



RESEARCH PAPER

Traversing the Depths: Unraveling the Threads of Trauma in Ta-Nehisi Coates' *The Water Dancer*

¹Laiba Zafar*, ²Samra Hafeez and ³Yusera Syed

1. Bachelors in English literature and language, School of English, Minhaj University Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan

2. Lecturer, School of English, Minhaj University Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan

3. M. Phil Scholar, School of English, Minhaj University Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan

*Corresponding Author | zafarqasem8@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study embarks on a profound exploration of trauma, identity and psychological struggle in the novel *The Water Dancer* by Ta-Nehisi Coates. The study employs the theoretical lens of Double Consciousness by W.E.B Du Bois, to illuminate the nuanced layers of psychological struggle of the protagonist and his identity formation amidst a backdrop of historical trauma. It unveils how characters navigate the complex terrain of personal and collective trauma, unveiling the threads that bind memory and consciousness. The research scrutinizes how the protagonist's experiences echo broader societal wounds, providing a thought-provoking analysis of the resonance of trauma within the context of double consciousness. Through a meticulous examination of narrative intricacies, the study unveils the protagonist's quest for self-discovery and resilience, shedding light on the transformative power embedded in the intersection of personal and collective histories. The research not only contributes to a richer understanding of trauma within the novel but also invites a broader discourse on the transformative potential of double consciousness in navigating and transcending historical wounds.

KEYWORDS Double Consciousness, Identity Formation, Psychological Struggle, Trauma

Introduction

Trauma can interfere with memory encoding and retrieval, resulting in fragmented recall and inaccuracies. Traumatic memories have a tendency to lack sensory detail and coherence, yet possess a deeper significance and impact compared to memories of positive experiences. Memories of stressful events frequently encompass a greater amount of information regarding thoughts and emotions, emphasizing the emotional intensity linked to trauma. This convergence of memory and trauma is observable not only on an individual level, but also within cultural communities that have undergone collective traumas (Abdulateef, 2020).

Traumatic memory is a deviation from normal memory that lacks context and remains unresolved within the individual's mind (Alcobia-Murphy, 2016). Traumatic memories disrupt the typical process of assimilating experiences into one's overall sense of self and can lead the individual to continuously relive the event as if it were occurring in the present. The experience of traumatic memory is often fragmented and can present itself as sensory perceptions, such as visual, auditory, olfactory, and tactile experiences. Traumatic memories tend to be fragmented and lack a narrative description. Such memories are frequently linked to a heightened state of physiological arousal, indicating

the intense emotional impact that these memories have on the individual (Payne et al., 2004).

Identity is an intricate and multifaceted notion that encompasses a range of elements constituting an individual's self-perception, including their principles, convictions, life encounters, and social ties. Disturbing memories and distressing occurrences can disrupt the cohesiveness of an individual's sense of self by creating a divide between their past and present. These events can profoundly influence how people view themselves and the world, molding their beliefs, attitudes, and actions. The examination of how trauma impacts one's identity is a focal point in self-schema research, with the goal of addressing the fragile self-concepts that result from traumatic experiences. Common vulnerabilities arising from trauma include feelings of powerlessness, inferior, non-existent, and futureless, all of which are prevalent among individuals who have undergone traumatic events. Such experiences can lead people to question their self-esteem, their role in the world, and their capacity to form meaningful connections with others (Lanius et al., 2020).

Identity is deeply connected to an individual's psychological experiences as it shapes his interpretations of the self, others, and the world. The psychological experiences that individuals go through contribute to the formation and development of their identity. For example, during childhood, the emergence of self is influenced by early experiences and interactions with caregivers and peers. As individuals progress through adolescence and adulthood, their identity is further shaped by the challenges and resolutions they encounter in new social environments, roles, and experiences. These psychological experiences play a crucial role in the construction of an individual's identity, as they help shape their self-concept and understanding of who they are in relation to others and the society they live in. As individuals navigate through life, they engage in a continuous process of self-reflection and self-evaluation, which influences their sense of identity (Pfeifer & Berkman, 2018). The study aims to scrutinize the concept of trauma, historical backdrop and mental strife to construct one's true self under the lens of Double Consciousness, which has not been explored earlier.

