

SELF-WORTH AND THE EFFECTS OF DOUBLE CONSCIOUSNESS: TONI MORRISON'S *THE BLUEST EYES*

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Abstract

The Bluest Eyes depicts the tragic condition of Blacks in racist America. It examines how the ideologies perpetuated by the dominant groups and adopted by the marginal groups influence the identity of the black people. Due to the colour of their skins, Blacks are always subject to different types of disrespect and insecurity in their society. The intention of this work is to analyze how the concepts of identity and race are portrayed in the novel, and how they relate to issues of white beauty standards, self-loathing and racial pride. Du Bois created a kind of new trend of dealing with African-American culture by inventing the concept known as “double consciousness”, and arguing that these black people were trapped between dual personalities. Meanwhile, the concept of beauty is an example of cultural institution; hence, the standard of beauty is based on the dominant group, so there is the White beauty standard—light skinned, blue eyes, blonde, slim body image—as the hegemonic practice that is consciously alive in the African Americans society involved in the story. Anchoring on the theory of double consciousness proposed by W. E.B. DuBois, the study aims at the idea that the African American must navigate the voyages of life from within a form of “two-ness”, because he is both man, and black. Therefore, the implications are that White beauty standard hegemony has led to the emergence of intra-racial discrimination happening within the African American society as it is reflected in the literary work due to the characters' efforts to seek White's approval. The second is the emergence of the self-loathing upon the characters, and the third is they try to obliterate their heritage. Eventually like Pecola Breedlove, the child protagonist, who yearns for blue eyes, has no recourse except madness.

Keywords: Hegemony, Marginalisation, Double Consciousness, Identity, Self-loathing

Introduction

Toni Morrison, the first black women Nobel Prize and Pulitzer Prize winner, in her first novel, *The Bluest Eyes depicts* the tragic condition of blacks in racist America. Morrison manages to portray the lives of black people, especially their life experiences in societies that still deal with racism issues. *The Bluest Eye* presents a more complicated portrait of racism. The chain reaction resulting from the American culture of the 1930s is what Morrison is trying to exploit. Internalized racism is found in this work and is loosely defined as the internalization by people of racist attitudes towards members of their own ethnic group, including themselves. This includes the belief in ethnic stereotypes relating to their own group. Internalized racist attitudes in individuals, present barriers towards

achievement of racial equality, as somebody with internalized racism may believe that they are inferior to people of other ethnic groups. The 'Black is Beautiful' cultural movement fights the internalized racism experienced by African Americans specifically with regard to beauty standards. Morrison uses Pecola's story to represent the product of this cultural hardship. Insight on her thoughts and actions allow us to see how these social prejudices influence the life of African Americans. Morrison's main goal is to emphasize on the psychological effect racism had on African Americans. Since the origins of African-American culture, white Americans have used and exploited black people, all while appropriating black culture. Kendrick Lamar exemplifies the polarization existing between cultures when he writes, "You hate my people, your plan is to terminate my culture/ You're fuckin' evil I want you to recognize that I'm a proud monkey" (27-28). "My culture" illustrates the disparity existing between blacks and whites, demonstrating a clear "them" and "us" relationship existing in the United States. This divide causes African-Americans to feel used and underappreciated, all the while, their culture is repetitively stolen and adopted by the white community. As the author points out in the afterword of the novel, the political climate of the United States was one of agitation, turmoil and great upheaval in the lives of African Americans when she wrote *The Bluest Eyes*. It was actually the peak of the "Black is Beautiful" movement and Morrison started to think why the movement is needed. In Byers Thomas, "Why although reviled by others, could this beauty not be taken for granted within the community?" (76-84) The characters in the novel show exactly why such a movement was needed. All of the characters value themselves according to their degree of blackness. Some of them even experience self-contempt and self-loathing because they are considered too black. Yet, others like Geraldine live their whole lives keeping up appearances. The thought of separating the lighter skinned blacks consumes Geraldine. All of it stems from letting others determine one's value.

