

RACIAL PREJUDICE IN TONI MORRISON'S NOVEL *THE BLUEST EYE*

¹R. Balamurugan, ²Dr.K.Shanmuga Sundara Raj

¹Part – time Ph.D. Research Scholar, Reg. No. 17221194011002,
Research Department of English, Sadakathullah Appa College, Tirunelveli – 627 011.
(Affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Abishekapatti, Tirunelveli).
Email : bala0332@gmail.com

²Research Supervisor, Assistant Professor,
PG Department of English, Government Arts and Science College, Kovilpatti-628501
(Affiliated to Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Abishekapatti, Tirunelveli).
Email : drckssraj@gmail.com

Abstract: *Black literature produced by Afro – American writers describe the past slavery and their culture. Everything written in the name of Black literature refers to the Black community in the states. The paper discusses the problems and issues of the Blacks in America. It describes the racism faced by the African American women and their struggles based on racial prejudice, and it exposes explicitly the long series of struggles that the Black have had against the exploitative tendencies of the White.*

Key Words: *Racism, Slavery, and Subjugation.*

Toni Morrison, born in 1931 in Lorain, Ohio, is one of the celebrated contemporary American novelists. In 1949, Morrison left Lorain to attend College at Howard University, the historically Black University in Washington, D.C. In 1953, she graduated from Howard with a Bachelor's Degree in English. Two years later, she received her Master's Degree in English from Cornell University. Morrison took degrees from Howard and Cornell Universities. She has taught at Yale, Bard College and Rutgers. In 1988 she was the Obert C. Tanner Lecturer at the University of Michigan. In 1990, she delivered the Clark Lectures at Trinity College, Cambridge and the Massey Lectures at Harvard University. In 1994 she held the International Condorcet Chair at the Ecole Normale Superieure and College de France. She died in August 2019 at New York.

Since the American Civil War, women face the double discrimination, firstly, for being as women and secondly, for being Blacks. Morrison exposes their struggles through her novel *The Bluest Eye* to remake them. The prologue part of *The Bluest Eye* of Morrison tells very symbolically about racism practiced in the country. A house has a very pretty door in red and a female child named Jane who also wore the dress in red, which denote the sacrifice of the female child and house. "It is green and white. It has a red door. It is very pretty... Jane live in the green – and – white house. She has a red dress. She wants to play" (*The Bluest Eye*2). The female child wants to play but no one is willing to play with her. Finally, a friend plays with her. It clearly shows that she is Black, therefore none of them is willing to play with her. "Grown – ups talk in tried, edgy voices about Zick's Coal Company" (*TBE* 7).

Frieda and narrator Claudia Mac Teer move to pick up coals. They used burlap sacks to fill the coal. While they return "The dying fire lights the sky with a dull orange glow. Frieda and I lag behind, staring at the patch of color surrounded by black" (8). Feet leave the gravel path and sink into the dead grass in the field. Due to their poverty in their life, they have to work the whole day. Darkness surrounded their life due to their backwardness. At night they could not erect amble kerosene lamp in their houses. "At night a kerosene lamp lights one large room. The others are braced in darkness, peopled by roaches and mice" (8).

Breedlove's house is an abandoned store where there is nothing to secure them from the winter season. Due to slavery and poverty they do not have proper shelter to protect themselves. During the winter season "The only living thing the Breedloves house was the coal stove, which lived independently of everything and everyone, its fire being "out", banked", or "up" at its own discretion, in spite of the fact that the family fed it and knew all the details of its regimen:"(35).

Winter is a very bitter season to them. Many people suffered a lot to do their works in a usual manner. They facing a lot of struggles to prevent their body from the winter season. Some people apply creams in the face to feel fresh and avoid dryness. The winter season collapses the normal way of life physically and mentally. In the same manner a brown girl appears in the school where Pecola was studying. “This disrupter of seasons was a new girl in school named Maureen Peal” (60). Maureen’s appearance, dressing code, long knee socks, long brown hair, patent leather shoes with buckles and a rich autumn ripeness in her walk show the richness of the white girls. The appearance drastically affected the thought of Frieda and Claudia. “She was rich, at least by our standards, as rich as the richest of the white girls, swaddled in comfort and care. The quality of her clothes threatened to derange Frieda and me”. (60)

The Black boys are not allowed to enter into the hall where Maureen sits. When she goes to bathroom to wash her hands in the wash basin the black girls are not allowed to stand in the area where she passes away. “Black girls stepped aside when she wanted to use the sink in the girl’s toilet, and their eyes” (61). Separate dining table is arranged to her for taking lunch in the cafeteria according to her desire. Special variety of food is provided to her in the cafeteria than others. Such a type of discriminations drastically affected the school life of Frieda and Claudia MacTeer feels that “Frieda and I were bemused, irritated, and fascinated by her”(61).

One day, it was a false spring day. Frieda, Claudia and Maureen walked together from the school to go to house. Immediately after coming out of the school they saw a group of boys round up there in the ground Frieda, Claudia and Maureen were glancing at the group. Pecola was stood centre of the round, the boys were dancing around her. Pecola hid her face by her fingers. She started crying, the tears wet her fingers. The boys criticized her “Black e mo. Black e mo. Yadadd sleeps nekked. Black e mo.”(63). On seeing this scene, Frieda ran towards them and brought her book down on the head of one of the boys named Woodrow Cain. The circle has broken. Frieda is taller than the group of boys, who round up Pecola, so that she could hit on his head easily. The other boys were afraid and Frieda took Pecola’s arm. After that they left the ground. Maureen starts to treat Pecola as a closed friend. “Maureen, suddenly animated, put her velvet-sleeved arm through Pecola’s and began to behave as though they were closest of friends” (65).

Maureen and Pecola involve in the conversation between them. In between the discussion Maureen raised a question, “Did you ever see a naked man?” (69). Pecola blinked. She does not know what answer should be given to her. However, she answered, ‘No’ and also states that “Nobody’s father would be naked in front of his own daughter. Not unless he was dirty too” (69). On hearing these words Frieda tries to hit on her face but missed. Maureen always wants to say that white people are cute and the others are ugly in front of them. Frieda knows about the attitude of Maureen. That is why she tries to hit on her face. Actually she explores the real thought she runs away from there. “I am cute! And you ugly! Black and ugly black a mos. I am cute!” (71).

Junior is the daughter of Geraldine, who is a brown – girl. Junior longs to play with the Black boys. More than anything in the world she wanted to play King of the Mountain, and have them pushed her down the mound of dirt and roll over her. She wants to feel their hardness pressing on her, smell their wild blackness and say fuck you with that lovely casualness.

Junior sadistically hurls his mother’s cat right in Pecola face. “He threw a big black cat right in her face” (87). Morrison provides a rather startling description of a group of people to which Junior’s mother, Geraldine, belongs, and by which, therefore, Junior’s actions can be traced. Geraldine’s genealogy is typological, not familial. She is one of the types of people who are losing a cultural identity that is rightfully theirs because of their racial ancestry. Morrison expresses the sufferings of the Black people vividly. A lot of ways adopted by the White people to deny freedom to the Blacks are explained in the novel. Morrison’s presentation of racism through various characters exposes the wretched conditions of the Blacks. The novelist has dealt with cultural and, sexual racism in the novel.

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