
SCAPEGOATED PECOLA: THE MAKING OF A TRAUMATIZED CHARACTER IN TONI MORISON'S THE BLUEST EYE

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ABSTRACT

Most often, when children are neglected and abused, this situation dangerously impact both their souls and minds. Observably, many children are unfortunately exposed to both neglect and abuse in various environments. Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* is a profound showcase of a careful building of a (female) character traumatized by hurting attitudes from parents. Heavily depending on trauma theory, this paper offers a detailed insight into the protagonist's experiences saturated by lifelong impacts of neglect and abuse.

Keywords: Neglect, Abuse, Experiences, Character, Trauma.

1. INTRODUCTION

According to The World Health Organization, “[c]hild abuse or maltreatment constitutes all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child’s health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power” (Butchart et al. 2006: 7). Interestingly, distinguishing among three forms of abuse—physical, emotional and sexual abuse—and two forms of neglect—physical and psychosocial neglect—are crucial. Sexual abuse covers a wide range of actions ranging from fondling to sexual intercourse. Then, the key factors of sexual abuse include age inappropriateness, the stressful and the threatening nature of the activities, degree of coercion, abuse of power and trust, and the nature of the relationship with the perpetrator. Emotional abuse goes beyond antipathy and involving cruelty toward the child. It includes humiliating and degrading the child, terrorizing it, depriving it of basic needs, inflicting extreme distress or discomfort, emotional blackmail and corruption. As a matter of fact, emotional abuse puts the victim at risk for a wide range of problem and symptoms, including shame, low self-esteem, depression, suicidal behavior, anxiety and dissociation (14-16). Psychological abuse—the stronger form of emotional abuse—refers to a “a repeated pattern of caregiver behavior or a serious incident(s) that convey to children that they are worthless, flawed, unloved, endangered, or valuable only in meeting another’s needs” (Myers et al. 2002: 81). Hibbard et al. also pinpoint that “psychological or emotional maltreatment may be the most challenging and prevalent form of child abuse and neglect, but until recently, it has received relatively little attention” (2012: 372).

Neglect entails acts of omission. Physical neglect includes both, failure to provide for basic needs like food, shelter, health care; and lack of supervision that puts the child in harm’s way (Allen, 2004: 15). Whereas, psychosocial neglect refers to psychological unavailability. The psychological unavailable parent is unresponsive to the child’s signals, especially the child’s plea for warm and comfort. Though, physical neglect children are often emotional neglected as well; psychological unavailability occurs in context of adequate physical care.

Western standard of ideal beauty has been a trap in which most African-American has fell into over generations. Pecola the protagonist of *The Bluest Eye* is also victim of this false concept of ideal beauty. Born to ignorant and poor parents, Pecola's acquiescence with this false concept collides with her parents' abuse and neglect and then her society's failure. Through Pecola's experiences Toni Morrison conveys the damaging effect of neglect and abuse and society failure in a racialized world.

This paper analyzes through the lenses of trauma theory, Pecola's experiences of neglect and abuse and their impact on the latter. This theory is "A body of 20th-century psychological research into the effects upon people of various traumatic events (assault, rape, war, famine, incarceration, etc.), leading to the official recognition in the 1980s of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder" (Baldick, web). Most situations addressed by this theory are seen in the life of the protagonist of the story this paper purports to analyze.

Structured around three chapters, this study explores first the situation of neglect and, second, abuse, before devoting the last part to the exploration of the aftermaths of both situations on the main character.

2. PECOLA'S EXPERIENCES OF NEGLECT

Considering psychologists investigation, children should be attached to their mother or care giver at least during childhood. Because "children who suffer disrupted attachments may suffer from damage to all of their developmental systems including their brains" (Bloom, 1999: 2). Yet, at Pecola's birth, the reader witnesses a subtle scene of detachment: Pauline, Pecola's mother, struggles to abide to the natural rule which is that of loving and accepting her newborn baby when she declares "a right smart baby she was" (Morrison, 2007: 126) but at last releases the sentence that would render mother-child bond complex by uttering that "I know she was ugly" (ibid.). This acknowledgment stems from the acquiescence with the Whites' norm of beauty. The Whites fix beauty norms based on white features, which exclude African Americans. Thus, African Americans become victims of discrimination, all sorts of inhumane acts that devalue them and create a sense of self loath in them. That is why the only thing Pauline could appreciate from her daughter is her hair as the following reads: "head full of pretty hair, . . ." (ibid.). She appreciates Pecola's hair because newborn babies have curled hair which respond to the American ideal of beauty.

