

Victimization Of Black Women In Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*

M. Geetha^{1*}, Dr. K. Muthuraman²

^{1*}PhD Research Scholar, Department of English, Annamalai, University

²Professor of English, Department of English, Annamalai University

Abstract

African American writer Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* makes a powerful point on the terrible impact that racial prejudice has on young people. It explores the intricacies and catastrophic consequences of the definition of beauty held by the prevailing society, as well as its most nuanced ramifications. White norms, perceptions, and attitudes that have little to do with their real lives have been forced upon black youngsters by themselves. As a result black women have been forced to look down upon themselves, which has a lasting impact on all aspects of their life.

Several women writers, including Toni Morrison, Margaret Walker, Lorraine Hansberry, Sojourner Truth, Zora Neale Hurston, and Alice Walker, aimed to develop new sociologies, aesthetics, and perspectives on healthy living. They brought with them a fresh perspective on women. These writers have lifted the status of the woman from that of an object to that of a subject. Race, class, and gender - all three deeply interwoven core concepts - were revolutionised. The focus of the study is on Morrison's creative, all-encompassing approach to art, which gives her novels an appealing quality. Because all her novels are so deeply psycho-social, they take on new significance in her discussions of gender, class, and race.

Toni Morrison is notable for being a woman and an African American. She has attempted to examine in her works the experiences of African American women in a racist and sexist society, their status in the United States, and their cultural legacy. Her works exhibit the influence of African American folklore. Her works transcend racial borders and capture the black sensibility that she has attempted to portray. She has enabled African Americans and feminists to change what we refer to as American literature through her writings. African American literature is now a necessary component of American literature. Her writings cover a wide range of topics, including good and evil, beauty and ugliness, love and hate, and death, all in simple language.

Morrison writes from a feminist stance in her works, which represent the victimisation of black people. Her home state of Ohio serves as the setting for both *The Bluest Eye* and *Sula*, which is fascinating from the perspective of black history. The black family suffered greatly because of their constant battle to survive, forge an identity and self-image, and adhere to the cultural and economic norms of the white elite. They also experienced a great deal of frustration and despair.

Morrison's fascination with racism as a source, effect, and expression of psychosis in both individuals and society led her to write *The Bluest Eye*. She learns about the terrible consequences of the white-centric definition of beauty. As a byproduct of "male gaze," she claims that the idea of physical beauty glamorises the female body and has racist connotations. This kind of thinking puts physical attractiveness ahead of morality and self-worth. Although it is portrayed as being extremely desired, African American women can never meet this standard of beauty set by white people, which consists of pale complexion, blue eyes, and blonde hair. This turns into the discrimination and difference parameter.

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Morrison believes that the advancement of African standards of beauty destroys the continent's sense of self. Inspired by the revolutionary atmosphere and the developing black consciousness of the 1960s - a time marked by an almost evangelical struggle for racial and personal identity - she decides to use black people's seemingly destructive and unavoidable fixation with the American standard of beauty as the central theme of her first major work.

The Bluest Eye is a tragic story about a young black girl who longs for the bluest eyes, which are a symbol of beauty and consequently worthy in society. The story is set in the sterile cultural milieu and the socio-historic background of the black persecution of 1941. The dominant theme of the novel is how black people dominate the current American ideals of beauty, which are blue eyes, blond hair, and white complexion.

The work exposes the destructive effects of white cultural dominance on African Americans' lives by depicting the terrible state of black people in a racist society and looking at how the beliefs that are upheld by the institutions that support the dominant group shape the way that black women see themselves. As Elizabeth Janeway, in *Women's Literature*, avers, Morrison's stunning insight reveals the disrupted emotions produced by living in a world where white standards and goals are presented to blacks as uniquely important and, at the same time, impossible for them to achieve. (383)

The victimisation of black people within the framework of the racist social system is exposed in the novel. It presents one of the strongest arguments against the connection between black women's psychological subjugation and western notions of feminine beauty. The main idea of the novel is that racism destroys African women's sense of self in general and African women's sense of self in particular when they are children.

The MacTeers and the Breedloves are two black families at the core of the novel. They left the South during the Great Migration in search of work in Northern industries and a higher standard of living. Cholly, the father, Pauline, the mother, Pecola, the daughter, and Sammy, the son, make up the Breedlove family. The children are the focus. The main narrator, Claudia MacTeer, relates what happened in 1940–1941 when she was nine years old, Frieda, her sister, was ten, and Pecola was eleven.

The primary character, Pecola Breedlove, temporarily moves in with Frieda and Claudia after Cholly Breedlove, in a fit of wrath, throws his family outside by setting fire to their rented flat. Pecola's own parents mistreat and abuse her. The emptiness and hopelessness of her family's circumstances are shown in the novel's opening chapters. The narrator clarifies that while their poverty was customary and stifling, it was not exceptional. Their ugliness was distinct, and they all accepted it without question as though a strange, all-knowing lord had handed them a robe of ugly to wear.

Pecola is shunned, abandoned, and divided. She is victimised by neighbours, teachers, and children. She now believes that she can never hope to be accepted outside of the black community and that she will never be an insider. She concludes that her only chance of escaping is to become stunning by acquiring the most stunning blue eyes possible, which will enchant everyone into falling in love with her. She has seen nothing good in her life, therefore her longing grows stronger. If we focus on the topic of pain, *The Bluest Eye's* plot functions on at least two different levels. It is about the suffering of women in general on the one hand, and the agony of black women specifically on the other. It appears that Morrison is drawing attention to the reality that black women are the "other-within-the-other." This phrase functions on two levels as well. Initially, males occupy the middle, women are the other, and black women are the other inside the other. Second, view Black women as the other, white people as the centre, and black people as the other. As a result, misery is based on both race and gender, with black women suffering the most.

