

**I AM
A
SLAVERY
HERITAGE
SURVIVOR**

December 6

2013

This article is a reflection and a discussion on post-traumatic slavery syndrome.

Thomas J. Walker,
Jr.

This article is a self-reflection and an in-depth look into who I am as a man, not just any man, but a man in black skin. A man in black skin tend to evoke and provoke a multitude of emotions and behaviors ranging from hatred to genocide. It discloses truth about my life and I am prayerfully hopeful that as a reader you will experience the revelation about who you are and how you are with regards to the color of the skin that you wear, and how you are affected by as well as how you react to individuals who wear black skin.

Please understand that the contingency of this article is not to bash, retaliate, or to hurt others, but on the contrary it is presented to create the emotions to facilitate healing, mine as well as yours. It is about an event that has had a profound conscious, unconscious and traumatic effect on my ancestors first and has had a residual effect on me. It is about the overt and covert prejudices manifested from our Eurocentric Ancestors and the learned the residual effects on you as well. It is imperative to know that feelings of anger, vacant esteem, and racist socialization resulted from untreated spiritual, psychological, and physical traumas. As you read you will also realize the importance of healing, which can only come about as a result of unveiling the truths of our African History that have been buried for centuries. The truth of the biographical depictions of inhuman treatment of people who existed/exist and would like to coexist in a manner equivalent to the standards of people of lighter hues and benefit from the same amenities as there earthly cohabitants. Just as our Jewish brothers and sisters remember their Holocaust and honors it to ensure current and future generations will know history so it is not repeated. I, too forge ahead to gain strength to bring about a new growth, a new love for life, for liberty and for truth. It is been said that truthfulness is the foundation of all human virtue. You cannot grow as a human being and you certainly cannot be healthy without truthfulness.

The truth is, we live in a society that never accepted or respected me as a man because of the color of my skin. The truth is, that people who wear black skin, were not permitted to have stature, obtain power, or establish prominence in these United States. The truth is, this process of alienation, degradation, began as early as the 1600 and has lasted until the present. The truth is, and the most unfortunate part of all of this is, we did not do anything to warrant any of it.

In an attempt to understand why there is such an adverse reaction to my skin, I stumbled across a documentary on Post Traumatic Slavery Syndrome by Dr. Joy Debruy-Leary and it was a jaw-dropping revelation. Suddenly, it hit me after all these years. I began to understand my defiance, my anger, my hatred, my hurts, my self-destruction, my fears, and my confusion. Post Traumatic Slavery Syndrome theoretically explains the origins and the causes of the adaptive behaviors of slaves, which has residually created many of the maladaptive behaviors exhibited in our present day African-American communities. Post Traumatic Slavery syndrome exists as a consequence of multi-generational oppression of Africans and their descendents resulting from centuries of chattel slavery. This is a form of slavery predicated on the belief the African-Americans were genetically and inherently inferior to whites. I find it so amazingly ironic that people of European descent who deemed themselves as supreme, more civilized, more intelligent, more moral character, would engage in behaviors so brutally inhumane that it surpassed the experience of the Jewish Holocaust. It was not just the physical enslavement, but the repeated acts of rape, pedophilia, sodomy of women and children and the dismemberment of black fathers, black brothers and black sons. Even more insane is the barbaric justification known as cognitive dissonance.

On Liberty and Slavery By George Moses Horton 1798–1883

Alas! and am I born for this,
To wear this slavish chain?
Deprived of all created bliss,
Through hardship, toil and pain!

How long have I in bondage lain,
And languished to be free!
Alas! and must I still complain—
Deprived of liberty.

Oh, Heaven! and is there no relief
This side the silent grave—
To soothe the pain—to quell the grief
And anguish of a slave?

Come Liberty, thou cheerful sound,
Roll through my ravished ears!
Come, let my grief in joys be drowned,
And drive away my fears.

Say unto foul oppression, Cease:
Ye tyrants rage no more,
And let the joyful trump of peace,
Now bid the vassal soar.