Interestingly, the belief in the White's norm of beauty separates Blacks from Whites, some Blacks from other Blacks, from their children, and, even, from themselves. Such a separation hampers their ability to blossom. Worst of all, to the concept of an ideal beauty is added that of the Breedlove family's living condition.

The Breedloves' miserable living condition urges Pauline to work overtime in order to take full responsibility of her children. But under-pay would not allow her to achieve her goal. Both over-duty and under-payment become a great handicap to the blossoming of the family. Pauline spends less time with her family and "the things she could afford to buy did not last, had no beauty or style" (2007: 127). Therefore, her exposure to the fine things, in her well-to-do master's house, which she would also like to possess distract her from her primary goal which is that of caring for her own offspring. Pauline becomes seduced by brightness of the things in her master's house, and overly pleased to be surrounded by all of her master's physical belonging as if they were hers. "She looked at their houses, smelled their silk draperies and loved all of it" (ibid.). Her love for these things which she cannot possess become a handicap for her growth and that of her family.

Pauline's will to enjoy her master's possessions and to be compliant and pleasing to her master dispels her from her duties as a mother as she struggles to fit a dream from which she

is entirely excluded. She therefore becomes distant from her children. The luxury in the master's household, drives her astray. She ignores the mania those so-called generous masters use to distance their servant from their families. And then chases ". . . to stand in the kitchen at the end of the day. . . . Hearing, We'll never let her go. We could never find anybody like Polly. She will *not* (italics in original) leave the kitchen until everything is in order" (2007: 128). The "*not*" being italicized testifies to how good Pauline is at this. It also proves that no matter the time and the circumstance she must make sure everything is in order. She therefore does not spend time with her daughter.

Pauline's full devotion to her master wipes all her energies leaving little to no space for herself, her children and husband. She fails to play the game as John Langston Gwaltney asserts: "We have always been the best actors in the world . . . I think that we are much more clever than they are because we know that we have to play the game. We've always had to live two lives—one for them and one for ourselves" (2007: 238-240). Pauline sadly lives all her life for them. She ignores the real role to play as an African American; instead of rewriting the story and acting in her own favor and that of her family, she fails herself and her family by acting according to the master's will. She has no time to care for her own family, no instance of investment into her daughter's identity construction. She *neglects* her children. Pecola's physical appearance is not acceptable; she wears "dirty torn cloth, the plait sticking on her head, hair matted where the plaits had come undone the muddy shoes with wad of gum peeping out from between the cheap soles, the soil socks" (2007: 91).

This portrayal of Pecola shows that Pauline does not invest any time in her daughter's physical appearance. Observably, Pecola's dressing style is as that of many African American due to poverty. The long period of time Pauline spends in her master's house causes a lot of damage to the Breedloves. Pecola does not only undergo physical neglect, she is also victim of psychosocial neglect.

Morrison underscores through Pecola's case, the crucial impact of maternal absence. It is emphasized through the psychosocial neglect Pecola is victim of. Pauline who is preoccupied by pleasing her master does not contribute to Pecola's cognitive and educational development. In the point of fact, children learn a lot from interaction with their parents or caregivers, i.e., their first role models. Parents easily influence the way their children act think and behave. Through interaction with the latter, they learn how to think critically, to discuss, to show approval and disapproval, and learn to express their feeling. But the long hours Pauline spends at work prevent her from spending time with her daughter. Even when she comes back, Pecola is just "like the afterthought one has just before sleep" (2007: 127). The use of the word "afterthought" accounts for how Pecola is left on her own, and the cognitive and interpersonal neglect she is victim of, which psychologists align under psychosocial neglect.

