



Collective Trauma: Healing and Reconciliation in Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye

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ABSTRACT

As an outstanding African-American author who has got fame for her tragic novel, Toni Morrison is well-known for her depiction of the black's traumatic experiences. She portrays the black community who had suffered as the result of being slaves, therefore being conditioned by their past, now faced with the after-effect of their traumatic suffering under white dominance. This black community has to bear the heavy burden of rejection, oppression, racism, and white dominance, so they are burdened with a wounded psyche and body that causes pain which constantly reminds them of their gloomy past. Morrison's major novel, *The Bluest Eye* focuses on traumatic events of the black community; this novel represents the communal and personal trauma of the black community who struggle with pressures pressing them down from upward and inward. This essay aims to study the cultural trauma that the black characters are haunted by and the after-effect of this trauma; especially, the paper focuses mainly on the major character, Pecola, who is so young to be able to deal with her bitter past and unable to struggle with her suppressive society. It further intends to analyze how this trauma condition's the characters' life and focuses on their difficulty dealing with the problems that weigh down their shoulders. Moreover, it aims to explore how communal trauma conditions subjective healing and the reconciliation in the communities within the work of trauma theory.

Keywords: after-effect of trauma, black community, collective unconscious, cultural versus personal trauma, subjective healing or recovery, wounded psyche.

1. Introduction

Collective trauma is usually designated to devastating psychological effects experienced over time and across generations by a group of people who share an identity and affiliation. Originally introduced to describe the experience of Holocaust survivors in the past decades, the term has been applied to numerous colonized indigenous groups, as well as African Americans in recent years. Racial discrimination has been a pervasive problem in the Unlisted States since the period of slavery yet the new theories of collective trauma increasingly appear in the literature concerning minority populations and groups that experience trans-generational communal pain, institutional neglect, guilt, self-blame, and shame. Contemporary American literature by African American writers voices the conceptualizing historical trauma as a communal and public narrative with personal and public representations.

As Eyerman discusses in his *Cultural Trauma: Slavery and the formation of African-American identity*: "Cultural trauma refers to a dramatic loss of identity and meaning, a tear in the social fabric, affecting a group of people that have achieved some degree of cohesion (Munoz et.al); in this sense, the trauma need not necessarily be felt by everyone in a community or experienced directly by any or all" (Stratton 2). Further Du Bois names and studies what he considered the lingering after-effects of slavery amongst black Americans. Accordingly:

The memory of slavery is central to challenging the revisionist counter-revolution which included a nostalgic view of life during slavery as well as an attack on reconstruction. Making this memory collective is central to the process of cultural trauma, a process in which collective memory will be formative of collective identity, as recognizable victims and perpetrators are named and acknowledged, marking a membership group off against those outsiders. (70)

The collective trauma inflicted by systems affects a group of people of any size and stirs up collective sentiment, often resulting in a shift in that society's culture and mass actions for generations to come. Trans-generational trauma of large scales such as the trail of tears, and slavery can be potent fuel for the eruption of violence and frustration in present communities. Focusing on historical collective trauma Toni Morrison attempts to reconceptualize the traumatic events through reliance on narrative elements such as characters, actions, places, and time to redefine the history and the collective memory in a reconstructive process. Toni Morrison's works constitute texts in which through the characters' interaction with the color, and memory the trauma is brought out to a societal level which is crucial for personal and communal healing for preventing traumatic identities to transfer into future generations. Collective trauma can be alleviated through cohesive and collective efforts such as recognition, remembrance, solidarity, communal therapy, and massive cooperation (Wikipedia) and this is what Morrison does in *The Bluest Eye*.