African-American novelist Ta-Nehisi Coates has become a significant voice in contemporary writing as he deftly explores topics of identity, memory, and the African-American experience. Coates navigates the intricate web of history, pain, and self-discovery via his moving storytelling, striking a chord with readers trying to understand the complexities of the African-American identity. His corpus of work has established itself as a literary touchstone for comprehending the challenges, aspirations, and resiliency of a community that frequently suffers from the complicated interactions between the weight of the past and the realities of the present.

Literature Review

Marginalization is the term used to describe the societal phenomenon in which specific individuals or groups are marginalized and pushed to the periphery or outskirts of society, leading to their exclusion and lack of access to opportunities and resources. This exclusion can manifest itself in different ways, including economically, socially, culturally, and politically. Marginalization is a systematic process where certain individuals or groups are marginalized and pushed to the periphery or outskirts of society, resulting in their exclusion and deprivation of opportunities and resources. This exclusion can be attributed to various factors, such as discrimination, prejudice, and imbalanced power dynamics (Collins, 1989).

Political exclusion, or the refusal to participate in political processes, can result in marginalization. When people or groups are forbidden from taking part in political processes, this is a form of marginalization known as political exclusion. Legal restrictions, cultural norms, historical circumstances, intimidation, and prejudice can all be causes of this denial. Additionally, social exclusion, which is a process whereby some groups are consistently disadvantaged due to prejudice based on things like ethnicity, race, religion, sexual orientation, caste, descent, gender, age, disability, migrant status, or location, can lead to marginalization. The inability to participate in the typical interactions and activities that are available to the majority of people, as well as the absence of resources, rights, products, and services are all examples of social exclusion (Raleigh, 2010).

Marginalization can have profound effects on people and communities. It may result in restricted access to systems of social support, employment, healthcare, and education. As marginalized people or groups are frequently isolated from mainstream society and its norms and values, it can lead to a loss of social and cultural capital. This may result in feelings of alienation, low self-worth, and diminished sense of community. Marginalization can have broader societal repercussions in addition to these personal ones. For instance, cultures that exclude specific groups of people lose out on the variety of viewpoints and skills that these excluded people can provide. As a result, these cultures may see a decline in social cohesiveness, a lack of creativity, and a slowdown in overall socioeconomic advancement (Bhowmik, 2011).

Marginalization is a condition of disadvantage that affects people or groups that are routinely denied access to necessary opportunities and resources as well as full participation in society processes. It is a complex process that includes social isolation, political exclusion, and many types of prejudice and discrimination. Politics, society, the economy, and culture can all play a role in marginalization. It describes the social disadvantage and exclusion that people or groups go through when their access to resources and rights that are typically available to members of society is repeatedly denied (Bernt & Colini, 2013).

Racial segregation involves the practice of dividing individuals according to their racial or ethnic backgrounds, resulting in both physical and social divides between distinct racial groups. This type of segregation can manifest in various settings, including residential areas, educational institutions, public spaces, and even employment opportunities. For instance, we can examine the geographical separation observed in major cosmopolitan centers like New York, London, or Paris, where diverse social and ethnic populations often lead to the establishment of isolated communities rooted in their respective social or ethnic backgrounds. The perpetuation of racial segregation is significantly influenced by racial discrimination, which encompasses differential treatment based on race or skin color, including actions that exhibit favoritism or bias towards one group in comparison to another (Rosa et al., 2021).