The lack of cognitive support undoubtedly moves together with the lack of educational support. Pecola therefore becomes a victim of multiple forms of abuse. The lack of educational support exposes her to being "ignored or despised at school, by teachers and classmates alike" (2007: 45). What worsens the issue is the fact that her mother could not read Pecola's emotional state and help her sort the issue through.

Pauline's naivety therefore leaves Pecola's plea for warm and comfort unsatisfied and makes Pecola "sat [for long hours] looking in the mirror, trying to discover the secret of the ugliness, the ugliness that made her ignored or despised at school, by teachers and classmates alike" (ibid.). This precision "long hours" and the use of "trying" pinpoints that Pecola's problem is not forcibly only physical; she certainly shows a feeling of disconnection and lacks some interpersonal skills. A lack which is the consequence of her loneliness.

It cannot be said enough, parents have the responsibility to watch on their children and bring them up to overcome life peripety as they ingrain in these children a sense self-love and critical mind. However, in Pecola's case, her mother is not there to remark on her fear, her signal for love, her dissatisfaction and desire to understand things that mystify her. And the natural easiness with which their experiences are shared with their parents, either good or bad, are absent for Pecola. She has learned to keep her emotion to herself because her parents leave no space for conversation or place for her to share their emotion.

In *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison also probes the causes of some children physical abuse. The Breedloves' poor living condition contributes dramatically to Pecola's physical abuse. More than the neglect Pecola is victim of physical abuse.

3. PECOLA'S EXPERIENCES OF ABUSE

Very often, insecurity and the inability to meet the family's need result in couple's frequent quarrels. In such a case, wives generally tend to drive their anger toward their husbands and when this is not done wisely, it exposes children to both parents' arguments and sometimes to violent scenes. And when the problem is not solved during a short period of time, it ends in frustration which is directed most of time toward the innocent children. This is how Pecola has become the scapegoat. Her mother very often hollers at her and beats her. She is mostly beaten for no reason. Even Pauline remarks the senseless of her beating her children, as she declares: "*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*" (italics in original) (2007: 124). The fact that Pauline would catch herself beating her children testifies to the lack of evidence or causes that should make her behave this way. And what makes things worse for Pecola is the fact her mother finds it difficult to regulate her motion and she exposes Pecola to frequent physical abuse and terror.

Hollering at a child is an experience that has the power to cause a sense of (abnormal) fear. Especially when the child does nothing to deserve such a reaction, it creates a sense of helplessness and terror. But this is Pecola's experience, Pauline holler at her when she does not expect it. Sometimes, some experiences are bearable because you expect it and you get ready for it. But when it comes out of a blue, the victims' quest for understanding girds an overwhelming state of mind.

Pecola's physical abuse does not stop at her being beating. She is also exposed to frequent violent attitudes between her parents. Her exposure to this violence affects her, ". . . the pain was as consistent as it was deep. She struggles between an overwhelming desire that would kill the other, and a profound wish that she herself could die" (2007: 43). The description made of Pecola's emotional state zooms in on the abusive nature of the violence between her parents and how tormented she is.

Added to the physical abuse, Pecola undergoes emotional abuse from her mother, classmates, teachers, and others. Morrison highlights in her narrative how disconnection between mother and daughter generates mother's victimization. The fragility of the bond between Pauline and her daughter makes her favor her masters' home and their daughter toward her family. Morrison outlines the situation when she allows Pecola to mistakenly splash blueberries juice on herself and on the floor at Pauline's master's house. Pauline's reaction exhibits the extent to which her daughter's emotional feeling means less to her. In time of pain the attitude of others toward the victim should normally be that of compassion. The normal first reaction should be to know how the victim feels. But Pauline fails to do so, though Pecola is hopping from pain of the hurt the blueberries sauce caused her, Pauline "knocked her to the

floor . . . yanked her up by the arm, and slapped her again, . . .” (2007: 109) in a moment where Pecola needs caring attention.