The narratives by the American novelist, Toni Morrison, string together traumatic events of the black community to construct meaning and establish a new discourse to express both individual and collective identities situated in new social contexts. In her novels, the communal and personal trauma of slavery is inflicted in the bodies and minds of its victims living on through successive generations. Narrating the lasting effects of slavery in *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison creates characters who strive with the insurmountable task of recovering from trauma to gain subjectivity. Seemingly, Morrison's novel, which is shaped by collective memories of communal trauma, attempts to convey fresh interpretations and aspirations essential to the subjective healing and reconciliation within and between communities. As Judith Herman argues in her major work *Trauma and Recovery*, the core experience of trauma is disempowerment and disconnection from others, therefore, recovery:

is based upon the empowerment of the survivor and the creation of new connections. Recovery can take place only within the context of relationships; it cannot occur in isolation. In her renewed connections with other people, the survivor re-creates the psychological faculties that were damaged or deformed by the traumatic experience. These faculties include the basic capacities for trust, autonomy, initiative, competence, identity, and intimacy. Just as these capabilities are originally formed in relationships with other people, they must be reformed in such relationships. (94)

2. Discussion

Toni Morrison as an outstanding female black author of her time is largely awarded for her various fictions and works. In her first novel, *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison digs into the traumatic story of a young African American girl named Pecola who grows up during the years following the Great Depression in Lorain, Ohio. Due to her dark skin color, Pecola has undergone a tragic situation because of loss, rejection, and oppression. She is teased for her appearance since society favors whiteness, blonde hair, and blue eyes as the standards of beauty. Pecola is raised in a black family, who have undergone racial discrimination, loss, suffering, and humiliation, and who unconsciously have been the main cause of Pecola's suffering. This is why she develops an inferiority complex that fuels her desire for blue eyes.

The Bluest Eye represents a soaring awareness during the time of the impact of representation on identity formation. This novel is written in a period that African-Americans rejected cultural stereotypes who struggled to change the situation and bring out a more affirmative understanding of African-American life. *The Bluest Eye* "echoes the public expressions of many African-American women in the late 1960s and early 1970s that addressed their particular situation and concerns" (Gillespie 46).

This story initiates with the story of Dick and Jane readers which intends to teach American children how to read. This is intentionally used so that Morrison can highlight the story in the primers of the lives of the fictional Dick and Jane and their family. In this novel, Dick and Jane represent an accepted and dominating narrative, against which each of the primary characters unconsciously evaluates their existence. The story passes through four seasons: autumn, winter, spring, and summer, which is vital in representing the character's situation, self, and identity. The major theme running through the novel is the black community like Breedlove and MacTeer's who struggle to survive in a racist society. Pecola as a sensitive member of this society is rejected and humiliated by his people and the whites. As Brook notes in his "Quiet As It's Kept: Shame, Trauma, and Race in the Novels of Toni Morrison": "In... in-between

nowhere land, the child (Pecola) is ultimately lost, unable to root herself in the firm ground of love and understanding that is necessary for any successful maturation" (1).

As Claudia opens the story with her: "*Quiet as it's kept, there were no marigolds in the fall of 1941*", she highlights the shame-laden trauma that hovers around the novel and which silences the community that has gone under rape trauma. This description demands that the victim become silent and don't tell anyone of the secret she carries with herself. *The Bluest Eye* seems to disclose the shameful secret that the black community has carried for the generation which has been kept unspoken for years. This text is a narration of the black community which is abundant in silences and omissions. These blacks are wounded in their psyche; they are haunted by trauma that makes them suffer and they inflict it on their children, consequently.

In the first scenes of the novel, Claudia and Frieda are portrayed as MacTeer's offspring. In this part of the novel, the children get sick so the mother impatiently tries to care for her children so that they can better off: "How . . . do you expect anybody to get anything done if you all are sick?" (*The Bluest Eye* 10). Despite the mother's love, the children feel miserable with slight violence towards them. Claudia says: "My mother's voice drones on. She is not talking to me. She is talking to the puke, but she is calling it my name: Claudia" (11). She is hurt by her mother's rude behavior towards her and her sister. As Putnam notes; "sometimes even loving mothers will inflict emotional abuse on their children, which, in turn, teaches them to repeat the abuse on each other" (30). Generally, Claudia and Frieda are put in stark contrast with Pecola, who is rejected and hit by her mother while she needs her protection and love for her self-protection and healthy growing up.