Soar on the pinions of that dove
Which long has cooed for thee,
And breathed her notes from Afric's grove,
The sound of Liberty.

Oh, Liberty! thou golden prize,
So often sought by blood—
We crave thy sacred sun to rise,
The gift of nature's God!

Bid Slavery hide her haggard face,
And barbarism fly:
I scorn to see the sad disgrace
In which enslaved I lie.

Dear Liberty! upon thy breast,
I languish to respire;
And like the Swan unto her nest,
I'd like to thy smiles retire.

Oh, blest asylum—heavenly balm!
Unto thy boughs I flee—
And in thy shades the storm shall calm,
With songs of Liberty!

Cognitive dissonance is the justification of two simultaneous conflicting thoughts in an individual's mind such as the thought of knowing slavery is wrong, yet they continue to engage in that

wrong behavior. Cognitive dissonance of the slave owners was to justify chattel slavery such as the comment made by Thomas Jefferson, one of America's illustrious founding fathers who said that slaves were incapable of feeling grief; therefore, he made this statement to justify his own actions of continuing to buy and sell mothers from their infants, fathers from their families, and brothers and sisters from their siblings.

Carl Von Linnaeus is credited with establishing the idea of a hierarchical structure of classification based upon observable characteristics. Linnaeus was the first person to implement the classification taxonomy that utilized skin color for the basis of classifying a man as a scientific explanation or justification of hierarchy. Linnaeus subdivided the human species into classifications based on skin color and continent.

- Homo-Europeanus – white, fickle, gentle, intelligence and guided by laws.
- Homo-Africanus – Black, phlegmatic, cunning, lazy, lustful, careless, governed by impulsiveness and dumb.

This is purely cognitive dissonance, which is a rather diluted form of a lie. What individuals of such mental prowess and of a gentle nature would travel 13,000 miles to work lazy people? An anthropologist by the name of Bloomenbach was the first to refer to whites as Caucasian and he scientifically professed the Caucasian as the most beautiful race of men.

According to science, race has no scientific merit to justify a hierarchical chart. Who we have been and who we are is defined by Dr. Cheik Anta Diop one of the most prominent and leading Anthropologist and Egyptologist in the world. According to Dr. Diop, it is scientifically and with great certainty that mankind was born in Africa on the latitude of Kenya, Utopia and Tanzania and going on a north south axis south to South Africa. It is clear that any humanity that had its birth in that region could not have survived in an equatorial region without

pigmentation. Diop states that nature does nothing by chance and given this mankind that was born in a subequatorial region was given melanin to protect its skin and it is clear that the first man had to be a black man. It is only after this black race of people left Africa to inhabit other parts of the world that had different climatic phenomenon that man changed and took on different aspects and developed different looks. Nature created six specimens of man before we got to man as we know him today. According to scientific data, Dr. Diop states the first three never acquired the potential to expand and leave Africa. The three others did leave Africa. The fourth and fifth of these specimens disappeared and what remains is man as we know him, the sixth species. The sixth species was proven to be a black man, which in prehistoric history is called the Grimaldi man. During the last glaciation, this man left Africa and went to Europe, which was extremely cold, much colder than it is now, and underwent the adaption of what is now known as the white man. The man we conventionally know to be a white man evolved from a black man over a period of some 20,000 years of adaptation to a different climate. This is all backed and proven by scientific data (James, G 1992).

How ironic is this? Will a white race ever acknowledge this truth? Of course not, this is how cognitive dissonance continues. Cognitive dissonance is one of the tools utilized by white men and women who were church-going, bible-toting people to justify wrong through what appears right. Ironically, they were also the same people who raped and condoned the raping of women and little girls, the beating of slave to death or brink of death, hanging pregnant women by their feet and cutting them open for the sake of exhibiting power, and literally pulling the limbs of slaves off by tying their arms and legs to horses. All because of how my African predecessors were defined. The oppressors felt compelled, immune and justified in their treatment of my people. This skin, this black skin, evoked all of this behavior? Why? Is our

skin so deviant or is the mind of the slave-owners the true depiction of white supremacy or racist, the deviant abnormal behavior?

