adah doubts the hospital's neglected treatment towards her son and she wonders if the hospital is meant for “Second class people ,the blacks.”.<sup>21</sup>

The relationship between Adah and her husband is featured by violence and mistreatment, mostly once she moves to London. Their alliance was the foundation of gender discrimination and enslavement. Adah is seen as “a baby factory” ,because the African woman must have children “as many as her husband wants and she would be forgiven everything as long as she produced children”.<sup>22</sup>Besides, Francis treats her as a property ,and he controlled everything related to her even her salary .Indeed, their relationship was a succession of quarrels, beatings, oppressions and unplanned pregnancies. Adah undergoes a domestic violence, namely verbal and physical .Her abusive husband used to beat her and enslave her all the time. For instance ,when Adah got family planning ,he accused her of prostitution and beat up her ,he claimed that she could take other men behind his back .The author says:

Francis called all the other tenants to come and see and hear about this great issue—how the innocent Adah who came to London only a year previously had become so clever. Adah was happy when Pa Noble came, because at least it made Francis stop hitting her. She was dizzy with pain and her head throbbed .Her mouth was bleeding .And once or twice during the proceeding she felt tempted to run out and call the police.<sup>23</sup>

Besides, rape is another instance of physical abuse .Francis used to beat up her wife ,and rape her . For him ,a woman was “a second class human to be slept with at any time, and if she refused to obey ,she is beaten up [...]But how could she protest to a man who was past reasoning. The whole process was an attack, as savage as that of an animal”.<sup>24</sup>Besides,Emecheta portrays the enslavement of the Nigerian women by their husbands. It is reflected through Adah's husband in the novel, who considers himself as a master, and Adah as a slave, who must obey his orders. It is assumed that “men never do wrong ,only women, that is why they have to beg forgiveness from their husband even though they are not at fault, and women have to beg forgiveness ,because they are bought ,paid for and must remain ,silent ,obedient ,slaves”.[sic]<sup>25</sup>

Yet, towards the end of the novel, Francis denies Adah and their children. After threatening her and assaulting her, she finally gets divorce and becomes liberated, independent and he denies the full responsibility of their children. The author says:

Francis said they had never been married .He then asked Adah if she could produce the marriage certificate .Adah could not .She could not even produce her passport and the children's birth certificates. Francis had burnt them all .To him, Adah and the kids ceased to exist .Francis told her this in the court in low tones in their language[...]Francis was carrying a knife today--- he did use it to threaten her[...]Now he came her adding the insult to all the injuries he had caused[...]Francis replied ,I don't mind their being sent to adoption.<sup>26</sup>

Both authors ,Morrison and Emecheta, had shaped their novels in order to encapsulate the blacks' oppression, mainly the black woman who is double marginalized in terms of race and gender .They display the relationship between the black man and black woman ,characterized by violence with all its forms, verbal and physical .Throughout their protagonists ,Pecola Breedlove and Adah Ofili ,the authors picture the suffering of black women in two different communities, the American one and the English .We may assert that both of their protagonists are victims, in the one hand of racism and in the other hand of the gender discrimination under the patriarchal society.

Despite the similarities, the plight of the victims is presented differently. In other words, Pecola's and Adah's reactions to their oppression and discrimination are depicted in different ways. Morrison pictures her prototype Pecola, a little girl, as being a silenced victim of a traumatic experience. Her dream of yearning blue eyes lead to her self-hatred, the fact that generates her passiveness. Yet, she feels repentance for blackness and femaleness in the racist and male dominated society. Besides, the social environment around Pecola is full of violence and oppressors that thwarted her to claim her self determination and becomes terrorized and mad .

Whereas, Buchi Emecheta presents her protagonist Adah as the bearer of the effects of racism and sexism. She depicts Adah as a black woman ,who undergoes sexism and racism in different worlds Nigeria and London. Adah suffers from racism mainly in London and from her abusive husband, Francis. But, her reaction is different from Pecola. Adah is active; despite all what she has endured in her life ;she is forced to live as a “second class citizen”, subjected to domestic violence ,at the end she becomes independent, and she could claim her self determination.