Pauline disregards her daughter’s emotional wellbeing and verbally abuses her in addition to the beating, “Crazy fool...my floor, mess...look what you... work...get on out” (ibid.). Again, she values her master’s floor more than her daughter. “My floor”, she claims, her claiming the floor speaks volume, perhaps not to her but to Pecola who could probably not understand why her mother chooses the floor instead of her. Most of the time, people say human beings are dearer than objects, but this just remains a say especially when it comes to kids. And worst of all, is its consequences on the victim, reason why one should think twice before uttering insults. But Pauline ignores this principle, and her calling Pecola “a crazy fool” scrutinizes the emotional distance between them. For who would like to be with a fool, to spend a moment with a crazy person? Her last sentence testifies to this “get on out” (ibid.). She chases her daughter out like a harmful animal. Worse, Pecola is not alone, she is humiliated and degraded before her friends Claudia and Frieda, and the white girl her mother cherishes most. The degradation and the humiliation prove the psychological abuse she is victim of.

Pecola’s experience at the Fisher’s house is so rude. Claudia, whom the abuse is not directed to, feels its rudeness and asserts: “(...) her words were hotter and darker than the smoking berries” (ibid.). If an aggression on a body damages the body, hot and dark words could only burn up the mind.

Surely, the words burn up Pecola’s mind, erase and dismiss her, enforce silence on her instead of a sense. Under normal circumstances, Pecola could tell her mother that she is sorry or that it is done mistakenly, but the dreadfulness in her mother’s behavior creates a sense of helplessness and fear as Claudia explains: “we backed away in dread” (ibid.).

Observably enough, Pauline favors the “pink-and-yellow” girl toward her daughter, she hushes and soothes the tears of the “pink-and-yellow girl” and treats Pecola as none (109). Though, Pauline could claim the Fishers’ floor, she is ashamed of her daughter. She finds it burdensome to acknowledge her and to say my daughter. So, she treats Pecola as a nonentity, erasing her totally before the Fishers’ daughter when the latter insists on knowing: “Who were they, . . .?” / “Don’t worry none, baby.” . . . / “Who were they, Polly?” / “Hush. Don’t worry none” (109).

Denial from other people is painful, yet it can still be understood but from one’s mother is being cruel toward the child and this puts the child on the path of harms; unless the child has another safe relationship.

For most children who undergo abuse, their safety is found at school and with their peers. They find solace at school in the hand of informed teachers. And for such children, school becomes the utmost place to be. They feel at home while in school, share their experiences with those teachers who value them and then acquire strength to overcome the unhealthy experiences they are undergoing in homes. But Pecola’s case is different, she is shamed and despised by her teachers too. Instead of them interfering in her situation and helping her solve her problem through, they emotionally abuse her and treat her as if they wish she were not in the classroom. The scene of Pecola’s abuse is reported by the narrator; “. . . her teacher had always treated her this way. They tried never to glance at her and call her only when everyone is required to answer (2007: 45). The narrator’s report exhibits how threatening the school environment is for Pecola.

The silent treatment Pecola receives from the hands of her teachers probably makes her feel dumb and prevents her from learning effectively. For children who are maltreated also are at risk for other cognitive problems, including difficulties learning and paying attention (Bick & Nelson, 2006: 177-8). Also, strong, frequent, or prolonged activation of a person’s stress

response system, often referred to as toxic stress, can have long-lasting damaging effects on an individual's health, behavior, and ability to learn. And not only is she ignored; her teachers prevent her from socializing with her classmates; "she was the only member of her class who sat alone at a double desk" (Morrison, 2007: 45). The teachers force isolation onto her. Though for those who experience abuse at home the time spent away from their house minimizes the effect of the abuse, because it an opportunity for them to have other experiences than being abused (Leslie & Cook, 2015: 687). Still, Pecola's teachers fail to use their authority as teachers to establish a friendly relationship and create a harmonious classroom, they rather vulnerate her more.

In Pecola's situation, the reader comes to grips with a very painful experience where teachers themselves are the source of re-abuse. While it is well known that when young people do not feel safe from physical, verbal abuse, harassment, and racism they are more vulnerable to experiencing a range of physical and mental health concerns. And her reaction to their behavior is revelatory of the wrenching consequences of their deed. "Long hours she sat looking in the mirror, trying to discover the secret of the ugliness, the ugliness that made her ignored or despised at school, by teachers and classmates alike" (Morrison, 2007: 45). As a result, Pecola has no particular friend at school with whom she could try to sort out the reason of her despise or from whom she could get support.

