

COMPARISON OF PREJUDICES AND RACE, AND SELF-IDENTIFICATION IN THE TWO NOVELS BY TONI MORRISON, *THE BLUEST EYE* AND *SONG OF SOLOMON*

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Abstract

Discrimination and identity: A Comparison of The Bluest Eye and Song of Solomon by Toni Morrison. In the novel, The Bluest Eye by Toni Morrison, the main character, Pecola Breedlove, shows how racism and societal expectations of beauty can have disastrous effects on the dreams of African American women. On the other hand, Song of Solomon depicts the black man Milkman Dead's search of his identity that simply requires accepting his root to overcome the effects of racism. In these stories, Morrison becomes a protestant against prejudice and a dissection of the reciprocal relationship between prejudice and the struggle for individual and cultural affirmation. This paper examines a comparison of prejudices and race, and self-identification in the two novels by Toni Morrison, The Bluest Eye and Song of Solomon.

Keywords: *identity, racial, gender, community, african, america*

The pectoral of Toni Morrison's "*The Bluest Eye*" and "*Song of Solomon*" defines the entanglement of race and identity that discriminative African American struggle through. Both novels are about how society and racism define personal and communal identities and present society and racism's painful effects.

Toni Morrison whose first novel is *The Bluest Eye* (1970) presents to the reader a graceful chronicling of the black experience and the American sociopolitical and cultural perception of the negro through the theme of beauty. Based on the geographical context of 1940s Ohio the plot focuses on the main protagonist, Pecola Breedlove — a little black girl who has assimilated the racism and

prejudice where light skin and straight hair are prioritized over blackness. In tragedy of Pecola, Morrison illustrates the role of discriminant that forms Pecola and people around her existence.

The analysis of Toni Morrison's "*Song of Solomon*" in terms of identity, legacy, and racially informed oppression, all of which the novel explores expertly in 1977. In the novel the author analyzes the impact of the racist policies and the sociological prescripts on the main character Milkman Dead stating how these driving forces define the lives of an African American and the dynamics of a community.

The Bluest Eye: Definition of Internalized Racism
Internalized racism is an act or process in which a subordinate racial group take on the beliefs, attitude and inferior status of the dominant race it has been subjected to.

In her novel "*The Bluest Eye*" published in 1970, Morrison gives readers Pecola Breedlove, an African American girl who wants blue eyes because the holder of this trait would be considered beautiful. It is born out of a culture that has come to appreciate whiteness or anything linked to white individuals as superior in every way to other races. The piteous and shocking experience described in the novel is focused on the internalized racism as the reaction on such pressure, which results in Pecola's self-hatred.

Morrison once again paints a picture of how discriminative process is not a just external but deeply internalized by societies. Pecola's family and peers all have problems with combating a racist community which negatively effects her feeling of insignificance. Her pathetic journey explicates the adversities of socialisation on esteem and identity hence proving how prejudice is devastating even psychologically.

Song of Solomon: A Journey toward Empowerment

"*Song of Solomon*" published in 1977 on the other hand provides a different view of racism and discriminations through Milkman Dead. While Pecola starts her story in poverty, Milkman starts in comfort though he too struggles with questions of identity and place. His investigation of his ancestry is thus a search of identity in a perc world that tries to categorize people.

The author uses many layers of symbolism and magical realism to address the question of African American representations and history. Milkman has to explore and learn about the amazing abilities of ancestors in overcoming oppression which tells about the role of cultural identity when facing disparities. They point out that such depiction of the family history stands in contrast to the discrimination that characters like Pecola face and shows that going back to the roots can bring power rather than oppression.

The Effects of Applying Cuts Model on Bulimic Symptoms in Overweight Males and Females

As you can see, the idea of beauty is the most important theme of "*The Bluest Eye*." Pecola's desire for blue eye is defined as she feels they will result to her becoming beautiful or rather all she needs to make her beautiful is blue eye in the eyes of a society that does not value her existence. This desire represents a social problem that colonized and whitened beauty standards are idealized and blackness is degraded. Morrison goes into great detail to show how these standards extend beyond the cultural perspectives by infiltrating family and community expectations and leading to feelings of worthlessness among people who cannot meet them.