Morrison is using one atypical African-American family to demonstrate what the effects could be of this phenomenon. She has deliberately created an extreme situation to prove a point. All the characters are affected to some degree, but Pecola succumbs to the difficulties she is facing. That was deliberate. Morrison wanted to show how the most unprotected member of society would be affected. In Dalsgaard Katrine, Morrison says, "I focused, therefore, on how something so grotesque as the demonization of an entire race could take root inside the most delicate member of society, a child; the most vulnerable member; a female" (233-48). Blue Eyes are a metaphor that is understood. When Pecola wants blue eyes, she is really saying that she wants to escape her life and her double consciousness. She has defined herself only by her degree of blackness. Pecola and her family regard being dark skinned as synonymous with being ugly. At only eleven years of age the solution Pecola can find regarding her feeling of inferiority and worthlessness is acquiring the symbol of beauty in her community. Blue eyes are regarded as beautiful by all the characters, including mothers and children who unanimously admire Shirley Temple. Pecola is in a desperate situation. She is black and not appreciated by her family. She is subjected to neglect and sexual abuse. In the surrounding community, she is subjected to intra-racism both by grown-up and her peers. All these add up and Pecola is becoming more and more obsessed with her wish for blue eyes. This wish is made because she wants to escape her life of becoming something she is not.

When she is raped by her father and becomes pregnant by him, she goes insane and starts to imagine that she has actually got blue eyes.

Theoretical Paradigm

In *The Souls of Black Folks*, what W.E.B. Du Bois termed “Of Our Spiritual Strivings,” is a point of view of how it feels to be the problem? African Americans have to put up a veil and be compelled to live a double life. The theory of double consciousness is the idea that the African American must navigate the voyages of life from within a form of “two-ness” (2), because he is both man, and black. The novel *The Bluest Eyes* constitutes Toni Morrison's most ambitious engagement with the dialogic of race in America. Morrison's work is more often preoccupied with, in significant measure, the internality of black life in America, even though she is always aware of the white presence at its fringes that can impinge at any time – as is so patently obvious in *Beloved* (as Sethe flees from Southern slavery) and, as a haunting pathology (the desire for a white physiognomy) in *The Bluest Eyes*. Whereas race is undoubtedly the dominant trope of the Nobel laureate's oeuvre, novels such as *Beloved*, *Song of Solomon*, and *The Bluest Eyes* makes this patently clear. Toni Morrison's first novel, *The Bluest Eyes*, was written during the 1960s and published in 1970. Through several layers of voices and different narrative techniques, the book tells us according to Byers Thomas “the shocking story of a black little girl named Pecola Breedlove, who descends into madness after being emotionally and physically abused on several occasions by the entire community around her, even—and especially—by her family” (76-84). This study focuses on double consciousness and its devastating effects on Pecola. Double consciousness is a term coined by W.E.B. DuBois in his *The Souls of Black Folks*. He describes it as, “a peculiar sensation, this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity” (2). *The Bluest Eyes* opened with an anecdote of Dick and Jane to show how racism destroys the mental stability of black people. It equates whites with success and happiness while blacks with poverty and unhappiness. This traumatises the minds of Blacks and they begin to dislike their own heritage and skin colour in the white world of Dick and Jane. In *The Bluest Eyes* and in another novel *Paradise*, Toni Morrison has created two thoroughly racialized communities. Both communities are crippled by racism but in different ways. In *The Bluest Eyes*, Morrison has created a dualistic tale of the oppressors and the oppressed. The novel illustrates how the racism which exists within the African American community can be seen as an effect of the oppression and racism its members has been subjected by the whites. The racism, oppression and marginalisation have corroded the characters' self-esteem and sense of self-worth. Most of the African American portrayed feel contempt for their own blackness. When Toni Morrison began her novel, *Song of Solomon*, she introduces her readers to a world in which Caucasian Americans have full power over their African American neighbours. Detailing the pessimistic treatment of African Americans, readers come to believe in the stereotypical “weak, black man,” of African Americans who allow themselves to be dominated, who see the dangers that are forced upon them and bow down to them, obliging to the torture and prejudice they face every day. Morrison believes and shows us through her writing that African Americans acted one way when around white people in order to avoid trouble and a different way

