

Deconstructing pecola breedlove: a character analysis essay



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A closed reading of Toni Morrison's *Bluest Eyes* clearly shows that Pecola Breedlove extends beyond being the novel's central character. Pecola Breedlove cannot be simply described as a mere fictional character whose only wish is to have fascinating blue eyes. Contrary to what many perceive, Pecola Breedlove's story continues to exist. It did not merely end within the waxy pages of Morrison's novel. More than anything else, Pecola Breedlove reflects the most pressing problems that society needs to confront. Her tale signifies the never-ending narrative of racism, discrimination, exploitation and gender inequality.

If one has to deconstruct Pecola's character, it can be readily observed that Pecola is a concrete representation of the continuous struggle of many women. Aside from her skin color, it is her gender that subjected her into very uncompromising situations. On a careful analysis, it can be readily observed that women are still seen from a derogatory perspective. More often than not, many women still experience domestication. Their value and importance are limited to the roles and functions that they perform within the confines of their homes.

Even in corporate settings, men are given more opportunities. Leadership roles are often given to men, whereas women remain as the subordinates. Indeed, just like Pecola Breedlove, women are constantly raped. They are raped within the four portals of their houses and they are raped within their respective workplaces. The patriarchal orientation and social structures present in each and every community continue to treat women as mere objects. Unfortunately, just like Pecola Breedlove, many also refuse to stand up, defend their rights and instead resort to escapism.

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On the other hand, it is also apparent that Pecola clearly exemplifies the deadly fangs of racism. Despite of the rampant call and advocacies to promote equality, racism still occurs. The presence of extremist groups that support racial segregation readily shows that racism still exists. However, more than racism per se, the treatment shown to Pecola by some of her fellow friends and classmates, to be more specific, Junior showcases a disturbing sight. This scenario concretely shows how individuals can develop hatred against other people even if they share a common race.

Unfortunately, Pecola chose to remain silent about this matter. This is also reflected in real-life and is often the root cause of a highly fragmented and divided community. However, what is even worse is that many consider this situation as something normal and ordinary just like what Pecola did (Adams & Fortune, 1998). If further contextualize, it can be fairly argued, that Pecola's wish represents her inability to accept her race—which further raises questions regarding identity formation and construction.

Speaking of identity formation and construction, Pecola symbolizes an individual that is victimized by a highly capitalistic white-dominated mass media. If one has to take a closer look, Pecola's low self-esteem cannot be purely attributed to the unjust treatment that she received from the people that surround her. Far beyond that, the images and representations created by other institutions, such as mass media, for example, readily encouraged Pecola to loathe herself.

Generally speaking, society's notion and understanding of beauty are still based on the "white, aquiline nose and blonde" archetype. This image is still

venerated in modern societies. Consequently, many teenagers, just like Pecola are blinded by the idea that in order to be beautiful, they must desperately try to circumscribe to the socially-constructed notion of beauty. Mass media makes the matter more complicated as they continue to enforce the thinking that being white equates to being classy and beautiful.

This is done through creating massive stereotypes and rendering much importance to white actresses and models. Society nowadays is filled with many Pecolas. Women are still oppressed and many remain brainwashed by a profit-oriented media. Also, the problems of identity construction and formation are still experienced by the victims of African diaspora. All of these dilemmas are readily articulated by Pecola Breedlove's character. Pecola Breedlove serves as a representation of life's bitter-sweet reality.