Racial discrimination can manifest on two fronts: institutional and interpersonal. On the institutional level, racial segregation becomes apparent through policies and actions that confer advantages upon one racial group while disadvantaging others. These institutional practices may involve discriminatory housing measures, unequal educational and healthcare access, and disparities in employment prospects. On the interpersonal level, racial discrimination is evident in the varying treatment individuals receive based on their racial background or skin color. This differential treatment can manifest in several forms, such as racial profiling, uneven disciplinary actions within educational settings, and biased hiring choices (Peterson & Krivo, 1993).

Racial segregation in the United States is a multifaceted and intricate problem deeply entrenched in its historical past. Despite the enactment of federal laws like the Fair Housing Act of 1968 to address discrimination, the issue of racial segregation endures in American urban areas. This persistence can be attributed to a range of factors, such as communities choosing to segregate themselves based on personal preferences, economic inequalities that constrain housing choices for marginalized groups, and the perpetuation of discriminatory practices and mindsets (Yinger, 1999).

Racial segregation can inflict harmful consequences on marginalized groups, particularly African-Americans, by resulting in their clustering in economically disadvantaged communities. In these neighborhoods, access to essential resources and opportunities becomes severely constrained. Such disadvantaged areas typically lack high-quality educational institutions, healthcare facilities, and job prospects, thus reinforcing a persistent cycle of poverty and inequality. Additionally, the segregation of schools along racial lines has been identified as a significant factor contributing to the educational achievement gap between black and white students. This is primarily due to predominantly African-American schools having fewer resources and lower-quality educators compared to predominantly white schools. Racial segregation also carries substantial ramifications for the health and overall welfare of marginalized populations. The presence of segregated neighborhoods and communities is linked to inferior health outcomes among racial minorities. These health disparities can be ascribed to numerous factors, including restricted access to high-quality healthcare facilities and services, heightened exposure to environmental risks and pollution in segregated regions, and elevated stress levels stemming from residing in disadvantaged communities (Broman, 1996).

Social and economic disparities are a primary outcome of racial segregation. The outcome is barriers to upward mobility and limited opportunities for marginalized communities to prosper economically, resulting in a cycle of poverty and inequality that is tough to overcome. Racial segregation, a multifaceted phenomenon with numerous root causes and wide-ranging repercussions, must be actively addressed and deconstructed to advance the cause of social justice, equality, and the overall well-being of all individuals and communities. Racial segregation in urban areas is the separation of racial and ethnic groups, leading to the formation of neighborhoods or communities with a uniform racial and ethnic makeup. This form of residential segregation has become deeply ingrained and accepted within American society, leading to the concentration of poverty and disadvantage in specific areas (Fiel, 2013).

Identity crisis is a period of self-exploration and questioning one's own sense of self, values, beliefs, and roles in society. According to Baumeister et al. (1985), identity conflict, or legitimation crisis, refers to the issue faced by individuals who have multiple definitions of themselves that have become incompatible. During adolescence, individuals undergo a developmental stage where they strive to establish their personal identity. This stage involves exploring different aspects of oneself, including interests, values, and goals, in order to form a coherent sense of identity. This stage, known as the identity crisis, can bring about feelings of confusion, anxiety, and uncertainty as individuals grapple with questions about their own identity and desires in life.

The renowned psychologist Erikson was the first to introduce the concept of identity crisis through his theory of psychosocial development. According to him, the stage of adolescence is a critical period for the formation of one's identity. During this stage, individuals are faced with the challenge of establishing a consistent and independent sense of self, all while considering the expectations and pressures of society. He believed that

successfully resolving the identity crisis results in a sense of identity achievement, where individuals have a clear understanding of their own identity and possess a sense of purpose and direction in life (Erikson, 1968).

Theoretical Framework

W.E.B. Du Bois's concept of Double Consciousness is a pivotal and influential idea in the realm of African American literature and sociological thought. Du Bois introduced this concept in his seminal work, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Du Bois, 2018). Double Consciousness refers to the internal conflict experienced by individuals who belong to marginalized or oppressed groups, particularly African Americans in the context Du Bois was addressing.

