

RESEARCH ARTICLE



**VICTIMS AMONG VICTIMIZED AND SELF -HATRED TOWARDS THE SAME PEOPLE  
ULTIMATELY LEADS TO RACE CONSCIOUSNESS IN TONI MORRISON'S NOVEL –  
THE BLUEST EYE**

**ANDE BALASOWRI**

Lecturer in English

Hindu College, Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, India



Article Info:

Article Received:20/01/2014

Revised on:21/02/2014

Accepted on :31/3/2014

**ABSTRACT**

Toni Morrison's Novel "The Bluest Eye" is about the life of the Breedlove family who live in Lorain Ohio in the early 1940's. The central character is Pecola an eleven year old black girl is dealing with self hatred. She encounters racism not just from white people but mostly from her own people. Her blackness causes her inferiority complex. Her skin makes her uglier. Her life is distorted by the white people and by her parents and by her own race. The blacks are victims. But Pecola is victimized by the same Black people. Her death brings race consciousness and unity at the end of the novel.

"In Black Skin and white mask Frantz Fanon critiques the psychological condition of Black people living in a postcolonial nation and emphasizes the importance of emancipating their colonized mind as a condition of being truly independent post colonial subjects. He vividly says that how easy it is to claim humanity and self autonomy but how difficult it is to be spiritually decolonized. The three hundred year old history of black people brought to the United States during the era of slavery has produced a psychological oppression within the Black culture. The subjugation that some black people experience because of these physical appearances promotes an adoration of everything associated with white, Eurocentric standards while encouraging disgust towards everything connected with Black Identity and Thought. Similar to other studies of Black Consciousness and Identity there are some incidents that highlight an awareness of how television, movies and lack of communal support can affect the lives of black people.

Toni Morrison is one of the Afro-American novelists who has a deep insight into the racial

problems, various discriminations and problems confronted by Blacks since their existence. There are some writers who promulgated the hardships faced by the Afro-American community.

Toni Morrison's novel the Bluest Eye is about the life of the Breedlove family who live in Lorain, Ohio in the early 1940's The family consists of the father Cholly, the mother Pauline, the son Sammy and the daughter Pecola. Pecola is the central figure, an eleven year old girl who is dealing with self hatred. Every day she encounters racism, not just from white people, but mostly from her own race. In their eyes she is much too dark, the darkness of her skin's inferiority complex, and according to every one else, her skin makes her even uglier. Pecola thinks that she can overcome the battle of self-hatred by having Blue eyes, symbol of Eurocentric beauty. Pecola wants the Bluest Eyes that anyone has even seen because Pecola believes this will make her beautiful. In the novel the bluest eye, portrays a social situation so distorted by the myth of whiteness that it produces in Pecola an unorthodox. Obsession of blue-eyed beauty named Shirley Temple. The obsession is so

intense that Pecola creates her own imaginative world and creates a self contained reality that can not be penetrated even by rape or incest. In *Blue Eye*, there is an internalised racism that damage the centres character - Pecola.

Pecola is abused by almost everyone in the novel. A black girl suffers two traumatic rapes. Her experiences, however are not typical of all black girls who also have to grow up in a hostile society. Black women encounter internal racism from Black Men, and from white society. She has very few friends. She is ridiculed by most of the other children and insulted and psychologically tormented by Black school boys because of her physical appearance and dark skin and coarse features. No boy plays with her except Claudia and Frieda. There are so many incidents that reflect the societal inhuman treatment towards Black people in American society. Pecola is raped by her drunken father and self deceived. She is in her imagination that God has miraculously given her Blue Eyes that she aspired for.

She loses her baby and in order to cope up with Eurocentric beauty world, she loses her sanity. Whiteness is superior in the novel that damages the black people mentally and physically. Pauline is the mother of Pecola, having learned to hate the blacks of their own bodies, shows her hatred on her own daughter Pecola. This indicates hatred towards the same people. Geraldine curses Pecola's blackness, because Pecola is ugly.

In one incident, Claudia a friend of Pecola, attacks a group of boys harassing Pecola. Through the character of Pecola, Toni Morrison shows the negative effects of blacks not accepting and believing in their own physical attractiveness. Pecola the protagonist suffers the abuse of her mother, father and classmates. This indicates the hatred towards the same people. They all victims of white hegemony.

Pecola is a fragile child when the novel begins, by the end of the novel, she is destroyed by violence. There are two emotional things in her life. She does not have the capacity to accept her blackness. She is forced to watch the brutal fights of her parents. Because of which, she alienates from the physical world and becomes mad. The fantasy world is the only security against the pain of her life. At the end of the novel, she mistakenly believes that her wish has been granted but only at the cost of her sanity.

Pecola is the symbol of the black community's self-hatred and belief in its own ugliness. Geraldine, including her mother, father show their evil treatment towards Pecola. They have shown hatred towards this girl. Pecola is the scapegoat for the entire black community.

Pecola's inability and ugliness has taught the black community feel beautiful, her suffering has made them feel comparatively lucky and her deprived condition has provided them the opportunity for speaking. Her aimless wandering at the edge of the town haunts the black community. Her desolate condition reminding them of the ugliness and hatred that they have tried to show on this black girl. Black people are discriminated by whites. But black women are victimized by white people and by Black men also. Pecola's suffering reminds the human cruelty. Pecola's suffering reflect the sufferings of Black community in United States. She is an emblem of human suffering in black community. Geraldine and Mrs. Breedlove are under the clutches of white people. They behave like white people and give impressions that they associated with whites society.

Geraldine is a middle class black woman cares for physical appearances of herself and her family. When Pecola visits her house she shows her disgust and tells her to get out of her house. This indicates self hatred. Pauline is also a maternal victim. Her story gives shape to Pecola's tragedy.

Intra-racial prejudices bring damage to Pecola's life. She is totally destroyed at the hands of her abusive, negligent parents. She is alienated and victimized. The white standards of beauty denies Pecola a positive sense of self worth. She gets defeated from within. The poignancy Pecola's Victimization springs up not only from racism and inter-racial conflict but also from the intra-racial conflicts related colour, firmly rooted in white racist - myths. The multiple forces of oppression cripple the minds of the blacks Pecola suffers not only because of her race but also because of her gender. She suffers both as a black and female.

#### REFERENCES

- Burke, William M "Beauty and Evolution" International Journal of Humanities and Peace 19.1. (2003)
- Byerman, Keith. "W.E.B. Du Bois and the Construction of Whiteness" *The Soul of Black Folk* one hundred years Later. Ed. Donald

- Hubbard Columbia MO University of Missouri  
press, 2003. 161-171
- Dubois, W.E.B. *The Souls of Black Folk*. Chicago A.C.  
Mc Clurg & Co. 1903
- Eagleton, T. *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* Oxford, UK  
Oxford University press 1990
- Gant LIZ, "The Bluest Eye" in *Black world* 20 (1971)
- Grewal Gurleen "Laundering the Head of White  
Wash: Mimicry and Resistance in the Bluest  
Eye" *Approaches to Teachign the Novels of  
Toni Morrison* Ed Nellie Mckay and Kathryn  
Earle. New York MLA 1997
- Kuezn, Jane. "The Bluest Eye Notes on History,  
Community and "Black Female subjectivity".  
*"African American Review* 27.3 (1993).