4. PSYCHOLOGICAL AFTERMATHS OF BOTH NEGLECT AND ABUSE

The repetition of abuse, which figures as a driving force in Pecola's life, showcases in how Pecola is also treated at school. Morrison showcases the situation when she pinpoints that Pecola spends long hours before a mirror looking for the clue of her despise. Her choice testifies to the loneliness she is victim of. And how the frequent abuse sets her aside and makes her an outcast among her classmates. The outcast status confers to her by her teacher vulnerates her and exposes her to the bully of other students. These are most apparent in the treatment she receives from her classmates; "when one of the girls at school wanted to be particularly insulting to a boy, or wanted to get an immediate response from him, she could say. 'Bobby loves Pecola Breedlove! . . .' and never fails to get peals of laughter from those in earshot, and mock anger from the accused" (2007: 46). The mock and anger from the accused shows that Pecola have got no one on her side. she is treated as a leper. No one wants to attach to her. Even the choice of the author's words "particularly" and "never" are not trivial, they are revelatory of the disdain and the helplessness Pecola is victim of. She becomes the object of particular insult which never fails to harm its target.

Another instance that testifies to Pecola's abuse is when she went to Mr Yacobowski's store for candies. Morrison pinpoints how dreadful experiences kill potentiality and give way to anger and sadness. Pecola all joyous to have her Mary Jane candies wonders on her way to the store about the reason why people call dandelions weed, for her "they were pretty" (47). And in her analysis, she thinks people hates the head of dandelion "because they are so many, so strong and soon" (ibid.). At a place where people find weeds Pecola see something beautiful to possess. Morrison shows Pecola's ability to develop her critical thinking and her capacity to value think base on her taste and not those of others. "And owning them made her part of the world and the world part of her" (48). This possession makes her happy. She has fun with them, an experience she could not have socially. She blows away the white head and peers into the yellow head with all the joy of childhood play. But this joyous experience would not last. Her experience with the store keeper dissipates her joy and substitute it with anger. He discriminates her on the name of race.

The scene between Mr Yacobowski and Pecola highlights how blacks are treated as no bodies. As a seller, Mr Yacobowski supposed to welcome Pecola and treat her as a customer. But as discrimination against blacks is the norm, he overlooks the relation between them and erases her totally. The erasure showcases when Mr Yacobowski fails to see her. For when one looks at a direction, one could see whatever is there to see, however you see nothing when there is nothing to see. But for this store keeper Pecola is nothing. The vacuum in his eyes speak at this level; unfortunately for Pecola “the vacuum is not new to her . . . She has seen it lurking in the eyes of all white people. She knew the disdain and attributed it to her blackness. Therefore, having definitely nobody on her side not even the one to whom business’s flourishment she participates in, she “feels the inexplicable shame ebb” (50). And she identifies herself to the dandelions, “a dart of affection leaps out from her to them. But they do not look at her and do not send love back. She thinks, ‘they *are ugly*. They *are weeds*’” (50). Pecola’s last appreciation of the dandelions *ugly* and *weeds* at the place of beautiful underscores how mean the store keeper’s behavior was to her. And Morrison italicizing the verb and the adjectives proves that the words do not come from Pecola innermost, it is just an acquiescence with what others thinks. The acquiescence damages her more, it steals from Pecola the source of her joy and denies her all the pleasure that ensue from the admiration of the nature.

Pecola’s acquiescence with others view about the dandelions is a sign of her acquiescence with the white idealized beauty. The repetition of the abuse and her age makes her accept her condition and fails to see the miserable “white immigrant with the taste of potato and beer in his mouth” (48). Observing the store keeper as she first observes the dandelion could have saved Pecola from the effect of the abuse. Morrison’s portrayal of the white man highlights the status of the man. And the fact that she put the question “how can” (50) zooms in on how blacks can be the prey of any white. The “how can” probes that the man is not attractive. Nevertheless, he devalues a little girl just for who she is. And for Pecola, the exposure to abuse disempowers her.