when around blacks. Now, through the stories of Pecola and the people who surround her, *The Bluest Eyes* brings to discussion matters such as race, identity, and raises questions on racial self-loathing, the menace of white beauty standards, and the African people's double consciousness. There are two kinds of stigmas in the novel opines Jerome Bump regarding the character of Pecola, the first one as “the bodily stigma of ugliness and femininity” and the second one as “the tribal stigma of being an African American” (156). My intention with this work is to analyze how concepts of identity in relation to race are manifested in the novel, how the book can be read as a claim for racial pride, and to show the tragic influence of being both African-American and at the same time ugly in order to make the reader align with the blacks.

Understanding a character's inherent personality needs close examination of his/her behaviour and the world's reaction and response to their actions. Regarding Pecola, there are many parts of the novel which unveil her true personality. First off, it is necessary to study the first reference of the novel which creates a strange impression in the reader's mind. At the point when the mother informs Claudia and Frieda that they would soon have a guest whose situation is different from theirs: “Mama had told us two days earlier that a “case” was coming” (16). Here by referring to the “case”, a picture of a strange person would be shaped in the reader's mind, and this would spark the first attitude toward black people in the novel. Not even calling her name when introducing her to the children, mother of Macteer family shows it is somehow abominable that Pecola is similar to her own children. Black people are considered by Whites as savages. They see Blacks are totally different from other people with different lifestyles. This specific point is clear when the narrator compares them to birds, “Propertied black people spent all their energies, all their love, on their nests. Like frenzied, desperate birds, they over decorate everything” (18).

This study imputes the issue of parenting as one of the foremost problem in the culture of the Afro-American. According to Andrea O' Reilly, attitude, issue of motherhood is central in studying African- American culture. How a mother treats her children and the whole family is of great significance. In Macteer's family, there is a mutual love and care between family members that keeps them united while in Breedlove's family; there is a specific segregation and desolation between family members, especially regarding Pecola's mother, Pauline. She is more enthusiastic to work outside than showing affectionate care and attention toward her family. Picola is so fearful of different persons or situations, so she is being teased easily by the people around her. She is deprived of her mother's affectionate love, and the result is her inability to resist any kind of oppression and injustice imposed on her by the society.

Another pivotal aspect in studying African-American culture according to O'Reilly is that “Mothers and mothering are what make possible the physical and psychological well-being and empowerment of African-American people and the larger African- American culture” (4). Eleven-year Pecola lives with her family in Lorain, Ohio. When her father, Cholly, burns down their house, she spends some days with the MacTeer family. Claudia, the youngest MacTeer, is one of the narrators who tells us Pecola's story. In the years covered by the narrative, 1940 and 1941, the Breedlove girl is constantly bullied and

mistreated by teachers, classmates, neighbours and family. Because she thinks of herself as ugly, she attributes their mistreatment of her to her physical appearance, as she believes that no one would behave badly in front of her if she were beautiful. One of the most traumatizing events in Pecola's life is the moment when she is raped by her father, gets pregnant and loses her sanity. By telling her story, Claudia is trying to make sense of everything that happened to the youngest Breedlove and to their community. Toni Morrison's purpose of depicting Macteer's and Breedlove's family was to show how atmosphere of the house and parents' behaviour would shape and affect children's future. Because Pecola is disconnected from her family especially her mother, she does not consider herself as a mature woman and also a mother in the near future, but only imagines how it would be different if she were a girl with blue eyes, "it had occurred to Pecola some time ago that if her eyes, those eyes that held the pictures, and knew the sights- if those eyes of hers were different, that is to say, beautiful, she herself would be different" (46).