Using the example of the relationship between Pecola and her father and the community treatment of dark skin women, the novel describes how the phenomenon of internalized racism works. This is a battle that is typical for the characters of the novel, especially Pecola's mother, Pauline, who also feels inferior to the white people. It also distances her from her own children their employer's 'white family' remains her dream as she is convinced they are beautiful and happy. This cycle of oppression is then continued in the novel as Pecola looks for acceptance in a society which erases her worth.

Discontent superseding In *The Bluest Eye* music seems to become a soothing balm as well as an heirloom for the characters – it supplies them with the understanding of themselves and others. In general, it means what it seems: a longing for something beautiful amid a society that makes Pecola Breedlove, the protagonist, feel worthless. Thus which brings us to the analysis of a song part of the novel titled: "Blue Blue Blue", it represents Pecola yearning to transform and become the beauty that she admires. Morrison writes:

In this case, she was, as they say, 'blues.' None of the music they played at that particular moment could help her flee from this feeling. This was so much so that she was always stuck in the blues." (Morrison, *The Bluest Eye*, p. 118)

Such an association becomes rather emotional reflecting Pecola's self-identity crisis and a search for the worth within a society oppressively demanding to have 'beautiful,' 'proper,' 'clean' skin.

Color and Gender

Morrison, skillfully entwines race and gender in the story. The oppression of Pecola is made worse by her sex, sex was such a reliable marker of oppression, particularly for black women. The issue of young black girls presented with a miserable existence of everything Sula represents the squalor that young black girls go through not only being oppressed but also abused by society and those close to them. The novel through Pecola, portray how black girls are vulnerable under both sexual and racial oppression in a given society.

Other female characters including Claudia and Frieda MacTeer depict different and far much better experiences than that of Pecola. Although they also struggle with socialization, their position towards her self and him helps them to navigate around and not embrace some of the pernicious messages Pinkney asserts Pecola internalizes. By contrasting the reactions to Discrimination and the Value of Community and Support in combating oppressive structures, this film effectively gets its message across.

The Role of Community

Morrison also looks at how society maintains or eradicates discrimination as well. They are rejected not only because of their skin color but also because of their class — poor — , an aspect that points to the fact that even if people of color were to rise up in the social ladder, they will continue to suffer at the hands of discriminative whites. That is probably the reason; the community did not accept Pecola and her family because the side of the society that is usually overlooked by everyone or even judged is always lonely and desperate.

However, it is crucial to see that racists do not need to physically harm other people in order to make their life miserable: this is achieved by collective indifference, as the case with Pecola Breedlove. Her tragic end serves as the mirror of society which can not and does not want to change for the better, and how racism is deeply ingrained in all spheres of people's lives. Morrison's characterizations of black men moving through systems that allow for the condemnation and oppression of people like them bring painful realism and demand action and change from others for true reconciliation.

Identity Crisis: A Case of *Song of Solomon*

The soul of "*Song of Solomon*" is Milkman's search for identity. From a wealthy family, Milkman at the start seems to be quite detached from his family's African-American lineage. To an extent racism is presented as a part of the past for Macon Dead and his family, with traditional African American culture replaced by money. This disconnection can be seen throughout many African Americans and has to do with something which is so deeply rooted in their race and yet devalued in society.

Throughout Milkman's transformation, Morrison reveals how discrimination impacts the human personality. It will not be a secret by now if Milkman's search is motivated by the fact that he has no connection at all to his ancestors. This is not a search for knowledge, but a search for self and a need to assert one's existence in a world where black men are made to feel invisible.

