

**THE OPPRESSORS' TAINTED SEXUALITY TO EXEMPLIFY THE
OPPRESSION IN THE SOCIETY: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO
THE BLUEST EYE BY TONI MORRISON**

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“In order to be as free as I possibly can, in my own imagination, I can't take positions that are closed. Everything I've ever done, in the writing world, has been to expand articulation, rather than to close it, to open doors, sometimes, not even closing the book - - leaving the endings open for reinterpretation, revisitation, a little ambiguity.”

—Toni Morrison 1998.

Toni Morrison is one of the most distinguished writers of the twentieth and twenty first centuries. Morrison has written nine novels, as well as the Pulitzer Prize-winning work *Beloved* and the National Book Critics Circle Award-winning *Song of Solomon*. She won the exalted Nobel Prize in Literature in 1993, and the Nobel Foundation illustrious her as a writer “who, in novels characterized by visionary force and poetic import, gives life to an essential aspect of American reality” (“Toni Morrison”). Some engrave for a lifetime and by no means bring about the mastery of language and intricacy of characters as fashioned by Toni Morrison.

Morrison is more than an inexhaustible instigator; she is a fictitious detractor and professor of Literature and Composition. Toni Morrison’s luminous assortment of fiction provides a close look into African American communities. As part of her looking at of human relations, Morrison examines the complexities of motherhood and proxy motherhood right through her works. In scrupulous, *Beloved*, *The Bluest Eye*, *Sula*, and *Song of Solomon* exaggerate the lives of natal mothers and how surrogate mother figures help to maintain social stability in the African American “village,” where community members assist in raising children—by compulsion or by choice. Community members prefer to tag along the examples set by others by tolerant the call to duty or the compulsion to mother the motherless or to strengthen the mothering of another.

Her first novel, *The Bluest Eye* (1970), is crafted in a way that draws the spectators into the story and makes them a part of the society that surrounds the two central characters, Pecola Breedlove and Claudia Mac Teer. By alluring the viewers into the story, Morrison intends to aggravate self-interrogation and eventually, alteration in the real world.

Community people of African lineage have long had to stride in to aid in the raising of children or captivating care of family matters and have thus helped outline what has been called the “village.” The community sometimes forms the village when it observes the dearth of one or both natal parents, notices a paucity in a child’s biological parenting, develops a yearning to improve the biological parenting, or an amalgamation of these reasons.

African Americans sustain some African traditions for the reason that of their expediency and because those traditions work as a substantial association to the past. Toni Morrison’s arrangement of women as biological and proxy mothers and the relationships those mothers have to their children. These mother-child relationships take consignment in African American “villages” and each chapter displays the affiliation between the community (village) and the biological and surrogate mothers. *The Bluest Eye* shows downbeat surrogacy and *Sula* shows the positives and negatives of biological and surrogate motherhood. Considered in concert, the novels work to form a village and each of the four novels is a crucial community member. Communally, the novels show the strengths and weaknesses of community living. Toni Morrison creates an instance of the African American village and the power of maternal sway in a child’s life.

African Americans discover from accounts of slavery that families who may have survived the Middle Passage without severance were later estranged through slave sales and relocations once they reached America. The consequent nonexistence of African American males resulted from men working long hours away from home, unwed parents, essence exploitation, or any mishmash of reasons. Because men were repeatedly missing, women stepped up to take care of the children in the community. Biological and surrogate mothers relied on their own instincts and the sustain of the village in order to obtain concern of their children.

The Bluest Eye is Morrison’s first novel published in 1970. In the novel, Morrison challenges Western standards of beauty and demonstrates that the notion of beauty is collectively constructed. Morrison also recognizes that if whiteness is worn as a typical of beauty or anything else, then the value of blackness is diminished and this novel works to sabotage that inclination. In representing pride in being black, this writer does not plainly represent positive images of blackness. Morrison’s fictive black people react in a different way to Western standards of beauty. Morrison speaks to the concern of race in fictitious criticism in her critical work *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*:

A criticism that needs to insist that literature is not only “universal” but also “race-free” risks lobotomizing that literature, and diminishes both the art and the artist. I am vulnerable to inference here that my inquiry has vested interests; that is because I am an African American and a writer I stand to benefit in ways not limited to intellectual fulfillment from this line of questioning. I will have to risk the accusation because the point is too important: for both black and white American writers, in a wholly racialized society, there is no escape from racially inflected language, and the work writers do to unhobble the imagination from the demands of that language is complicated, interesting, and definitive (12-13).