Another is the **notion of white God in Breedlove family**. Breedlove family are not satisfied with their lives. All the family members identify themselves with White Americans and yearn for their luxurious way of life. The blatant and tangible comparison between Breedlove and White American family is described in the novel which would clarify this point. In O'Reily,

Pecola, Pauline, and Cholly Breedlove fall victim to their failure to transcend the imposing definition of 'The Other's' look. Reduced to a state of objectness (thingness), each remains frozen in a world of being-for-the-other and consequently lives a life of shame, alienation, self-hatred and inevitable destruction (50).

This specific kind of feeling in poor African- American families especially Breedlove is clear when Morrison describes their austere situation of life in the novel: "They lived there because they were black and poor and they stayed there because they believed they were ugly" (38). Or in another part of the novel, when the narrator refers to God who has created these black creatures: "It was as though some mysterious all-knowing master had given each one a cloak of ugliness to wear, and they had each accepted it without question" (39). By bringing the word "master", it might refer to God who has intentionally created them with black skin and made them to live under such inequality. To look at another aspect of the situation, a specific point which can be elicited from the above passage is that God and the angels are white who give their blessings to white people and abandoned all those non-Whites to live with their own vigour. This specific notion of White God is also described in the novel when Cholly, Pecola's father, describes his love of black devil: "God was a nice old white man, with long white hair" (134). So black people believe that all kinds of disrespect and ignorance which they bear in their life are rooted from God's own will that made the Whites to be emancipated and do whatever they want. That's why Cholly does not follow morality in his life and religious sanctum, which eventually led to his sexual relationship with his own daughter.

The Bluest Eyes explores the tragedy of oppression and internalized racism. It examines the tragic effects of imposing white, middle-class American ideals of beauty on the

developing female identity of a young African American girl during the early 1940s. Hills Collins in her book *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment*, notes that, “Portraying the range of ways that African-American women experience internalized oppression has been a prominent theme in Black Women's writing” (43). Inspired by a conversation Morrison once had with an elementary school classmate who wished for blue eyes, the novel poignantly shows the psychological devastation of a young black girl, Pecola Breedlove, who searches for love and acceptance in a world that denies and devalues people of her own race. Morrison says that,

The origin of the novel lay in conversation I had with a childhood friend. We had just started elementary school. She said she wanted blue eyes. I looked around to picture her with them and was violently repelled by what I imagined she would look like if she had her wish. The sorrow in her voice seemed to call for sympathy, and I faked it for her, but, astonished by the desecration she proposed, “I got mad at her instead.” (270)

African-American history starts in the 16th century, with peoples from West Africa forcibly taken as slaves to Spanish America, and in the 17th century with West African slaves taken to English colonies in North America. After the founding of the United States, black people continued to be enslaved, and the last four million black slaves were only liberated after the Civil War in 1865. Due to notions of white supremacy, they were treated as second-class citizens. The Naturalization Act of 1790 limited U.S. citizenship to whites only, and only white men of property could vote. These circumstances were changed by Reconstruction, development of the black community, participation in the great military conflicts of the United States, the elimination of racial segregation, and the civil rights movement which sought political and social freedom. In 2008, Barack Obama became the first African American to be elected President of the United States.

Before being an industrial country, America is agricultural country which has enormous farming land that should be farmed. Because of that, America takes many immigrants from Africa and India to work at their enormous farming land. Slavery in America started in 1619, when a Dutch ship brought 20 African slaves ashore in the British colony of Jamestown, Virginia. They worked as farmers in America, farming land. They planted cotton and tobacco. The success of cotton and tobacco plantation improved the great number of immigrants. Throughout the 17th century, European settlers in North America turned to African slaves as a cheaper, more plentiful labour source than indentured servants, who were mostly poorer Europeans. Racism is one of dominant discrimination in the United States. This is because of the black people's position as minority and the history of their race. They were discriminated against because they came from slavery. Then occurs some prejudice based on the physical appearance and characteristics toward their behaviour. This condition made it hard for them to live normally and get some opportunities.