In essence, Double Consciousness involves a dual awareness or a two-fold identity. The individual sees themselves through their own eyes and, simultaneously, through the eyes of the dominant society. This dual perspective is a result of historical and social conditions that impose a certain identity on the individual, often perpetuating stereotypes and limiting opportunities. Du Bois articulated this concept to explain the complex and often contradictory experiences of African Americans living in a racially stratified society.

Double Consciousness is not only an individual psychological phenomenon but also a social one. It reflects the broader societal challenges faced by those who must navigate between their own cultural identity and the expectations imposed by a dominant culture. This concept became foundational in discussions about identity, race, and the social dynamics of power and privilege. Moreover, he argued that overcoming Double Consciousness required recognition, understanding, and ultimately, a reevaluation of societal structures that perpetuate racial inequality. He saw education and cultural awareness as tools to develop a more nuanced understanding of identity, both individually and collectively.

The concept of Double Consciousness has resonated far beyond its initial introduction and continues to be relevant in discussions on race, identity, and social justice. It remains a powerful framework for understanding the ongoing struggles faced by marginalized communities in asserting their identities within societies that often impose limiting narratives. In the context of the protagonist's traumatic experiences in *The Water Dancer*, Double Consciousness becomes a poignant framework for understanding the internal conflict arising from the intersection of personal and collective histories. The protagonist, grappling with the weight of inherited trauma, navigates a profound duality, trying to reconcile his individual experiences with the societal expectations and stereotypes imposed by a history marked by oppression.

As the narrative unfolds, the application of Double Consciousness unveils the intricate threads of trauma woven into the fabric of the protagonist's identity. The character's struggle to make sense of personal pain against the backdrop of historical injustices mirrors the broader societal challenges faced by marginalized communities. Through the lens of Double Consciousness, the exploration of trauma becomes a poignant examination of the protagonist's quest for self-discovery within the constraints of a society that imposes a collective narrative. This analytical approach not only enriches our understanding of the individual's psychological journey but also prompts a critical reflection on the societal structures perpetuating trauma and the transformative potential embedded in navigating these depths of consciousness.

Analysis

In Ta-Nehisi Coates' novel, *The Water Dancer*, the character Hiram serves as a fascinating lens through which to explore the intricate confluence of memory, trauma and double consciousness. Hiram, the protagonist of the novel, embodies the concept of double consciousness in his lived experiences as a black individual in a racially oppressive society. He grapples with the twoness of Black subjectivity where he simultaneously navigates his own personal identity and experiences while also being constrained by the distorting effects of White racism.

Throughout the novel, Hiram's memories and traumatic experiences play a significant role in shaping his understanding of self and the world around him. Hiram's memories, often triggered by moments of intense emotion or through his unique power of "conduction" (Coates, 2019) serve as portals into the past, showing the deep-rooted traumas and injustices that have been inflicted upon the Black community. Hiram's unique power, referred to as "Conduction" (Coates, 2019), which allows him to transport himself and others to different locations through the power of memory and song. Through the process of conduction, Hiram is able to connect with his ancestral roots and tap into the collective memory of his community. This connection to the past and to his collective memory becomes a way for Hiram to confront and process the trauma that has been passed down through generations.

While working in the Virginia tobacco fields, Hiram recalls Harriet's words: "to forget is to truly slave. To remember, even the scars" (Coates, 2019). Hiram draws strength and resiliency from his mother's memories, which act as a constant reminder to him of their shared history, the value of remembering, and the horrors they have faced. Additionally, Hiram's recollection of drowning acts as a potent metaphor for the stifling and repressive aspects of slavery. Hiram is talented, particularly in terms of his extraordinary recall. Ironically, despite his capability to memorize lengthy and complex collections of facts and tales, Hiram is unable to recall his mother or the day they parted way because he has "pushed [his] memory of her into the down there of [his] mind" (Coates, 2019). Hiram is hit by the thought of all of his loved ones, especially his own mother, she was compelled to cross the bridge and whom he would never see again, as he gets closer to the bridge.