Morrison does not mean that themes within a novel cannot be “universal” but is remarking that race plays a foremost role in the edifice of literary. In *The Bluest Eye*, for example, Morrison presents the widespread premise of seeking incredible, in Pecola’s case blue eyes, to better your eminence of life. However, Pecola’s race plays a foremost factor in her quest. She cannot acquire her desire because she cannot alter her eye color. Pecola’s yearning is truly to

change her race. She wants to be white in order to gain love and reception from society. Removing race from the reading of the text is basically removing the means of the plot. Morrison writes both her criticism and her fiction with a intended rationale.

Her purpose is to unite and allow both the African American community and the American community as a whole by infuriating self-interrogation and indulgent of collective accountability. *The Bluest Eye* tells the story of an eleven year old black girl, Pecola Breedlove, who wants to have blue eyes, because she sees herself, and is regarded by most of the characters in the novel, as ugly. The standard of beauty that her peers pledge to is represented by the white child actress, Shirley Temple, who has the preferred blue eyes. The novel starts with the portrayal of an ideal white family but in the near-parodic way of a school reading briefing, where we congregate Dick and Jane and their attractive parents living in a nice and contented house with a lovely dog and a cat.

Finally, having been treated very badly by most people contiguous her, Pecola yearns to have blue eyes in the hope that people will love her. However, as Pecola does not have blue eyes, these social symbols of white beauty, she cannot come anywhere near to the ideal of white beauty. In other words, white women may lack implausible in terms of the gendered body, but due to their white privilege, they are not radicalized in the same way. African American women have a history of being sexually demoralized – in the days of slavery, as well as in their own ensuing communities. Sexual nuisance and abuse are still a problem, and by addressing this issue, Morrison aims, in *The Bluest Eye* (1970), to shed light on what has been and still is a outlawed in the African American society. As she herself puts it in her Afterword:

“[. . .]This is a terrible story about things one would rather not know anything about.” (*The Bluest Eye*, 213)

The Bluest Eye is the story of two sisters, and predominantly of Pecola who thinks that if she only had blue eyes, people would be pleasant to her. The story deals with the effects of low self-esteem, violence, drinking, deficiency, exploitation, incest, pedophilia and ignominy, which can all be allied, in one way or another, to repression. The blacks are subjugated by the white society, the children endure diverse kinds of oppression and lack of love from their parents, and in twist the children tyrannize one another. The story of the three girls illustrates how children who live in an atmosphere of overthrow are exaggerated and discernible for life. The excessive and most damaging exercise of power in this community, however, is predominantly carried out by men who express their influence through their sexuality, and often in the most degrading manner – the victims being women and children.

The disillusioned sexuality that is dealt with here may be seen as an appearance of the abuse of power, and this mortifying and domineering sexuality is what in the end ruins the life of Pecola. When the novel reveals the stories after broken childhoods, and shows that the sins of the fathers – and mothers – will bother their children, it attempts to respond *why* by clearing up *how*. In *The Bluest Eye* Morrison uses the oppressors' tainted sexuality to exemplify the oppression in the society on a number of different levels, and she portrays the oppressed as well as the oppressors. She also reveals how the characters who are subjected to oppression often end up as oppressors themselves. The characters' sexuality thus serves as a indication of the setting that the characters have been subjected to.

The Bluest Eye (1970) is Morrison's first novel. It announced her influx in literary arena, though it did not receive a positive response at the hands of few critics. For some, it is an expression of emergent vision of the world. *The Bluest Eye* honestly examines the entire process of overthrow and suppression of the black at the hands of the white. *The Bluest Eye* follows the

edifice of a Black folk discourse as described by Hatch. Morrison presents her narrative as a comparison between the Mac Teer family and the Breedlove family, in particular, the way in which the community's interactions between these two families affects the lives of their young daughters, Pecola Breedlove and Claudia and Frieda Mac Teer. Morrison shows how the community's treatment of these girls is based on their parents' station in the social pecking order of the community. The more cherished and established the parents are, the more advantages and support the girls receive from their neighbors.

Claudia Mac Teer, the first person raconteur of *The Bluest Eye*, functions as the "Active tradition bearer" whose storytelling has the power to shape the consciousness of the community (Hatch. 15). *The Bluest Eye* is a "narrative in the best tradition of an African American interactive, communal event" (Hatch. 15). Claudia states at the commencement of the novel, "There is really nothing more to say-except why. But since the why is difficult to handle, one must take refuge in the how" (*The Bluest Eye* 6).

In *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison writes,

"Knowing that there was such a thing as outdoors bred in us a hunger for property, for ownership. The firm possession of a yard, a porch, a grape arbor. Propertied black people spent all their energies, all their love, on their nests." (Hatch. 18).