### **3. Trauma:**

Trauma designates the “experiences that cause physical and psychological stress reactions”.<sup>27</sup> It generates from a series of traumatic events and violent acts that are experienced by individuals and lead to psychic destruction. This phenomenon can result from “a constellation of life's experiences as well as from a continuing pattern of abuse ,from a single assault and from a period of attenuation”.<sup>28</sup> In this sense, Albert Memmi points out that “all the injustice ,insults ,humiliation and insecurity”,<sup>29</sup> emerging from racism and conditions of oppression ,engender devastating effects on the individuals, as the self-loathing.

### a. Trauma in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*

In *The Bluest Eye*, Toni Morrison deals with the issue of trauma as an effect of racism. She depicts trauma as “the damaging internalization of assumptions of immutable inferiority originating in outside gaze”<sup>30</sup> In her story, she focused on “how something as grotesque as the demonization of an entire race could take root inside the most delicate member of society, a child; the vulnerable member, a female”.<sup>31</sup> She gives voice to those who are traumatized by social and familial oppressions. Particularly, she depicts the Black women suffering from rape, incest, violence and submission by the Black men.

Morrison tends to present the plight of the black community through the Breedloves, a representative of every poor black family, which witnesses racism, that affects all its members in their personalities. In her fiction, the author features her protagonist, Pecola Breedlove, as young black girl, who is “a total and complete victim”, not only of a racial society, but also of her “crippled and crippling family”. She witnesses “the social and domestic aggression” that cause her to “fall apart”. The following instances foreshadow the author's depiction of the progressive traumatising of Pecola.<sup>32</sup>

As it has been mentioned above, Pecola is victimized by “the devastation that even casual racial contempt can cause”;<sup>33</sup> she lives in the periphery of society and under an oppressive white cultural dominance, and undergoes whites' humiliations and violent acts. For instance, Pecola's encounter with the storekeeper, Mr Yacobowski, foreshadows the whites' attitudes toward the Blacks. The author says:

She looks up at him and sees the vacuum where curiosity ought to lodge. And something more. The total absence of human recognition the glazed separateness. She does not know what keeps his glance suspended. She has seen disgust, even anger in grown males[...]The distaste must be for her blackness[...]The blackness that creates the vacuum edged with distaste in white eyes[...]outside, Pecola, feels the inexplicable shame ebb.<sup>34</sup>

This quotation shows at what extent the humiliations and the racial attitudes towards the blacks can cause in Pecola 's psyche. She feels shame for her blackness, and is rejected everywhere by the members of her community; even at school, she is isolated and believes that “the ugliness that made her ignored or despised by teachers and classmates alike”.<sup>35</sup> Thus, Pecola seeks whites features to be loved and accepted in her society and prays to have blue eyes. The author says:

It had occurred to Pecola some time ago that if her eyes ,those eyes that held the pictures, and knew the sights ,if those of hers were different, that is to say ,beautiful ,she herself would be different .Her teeth were good, and at least her nose was not big and flat like some of those who were thought so cute. If she looked different, beautiful, maybe Cholly would be different, and Mrs. Breedlove too. May be they'd say, “Why ,look at pretty eyed Pecola .We mustn't do bad things in front of those pretty eyes.”<sup>36</sup>

In this quotation, Morrison reveals Pecola's dream for having Blue eyes ,in order to be accepted by her community and even by her family. She believes that if she will be different and beautiful, her parents will be different too. Pecola is not only mistreated by her community, but also abused by her parents. She undergoes multiple traumas, being physically abused by her Mother, Pauline and sexually abused by her violent father, Cholly. Her both parents had experienced traumatic occurrences throughout their lives. Morrison shows how can the traumatized past of both parents turn into their children and lead to their psychic erosion .For instance, Cholly is traumatized; after being abandoned by his parents, he witnessed a brutalizing incident in his life, which was the interruption of his first sexual encounter by whites. They humiliated him and forced him to continue relations with his victim Darlene. This creates a trauma, not only in his humiliating, but also his impossibility to respond to the situation “never did he once consider directing his hatred toward the hunters. Such an emotion would have destroyed him. They were big, white, armed men. He was small, black helpless”[sic].<sup>37</sup> And this affects his behaviour and his relation with females .He mistreats his wife and rapes his daughter.

