

The Black and White Reality of the Modern Era: Looking into the Good and the Bad in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*

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Abstract:

This article describes the good and the bad part of the novel *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison as well as the black and white reality of the modern era. We all belong to the “modern era” with modern perspective and would want to live the life differently with all the modern values like equality, ethics, moral, truth, social justice, fairness, honest, etc. Despite of all these, there are still many people in these world who don't want to accept these modern values. They still need to open their mind. There is nothing right or wrong it's all about perspectives. They do not want to treat everyone equally without judging them based on their religion, skin color, body shape. We all are humans, each individual deserves same kind of respect and acceptance irrespective of any religion, body shape or skin color. This novel is all about young black girl who desires for the bluest eye in order to get the respect from the society. It contains all information about her struggles throughout her entire life. There is no one's control over skin color, it's something which is heredity and natural. It's a high time that we start looking into good and bad of all these modern values by accepting black and white reality of today's world.

Keywords —Bluest Eye, ToniMorrison, BlackandWhite, Beauty, Depression, Reality, Feminism

I. INTRODUCTION

Background of Study-*The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison is a novella about a young black girl that seeks blue eyes in order to gain respect and love in this materialistic society. All the characters are struggling in their life to gain love. People of color are given no importance and treated as animals and enslaved by Americans. White skin and blue eyes are the ideal definition of beauty and all the other people who lack these features are called ugly. Major themes of this novel are innocence, love, family, sex, race, appearances, society and class, women and femininity. Toni Morrison had beautifully shown all these themes and left a mark of her magnificent work.

Toni Morrison was a strong and independent woman; she was against racism and exploitation of the black community, through this novel she showed Pecola's struggle to find blue eyes that she desired from the very next moment she saw Shirley Temple with blue eyes.

II. DISCUSSION

Literature Review:

1. Dana Paramita, Faculty of Humanities Diponegoro University: Nevertheless, black people sometimes change their standards when confronted with the white race. In fact, standards of white beauty cause distress for black women. When a woman cannot meet the applicable standards of beauty in society, she feels a sense of insecurity, loneliness, and low self-esteem.

This is what happened to Pecola, the main character in the novel who, feels like the ugliest person alive due to not having the white beauty standard and ard.

2. Cynthia Davis' *Self, Society and Myth in Toni Morrison's Fiction* states that the crime of the racist society is stealing away the Black reality and substituting it with dead, external objects as a means to achieve self-definition, thus denying the Black people the freedom to define their self.

Objectives: Morrison's text *The Bluest Eye* portrays reality of the society, how society expects you to be. White is considered as ideal definition of beauty and black ones are degraded, because of beauty definition people start hating themselves which is harmful for their own self and personality. People need to understand this complexion isn't beauty, beauty is the confidence you take with yourself, the way you treat people, the personality nature is beauty, self-love. White is given superiority and black is inferiority. We have also seen how female are physically abused and molested. By research paper I want to prove that complexion is not as defined beauty you should love yourself and every soul is beautiful.

Every human being deserves love respect no one is perfect. No woman should be abused, disrespected.

Breedlove family and Neighbors: Father is an alcoholic and her mother is distant, there is no love or respect among them and they usually beat each other and argues a lot. Their parenting skills are questionable and Pecola's father burned their family house down which resulted in Pecola's transfer to a foster home that belongs to the Mactees in Lorain, Ohio.

Neighbors- They have two girls, nine-year-old Claudia Macteer and ten-year-old Frieda Macteer. It was the time of the Great Depression, and it was really difficult for The Mactees to meet ends, they had to work really hard to earn a living and survive at that time.

The Mactees were humble and loving, they welcomed two new members in their home, Pecola and Henry. Pecola was a little girl who belonged to

a brutal family and Henry was an unmarried man. Henry was kind and cheerful, he easily settled with the two girls and entertained them with magic tricks.

The Abuse: Every character has been abused in some way. Characters are abused in physical, emotional, mental and social. We have seen how Pecola's family use to abuse each other, how Cholly got humiliated by whites during his love life time, Pauline was also got abused by his husband, Pecola got raped by his father and many people abused her. Even we saw in MacTeer family Frieda was molested by Henry.

Society abuses by their comments which puts person depressed and makes one individual feel hated for themselves. All the characters in the play are treated unfairly and were forced to believe that they are ugly and they do not deserve any love, affection, respect or rights. They were treated like animals and were given no respectful place in the society. None of them got any love, their bad life experience ruined their innocence and mind.