Let me introduce an individual by the name of Willie Lynch. Willie Lynch was a British slave owner from the West Indies who dramatically changed the atrocity of American chattel slavery into the process of transgeneration trauma. He guaranteed to a group of Virginia slave owners that if they implemented the methods of control on their populations of slaves that they will be able to have this control for at least 300 years. He also guaranteed that any member of their family, wife, children, etc., could implement these methods with remarkable success([FinalCall.Com](#) News). His method was simply to take the differences amongst the slave and amplify them. He uses fear, distrust and envy for the purpose of control. Lynch utilized age, color/shades, intelligence, size, sex, size of plantation, attitude of owners, etc. Lynch advocated conflict was stronger than trust, envy stronger than adulation, respect or admiration; pitted old males against young males; dark skinned slaves against lighter skinned slaves; female against males. He indicated that all white servants and overseers must distrust all blacks. He goes on to say that it is necessary that slaves trust and depend on the slave owners. They must love, respect and trust only them. Lynch also emphasized that it is imperative that slave owners use wives and children and never miss the opportunity to do so. He goes on to further describe the process of comparing the rearing of a horse to that of a slave. He also talked about utilizing violence as a resource of gaining the attention by implementing the factor of fear.

I know why the caged bird sings by Maya Angelou

A free bird leaps on the back
Of the wind a floats downstream
All the current ends and dips his wing
In the orange suns rays
And dares to claim the sky.
But a BIRD that stalks down his narrow cage
Can seldom see through his bars of rage
His wings are clipped and his feet are tied
So he opens his throat to sing
The caged bird sings with a fearful trill
Of things unknown but longed for still
And his tune is heard on the distant hill for
the cage bird sings of freedom.
The free bird thinks of another breeze
And the trade winds soft through
The sighing tree
And the fat worms waiting on a dawn- bright
Lawns and he names the sky his own.
But the caged Bird stands on the grave of dreams
His shadow shouts on a nightmare scream
His wings are clipped and his feet are tied
So he opens his throat to sing

The caged birds sings with
A fearful thrill of things unknown
But longed for still and his
Tune is heard on the distant hill
For the caged bird sings of freedom

The continuous use of these tactics over a course of 246 years from 1619 to 1865 had a profound effect over several generations of blacks. Each generation passed on the adaptive strategies and behaviors from the previous generation plus some newer adaptive measures. This systematic brainwashing both in the mental and physical state and the residual effect is what defines post traumatic slavery syndrome, which is the first stage of mentalcide.(Carlson, E.1997)

Mentalcide is the process whereby a slave was distracted from thinking freely. The individual has restrictions of participating and using those tools that are so common in defining who you are such as: language, values , rituals, beliefs, and the inability to interact with family. But the most humane example of slavery , if there is such a thing, would be the fact that we were considered property and as property we were protected to some degree. We were still subjected to trauma after the Emancipation Proclamation was enacted on June 13, 1863. When the Jim Crow laws were in place to enslave us mentally, legally, and financially, the Black Codes were set up immediately on June 14, 1863 to counteract the proclamation that freed them .The first code was the Vagrancy Law, which basically stated that if you are a unemployed at the time of your freedom you were going to be arrested for vagrancy. Consequently, a newly freed slave was arrested immediately for this infraction. The second code was the Convict Lease Law, that permitted the law officer to release the detainee back to the plantation from whence he/she came.

The third code was Literacy Test Law, which said that, although you are free and in order for you to have any rights, you must be able to take a test. If you were able to pass it, then you were arrested because the only way you could pass such a test one would have to be literate and it was illegal for a Black man to read. How do we win? The Jim Crow years spanned the range of 1865-1965, the second stage of mentalcide (Carlson, E 1997). Although at this time we were actually free, we soon found out that it was only in theory. As blacks we were free alright; free to be beaten for no reason; free to be lynched ; free to be ganged-raped; free to have collectively 15 million acres of farmland taken away from us because we were black. As a result of all of this, what type of condition are we to be in, as a result of all of this? I ask this knowing that the answer is obvious. We are still under the influence of this racist scheme as our ancestors continued to pass down these traumas for generations, we are to the point where we hate to see, to interact, and to love anyone in this black skin.