Claudia and her sister Frieda are black girls that are the target of oppression, racism, and rejection like Pecola. They are jealous of their neighbor, Rosemary Villanucci since she is the superior girl for her white wealthy family. Claudia and Frieda are criticized for their blackness. Rosemary forbids them to enter her family's expensive car, so they plot against the girl and beat her when she comes off the car at the result of which Rosemary pulls down her pants by which they feel disrespected. Despite, their rejection and inferiority before the white-dominated society, Claudia and Frieda have the chance of being loved and cared for by their mother. The mother's presence is highly remarked which later becomes a footprint for Claudia and Frieda when they are confronted with Pecola and her loneliness. These two sisters, learn to care and love, which is projected by a dominant mother; it is represented in their protection of Pecola while she is in dire need of protection. Claudia and Frieda are constantly cared for and answered by their mother, which is very helpful in their healthy identity and self-development. They think of their mother as a mere supporter, nurturer, and absolute power that gives them a sense of importance.

In the third section of the novel which resides in the spring season, Claudia finds Mr. Henry, the lodger they have taken into their house, trying to sexually abuse Frieda but he is confronted by Mrs. MacTeer's annoyance and his dismissal. This scene could be compared to Pecola's rape scene. While Frieda is protected by her mother and older sister, she escapes rape and any physical or mental damage, while Pecola is left alone and rejected at home as well as in society which makes her prone to rape and destruction. Frieda is shielded from all damages, while Pecola is open to damage. After Mr. Henry's attempt in abusing Frieda, she overhears a neighbor declaring that Frieda has been "ruined" (91). This gives her a wrong impression and makes her misunderstand the word ruined; she associates this word to the prostitutes and regards it as becoming fat, so when she tells Claudia, they decide to find whiskey which would prevent Frieda from becoming fat. Claudia as an older sister is another protector that can release the sister of her suffering. Frieda by discussing her fears and sufferings and sharing them with her sister can better cope with her inner conflicts.

Pecola is not lucky enough like Claudia and Frieda; she lives in a dominant racial society and in a chaotic family that provides her with fears, humiliation, and rejection rather than love. Pecola as a child is witness to her father's cruelty towards her mother, his drunken manner, and her mother's loveless burdened life that reflects misery and poverty. When her father puts the fire on their home, she is forced to live with MacTeers. Meanwhile, Claudia is astonished by Pecola's idealization of white dolls and the child star Shirley Temple as the standard of beauty. Claudia cannot comprehend what makes the Whites more acceptable and the Black ugly. On the other hand, she encounters all the people that regard the whites as superior and beautiful and therefore ideal and perfect standards. This is why, when Claudia receives a white doll for Christmas, she destroys it intentionally so that she can understand what is inside which makes it desirable. She just comes up with a metal cylinder which makes the doll bleat.

During her stay in MacTeers', Pecola passes from childhood to womanhood which Morrison puts forward in her menstrual period. This seems traumatic for Claudia and Frieda, initially. Since they are younger than Pecola, they are horrified but afterward, they try to help after they are informed of the matter by their mother. When Pecola is told that she can have a baby afterward she wonders how it would happen: "somebody has to love you" (32). But love seems the most unreachable and most ambiguous thing in the world. Pecola has no clue how she can receive love since she hasn't been loved by anyone, even her parents.

When Claudia, Frieda, and Maureen Peel after school walk together home, they encounter boys who tease Pecola for her skin color and poverty. They mock her for his father sleeping naked which makes her annoyed and broken-hearted. Frieda launches up to help defend Pecola by breaking up the circle of boys, and then they ask her to join them. Maureen Peel offers to buy an ice cream cone for Pecola. Since the MacTeer girls have no money, they do

not eat ice cream and are envious of Maureen being rich. As the girls continue to walk, their conversation turns to menstruation, pregnancy, and naked men. Maureen mocks Pecola for his father's nakedness then asks whether she has ever seen him naked and taunts her like the boys. She then accuses her of being dark-skinned, poor, and an outsider. Maureen accuses the others of black and inferiors and then calls herself cute and better. This fills the black girls' minds with the question of beauty since they are marked as less valuable, desirable, and worthy.