Neelam Bhardwaj's paper entitled “*The Bluest Eyes: A Tragedy of Oppression and Internalized Racism*”, talks about the life of African-American women that had been affected by racism, sexism and classicism. It says that Black women are also victimised not only on the basis of races and sex but also badly treated by class exploitations which is

the greatest oppression of blacks in America. In this way, black women suffered from the double disadvantage of racial discrimination and gender bias. The paper also explores the tragedy of the oppression or violation of children, especially poor children and she explores a problem specific to groups targeted by racism, that of internalized racism. If the Black Arts Movement then failed black women by not taking their gender into their agenda, the feminist movements of the period failed them by not taking race into theirs. As feminist theorist, Bell Hooks points out that a black woman looking for a theory that would encompass both gender and race would be pretty isolated:

No other group in America has so had their identity socialized out of existence as have black women. We are rarely recognized as a group separate and distinct from black men, or as a present part of the larger group “women” in this culture. When black people are talked about, sexism militates against the acknowledgement of the interests of black women; when women are talked about racism militates against recognition of black female interests. When black people are talked about the focus tends to be on black men; and when women are talked about the focus tends to be on white women (21).

A Du Boisian Reading of *The Bluest Eyes*

What matters mostly in this society is European or Western's way of life and what is not included in this domain of society is marginalized like what Pecola represents. This feeling of being ignored by others is also clear when Pauline talks about the time she was in hospital and wanted to give birth to Pecola. Being a black woman, Pauline was not under doctors' monitoring, while white pregnant women took benefit from nurses' and doctors' care. This kind of ignorance and marginalization or Othering definitely affects the embryo's consciousness in Pauline's womb as is depicted in the novel, “They never said nothing to me. Only one looked at me. Looked at my face, I mean. I looked right back at him”. Or when she says that doctors talked to white women warmly: “I seed them talking to them white women” (125).

The African suffers oppression also in the way he uses language. They do not pronounce words correctly or pay attention to making their sentences properly. This is seen in the novel when the narrator says, “nasty white folks is about the nastiest things they is” (120). These kinds of self-hatred and shame drive from the fact that African-Americans suffer from double-consciousness. Du Bois asserted in his famous book, *The Souls of Black Folks* that,

The Negro is ... gifted with second-sight in this American world – a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity (1-2).

What Lewis Gordon believes is that this kind of double-consciousness has two particular aspects to be analyzed. The first one is about “negative and psychological impacts of being a black person. So after comparing themselves with white people, blacks try to see themselves through the lens of Whites”. The second one which Gordon refers to is that,

“after finding themselves different from others, they realize that they are not treated the same as Whites” (78). This is clearly illustrated in the novel when Pecola identifies herself with her white fellows and imagines how her situation of life would be different if she were a white girl. So in that way, she would be revered as a respectable girl: “If those eyes of hers were different, that is to say, beautiful, she herself would be different” (46). This feeling of two-ness in one's personality reveals the assumption that black people will be offended opines Paul Mocombe from “a synthesis of African survival (Africanism) with European cultural norms, giving blacks a double consciousness or making them hybrids or bicultural” (7). In *The Bluest Eyes*, Morrison refers to the plant dandelion which has a particular significance. Being a wild plant, dandelion is considered as a useless flower which later becomes a white ball of seeds. This can be attributed to Pecola who is being ignored by white people, “nobody loves the head of a dandelion. Maybe because they are so many, strong, and soon...” (47) Pecola refers to her own situation and conveys the message that although she is not a beautiful girl right now, later she will be a girl with a white skin and blue eyes who would be praised by everyone. What Mocombe believes is that this kind of being a black, behaving in a way which does not attract White's attention is part of their “innate sense of blackness or Negro blood” which caused these poor African- American people different from their white fellows” (59). What Braden Kendhammer argues in his article about Du Bois's concept of double consciousness is that, “because of feeling a special duality in their personality, Blacks should have a satisfactory state of life and live in a way to take advantage of modern education” (57). But we see that the reverse of it exists in the novel. Instead of building their life upon education and construction of their identity, the Breedlove family is deprived of ordinary education and there is no clear and stable relationship among family members. There is no portrayal of any special love or understanding between Pecola and her parents. Even Pecola's father works for his own profit and his only trouble is his own survival. One particular aspect in considering Du Bois's double- consciousness is according to Richard Schafer, the concept of 'veil'. This specific veil refers to “race itself and its impact on the lives of Black American, the racial lens through which White Americans view Black Americans” (3). In analyzing the novel, it becomes clear that Pecola's family suffers from such veil in their lives, for example, when the poor condition of Pecola's life is described in the novel, “and Pecola, she hid behind hers. Concealed, veiled, eclipsed- peeping out from behind the shroud very seldom, and then only to yearn for the return of her mask” (39). Black people have to conceal behind their ugliness, blackness or their originality and be marginalized. Actually a great gap or a vast dichotomy turns up between these two groups. Another part of the novel which talks about existing veil between Whites and Blacks is when it says that the true and primordial obstacle which does not let white people build a good relationship with their black fellows is their skin colour and also their ugliness: “And it is the blackness that accounts for, that creates, the vacuum edged with distaste in white eyes” (49).