Both transferring people between two separate locations and opening "a blue portal via one dimension to another" (Coates, 2019) are both possible with memory. Hiram has a mystical ability of Conduction. Hiram is engulfed in blue mist when he has Conduction and just as he believes he is about to pass away, a light that was blue envelops him. He experiences calm and freedom in this context and is convinced that there is, in fact, "a home-place of [his] own, a life beyond the Task" (Coates, 2019). In this way, blue represents strength to Hiram. *The Water Dancer* demonstrates that in spite of having individuals physically locked up, slavery also works by breaking the bonds between the victims' families, cultures, and memories. Therefore, remembering one's background and loved ones who have passed away is a potent weapon in the fight against slavery.

The Virginian countryside is destitute when Hiram starts to grow up. Families are frequently split up by estate owners who sell slaves to distant locations. Even if his elders were able to successfully raise entire families, Hiram reflects that "there was no peace in slavery, for every day under the rule of another is a day of war. That solace is not freedom and one can be certain but never be secure" (Coates, 2019). True equality is what he seeks, not just an easier form of enslavement. Georgie, "the task man who seized his own liberty" (Coates, 2019) is mythologized by Hiram and others. Georgie's job is to deliver freed slaves to his white employers. His supposed freedom is untrue. When Corrine and Hawkins

order Hiram to kill Georgie, Hiram must accept "how thoroughly they had taken [them] in, so that even [their] own heroes, [their] own myths, were but tools to further maintain the task" (Coates, 2019).

On the other hand, via his role in developing proofs within the Underground, Hiram starts to sense a new strength to combat the institution of slavery. Corrine cautions Hiram that "freedom, true freedom, is a master too one more dogged, more constant, than any ragged slave-driver" (Coates, 2019). Hiram no longer has a proprietor at Bryceton. He is obligated to uphold the cause of justice, though. He is to join the Underground, a reference to the actual Underground Railroad, a sizable network of people who assisted fugitives fleeing American slavery. Hiram learned upon his return to Bryceton that the Underground's work in the South is not about freedom but rather conflict. As a free man living in the North now, Hi understands that although the Underground can free some slaves physically, they are unable to recover everything that slavery has taken from them "freedom that extended to all of [their] blood. For what did it mean to be free, in a city such as this, when those [masters] hold to most are still Tasked? What was [Hiram] without Sophia, without [his] mother, without Thena?" (Coates, 2019). When talking about his divorce from his wife and kids, Otha says, "here are so many holes in [him], so many pieces cut away. All those lost years, All [his] losses" (Coates, 2019).

Hiram learns a greater understanding of the Underground's work through his friendship with the White family as he comes to terms with the fact that there are limitations to physical emancipation. Hiram is extremely impressed by the love and support the Whites exhibit for one another, for him, and for their children's endeavors when he visits them for dinner. Harriet Tubman was among the best-known conductors of the Underground Railroad. Over 300 slaves were freed with her assistance. Harriet ultimately explains how the power of conduction works to Hiram in *The Water Dancer*. Hiram is driven by Harriet in a pivotal event from Delaware to Maryland. She explains how Conduction works by recounting the tales of all the individuals who were affected by slavery, went missing, or were slain. Hiram and Harriet are connected as they go by "a kind of communion, a chain of memory extending between the two of [them]" (Coates, 2019) which ties together their most poignant recollections of the people they have lost.

Hiram's character is profoundly shaped by the historical backdrop of slavery in America. His past as a slave serves as a crucible for his character development, leaving an indelible mark on his identity. Having experienced the brutality and dehumanization inherent to slavery, Hiram's personality is forged in the crucible of these harrowing experiences. His firsthand witness to the horrors of slavery, from the separation of families to the physical and psychological abuses inflicted upon enslaved individuals, imbues him with a deep sense of empathy, resilience, and a passionate desire for freedom. The legacy of slavery serves as a haunting specter that continually influences his choices, actions, and his unwavering commitment to seek not only physical liberation but also the reclamation of his own agency and identity. Hiram's character is a testament to the enduring impact of history on individual lives and the profound resilience of the human spirit in the face of unimaginable adversity.