Claudia and Frieda face difficulties, abuses, and rejection as the result of their skin color but they are not destroyed and shattered like Pecola, because they are loved by their family. Consequently, they could somehow deal with their communal trauma. Claudia continues her narration by describing her father's protection toward his family and the elements, including the winter weather that threatens it. These external threats represent threats for Claudia and her sister's self-esteem and sense of well-being. Claudia is concerned with Maureen Peal, who has lately arrived in town from the big city of Toledo, Ohio. Maureen is an upper-middle-class, light-skinned, green-eyed, well-dressed child who receives love, attention, and support from the adults and the children in the community which leads Claudia to question the cause of such difference and discrimination. Maureen is embraced by society because of her appearance and wealth. Additionally, she is defined as the standard of beauty by a white-dominated society while Pecola, Claudia, and Frieda are not.

The Bluest Eye depicts some film stars like Shirley Temple, Jean Harlow, Ginger Rogers, etc. who are the model and ideal people that attract the white gaze because of their charming appearances. This is fully effective in the black characters' identity formation. Justine Tally in his *The Cambridge Companion to Toni Morrison* notes: "only Claudia as a young girl has the security of knowing who she is, and the family and community support to reject an ideology that defines her as inferior" (13). Moreover, Claudia can survive the trauma and develop her self and identity by narrating and reconstructing her trauma story, so she can pass the stages of recovery. Furthermore, Claudia by narrating her story as well as Pecola's intends to overcome her traumatic memory. She affirms that "there are melodies in grief and to write and speak of those experiences that have remained unrecorded is to begin to heal the invisible wounds created by silence" (Williams 53).

Unlike Claudia, Pecola cannot narrate her own traumatic story which stems from her lack of understanding; since Pecola cannot understand her trauma, she cannot deal with it hence, she cannot find safety that would grant her recovery and reconciliation. As Judith Herman states in her *Trauma and Recovery*, after trauma incident "survivors feel unsafe in their bodies, their emotions and their thinking feel out of control: they also feel unsafe concerning other people" (113). It could be argued that Pecola cannot understand her trauma since she cannot find safety. Moreover, she cannot escape her trauma since she is projected repetitive trauma. So she is burdened with the heavyweight of trauma which she finds impossible to deal with. It is Claudia who by witnessing Pecola's trauma, narrates her story, she puts her sentiments in words in echoing Soaphead Church: "To name an evil was to neutralize if not annihilate it" (164).

Claudia by witnessing Pecola's suffering and traumatic life intends to provide safety for her, but unfortunately, she is just a witness and narrative of Pecola's situation; she is helpless in putting off the fire in Pecol's soul and body. As Lejkowski notes in his essay; "As a narrator, Claudia will use Pecola's imagination to locate the specific trauma with which she is coping. Pecola's fantasy of blue eyes stems from her basic conflict with her appearance and the fantasy is applied to more severe traumatic experiences such as domestic violence and rape" (63). Claudia narrates the story of the Breedlove family to focus on their coping with trauma and healing or recovery.

Pecola doesn't have blue eyes which excludes her from society and distances her from white blonde and blue-eyed beauties. She has come from a poor family; their house and appearance are in contrast to Dick and Jane Story: "HERE IS THE HOUSE IT IS GREEN AND WHITE IT HAS A RED DOOR IT IS VERY PRETTY IT IS VERY PRETTY PRETTY PRETTY" (8). This highlights Breedlove's broken, untidy and poor furniture, house, and blackness in contrast to Dick and Jane's house. It could be argued that the Breedlove family as the next generation of slaves defines themselves as ugly which is injected by the white society. These black are suffering collective trauma that has haunted their consciousness through the generation and which lingers on. Their self-definition is inflicted by both the African-American and white communities. They feel contempt and exclusion which makes them experience collective trauma that never ceases to exist.