As a matter of fact, she faces a situation where those critical questions about people’s appreciation of the dandelion could have work. But she rather accepts the man’s insult and attributes it to her blackness. As she fails to see the store keeper with the taste of potato and beer in his mouth” (48) who is trying to value himself over Pecola.

In addition to this, Soaphead Church abuses Pecola. Pecola who believes her blackness is the source of her disdain, seeks for blue eyes. She thinks having blue eyes ‘a symbol of beauty’ will make people accept and love her. “Each night, without fail, she prayed for blue, salutary, eyes. Fervently for a year she had prayed. Although somewhat discouraged she was not without hope. . . . Thrown, in this way, into the binding conviction that only a miracle could relieve her, . . .” (46). She therefore visits a miracle worker for solution as soon as she learns about him.

Throughout the novel Pecola did not confide in anybody about her wish to have blue eyes. Not even to the three whores, Poland, China, and miss Marie, who live in the apartment above the Breedloves’ storefront and who did not despise her. They are the only persons before whom Pecola easily expresses her feelings and initiates talk. And neither did she confide in Claudia and Frieda despite how good they have been to her during her sojourn in their house. In fact, her conviction about a supernatural force fulfilling her wish keep her from bothering them with it, she rather prays “each night . . . Fervently, . . . (46).” So, hearing about a miracle doer is salutary. Without hesitation, Pecola runs to him. But she still holds on to her conviction that only a supernatural being could help, which showcases in her use of “maybe” when Soaphead Church asks her: “‘What can I do for you, my child?’” / “. . . ‘Maybe. Maybe you can do it for me.’” / “. . .” / “I can’t go to school no more. And I thought maybe you could help

me.” / “Help you how?” . . .” / “my eyes.” / “What about your eyes?” / “I want them blue” (173-4).

Her use of “maybe” proves that she does not forcibly expect a solution from Soaphead Church. But Soaphead Church misses this goal. His belief of the white supremacy which is mulatto parents inculcate in him, makes him abuse Pecola instead of saving her.

Pecola constantly believes that all of her miseries are caused by her ugliness; the society forge ugliness, which she accepted. So, for her the course of things will change if she herself changes. Particularly, Pecola focuses on her eyes which is one of the features on which the Western defines beauty. “It had occurred to Pecola some time ago that if her eyes, those eyes who held the pictures, and knew the sights—if those eyes of hers were different, that is so to say, beautiful she herself would be different” (46). So, she ignores completely her being pregnant as the cause of her being sent out of school and again blames it on her ugliness. And she wishes to change her situation as she heard of Soaphead Church—the magician.

Soaphead’s education and his experiences as a light-skinned African American make him acquiesce with the white supremacy. His family’s devotee which is that of keeping the white trait and all the implications of this action also allows him to “love and understand” (174) Pecola. Thus, he sympathizes with her and deems it utmost to help. But his choice is cruel.

Though Pecola’s plea for blue eyes evinces her desperate for them, her use of “maybe” leave a room for discussion. Unfortunately, Soaphead fails to seize the little room that Pecola’s use of “maybe” leaves to create a sense of calm and confidence. Instead of communicating the concern as he encourages Pecola to talk, while he listens actively. An active listening that will have established a psychological environment wherein Pecola will discuss her concern and fear. Soaphead rather leaves way to his emotion. Being a victim of the white hegemony himself, Pecola’s wish “. . . seemed to him the most poignant and the one most deserving of fulfillment. A little black girl who wanted to rise out of the pit and see the world with blue eye” (174). He believes “God had done a bad job” (174) and decides to right it. But his belief and decision spark from an overwhelmed state of mind.

Pecola’s hopelessness, helplessness, and haplessness overwhelm Soaphead. And the latter’s powerlessness leads him to manipulate Pecola. He makes her believe she has blue eyes so that she could live happily with the illusion as the following testifies: “I gave her the blue, blue, two blue eyes. . . . no one else will see her blue. But *she* will. And she will live happily ever after” (182). Unfortunately, his good intention is just a vicious circle of abuse.