Still I Rise by Maya Angelou

You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may trod me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise.

Does my sassiness upset you?
Why are you beset with gloom?
'Cause I walk like I've got oil wells
Pumping in my living room.

Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I'll rise.

Did you want to see me broken?
Bowed head and lowered eyes?
Shoulders falling down like teardrops,
Weakened by my soulful cries?

Does my haughtiness offend you?
Don't you take it awful hard
'Cause I laugh like I've got gold mines

Diggin' in my own backyard.

You may shoot me with your words,
You may cut me with your eyes,
You may kill me with your hatefulness,
But still, like air, I'll rise.

Does my sexiness upset you?
Does it come as a surprise
That I dance like I've got diamonds
At the meeting of my thighs?

Out of the huts of history's shame
I rise
Up from a past that's rooted in pain
I rise
I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.

Leaving behind nights of terror and fear
I rise
Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear
I rise
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.
I rise
I rise
I rise

The third stage of mentalcide (mental homicide) took place from 1965 to the present. During that time we have seen boycotts, sit-ins, riots, and assassinations all marking the end of overt forms of slavery, only to be deceived by the rewriting and restructuring of the essentials for equality or just the leveling of the playing field, we have been asking for 300 years. By law we have made it, however in practice we haven't moved not one step. I say this because for the past 300 years just as we have learned to avoid thinking or talking about our traumatic event; feeling numb; feeling hopelessness about our future; problems with maintaining close relationships; irritability and anger; overwhelming guilt and shame;

and perhaps worse of all is self-destructive behavior, the entire Eurocentric community for the past 300 is convinced of their superiority because they have legally terrorized us, ostracize us, and brutalize us for their glory, their power and their wealth.

A well known and well studied disorder that mirrors the presently unaccepted phenomena/disorder of PTSS(Post Traumatic Slavery Syndrome) in definition, symptoms, causes, risk factors, complications and perhaps in treatment, is that of Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome. The Post- traumatic stress disorder is a mental health conditioned that's triggered by an exposure to a prolonged trauma in the area of kidnapping, captivity, sense of identity or a sense of self. Getting treatment shortly after the initial trauma is essential to possibly prevent long term stress disorder .(MayoClinic.com)

We are not; however, at this place where we want to point fingers. We are at a place where we have exposed the trauma of slavery and the disease of white supremacy. Now the victims of oppression as well as the victims with the oppressed mentality of racism need to talk. When we engage in conversation with Whites Americans and even with Africans Americans to discuss racism, the position of White Americans becomes defensive. The responses are as follows: Slavery happened a long time ago or I wasn't there and I am tired of being made to feel guilty about something that I didn't do.

Well, the fact is it doesn't matter whether you or I was there, but it doesn't negate the fact that I as a African American was affected and as a White American they were traumatized to have a perception of unconsciously overt and unconsciously covert thoughts and behaviors of

racism. How do you explain such discrepancies in the living conditions of blacks in this country? Look at the disparities in education; 17% of all students are African-American, 41% of special education students are males and 87% of the males are African-American. Look at the racial disparities in prison sentencing. We as African-Americans have been taught in America that your status is based on what you have and what you wear. The greatest source of buying in the world of Nike, Adidas and other name brand products are African American and yet we are the lowest in the world on the chart of hierarchy of income. Just for the sake of esteem and self esteem. Crazy isn't it, but this is perspective that so many of our brothers and sisters have. They have engaged in behavior and thought processes that seem so outrageous and extreme, but this is their cognitive dissonance to maintain a sense of dignity, a sense of esteem, just to feel American because our knowledge about who we are is absent due to our Diaspora from Africa. Our American history books don't talk about us in a manner that would elevate our psychosocial economic disposition where we should feel like we are inclusive.