The Breedlove family undergoes verbal, physical, psychic, and sexual abuse. Pecola's brother, Sammy Breedlove, is suffering as an inferior black which makes him run away so that he can escape the adversity surmounting him. Pecola as the most sensitive part of the family suffers blackness, her mother's rejection, and hate and his father's sexual abuse which makes her shattered and defragmented and therefore leads her into internal conflict and rave. She has too much to bear, so ends up raving in her traumatic world in which she longs for blue eyes. She craves for blue eyes and hankers to be like SHIRLEY TEMPLE and Jane, who have blue eyes, and who because of their blue eyes are at the center of attention because they have a mark of beauty in the dominant culture.

The traumatic abuse that Pecola experiences at home make it hard for her to deal with racism and hate in the external world that she confronts. When she goes to buy candy, MARY JANES, she confronts the storekeeper, Mr. Yacobowski's hate and disgust because of her ugly looks and face. When he avoids touching her hand in returning

her exchange money, Pecola feels shame and inferiority, but she tries to swallow the bitterness of the fact with the sweetness of the candy which brings her moment delight for its consuming whiteness. As Gillespie notes, "The candy provides Pecola with an artificial respite from her misery. Consuming the Mary Janes becomes for her a fleeting opportunity to imagine herself to be the little girl depicted on the wrapper, a girl who is desirable enough to be consumed" (48). Pecola in the space of hate, disgust, rejection, and abuse tries to escape to her white-desired and beauty-intended imagination that regards her as blue-eyed and makes her beautiful for her alter-ego.

Furthermore, when Pecola realizes the storekeeper's "distaste . . . for her, her blackness" (*The Bluest Eye* 49), she is forced to accept self-hatred and surrender to white sphere such as Shirley Temple, white baby dolls, the white Mary Jane on the candy wrapper, and eventually, her quest to attain blue eyes. According to psychiatrists William Grier and Price Cobbs, authors of *Black Rage*, "every American Black girl experience some degree of shame about her appearance; many must submit to painful hair-combing rituals that aim to make them look, if not more White-like, at least more presentable" (43). Pecola's shame and contempt are injected by society, therefore she has to stoop to the heavyweight of white oppression. As Putnam argues: "In Morrison's novels, young black girls, taught by society to worship white femininity and white motherhood by the community adoration of them, must either believe in their deficiencies, as Pecola does or attacks the source of oppression, as Claudia does" (28).

On the other hand, Pecola's real contempt stems from her family. One day, when Claudia and Frieda are waiting for Pecola to walk home together, she knocks over a blueberry pie her mother has made and the blueberries pour down on the floor and burn Pecola's legs. At this, she is confronted by her mother's violence and aggression rather than her compassion and concern for her burnt leg. While Pauline could show her maternal affection and consideration to her fragile child, she cares for the white daughter of the family for whom she works. It could be argued that Pauline unconsciously because of her inflicted discrimination injects the same feeling towards her black daughter. Morrison in this part narrates her Nick and Jane narration as: "SEEMOTHER MOTHERISVERYNICEMOTHERWILLYOUPLAYWITHJANEMOTHER LAUGHS LAUGHMOTHERLAUGHLA" (101). This story represents a mother that is nice who plays with Jane and laughs; it represents the true mother which is in contrast to Pecola's mother.

Additionally, Pecola is not only the target of abuse by her family, and her classmates, but also a weak object for the malicious and abusive boy, Junior, who is brought up by narcissist, Geraldine that only cares for her appearance, house, clothes, and hair. She is obsessed with her beauty more than her own child. Junior, as a result, has an abusive power which he longs to inflict on his cat, or on weak. This time, he has chosen Pecola as the best target. One afternoon, he asks her to come into their house; then he throws his mother's cat in her face which scratches her. When she struggles to escape, his mother arrives and blames Pecola for everything. Geraldine sees the child as representative of poverty, disorder, despair and calls her a bitch, then shouts at her to leave their house. Morrison notes,

"SEEFATHERHEISBIGANDSTRONGFATHERWILLYOU PLAYWITHJANEFATHERISSMILINGSMILESMILEFATHERSMILESMILE" (120). This represents a father that is big and strong, who plays with children, and who smiles. This father is in contrast to Pecola's abusive father. It is the father that must be protected so that he could survive his children of all the coming evil.

