



Woman As A Victim of Racial Hatred: A Study of Toni Morrison's Novel The Bluest Eye

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Abstract : The woman represents the symbol of nature. She contributes to make progress in the family, society as well as country through her active participation same as the male counterpart. But woman is suppressed into lower status compared to the male power and position in the society intentionally, even after her great contribution in reality. The evidence can be found in the portrayal of woman in the literatures from the different cultures. African-American literature has played a significant role in American literary history since the eighteenth century. Black writing owes its very nature to the oppressive conditions under which the Blacks have been subjected to in America. What motivates the Blacks to write is the condition of oppression, and what they desire of their writing is to ameliorate their condition. Racism and sexism have made heavy inroads into the lives of African-Americans. Black woman is a victim of multiple oppression and double marginalization of race and gender. Keen attempts have been made, particularly in the last two decades, by Black women writers to withstand and rectify the evils of racism and sexism.

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Introduction

African-American literature has focused on a number of recurring historical and sociological themes, all of which reflect the politics of Black experiences. The political content of African-American literature includes correcting stereotypes of African-American culture, experiences and achievements, and exploring racial issues, including, institutionalized racism, internalized racism, intra-racial racism and the combined oppressions of racism, classism and sexism. These themes constitute surviving life's negative experiences and questions, and rectifying them the positive.

Being A Black Woman: Effects Of Racism

Racism is the theory or idea that there is a link between inherited physical traits of personality and culture. The politics of racism has assumed greater significance in the context of the considerable numerical strength of the Black community in America. In this regard, Calvin.C.



Hernton remarks: Racism is a man-made, man enforced phenomenon...may be defined as all of the learned behaviour and learned emotions on the part of a group of people towards another group; whose physical characteristics are dissimilar to the former group; behaviour and emotions that compel one group to conceive of and to treat the other on the basis of its physical characteristics alone, as if it did not belong to the human race Racism is a politics based on the notion that some races are inherently superior to others. There are many writers who have adopted the racist point of view. A writer's attitude to racism is part of his ideology or politics and is reflected in his writings. Race is a group or category of persons connected by common origin. The word entered the English language at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Since the beginning of the nineteenth century the word has been used in several other distinct senses. Joel Kovel, in his critically penetrating analysis of racism, explains the theory whereby the Whites quantifies the Blacks into a wholly new equation wherein they exist not as people, but as things. He says that the White slave-owner ... first reduced the human self of his black slave to a body and then reduces the body to a thing: he dehumanized his slave, made him quantifiable, and thereby absorbed him into a rising world market of productive exchange... Thus, in the new culture of the west, the black human was reduced to a black thing, virtually the same in certain key respects as the rest of non-human nature-all of which could become property. It is clearly seen in this explanation that one of the methods employed in the creation of a new social system in which the Whites are masters and owners, and the Blacks are a subnormal group of property which can be sold, bartered or used as a convenient form of currency. By the mid-seventies, African-American women fiction writers like Paule Marshall, Toni Morrison, Alice Walker and Gayle Jones had not only defined their cultural context as a distinctly African-American one, but they had also probed many facets of the interrelationship of sexism and racism in their society. This reduction of humans to chattels or non-humans is the first definite step towards the establishment of racism as an innate archetype of the White American civilization. In short, black symbolizes everything negative and sordid in life, culture and religion. To be worthy of love one has to be beautiful; to be beautiful one has to be white in colour. The poor Negro has no place in this scheme. That which is unattainable becomes the most agonizingly desirable thing for all humanity. So the Black man's soulwrenching desire for whiteness is an indirect desire for love, respectability, honour and acceptance. It is an agonizing human experience. Being White in colour implies a series of connotations: of being attractive, both physically and culturally,



desirable, intelligent, reasonable and above all worthy of love. Blackness is seen as a negative sign, a symbol of ugliness, uncontrolled, irrational behaviour, violent sexuality and so on. In short, black symbolizes everything negative and sordid in life, culture and religion. Having allotted a burden of evil, fear and diabolism to black colour, western philosophy, society and culture finally find the perfect personification of this misalliance in the Black man. The devil is an abstract entity in western thought until western man encountered the Black man from Africa. The triangle drawn with devil, black colour and the Black man is firmly entrenched in the psyche of White America. Within this atmosphere of anger, hatred and fear, with its background of blackness, began the extraordinary performance of a tragedy wherein the Black man is the principal villain. As against the more overt forms of racism, the method of racial indoctrination is much more covert. The western perspective of beauty becomes the Black man's burden from the beginning of his racial history in America; he has to carry the burden on his tortured back. From the times of slavery to the modern period the Blacks have to endure a whole extent of emotions like anger, envy and frustration. They appreciate the White American economy, society, culture and colour. The outcome of this destructive attempt is a decline of values like self-respect, self-love, dignity and pride in one's own race. This extremely subtle, but very corrosive facet of racism has its birth in American history and its maturity in modern American thought. This covert form of racism, which is subtle but slow and fatal in its methodical progress, is doubly injurious to the Black race. Its invisibly corrosive nature is hardly explicit. It is this type of subtle, but deeply damaging variant of racism that forms the background to African-American women's fiction. Cruelty, torture, lynching, rape and bestiality, the marks of traditional racism, which form an important ingredient in the writings of Black male writers like Richard Wright and Ralph Ellison, do not find any place in Black women's fiction. Racism plays an insidious role in their writings. But the effect of this type of racism is much more devastating in its consequences. The predicament of "internalized racism" results from the psychological conditioning by which a racist society indoctrinates people of colour to believe in the White superiority. Victims of internalized racism generally feel inferior to the Whites: they are less attractive, less worthwhile, less capable, and often they wish if they were White or looked more White. Toni Morrison provides us with one of the most chilling portraits of internalized racism in *The Bluest Eye* in which Pecola Breedlove, a young Black girl who can't see her own beauty, believes she would be pretty, happy and loved only if she had blue eyes. In this novel,



Morrison weaves stories of violation and hardship to examine the ugliness that racism produces. “Internalized racism” often results in intra-racial racism, which refers to discrimination within the Black community, against those with darker skin and more African features. Filmmaker Spike Lee also portrays intra-racial racism in *School Daze* in which students at a historically Black college form two rival groups based on the relative “whiteness” or “blackness” of their physical appearance.

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