Yet , Pecola's mother Pauline, was a victim of racism. When she was a child, she was insignificant in her community and she used to seek approval in other's eyes. The fact that lead to her self-loathing as Pecola. Besides, she becomes a neglectful and abusive mother, and she was aware of her mistreatments of her children, she admits that: “they sure worried the life out of me. Sometimes I'd catch myself hollering at them and beating them, and I'd feel sorry for them, but I couldn't seem to stop”.<sup>38</sup> Another incident that shows her mistreatment toward her daughter, when Pecola burnt herself after dropping a pie in the home of the whites, the Fishers , Pauline attacked her, “yanked her up by the arm, slapped her again, and in a voice thin with anger, abused Pecola ”.<sup>39</sup> And she run to help the Fishers daughter, who was crying because the pie is fallen “the little girl in pink started to cry .Mrs Breedlove turned to her: Hush baby ,hush. Come here, don’t cry no more”.<sup>40</sup>

In addition ,all the progressive traumatisation of Pecola, being rejected and mistreated by both her community and by her abusive parents, and after her incestuous pregnancy ,she had a psychic destruction “the damage done was total”,<sup>41</sup> she “steeped over into madness”<sup>42</sup> and she becomes ostracized by the society even neglected by her mother.The narrator Claudia, Pecola's friend ,realizes the harm and the damage done to Pecola by community ,including herself. She says:

We tried to see her without looking at her, and never, never went near. Not because she was abused, or repulsive, or because we were frightened, but because we had failed her[...]All our waste which we dumped on her and which she absorbed. And all of our beauty, which was hers first and which she gave to us. All of us ,all who knew her, felt so wholesome after we cleaned ourselves on her. We were beautiful when we stood astride her ugliness. Her simplicity decorated us, her guilt sanctified us, her pain made us glow with health.<sup>43</sup>

Thus, Toni Morrison shapes her fiction with the plight of Pecola ,who is the mirror of every African American woman ,and the victim of a series of traumas due to racism. She tackles the suffering of the most sensitive member of society, the female. Besides, she presents the issue of trauma that is transmitted from parents to their children, such as

Cholly and Pauline who mistreated her daughter Pecola, and abused her. Therefore, their psychic destruction is the result of the legacy racism.

### **b. Trauma in Buchi Emecheta's *Second-Class Citizen***

Similarly to Morrison, Emecheta deals with the issue of trauma in her novel. She depicts the traumatic experiences of the African woman in London, being subjected to racial and patriarchal oppressions. Through her main character Adah, the author reveals that the physical and psychological abuses of woman can have devastating effects on her welfare. Adah is the victim of an oppressive husband, a hostile and a racist environment. These following instances show the suffering of the protagonist; how sexual abuse and battering caused her trauma. Adah is severely abused by her husband Francis; he used to beat her and to rape her. Indeed, he treats her as a property and an object. For him “a woman was a second-class human, to be slept with at any time, even during the day, and if she refused, to have sense beaten into her until she gave in; to be ordered out of bed after he had done with her; to make sure she washed his clothes and got his meals ready at the time”.<sup>44</sup> The novel is full of scenes of rape and battering. For instance, when Adah comes to London, and Francis tells her to accept her new status as “a second class citizen”, after this scene, he rapes her; and Adah cannot protest to “a man who was past reasoning”. The whole process was an attack, as savage as that of any animal”.<sup>45</sup> Another incident, when Francis forces his pregnant wife to have sex with him. The author says :

Francis was like an enraged bull[...]why, you wicked witch? Is it too much for a man to want his wife? he thundered, shaking Adah brutally by the shoulders. She whimpered in pain.<sup>46</sup>

These series of violent acts engender Adah's trauma. For instance, when she is hospitalized for miscarriage, she begins to question her relationship with Francis. She looks around her and compares herself with the other women and their husbands' attitudes. She

feels repentance about her relationship with her violent husband who torments her, and even controls her salary; she hopes to be like the other women. The author says:

Adah burst into tears [...] She did not want to stop because she might be tempted to[...] tell them that for once in her whole life she hated being what she was. Why was it she could never be loved as an individual, the way the sleek woman was being loved ,for what she was and not just because she could work and hand over her money like a docile child? Why was it that she was not blessed with a husband like that woman who had had to wait for seventeen years for the arrival of her baby son?<sup>47</sup>

In this quotation, the author depicts Adah as a traumatized woman ,lonely in the hospital ,hoping that her husband come to bring her flowers as the others, but she realizes that her hope is far to be realized because Francis cannot change and adopt himself to the society. Thus, she wonders “why was it that men took such a long time to change, to adopt ,to reconcile themselves to new situations?”<sup>48</sup> For instance ,Another incident which shows the cruelty of Adah's husband, when he humiliates her and burns her manuscript, Adah decides to write *The Bride Price* ,and wants to tell him, she is disappointed by his reaction. He says: “you keep forgetting that you are a woman and that you are black. The white man can barely tolerate us men, to say nothing of brainless female like you, who could think of nothing except how to breast-feed baby”. This had an effect on her, “Adah was hurt badly”, and he calls her work “rubbish ,was a deeper hurt, and he had said that she would never be a writer because she was a black and because was a woman was like killing her spirit .She felt empty”.[sic]<sup>49</sup> Besides, Francis is used to humiliate Adah ,all the time, he tries to oppress her with words and attitudes. And when he burns her story “brainchild”, after this event “life with Francis became purgatorial”,<sup>50</sup> she decides to start a new life.

Yet, Adah feels loneliness in London with all what she endured ,she had no one to help her , “she was not happy and this country was a dangerous place to be unhappy in”.<sup>51</sup> The fact that lead to her emotional breakdowns .Adah is traumatized by her abusive husband and “even though her mind was crying for someone to listen her ,to understand her”[sic],<sup>52</sup> but she has no one to console her or help her because she was black and

considered as Second Class Citizen, living in a white dominant country .This qualification “had a psychological effect on her”.<sup>53</sup> Because ,”being black meant inferior and was something she was supposed to be ashamed of”.<sup>54</sup> Thus ,Emecheta foreshadows all these violent acts, battering and rape ,that generate the trauma of her protagonist Adah .And even the racist environment had psychological effect on her.

## End notes

<sup>1</sup> Morrison ,T.(1970) *The Bluest Eye* :A division of Random House, Inc. New York: Rinehart and Winston .15

<sup>2</sup> Ibid ,138

<sup>3</sup> Emecheta, B.(1974) *Second Class Citizen* :A Division of Reed Publishing.US Allison and Busby Ltd .8

<sup>4</sup> Ibid ,1

<sup>5</sup> Ibid,3

<sup>6</sup> Ibid ,69

<sup>7</sup> Morrison ,T.(1970) *The Bluest Eye* :A division of Random House, Inc. New York: Rinehart and Wintson.138

<sup>8</sup> Ibid ,80

<sup>9</sup> Ibid ,24,25

<sup>10</sup> Ibid ,65

<sup>11</sup> MEMMI,A.(2000)*Racism*: the University of Minnesota Press: USA: Steve Marinot.165

<sup>12</sup> Sielk ,S.(2002)*Reading Rape :The Rhetoric of Sexual Violence in American Literature and Culture*: Princeton University Press : New Jersey.153

<sup>13</sup> Morrison ,T.(1970) *The Bluest Eye* :A division of Random House, Inc. New York: Rinehart and Wintson.150,151

<sup>14</sup> Ibid ,42

<sup>15</sup> Ibid ,160

<sup>16</sup> Mfunne-Mwanajakwa, D.(2000)*Ambivalence :Buchi Emecheta 's Rugged Road towards Self Female actualization in Head Above Water*,J. Humanit (Zomba),20.59

<sup>17</sup> Emecheta, B.(1974) *Second Class Citizen* :A Division of Reed Publishing.US Allison and Busby Ltd .16,17

<sup>18</sup> Ibid

<sup>19</sup> Ibid ,38

<sup>20</sup> Ibid,70,71

<sup>21</sup> Ibid ,60

<sup>22</sup> Ibid ,22

<sup>23</sup> Ibid,154

<sup>24</sup> Ibid ,175

<sup>25</sup> Ibid,81

<sup>26</sup> Ibid,185

<sup>27</sup> Development services group(2016)*Behind the Trauma: Samhsha's National registry of Evidence based Programs and Practices*.1