Hiram's insight that "Conduction got to have water" (Coates, 2019) is an example of how he is becoming more aware of the potential and power dynamics underlying his talent. In addition, his path to freedom is entwined with the background of the Underground Railroad, a 19th-century network of covert routes and safe houses used by oppressed people to flee to freedom. The Underground Railroad is metaphorically represented by the idea of conduction in the book. It represents the transforming path that slaves like Hiram must take in order to achieve freedom. Hiram's character is motivated

by a desire to break free from servitude throughout the entire novel. The ultimate objective of Hiram is not just his own liberation, but also the liberation of others.

Hiram develops a keen understanding of the more powerful forces at work in the struggle for freedom as a result of his experiences with the Underground Railroad and his newly discovered ability of Conduction. He understands that, while important, running, reading, and writing are insufficient to challenge the entrenched oppressive systems. Hiram is aware that some foes in our world cannot simply be outrun. He understands the necessity of facing these foes head-on and actively taking part in the struggle for freedom. This echoes the actual reality of slavery in America, where enslaved people were continually exposed to physical and psychological violence, as Corinne warns Hiram, "There are enemies in this world that cannot simply be outrun" (Coates, 2019).

As he accepts his part in the fight against slavery and develops into an important figure in the Underground Railroad, Hiram's character changes. He effectively becomes a conductor himself by using the power of conduction to deliver slaves to freedom. This change represents Hiram's development from a spectator to an active participant in the struggle for freedom. Hiram's path is also characterized by personal development and self-discovery. We witness Hiram's internal conflict and turmoil as he considers his dreams. He is burdened by the weight of betrayal and sorrow, as well as by the memories of his past.

Hiram is plagued by his past traumas and the injustices he has seen throughout the entire novel. He sees the jail, the boy, and the mother seeking retribution for the crimes perpetrated against them in his dreams. These nightmares spur Hiram to action by serving as a constant reminder of the atrocities of slavery. The background of Hiram's persona is strongly ingrained in the American slave trade's historical setting. A network of people and supplies known as the Underground Railroad helped enslaved persons escape from the South to Free States or Canada.

The narrative makes reference to the character of Harriet Tubman, a significant figure in the Underground Railroad, and she offers historical context for the reasons behind the current assault on smuggling. Many enslaved people were helped to flee to freedom by Harriet Tubman, who is praised for being a leader, a humanitarian, and a hero. She sacrificed her personal safety to protect the freedom of others, and her actions were praised for their bravery and nobleness. Hiram's choice to actively take part in the struggle for liberation is consistent with historical figures like Harriet Tubman who were prepared to jeopardize their personal safety in order to aid others in achieving freedom. The story of Hiram's character also illustrates the psychological effects of slavery on slaves, in addition to the historical setting. Hiram's character changes throughout the novel as he struggles with the emotional and physical abuse of slavery. This is evident in his dreams, where he looks for comfort and an escape from the difficult reality of his everyday life.

Hiram is taught the value of group togetherness and resistance by Harriet Tubman. Harriet highlights the role of water as a medium for movement and change, emphasizing the significance of water in the process of conduction. By incorporating water into her strategies, Tubman was able to make use of the surrounding environment to help free those who were slaves. In addition, Hiram's character story in *The Water Dancer* sheds insight into the tenacity and fortitude of slaves during a difficult and harsh period in American history.

Harriet Tubman is a well-known representative of the abolitionist cause and exemplifies double awareness through her work as an Underground Railroad conductor.

Her dual identity as both a woman named Harriet and the heroic leader known as “Moses” (Coates, 2019) who freed countless slaves is highlighted by the twin roles she plays as both Harriet and Moses. “Moses has her loyalties and they are tied most strongly to the station here in Philadelphia” (Coates, 2019) depicts the power and struggle of Moses in freeing enslaved people.