Morrison forces the convention to examine their own lives by presenting this story as both a proclamation of actuality and as a call to action using the traditional style of black folk sermons. Through the narrative, Morrison presents the pessimistic example of the Breedlove family and shows through the dissimilarity to the Mac Teer family that if the community rallies in concert to help those neighbors in need, they can formulate a real difference in society. Little girls like Pecola live in our communities. Morrison is asking the questions: Will you stand aside, bring about false standards of beauty, and allow this methodical racism to annihilate the lives of families in our community, or will you be practical in helping create a solution? Do you watch young girls suffer at the hands of their parents or do you be transformed into complicated in the family's life? Morrison comments in a subsequently incorporated in *The Bluest Eye* unconfined in the 1994 Plum Edition:

I did not want to dehumanize the characters that trashed Pecola a contributed to her collapse. One problem was centering: the weight of the novel's inquiry on so delicate and vulnerable a character could smash her and lead readers into the comfort of pitying her rather than into an interrogation of themselves for the smashing. My solution-break the Narrative into parts that had to be reassembled by the reader-seemed to me a good idea, the execution of which does not satisfy me now. Besides, it didn't work: many readers remain touched but not moved (Li .18).

The Bluest Eye is the retort of some of Morrison's listeners. However, others feel the impact of the story and use it as a way of creating change in the world. Claudia ends the book by saying,

"This soil is bad for certain kinds of flowers. Certain kinds of seed it will not nurture, certain fruit it will not bear, and when the land kills of its own volition, we acquiesce and say the victim had no right to live....We were wrong, of course, but it doesn't matter. It's too late" (*The Bluest Eye* 206).

The "soil" is the neighborhood and all the standards it has acknowledged as its own, white beauty ideals, ownership of property, and class systems that establish a member's importance. The "flowers" are the people living in the community. Girls like Pecola are not nurtured, expectant to thrive. They are not able to cultivate and flourish in the community because the "soil" is toxic. Apart from revealing the predicament of the Negroes in the USA, the novel also sets out to look at the way in which some Afro-Americans browbeaten the members of their own race under the collision of ethnic supremacy. The novel also unfolds how a few individuals unswerving their anger and aggravation at others who are below them in status and power because they cannot raise their voice aligned with their exploiters who are in any case finer to them.

As far as the white inflicting violence on the black is alarmed, there are copious instances of it in the novel. The white, who in the 1940s, were in majority and shaped the foremost culture, demoralized the Afro-Americans with their words and deeds. The black who were expelled from the main stream felt almost castrated at the nastiness of the masters. They possibly will not do anything but congregate the terms with the wishes of the white.

This complete procedure of defeat of the black by the white leaves the black sensitively crippled. This makes them think whether they survive in this world as human beings or not. They are persistently reminded of their eccentricity. In order to sustain their ascendancy, the white, after the ruin of slavery, propagated their own stereotypes regarding beauty. One who qualifies the test as prearranged by the masters is deemed attractive, and one who fails is measured ugly. In this way, the white hurt or harm their black objects in a delicate psychosomatic mode.

Other than the ethnic violence, the novel also contains instances of intra racial violence where the members of one community impose tortures on the members of their own community. In the novel, *The Bluest Eye*, readers locate the black directing violence on other blacks. It seems astounding that in a the social order where the Negroes are previously exploited by the prevailing culture, as an alternative of portion each other, the Africans are seen detrimental and soreness their own brethren.

However an additional consequence of violence, as offered in the novel, is loss of identity. The white set such high standards of beauty that are not viable to conquer for the black. The Americans and the Europeans are instinctive with the white skin. In a country where the white are in preponderance and where to be white sensitive is well thought-out to be beautiful, it becomes almost next to unfeasible that the black will be measured sooner or later beautiful.

There are many Morrison has also stretched out her viewpoint on the world approximately her by dealing with the premise of violence. In fact, she seems to be portentous that the life does not proffer flowers all the time. There are difficulties and obstacles on the path as well. Now, in America, the Afro-Americans are confronted with the difficulty regarding their identity. The predicament before them is how to define themselves. There are two promising solutions as obtainable in the novel. The first is that of concession oneself absolutely to the notions of the wider culture. People within this approach start considering themselves either as misfits or begin to emulate the ways of the white. Afro-American characters in the novel who believe these standards to be supreme. They judge themselves in next of kin to these standards and as a result, they find themselves hideous. Hence, they lose their own uniqueness.

Last, but not the slightest, the way the writer has dealt with the idea of violence also has its own moral and aesthetic collision. It arouses feelings, such as: pity, compassion, admiration and abhorrence in the hearts of the reader.

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