Generally, Pecola gets voiceless by her family, friends, and the society at large. She gets gradually introverted and muses with herself, by which, she intends to cope with her trauma that is hard to come by. The two major deterministic forces in Pecola's young life are her mother and father, Cholly and Pauline Breedlove. Pecola never gets the chance to call them mom and dad; she cannot get shelter and solace from her parents which are rooted in the collective trauma that they carry from their childhood, from their ancestors and generation. Cholly and Pauline like Pecola are victims of their time and culture who are condemned for being black and inferior. Consequently, they unconsciously pass their collective trauma to their children unintentionally.

In the final section of the novel, Summer, Claudia narrates Pecola's rape and her traumatic life. The truth of Pecola's rape is shocking to Claudia. She is disturbed by the townspeople's response and attitude toward her traumatic experience. Even Pauline as a mother, instead of diminishing her child's suffering, rejects her, whatsoever. Claudia is the only witness to Pecola's trauma and the only testimony to convey her traumatic and fragmented psyche. This is best represented in her silence and fragmented narrative. To let decrease the tension of Pecola's trauma, Claudia and Frieda go through planting seeds, which could help them overcome suffering. Claudia goes on: "LOOKLOOKHERECOMES AFRIENDTHE FRIEND WILLPLAYWITH JANETHEYWILL PLAYAGOODGAME PLAY JANEPLAY" (170).

Pecola ends up having an internal dialogue with her alter ego which is resulted from Cholly's rape; she ends up musing in her imagination which reflects her intention to find refuge so that she could escape her haunting trauma. Finally, Pecola finds solace in her imagination which makes her believe that she has, at last, got her much-desired blue eyes. Pecola thinks that others are jealous of her blue eyes, so they avoid her. She is afraid of her eyes not being the bluest. In that case, she would not be loved and accepted.

Pecola is left alone with a shattered identity, and unsheltered situation; her cries are not answered by anybody which led her into the path of alienation, fragmentation, and loss, and consequently resulted in her lonely inverted dialogue with her ego. Claudia who is witness to Pecola's loss feels helpless and dumbstruck, thus sticks to her

constructing trauma scene and tries by the act of implantation to reduce her sense of trauma. As Gillespie states, "Pecola is a casualty of the malignant love of her father, the failures of her mother, the disinterest of her community, and a culture that defines her as disposable, insignificant, and ugly" (52).

Consequently, Pecola ends up living in a fragmented world of madness; she keeps up talking to her alter self about her magical blue eyes, which make everyone fascinated and envious. She avoids being rejected and looked dropped-eyed. She remarks: "Ever since I got my blue eyes, she looks away from me all of the time. Do you suppose she's jealous too?" (195). She further maintains that "Everybody's jealous. Every time I look at somebody, they look off" (195). She builds up a space where she creates herself as blue-eyed and perfects that raises anyone's jealousy.

Moreover, Pecola imagines her blue eyes will be the ultimate solvent of all her problems; it will end her parents' violence and will make them reconsider what they have done: "Why to look at pretty-eyed Pecola; we mustn't do bad things in front of those pretty blue eyes" (46). Pecola's imagination suggests her attempt in coping with her trauma as well as representing her feelings of helplessness and guilt towards this violence.

In *The Bluest Eye* blackness has conditioned even a mother/child bond which resulted in negligence, hate, and abuse consequently. Pauline Breedlove lacks mother love, whatsoever. She is so much affected by white society that she rejects her children. Unconsciously, she passes on to her children her own distorted and contemptible vision and self-loathing that she is inherited from her miserable world: "into her son she beat a fear a loud desire to run away, and into her daughter, she beat a fear of growing up, fear of people, fear of life" (*The Bluest Eye* 102).