In the past, water was essential to the Underground Railroad. To escape slavery, enslaved people frequently had to cross rivers, swamps, and other bodies of water. In one passage from the novel, Hiram says of his dreams, “On the bad days [Hi’s] dreams were hot, and [he] saw the jail, the boy, and his mother raining down the wrath of God upon Ryland's Hounds - Ryland's Hounds! May black fire scorch you down to your vile and crooked bones” (Coates, 2019), which is one of the quotes that highlights his desire for freedom and his psychological struggles. Hiram's nightmares show the intense hurt and resentment he feels as a result of the wrongs of slavery, as a further representation of the psychic cost of slavery, Hiram's dreams. His desire for freedom and escape and the agony he endures as a result of his servitude are all depicted in these nightmares.

Corinne serves as a prime example of dual awareness. Corinne is a complicated person who struggles with the conflict between her American identity and her African roots. She is the embodiment of double consciousness in her choices and actions. Corinne, for instance, must balance her dual position when she decides to use her herbal expertise and healing abilities to aid other slaves. Her work as a healer reflects her African heritage and the traditions that have been passed down to her, while also questioning the prevalent notion that white medical procedures are superior. Corinne's dual consciousness is also evident in her interactions with the black community and the white plantation owner. She is conscious of the power dynamics at work and the need to properly navigate them. Her capacity to live in two worlds enables her to support and heal her fellow slaves while also retaining some autonomy inside the walls of the plantation.

Corrine struggles with her privilege in society and her desire to aid the oppressed as a white woman who understands the misery of those who are enslaved. Corrine's actions are evidence of her dual consciousness as a white lady who benefits from the institution of slavery and as an empathic person who sees and opposes the unfairness of that institution throughout the course of the book. Corrine's decision to empower and educate the plantation slaves is an example of her battle with dual awareness. Corrine acknowledges the humanity of those who are enslaved despite her white privilege and works to improve their lot in life by providing them with education. “And this Thena woman,” said Corrine. “She is past the age when we can justify such a journey” (Coates, 2019), this depicts the problems witnessed by Thena in the age of oppression.

Hiram's journey towards self-discovery in *The Water Dancer* is a profound odyssey, intricately entwined with his painful history as a slave. As he navigates the turbulent waters of memory and trauma, Hiram's quest to unearth his past becomes a voyage of self-realization. Through his unique power of conduction, he not only transcends physical limitations but also delves deep into the recesses of his own mind, unearthing memories long buried. With each revelation, Hiram pieces together fragments of his identity, understanding that his history is not just a testament to suffering but also a testament to resilience and the unbreakable spirit of those who endured. His journey symbolizes the enduring power of the human spirit to rise above adversity, to confront the ghosts of the past, and ultimately to forge a path towards self-discovery.

As Hiram's narrative unfolds, we witness the transformation of a man burdened by the shackles of history into a beacon of hope and resilience. His journey is not just about

unraveling the traumas of the past; it is about embracing his role in shaping the future. Hiram's self-discovery is a testament to the healing power of confronting one's history, acknowledging the pain, and using it as a catalyst for change. In his journey, we find a universal story of redemption and self-realization, a reminder that even in the darkest chapters of history, there is always the potential for growth, enlightenment, and the reclamation of one's own narrative. Hiram's odyssey stands as a testament to the enduring power of the human spirit to confront its past and emerge stronger, wiser, and determined to shape a brighter future.