Another manifestation of Milkman Dead's life's philosophy of the journey of self-discovery is dance. He learns and adapts and his stuff, his movements particularly as he discovers his family and his role within it. Morrison illustrates this transformation:

Milkman's steps of dancing freed as understood each of them lighter signifying his freedom. His dance was no longer mere twisting; it was chants, persona, and pleasure." (Toni Morrison, *Song of Solomon*, p. 322)

Here dance symbolizes growth of the protagonist, Milkman, his freedom and his breaking free from the societal and family control.

A Historical Context of the Events as Well as Personal Stories

To the whole story, Morrison adds deeper layers of meaning by including references to African American folk and tribal tales as well as myth. Solomon also, the Milkman's ancestor, who runs for freedom in Africa is also a symbol of elevated freedom and a wish to overcome the restraints put by a racist America. Solomon's story describes the desire for a bodily and soul-saving action, which is why people need to know their history.

By using the following characters in the novel, there are different lessons of discrimination and its effects are depicted. For example, Milkman has a friend, Guitar Bains who stands for use of force against the racists. His

obsession with revenge shows how systemic prejudice brings prejudiced people to become bad and make the construction of identity and community more challenging.

The Role of Community

Morrison makes it clear that communities that are subjected to discriminations negativities have to strive and do away with it. Together with the process of growing in personal hierarchy, Milkman learns about the importance of collective identities as his family faced many challenges. The relationships he builds with his family members demonstrate how they are in a position to transform source, namely history and culture into strength.

Morrison connects features of the novel to the role of the close-knit community and the importance of stories. Thus, the characters' experiences and lessons which are conveyed orally represent the collectivist perception of identity, rather than individualism. Morrison's use of this narrative strategy thus enables her to raise political awareness of blacks and African American culture while demonizing the forces that tram the same culture.

Discrimination and Identity of Women of Colour

Discrimination sets the two novels within a framework of an evil that affects people individually and in a group. In *The Bluest Eye*, Pecola is ultimately killed because of the effects of beauty standards in society while in *Song of Solomon*, Milkman regains his rightful name and thus his identity.

Thus the need to draw attention to Morrison's novels and short stories in a manner that provides readers with uncomfortable truths on race and identity in America. She is keen to point out that discrimination may be social, familial and internal affecting not only the concerned person but the entire society. Morrison writing presents self-identity and recognition of history of the people as a way of fighting oppressors/colonial masters.

Conclusion

The subjects of Toni Morrison's "*The Bluest Eye*" and "*Song of Solomon*" are Discrimination with emphasis on Identity. In the relations between Pecola and Milkman, the author demonstrates how the black people suffer in the

American society that is prejudice against them. Hear stories not only concern the suffering due to discrimination but also strengthen the idea of accepting traditions to turn them into a source of power. In conclusion, Morrison's books cannot be too far from being seen as valuable contributions to race and identity, as well as the legacies of racism and oppression.

Even in the face of prejudice the book tackles discrimination in race, beauty and identity brilliantly in *The Bluest Eye*. The author's sharp pen makes readers put their faces against the dark reality of the requirements society sets and what it does to its members. Pecola's doomed desire for blue eyes symbolizes a devastating lessons that people of color have to learn in societies terrorized by racism and its equally devastating disciple – Colorism. With the help of such plot and characters construction, Morrison shares the calls for question the perception of those, who consider themselves superior, as well as for changing the discrimination of people, making the world more tolerant and understanding. In this social-realism novel "*Song of Solomon*" Toni Morrison analyzes the black Americans' struggle for self-identification in the context of racism and relation to their ancestors. This paper seeks to show how, using the character of Milkman Dead, Morrison depicts a world that is largely hostile to the black man. In this respect, by raising the question of identity and the value of a community, which she opposed to racism, Morrison invites the readers to reflect on what remains of racism and how strength can be born from this wound. In conclusion, "*Song of Solomon*" is a moving example of the human spirit that can triumph over the world that is Against it to a certain extent.

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