The Abandoned: Cholly Breedlove was abandoned by his mother when he was 4 days old on a train track, her great aunt Jimmy found him and took him into shelter, he was raised by her, she really loved her and named him Charles.

Pecola's parent's history was the major reason behind her having self-doubt and not knowing self-love. Pecola and her parents had to go through the same struggle to find love and respect. They all had their own fears which they could never overcome and ended up being the worst version of themselves.

Pecola learns the truth about her pregnancy and wants to carry the child and but nobody supported her and wanted her to get an abortion, except Claudia and Frieda as they want her to keep the baby. They spent all their saving and planted marigold seed.

The Desire to Have Blue Eye: Pecola had no love for her own self and according to her she's ugly and deserves no attention or love as only girls with white skin tone and blonde hair deserves love. She wants to gain a place in the society and be

respected, she wants people to like her not treat her like an untouchable, and in order to get all this she need blue eyes. Blue eyes are her only medium to get everything she wants in the materialistic society. She wants to end her suffering; her life struggles make her to go insane in an exchange of pursuing blue eyes. The bluest eye takes place during The Great Depression when it was even difficult to meet ends, people had no jobs, rich and poor both came to the same level and had nothing, everything was destroyed and people were dying due to lack of food and water. There was nothing they could do about it except sitting quietly. While it was difficult to get food to eat, African Americans also had to fight for rights, identity and equality. Most of the problems were faced by the people with the black skin color. Pecola once met Soaphead when she visited him, he is an adviser, reader and interpreter of dreams. Pecola expected from him to grant her blue eyes, but he knew it couldn't happen, so instead of telling her the truth, he manipulated her to feed a poisoned meat to his owner's dog. He said that if dog reacts after eating the meat, she will get blue eyes. Pecola feeds the meat to the dog and it kills it and made Pecola believe that his wish has been granted to her.

Soap head is insane and believes that the God is jealous of his smartness. After killing the dog, he writes a letter to the God tell him about all his deeds and how use to molest little girls for exchange of money and candy. He also writes about her ex-wife and that he did not touch Pecola just manipulated her in getting his work done and making her believe that she has blue eyes.

III. CONCLUSIONS

In this novel, we learned about the character's journey to find their own identity. We also learned about their social, political, economic and psychological conditions. The story takes place during The Great Depression, which makes it pretty clear that they had economic problems as the economy was falling apart and there was nothing left to save, the struggle was for all classes, they all suffered together but the black community suffered the most as they were put last, they were treated like animals and no importance was given to their

lives, nobody bothered to even care about them. They were getting minimal wages and it was impossible to meet ends with those wages; they already had enough problems of slavery and racism and the great depression just got added to their problems. They had their own psychological problems which was created by the society only.

Through Pecola's story, we also learn about the culture of the 1940's, we learn about the society and the social norms. The value of women and the patriarchal society is Clearly shown. The struggle and exploitation faced by all the characters are quite real and I was really difficult to be an African American, and it is even more difficult to be a woman. All the characters are being exploited and disrespected at a point in their life and that moment just ruined them all snatched away their emotions of love and care.

Toni had a personal attachment with this novel and as it seems it was her real-life story and she experienced it all, most of the incidents have a lot of similarities with her life which makes us wonder, whether it's a fiction or a real -life story.

We all belong to the "modern era" with modern perspective and would want to live the life differently with all the modern values like equality, ethics, moral, truth, social justice, fairness, honest, etc. Modern values include people's right to live together in a society that accepts everyone for who they are, you are free to put your own perspective in front of anyone and where you are free to be who you are without hurting physically or mentally to someone else.

These modern values also include many things like,

- Freedom of expressing
- Availability of education for everyone
- Accepting cultures, lifestyles, and people
- Being authentic
- Standing up for your values
- Equal accessibility of resources
- Everyone having the right to a safe and secure life
- Modern values also include innovation, creativity and new thinking

Current generation of today's era, is adapting and accepting each culture. World is changing, there are

many initiate which are leading us towards equality. It's important that each individual respect another one irrespective of gender, culture, skin color, or life values, etc. I feel happy by seeing time has changed a lot.

Despite of all these, there are still many people in these world who don't want to accept these modern values. They still need to open their mind. There is nothing right or wrong it's all about perspectives. It's a high time that we start looking into good and bad of all these modern values by accepting black and white reality of today's world.

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