Throughout the novel, references to people's eyes are of great significance, for example, in the above sentence “white eyes”, or in a place where Pecola sees herself in the mirror: “Long hours she sat looking in the mirror, trying to discover the secret of the ugliness” (45). Morrison intentionally made references to people's eyes, especially those of Blacks'. She is saying that people's eyes act as a medium for one's expression of feelings and

attitudes. Eyes are the most powerful organ of the body by which people can communicate with each other. Or put in another way, the eyes are the first and most efficient organ of the body through which man can penetrate and understand each other's soul. What Morrison claims is that no matter what the colour of people's skin, they can realize each other's needs just through looking at each other's eyes. In the novel, the reverse of this situation is depicted. There is no respect or love between White and Black. The whole novel describes Pecola's and even her mother's desire to be in the shoes of Whites and be white and beautiful like them. Actually both the mother and the daughter are in the words of Shirshankar Bhanegaonker "the poor victims bewitched by the illusory models of beauty" (381). This is what Du Bois describes as 'double-consciousness'. Black people's identity trapped between a kind of two-ness and divergence make them not to preserve their primary personality and wish for something ruling in the society- white skin. Instead of constructing a new identity for herself, Pecola destroyed it. What Bhanegaonker says regarding her situation is that such voluntary need to be a beautiful girl led to Pecola's despair, frustration, disintegration and insanity" (389). Pecola thought that by having blue eyes she would be praised by everyone and do whatever she wanted, but what is actually depicted in the novel was death of her baby which was concomitant with her madness: "She, however, stepped over into madness, a madness which protected her from us simply because it bored us in the end" (206). This kind of seeing themselves through the eyes of Whites reveals another aspect of Du Bois's concept of double-consciousness, opines Shao Yuh- Chaun, "the relation between individual and community and also past and future of blackness" (550). They all think about their future life and imagine how their life would change if they were white, and they also consider themselves in opposition to the whole society. They are always afraid of not being accepted by the community and have a disillusioned feeling which makes them alienated and dissociated from other people. To look at the other side of the matter, Morrison in Chaun, "dramatizes the devastating effect of chronic shame on her characters' sense of individual and social identity, describing their self-loathing, self-contempt, their feelings that they are, in some essential way, inferior"(556). This kind of feeling about one's 'self' in Blacks is clear in the novel when the narrator talks about Pauline's treatment toward her family: "Into her son she beat a loud desire to run away, and into her daughter she beat a fear of growing up, fear of other people, fear of life" (128). Actually Pecola's insatiable desire for having blue eyes results in becoming an invisible figure in the society who eventually becomes mad. She not only wanted a great transformation in her life like being a white and beautiful girl but also wanted the bluest eyes in the world. This kind of transcending beyond her capacities caused her tragic destiny. This kind of double-consciousness has its effect on Frieda and Claudia too. In a place, when Claudia asked herself, "what made people look at them and say, "Awwwww", but not for me? Or when she destroyed white baby dolls" (22). Finally, the most apparent part of the novel which talks about Pecola's double-consciousness is in the part where the narrator talks about Pecola's appearance: "So the distaste must be for her, her blackness. All things in her are flux and anticipation. But her blackness is static and dread. And it is the blackness that accounts for, that creates, the vacuum edged with distaste in white eyes" (49).