<sup>28</sup> Victory, L.(1996)*The Politics of Abuse :The Traumatized Child in Toni Morrison and Marguerite Duras*, *Mosaic: Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature*, June,29(2),1

<sup>29</sup> MEMMI, A.(2000)*Racism*: the University of Minnesota Press: USA: Steve Marinot.19

<sup>30</sup> Morrison ,T.(1970) *The Bluest Eye* :A division of Random House, Inc. New York: Rinehart and Winston. xi

<sup>31</sup> Ibid

<sup>32</sup> Ibid

<sup>33</sup> Ibid

<sup>34</sup> Ibid,48,49,50

<sup>35</sup> Ibid

<sup>36</sup> Ibid ,46

<sup>37</sup> Ibid,150

<sup>38</sup> Ibid,124

<sup>39</sup> Ibid,109

<sup>40</sup> Ibid

<sup>41</sup> Ibid ,204

<sup>42</sup> Ibid,206

<sup>43</sup> Ibid,204,205

<sup>44</sup> Emecheta, B.(1974) *Second Class Citizen* :A Division of Reed Publishing.US Allison and Busby Ltd .175

<sup>45</sup> Ibid,38

<sup>46</sup> Ibid ,88

<sup>47</sup> Ibid,120

<sup>48</sup> Ibid,121

<sup>9</sup> Ibid,178

<sup>50</sup> Ibid,181

<sup>51</sup> Ibid,167

<sup>52</sup> Ibid,166

<sup>53</sup> Ibid,71

<sup>54</sup> Ibid,70,71

## **General Conclusion:**

After the study and the analysis of the two novels, Toni Morrison's *The Bluest eye*, (1970) and Buchi Emechta's *Second-Class Citizen*, (1974), we come to the conclusion that both authors dealt with the issues of racism and otherness from similar if not to say identical perspectives. Taking into consideration the date of the publication of both works, one may say that, even if the two female writers mirror the life of the blacks in two different white communities: the American and the British, the two authors have experienced and lived under the same conditions. It is obvious that both of them use their works to bear their witnesses regarding the relationship between the blacks and the whites, in addition to what this relationship engendered on blacks, with special focus on black women. The theory adopted for our dissertation is Albert MEMMI'S *Racism*, (1984) which covers most of the points discussed and analysed in our work.

It is worth noting that Toni Morrison, in her *The Bluest Eye*, has portrayed the life of the blacks in the American society; a life characterized by racism, marginalization and humiliation. Toni Morrison, through the characters and the themes in her analysed novel, explained how, due to both history and society, the whites denigrated the blacks and oppressed them. The author goes further and affirmed that the damages inflicted on the blacks cause them to be violent and aggressive. So, the black man, who in order to use his difference from a woman to his advantage, has chosen to dominate and oppress the black woman, because she is viewed as the Other in relation to him. The consequence of such behaviour and relation is reflected in the violence exercised on black women, who later on suffer from trauma, as the inevitable output of both racial and gender marginalization.

On the behalf of Buchi Emecheta, her *Second-Class Citizen* depicts the life of the black, in the British society. The author has proved the same view as Toni Morrison. That is to say, the differences between whites and blacks are used in an unjust way that permits the continuation of the whites' oppression of the blacks. Again this fact has negatively affected the relation between the black man and the black woman, who suffer from violence and psychological trauma. The major difference from Morrison is the fact that Adah, the main character in Emecheta's novel, refused to conduct her whole life under the black man's oppression and marginalisation and rebelled.

To finish with, one may say that Toni Morrison's and Buchi Emecheta's works share a lot of common points. The end of Emecheta's novel and Adah's reaction to her husband and her success to support her five kids alone can be understood as an answer to Pecola in Toni Morrison's novel, meaning, a black woman has to affirm her identity, to be proud of it and never accept man's oppression and marginalisation. So, the two works can be studied from different angles, like dialogism or feminism.

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