I am African-American who have not only experience the degradation of racism from our white society, but contrary to natural behavior I have also felt the ostracism from my own people. One person in particular was myself; my own-self hatred from not feeling good enough, for not feeling worthy, for not feeling black enough to feeling too black in the presence of my predominantly white classmates. I grew up during the time when the fight for Civil Rights was as graphic as any YouTube gang fight. I witnessed as well as the world the disparities between the treatment, living standards, and the civil liberties of White Americans and those of Black Americans. I experienced the growing pains of segregation and the degradation of being called "monkey" and "nigger" by 'some' of my caucasian classmates, while others watched in embarrassment and shame. Those individuals that were vividly uncomfortable with the onslaught

of racial slurs peaked my interest because they didn't conform nor seemingly could conform to that racist behavior and I wondered why. On the other hand I felt the pressure of hate from those individuals who looked like me. Skin that was comparably as dark as mine or darker who despised the fact that my father was a physician ,who in more times than I care to mention, treated them and their family members medically for years. I could only reflect on the fact that Willie Lynch program was still thriving in the minds and behavior of many folks.

Where did I fit in you ask?... No where! I began to make bad decisions, living recklessly and engaging in behaviors that were unreflective of my upbringing. I really tried to live a life that reflected the expectations of my parents, only resulting in hidden pains from vacant esteem, anger from the lies that are told and derogatory comments made about me and bitterness from a classification based solely on my skin color and not the content of my mind and heart. I was deflated because I felt helpless to do anything about it. No matter how mad I get, there is nothing I can do about. I'm just another mad 'Nigga'. But when a white man gets mad... I may lose my job; my freedom; and my life I finally found my niche when I surrendered to the world of drugs, where I was accepted regardless of my black skin. I was accepted and indulge to the brink of committing any criminal act in order to support my habit. I was finally in a place where I wasn't discriminated against until I was arrested. Reality quickly brought me to a sober reality that I was black and very black because my sentence was so extreme to the point where the faces of the courtroom grimaced as my sentence was read. I must mention that prior to my sentencing there was a white male with similar charges and was sentence to a drug program.

But in the midst of all this unfairness, the seeds of faith and prayers of my ancestors were heard and God stepped into bringing about a spiritual verdict of redemption. I was under the Godly judicial grace that over turned 15 years into 2 ½ years. I have acquired a disposition of

healing and the mission of advocating healing to members of my community. I cannot sit back and allow the residual trauma of oppression and racism to continue to infiltrate the lives of the next generation whether one was the descendent of the oppressed or the descendent of the oppressor. I am dedicated to changing feelings of hopelessness to hopefulness; self-destruction to self-reconstruction; propensity for violence to propensity of peace; blamefulness to blamelessness. It is said that we die for a lack of knowledge and it is time that the knowledge of truth is revealed so that the liberation of African-Americans and the liberation of those who bear the shame and anger of racism, both the oppressor and the oppressed can begin to heal.

One Sound ; One Voice By Vaughan Phoenix

Tear down these walls that keep us apart
Tear down these fences unite our hearts
Recover the nations into your arms
And we'll hear your voice
And we'll have one heart, one love, one father, one blood
Your creation gathered together with one sound, one
song, one voice.

How can we say "we love you", when we won't
speak to our brother, we abuse our sisters, and
won't take care of our mothers.;
Father, Father, Father, help us !
Your sons and daughters cry!
Your sons and daughters cry!
One heart; One love; One nation; We're all one blood.
Your creation gathered together, with sound, one
song, one voice.

Heaven hear our prayer take away the pride
That has separated us from your light
We will stand united and we'll show the world your love
Give us one heart, one love, one nation, we're all
one blood
All creation and we're gathered together
Lifting one sound! one song! one voice!

This is the time when the realization of who we are as African Americans or White Americans is essential. This is the time that we have to confess to the addiction of being enslaved and the craving of wanting to enslave. It's time to cease to injecting the poison Willie Lynch into the veins of our people. Its time to sentence the dope dealer known as 'cognitive dissonance to death. This is the time to seek the foundations of recovery knowing that we will never heal totally but the forces of relapse will never be an option.