

Racial Discrimination: A study on Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*

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Abstract:

Racism one way or other affected that everyday life of the common people. It plays a pivotal role in employment, education, social and economic grade of an individual. This paper tries to explore the theme of racial discrimination in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*. *The Bluest Eye* also portrays problems such as child molestation. In his work the major characters experience discrimination from both black and white. Toni Morrison says that interaction of Claudia, Frieda, Pecola and Maureen turns into a racial issue of grades of blackness. Thus in *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison gives the child notion of the effects of racism.

Keywords: racism, black and white people, child abuse.

Racism is a specific form of domination arises from prejudice of a group of people based on some innate characters, like to skin color which makes them lesser to their oppressors. Yet the idea of race and racism and modern inventions are arose and became part of the society in the background of the African slave trade only at the drawn of capitalism during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Racism is also another issue which has been strongly disparate by these novelists. Their novels show how even Black People become racist and do not differ with it. In *The Bluest Eye* some major characters experience discrimination from both Black and Whites. Racism is a factor that challenges them in achieving contract with the surrounding world. In Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, for being black.

Racism as reflected in Toni Morrison's novels deals with the suffering on African American in the United States. The African American literature Portuguese the suffering f its characters based upon their disposition, their deeds and their intellect. For example, it is peoples sufferings and self-hatred that lead to her mental illness in Morrison's *The Bluest*

Eye. Toni Morrison worked as an editor for Random House during the year 1960-70. During that residence she popularized Black Literature and the Black authors and edited books of writers like Toni Morrison evolved as one of the most important African American writers of the twentieth century's.

The *Bluest Eye* was her first novel published in 1970 *The Bluest Eye* also boldly portrays problems such a child molestation and racism. Racism is a factor that challenges them in achieving agreement with the surrounding world. In Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, Pecola is insulted throughout the novel for being black. For example, her fellow Black boys call her "Black e mo Black e mo Ya daddy sleeps necked"(50) which is a great racist abuse. So, a light skin facial appearance is liked by Pecola as it is considered as a basic equality of physical attractiveness. In *The Bluest Eye* of Toni Morrison the tragic girl Pecola believes that if her eyes were blue she would be attractive. Virtuous, and be loved by everyone roughly her, Friends would play with her, teachers would treat her better and even her parents might stop their invariable fights because, in her heart of hearts, no one would want to... do bad things in front of those pretty eyes" (34). The issues of racism have been prevalent even in the other contemporary American children young adults and are regularly seen in the literatures. The difficulties of the marginalized persons who have suffered from it seen in the novel of Toni Morrison Pecola Breedlove is such an individual who is socially and sensitively planned to perceive herself as being 'lower' and often wished to look, more like the foremost group. Sadly the female character equates 'black' with inferiority and 'white' with beauty and superiority. The effects of racism, on the marginalized female characters the role of patriarchal ideology, intersexuality and the way to claim their individuality are in *The Bluest Eye*.

In *The Bluest Eye*, Toni Morrison indicates how the careless acceptance of the dominant group's values can be unfavorable for African Americans. The neighborhood boys in *The Bluest Eye*, rebuke Pecola Breedlove for the darkness of her skin, calling her a Black e mo. In describing this episode, Claudia the narrator remarks that," It was their contempt for their own blackness that gave the first insults its teeth" (50). Barbara Christian, the author of the acclaimed book *Black Women Novelists. The Development of a tradition, 1892-1976*, demonstrates how these ideas can invert the natural order of an entire culture, creating a group of people who feel an awful contempt for the color of their own skin and by implication, their own culture" In *The Bluest Eye* Toni Morrison says that victims of racism generally feel lesser to whites, and often wish they were White or looked Whiter. Pecola