Pauline as a mother injects in her child a trauma that dates back to the wounds of slavery and history. Pauline like all black slaves and blacks has suffered racial trauma. Pauline suffers traumatic past; she is a black who tries to deny her blackness and suffering, so she tries to cope with her trauma by adoring white beauty and rejecting and humiliating blackness. She distances herself from her people and especially her children and tries to stick to the whites. The main reason behind all her action resides in her troubled childhood. She has inherited and grown up with an inferiority complex and a trauma that she is grown with.

Likewise, Cholly, Pecola's father, has undergone traumatic childhood which conditions his identity and his further role as a father. He was left alone after being born by her mother because of her death and abandoned by his father, so he was brought up by his Aunt Jimmy until he reached the age of thirteen. Cholly was left in an immature world that not only destroyed his healthy development into adulthood but also inflicted on him the racial feeling of rejection and inferior blackness that affected all his life. In his initial sexual interaction with a woman in the woods, he was surprised by two men, who humiliated him by watching and forcing him to keep up what he was doing. This incident aroused his anger but he felt helpless, so he projected his anger towards Darlene, the woman he had a sexual relationship with. This incident ignited in Cholly a sense of frustration and a way of dealing with his contempt and shame by inflicting it on those weaker than him, which finally resulted in Pecola's. When Cholly goes in search of his father, he ends up in total rejection and consequent traumatic shame and suffering.

Afterward, when Cholly confronts his father, and his father demands whose boy he is, he cannot say, "I'm your boy", because he thinks that would sound disrespectful. Cholly is rejected by his father who says, "Get the fuck outta my face!" he shouts at Cholly in a "vexed and whiny voice" (156). This makes Cholly lose his control and soil himself "like a baby" which results in his sense of humiliation by others' gaze. Cholly is afraid of being shamed by others' gaze. He runs away in panic: "Cholly ran down the street, aware only of silence. People's mouths moved, their feet moved, a car juggled by, but with no sound...his own feet made no sound". Out of shame, he conceals himself under a pier near a river, and he remains "knotted there in a fetal position, paralyzed, his fists covering his eyes, for a long time. No sound, no sight...he even forgot his messed-up trousers" (157).

Cholly is a victim of his past and his blackness which he carries with him to his adulthood. To diminish his suffering and trauma he helplessly finds his child as a tool of pouring out his feelings. Furthermore, Cholly has learned to address his love and feelings with anger and frustration. When in the concluding part of the novel he is faced with Pecola and feels her hunched back and her head turned to one side, he wonders why she looks "so whipped" and why she isn't happy. He decides to break her neck but tenderly, this he has learned as a means of love from his childhood and which he wants to address her child with: "What could a burned-out black man say to the hunched back of his eleven-year-old daughter? If he looked into her face, he would see those haunted, loving eyes. The hauntedness would irritate him—the love would move him to fury. How dare she love him? ... What was he supposed to do about that? Return it? How?" (*The Bluest Eye* 161).

3. Conclusion

It could be concluded that Morrison's black world represents the fragmented world of the trauma victims that are the outcomes of racial discrimination and white-dominated society. These black communities, therefore, live with an inferiority complex and hence suffer a hierarchal traumatic wound that dates back to the time of slavery. Thus, this suffering resides in their collective unconscious which continuously streams from generation to generation. Breedlove and MacTeers family as the example of the black community are prone to trauma and suffering because of their culture as well as personal trauma. Unlike the Breedlove family, MacTeer could get sheltered by nurturing and

breeding love within the family that helps them survive pain and suffering and finally leads them into the stages of recovery and reconciliation. But, the Breedlove family cannot find a chance of recovery and healing like their counterparts. Pecola as the most sensitive member of this family is crashed under racial and familial trauma which shatters and destroys her. Cholly is ridiculed and humiliated who finally escapes since he cannot deal with his trauma, Pauline, likewise, cannot cope with her suffering, so she sticks to white values as a means of healing and recovery.

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