In fact, like Pecola, Soaphead is victim of emotional abuse. Soaphead does not benefit from any constructive interactions from his father. Therefore, this jeopardizes his ability to think and communicate effectively, which influences his relationship with his clients. If he could have seen that Pecola being out of school has nothing to do with her eyes—a natural feature and not a curse—and help her consider things otherwise, Pecola could have been saved. But his ability and “practice was to do what he was bid—not to suggest to a party that perhaps the request was unfair, mean, or hopeless” (172). He surely knows that engaging in that will be fruitless because he cannot convince them anyways. He lacks the communicational skill to interact with the despair and help him or her out of hopelessness. Especially in a case like Pecola wherein he is convinced by his surrounding that God has done a bad job. Therefore, from the status of victim, he becomes victimizer.

Soaphead’s acquiescence with the white supremacy blinds him from seeing further than what he has been told. His belief in “De Gobineau’s hypothesis that ‘all civilizations derive from the white race, and 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’” (168) maims him. Thus, he ignores that disdaining black people has nothing to do with their natural features

and it just a strategy used by the whites to feel superior. And that what African Americans need is a strong state of mind. Because even those who strive to apparently look like them still suffer. They become enslaved in the white hegemony, Soaphead's ignorance takes over his reasoning capacity and he therefore manipulates Pecola.

Soaphead abuses Pecola as he creates a false scene to deprive Pecola of all doubt of possessing blue eyes. He poisons the dog but convinces Pecola that any strange behavior from the dog equates the answer to her wish to have blue eyes. His manipulation drags Pecola into insanity. The horror attached to the possession of blue eyes becomes greater than the aloofness Pecola was victim of. Since Pecola believes herself with blue eyes she is no more the same. Her belief coalesces with the reality. She looks into the mirror every minute to be sure her eyes are blue. But the confusion that the reality— seeing her former eyes in the mirror—and her belief—the possession of blue eyes—create makes her conjure an imaginary friend.

"How many time are you going to look inside that old thing?"

I didn't look in a long time.

You did too—

So what? I can look if I want to.

I did say you couldn't I just don't know why you have to look every minute. They aren't going anywhere.

I know. I just like to look.

You scared they might go away? . . ." (193)

Pecola's inability to see her blues is depicted in the many times she spends looking into the mirror within a minute. And the need to appease her doubt is translated in her talking to herself—imaginary friend.

Pecola talking to herself fester all her relationship. People look drop-eyed at her as her remarks read:

You looking drop-eyed like Mrs. Breedlove, [her mother]".

Mrs. Breedlove look[s] drop-eyed at you?

Yes. Now she does. Ever since I got my blue eye, she look[s] away from me all the time. Do you suppose she's jealous too?

Could be. . .

Everybody's jealous.

Every time I look at somebody they look off. (195)

The fact that it is after her blue eyes that her mother and others look drop-eyed at her testifies that her attitude after her belief of having blue eyes horrified them. This demonstrates how Soaphead so proclaim good intention is nothing than manipulation and psychological abuse.

5. CONCLUSION

Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* addresses a crucial issue—neglect and abuse—many children undergo, especially African American children due to some parents' ignorant, poverty and then racism in the American context. This is what this study attempted to explore in order to discuss the aftermaths thereof. Trauma theory has helped come up with some crucial results that call for réflexion and open room for more research. The first chapter found out that experiences of neglect from parents (the most unexpected persons to neglect) push a child to seek asylum in other people who be dangerous for it. In the second chapter, it has been shown that abuse have direct effects on children both physically and psychologically. The third chapter accounted for

the aftermaths of both neglect and abuse on a single child and showed that this can be destructive for life; and folly might be one of the most important consequences.

Considering how harmful neglect and abuse are to the protagonist, this study has offered details about what they are, how maternal abuse and neglect give room to other forms of abuses and expose Pecola to acquiesce with the Whites' norms of ideal beauty without critical thinking. An acquiescence that whittles her bit by bit and finally damages her life.

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