Breedlove frequently looks for the consent of other and seeks love from them. She asks Claudia how do you get somebody to love you (23). As Pecola African American support the cruel efforts of the dominant culture by burying their self-identities and follow an harmful part of self-hatred by supporting a false standard of beauty. The girl equates beauty with happiness, and it is a difficult to find fault with this young girl for misperception, because both black and white communities support the same idea. Racism may also result in inter-racial racism, which refers to discrimination within the Black Community by those of lighter colored skins against those with darker skin and more African features. Claudia's dislike towards light color skinned Maureen peel is apparent in *The Bluest Eye*,

We were lesser ,Nicer, brighter but still lesser, Dolls were could destroy, but we could not destroy the honey voices of parents and aunts, the obedience in the eyes of our peers, the slippery light in the eyes of our teachers when they encountered the Maureen peals of the world.(57)

These multiple forms of racism with which African Americans went through were first described in the souls of Black Folk (1903), by W.E.B Dubois as double consciousness or double vision. This is the awareness of belonging to two conflicting cultures: the African roots and which was transformed by its own unique history on American soil, and the European culture imposed on them by white American. For many Black Americans this means having one cultural self at home and another cultural self in white conquered public space, such as the agency and the school. A universal characteristic of Morrison and other African American novelists has been their depiction of both male and female protagonists, either failing or succeeding on their difficult journey to selfhood.

In the case of Claudia from *The Bluest Eye* she resists and protests against the ideas of western beauty Pecola is innocent but tragic. There is no break or lifetime for Pecola. She is sexually, abused by her father, shunned by her mother, ignored by her peers, unacknowledged by her teachers, simply victimized by both white and Black communities. She is socially programmed to believe that she is ugly and worthless, because believe that she is and she does not symbolize western cultures idea of beauty. She is also an easy victim, responding with tears rather than swearing at people who insult her like Claudia. She has also engrossed the values of the dominant culture present in all the media in studying Pecola from a psychological point of view, one can say that she is trapped in Showalter's first phase

which is “imitation tradition and internalization of its standards of art and its views on social roles” (1108)

In *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison also demonstrates the forces in the white society that eat away at Pecola self-worth her encounter with Mr. Yacobowski, a fifty-two-year-old white immigrant store keeper in her town, Although Pecola is a playing customer, Mr. Yacobowski looks at her as a nonexistent human and does not want to touch her hand to take the money. Pecola leaves the perceiving herself as ugly and meaningless as a wed keeping through a crack in her sidewalk she has no one to care for her or lean on. Claudia’s reflection at the end of the book on the incapability of some seeds to grow and bear fruit in the self of her community really suggests how hostile both black and white communities have been Howard Pecola Breedlove when the society fails to nature flowers like Pecola Breedlove when sustenance of this soul is denied and the fruit of self love is never realized. In that situation, Pecola Breedlove is driven to insanity and her crucial objective is the garbage heaps on the outskirts of town. In *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison also gives a classic mid twentieth century typecast of a perfect, happy white’s family home that neatly contains two parents.

Morrison also introduces the reader to Maureen Peal in *The Bluest Eye* as a, “A high yellow dream child with long brown hair...” (47). Claudia compares this new arrival with her local, rich white girls purely on the basis of her appearance and dress, the other children also basically accept the difference: Black boys didn’t trip her.... white boys didn’t suck their teeth when she was assigned to be their work partner; black girls stepped aside...” (48). Thus Morrison demolishes the conservative ideas of color prejudice by locating Maureen turns into racial issue of grades of blackness.

The childhood experience in facing racism is relatively more abolishing because of their inability to reevaluate the same in an adult way. The children seek slave from motherhood family. In *The Bluest Eye*, girls like Claudia and Frieda escape to some degree from this racist culture due to the lack of support but girls like Pecola succumb to the racist domination due to the lack of support from her failed black family and her mother herself is a victim of racism, female oppression and general racism. In *The Bluest Eye*, Cholly Breedlove who faces a complex sexually and racially degrading experience in his childhood develops a bad attitude towards ‘love, sex, hate and physical aggression’ Thus in *The Bluest Eye* gives the child notion of the effects of racism.

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