Conclusion

In Lorain, Ohio where Pecola grew up, the citizens are suffering from self-loathing because of their marginalization and because their self-worth has been so corroded by the lack of affirmation and appreciation. It is established that Blacks in America are trapped between two poles of existence- as Africans and also Americans, so they are not able to establish a unique and permanent identity for themselves. They are under the influence of double-consciousness which made them become keener toward white people's world and an insatiable desire to be in their shoes like having white skin, speaking fluently or taking advantage of modern education. What Toni Morrison depict in her novels is that there is a great barrier or wall or what Du Bois calls 'a veil' between Whites and Blacks that exists which does not let each understand each other and penetrate each other's culture and civilization. The hegemonic situation in the society led to a state where the whites feel superior and dominant while Blacks are doomed to be ignored and alienated. This state of being detached from community creates a special feeling of self-loathing and shame in Black people and force them to transcend their current personality and desire something unachievable like what is depicted in the novel—Pecola's desire to attain blue eyes caused her madness. However, as the writer highlights in the foreword section of the book, it is also extremely important to the narrative that the protagonist is a young child. Pecola's struggles with her black appearance can be seen in the passage, in which she wishes she could make it disappear,

Please, God,” she whispered into the palm of her hand. “Please make me disappear.” She squeezed her eyes shut. Little parts of her body faded away. Now slowly, now with a rush. Slowly again. Her fingers went, one by one; then her arms disappeared all the way to the elbow. Her feet now. Yes, that was good. The legs all at once. It was hardest above the thighs. She had to be real still and pull. Her stomach would not go. But finally it, too, went away. Then her chest, her neck. The face was hard, too. Almost done, almost. Only her tight, tight eyes were left. They were always left (43).

Effects of western colonization on black people's lives especially their mind are in a way that they spend their lives trying to imitate western state of life and imagine themselves as one of the Whites. Their main purpose is that they believe that all these kinds of good and advancement are the prerogatives of the Whites. *The Bluest Eyes* shows how the African-American Community has been denied the “American Dream”. They have been closed out and rejected by the very country into which they were born.

After reading and writing this work, I believe that the “remaining touched but not moved” (VIII) Morrison refers to is related to an inquiry of our society's values. Should beauty be as important as it is? Do African Americans gain from being considered beautiful, or is it still harmful and drives them further away from their traditions? Pecola does believe she has gotten her blue eyes by the end of the novel, but she still wants more: she needs the bluest eyes. After all, beauty standards are always going to be unachievable, even for white people. We will always be too fat or too tall, and the pursuit of beauty as one of the most desirable values in life will always create self-loathing. We all take part in Pecola's downfall, and that may be the reason the “why” of her story is so difficult to handle (4). While we cultivate beauty as our strongest wish, we may be generating and spreading self-contempt.

As a solution, Morrison brings love, stories, connection to the community. In *The Bluest Eye*, that community is the African American one, since that is the position of the main characters. After all, the bluest eye does not refer exclusively to Pecola's wish. The "eye" can be read according to Moses Cat as "I": self, subject (126). The bluest may be understood as a reference to blues: a strong African American tradition. If Pecola imagined her healing would come from possessing the bluest of eyes, Morrison seems to think that a truly healed identity will more probably come from connection to community and to others, and that is the message her novel gives.

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