Pecola is harmed by every account. The remaining black women in the novel experience all these different kinds of misery. It should be noted that subordination occurs even to black men. Cholly has a transformation because of his humiliation after being discovered by the two white men during their first sexual encounter. It made a huge impression on him. He even went so far as to kill a couple of white males because he could never move over it.

In the novel, white men abuse black women mostly for psychological reasons. It does not raise itself above the material plane. The language, the escape of the gaze, and the facial expression all express the otherness. A notable illustration of this can be seen in Pecola's encounter with Mr. Yacobowski's business. Being a Jew, Yacobowski himself is opposed to having a relationship with a black woman.

Pecola is accustomed to this eye shifting as she has witnessed it lurking in the eyes of all Caucasians. Therefore, her blackness must be the source of the dislike. Yacobowski hesitates to contact her as she gives him the change for the chocolate she purchased. He even avoids touching her hand. At last, he accepts the money, being careful to avoid getting his nails too close to her wet palm.

The readers witness the mistreatment of black people by the white establishment through Cholly's painful experience and insult at the hands of the White hunters who demand that he finish the performance with them. Black people are treated like animals by white people. The white people here get excited when they see the black mate, just like the ancient Romans did when they saw animal sports like this. Their primary goal is to make the black people feel uncomfortable. They have a voyeuristic inclination to see if the black people are as skilled at sex as they are said to be. The worst victim in this case is Darlene. After being treated like an animal by the whites, Cholly begins to despise her.

Pecola experiences the ultimate act of brutalization and treachery when she is raped by her own father, Cholly. It is possible to read his strange rape of Pecola as a pitiful attempt to go back to the exuberant times of first love, when his mere presence practically made a new human being. To protect herself from the dehumanising stare of all white people and a life devoid of affection, he turns to her. His sexual assault of Pecola represents a warped version of his love for her, as her stillborn child serves as a symbol of both her personal violation and the limited life she has been forced to lead.

The most important feature of novel is victimisation of Pecola by Cholly. The worst thing he does is molestation his own daughter. His rape of her is shown in a highly weird scene. Without realising what he is doing, he rapes her. He rapes her "tenderly," but afterward, he stops being sensitive. He experiences both tenderness and hatred. This ambiguity is what distinguishes his personality.

It is intriguing to learn why Cholly acts in this way. This question stems from his early years. There are at least three males who treat him poorly. Initially, his father, who leaves his mother behind after she becomes pregnant. After his aunt passes away, he goes to see him, but his father is more interested in gambling than in chatting to him. After that, Darlene had sex with the two white men who caught him. His subsequent life is defined by these folks. Growing up, he becomes a man who avoids accountability. He uses women as a means of expressing his displeasure and need for sex. He lets Pauline and Darlene know how frustrated he is.

There are further incidents of black men victimising women. One example is the group of black boys that surround Pecola and make fun of her for seeing her father in the nude. Frieda and Claudia have black male torturers of their own. Tenant Mr. Henry tries to assault Frieda sexually. Mr. MacTeer, their father, never shows them much affection. Consequently, in the novel, black women are consistently mistreated by their male counterparts.

It is shocking that black women do not form a coherent group despite facing most of their issues from three groups: white men, black men, and white women. Rather, they proceed to mistreat one another. Perhaps self-hatred brought on by white

hegemony is the cause of black people's propensity to harass fellow black people. Black folks have become so self-hatred because of the manner that white standards have tainted their minds.

Pecola takes comfort in the companionship of the three prostitutes, Frieda, and Claudia. She feels uncomfortable with black women anywhere else. The new black student at their school, Maureen, follows them around, buys Pecola some ice cream, and then taunts the three of them before running off. Geraldine is a woman who, although she keeps her family happy, does not love them or like having sex. She is still emotionally empty, incapable of loving or caring about anything but her cat. She warns her son not to go around "niggers" since she despises them. She made the difference that although niggers were noisy and untidy, coloured people were tidy and reserved.

Geraldine calls Pecola a disgusting little black bitch and kicks her out of the house because she sees her as a threat to her home. Not even her mother treats Pauline pleasantly. She views her two children as a cross that she must bear. She values the daughter of her white mistress more than her own. In a similar vein, Mrs. MacTeer, mother of Frieda and Claudia, mistreats her children. Additionally, their home is devoid of love. Pecola receives criticism and annoyance from Mrs. MacTeer when she consumes two quarts of milk at her place.

Pecola is subjected to sexual as well as racial oppression throughout the novel. Her storefront home is a metaphor of the funk, ugliness, violence, and poverty associated with her condition. Due to the mother's internalisation of the idealised image of the desirable woman as lovely, well-groomed, and cuddly, Pauline rejects her own daughter Pecola, who is unable to meet this standard due to her poverty and race.

Morrison's attention on racism stems from her belief that racism was the main barrier facing African Americans in America at the beginning of her career. The devastating impacts of prejudice on the black population are depicted in *The Bluest Eye*. The tale illustrates how a community can be privileged without contributing anything good, and how innocent individuals can be marginalised without any fault of their own.

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