Conclusion

The current study has concluded that the exploration of trauma in Ta-Nehisi Coates' *The Water Dancer*, as illuminated through the lens of Du Bois's Double Consciousness, reveals a profound tapestry of interconnected personal and collective histories. It captures the essence of the protagonist's journey, navigating the intricate threads of trauma that bind individual experiences with the broader context of historical wounds. The application of Double Consciousness not only deepens our comprehension of the protagonist's psychological struggle but also underscores the universality of this internal conflict within marginalized communities. The dual awareness embedded in Double Consciousness becomes a poignant tool for unraveling the complexities of identity formation and resilience in the face of historical trauma. This study underscores the transformative power embedded in the intersection of personal and collective histories. It invites readers to contemplate not only the protagonist's journey but also the broader implications for understanding and addressing the persistent resonance of trauma within the context of Double Consciousness, fostering a deeper appreciation for the transformative potential of resilience and self-discovery amid the threads of historical wounds.

References

- Abdulateef, H. A. (2020). Traumatic Narration: A case study of Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. *مجلة كلية التربية*, 4(38), 20. <https://doi.org/10.31185/eduj.vol4.iss38.1319>
- Alcobia-Murphy, S. (2016). 'Living So Far from Words': Intertextuality, Trauma and the Post-Shoah World in MedbhMcGuckian's *Blaris Moor*. *Review of Irish Studies in Europe*, 1(1), 18–35. <https://doi.org/10.32803/rise.2016.01.03>
- Baumeister, R. F., Shapiro, J. P., & Tice, D. M. (1985). Two kinds of identity crisis. *Journal of Personality*, 53(3), 407–424. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6494.1985.tb00373.x>
- Bernt, M., & Colini, L. (2013). Exclusion, Marginalization and Peripheralization: Conceptual concerns in the study of urban inequalities. *Leibniz Institute for Regional Development and Structural Planning (IRS)*. <https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/228579/1/irs-wp49.pdf>
- Bhowmik, S. K. (2011). Ethnicity and isolation: Marginalization of tea plantation workers. *Race/Ethnicity*, 4(2), 235–253. <https://doi.org/10.2979/racethmulglocon.4.2.235>
- Broman, C. L. (1996). The Health Consequences Of Racial Discrimination: A Study Of African Americans. *Ethnicity & Disease*, 6(1/2), 148–153.
- Collins, S. M. (1989). The marginalization of Black executives. *Social Problems*, 36(4), 317–331. <https://doi.org/10.2307/800818>
- Du Bois (2018). *The Souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches*. University of Massachusetts Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv346v0g>
- Erikson, E. H. (1968). *Identity, youth, and crisis*. New York: W. W. Norton.
- Fiel, J. E. (2013). Decomposing school resegregation. *American Sociological Review*, 78(5), 828–848. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122413496252>
- Lanius, R. A., Terpou, B. A., & McKinnon, M. C. (2020). The sense of self in the aftermath of trauma: lessons from the default mode network in posttraumatic stress disorder. *European Journal of Psychotraumatology*, 11(1), 1807703.
- Payne, J. D., Nadel, L., Britton, W. B., & Jacobs, W. J. (2004). The Biopsychology of Trauma and Memory. In *Oxford University Press eBooks* (pp. 76–128).
- Peterson, R. D., & Krivo, L. J. (1993). Racial segregation and Black urban homicide. *Social Forces*, 71(4), 1001–1026
- Pfeifer, J. H., & Berkman, E. T. (2018). The Development of Self and Identity in Adolescence: Neural Evidence and Implications for A Value-Based Choice Perspective on Motivated Behavior. *Child Development Perspectives*, 12(3), 158–164. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cdep.12279>
- Raleigh, C. (2010). Political marginalization, climate change, and conflict in African Sahel states. *International Studies Review*, 12(1), 69–86. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2486.2009.00913.x>

Rosa, P. L. F. S., Borges, A. L. V., & De Araújo, E. M. (2021). Content validity of the scale Perceptions on Interpersonal Racial Discrimination in Brazilian Healthcare Facilities (Driss)1. *Saude E Sociedade*. <https://doi.org/10.1590/s0104-12902021200410>

Yinger, J. (1999). Sustaining the Fair Housing Act. *Cityscape*, 4(3), 93-106.