

Women in the society



In contemporary world of this twenty first century, where modern science and technologies, new life style has reached its great height, people consider that men and women are given equal rights in family, education and other affairs. But, speaking truly, women are deprived of their real rights.

Moreover, women aren't even regarded as humanbeing where they are illtreated, subjugated, brutally charged, seen and used only as wanton and lecherous creatures by the male folks for their least and meanest physical pleasure.

So, firstly, women are marginalized for being a woman and secondly, they are marginalized based on their colour or race etc. This research paper focuses in analyzing these issues of gender disparity, racial and sexual violence which are prevalent even in this modern world in the novel *The Bluest Eye* written by Toni Morrison. This novel presents the various struggles faced by African-Americans, especially by girls and women in deeper context.

Born on 18th February 1931 in Lorain, Ohio, U.

S, Toni Morrison is an well-known American novelist, essayist, editor, teacher and professor emeritus at Princeton University. An acclaimed novelist and literary critic, Toni Morrison is dedicated to exploring and exposing the black experience. She is also the first African-American woman to receive the Nobel Prize in Literature. She wrote four novels, all dealing with various aspects of the black experience in America. *Sula* was published in 1973, *Song of Solomon* followed in 1977, and in 1981, she released *Tar Baby*. All three garnered critical acclaim and raised her profile as a writer, but it was

Beloved, published in 1987, that really cemented her position as one of America's most important literary voices, fetch her Pulitzer Prize and the American Book Award in 1988. The central theme of Morrison's novels is the black American experience; in an unjust society, her characters struggle to find themselves and their cultural identity.

Her use of fantasy, her sinuous poetic style, and her rich interweaving of the mythic gave her stories great strength and texture.

Chloe L Sell says, Morrison offers a view of gender disparity through race in *The Bluest Eye*, showing that black women and girls are doubly oppressed because of their race and gender. Pecola is a triple victim, because she is young, black and female. The society has identified the woman as a person who belongs to the fairer sex. It is equal to say that a female is perceived by the society from the point of view of sex. Males and females co-exist in this society for the harmonious growth and development of the nation. They share equal responsibilities in supporting the family but at the same time gender difference occurs even in the family. Females play a vital role in the reproduction process and still they are labeled as the second sex or the weaker sex. (Spivak's theory of subalternity) De Beauvoir says: Thus humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him: she is not regarded as an autonomous being The body of man makes sense in itself quite apart from that of woman, whereas the latter seems waiting in significance by itself Man can think of himself without woman. She cannot think of herself without man. And she is simply what man decrees: thus she is called the sex , by which is meant that she appears essentially to the male as a sexual being.

For him she is sex absolute sex, no less. She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute she is the Other (16). In this novel, Pecola is the central character where she was highly humiliated by malefolks because of her colour and also being as a girl. She was ashamed by her schoolmates, where all boys surrounded her and spoke filth about her. These boys would tease her like, Black e mo. Black e mo. Yadaddsleepsnekked. Black e mo black e mo ya dadd sleeps nekked. Black e mo (The Bluest Eye) She was also treated as untouchable by the shopkeeper because of her dark colour, where he shows his complete distaste upon the girl, Pecola. She holds the money toward him. He hesitates, not wanting to touch her hand... Outside, Pecola feels the inexplicable shame ebb. (The Bluest Eye) Geraldine also mentions Pecola as black bitch when she is put to blame of killing her cat.

Get out. You nasty little black bitch. (The Bluest Eye) Cholly, Pecola's dad had started his physical desire from his childhood, where he sexually assaulted the girl named Darlene. Even after marrying Pauline, he didn't alter his desire of sexual gratification a bit. He married her for his sexual pleasure and used her to fulfill his needs and brutally attacked her several times. He never considered her as a humanbeing and his only work was to drink and have merry. Her mother also beats Pecola whenever she was high or in stress. Despite all, being her own father, Cholly abused and molested her own daughter and she was impregnated by him. Chloe L Sell says, Pecola's and Darlene's right to security of person/freedom from sexual violence is violated when Cholly rapes them. Because of this, they no longer

have control over their bodies. Actually it is doubtful as to whether Pecola ever had control of her body. Her mother constantly abuses her, her father uses her as sexual property, and the state forces her to have a baby born of incest. This is taking away her bodily autonomy.

Not only by white folks, she was even more criticized and humiliated by her own community people for Pecola being extremely dark, which heightens the tragedy. She be lucky if it don't live. Bound to be the ugliest thing walking.... Ought to be a law: two ugly people doubling up like that to make more ugly. Be better off in the ground. (The Bluest Eye) These unceasing wounds and tortures by her surroundings made her discomfort and she yearned for blue eyes, which according to Pecola and the society are very pretty, lovely and beautiful. The society and the surroundings where she lived made her think so. On the process of longing and converting for blue eyes, she became mad at last.

Frieda and Claudia are the friends of Pecola. They also belong to black community of Pecola. Even they confronted whips and beatings from their mother for two reasons.

Besides, she can't do nothing but whip us...She wouldn't kill us, or laugh a terrible laugh at us, or throw a bottle at us.(The Bluest Eye) This shows that they are usually prone to these thrashings. These girls are also faced sexual abuse by Soaphead church and by Henry, mainly affected by Frieda where she explains this to her sister, Claudia in the novel. First he said how pretty I was. Then he grabbed my arm and touched me. (The Bluest Eye) Even though Pecola and these girls faced more or less similar issues, their way of

approaching the life and the world seem to be different. Though these girls, Frieda and Claudia also had issues for being born as blacks, never tried to go the extent of changing the colour of the eyes into blue as Pecola did. A little black girl yearns for the blue eyes of a little white girl, and the horror at the heart of her yearning is exceeded only by the evil of fulfillment. (The Bluest Eye) Ms. Marie, China and Poland are prostitutes who live in the house upstairs to Pecola's house. They are alienated and disregarded by the society. They were driven to this kind of job because of the male folks as they left these girls astray without any concern after having used them.

Rajni Bala says, Commercial sex in the form of three black prostitutes, China, Poland and Miss Marie, forms an important part of the collage of sexuality in the black community being described in The Bluest Eye. Living on the margin of society, these women have banded themselves together and represent reverse exploitation. The society where they live is so cruel and selfish, where men are dominative and women are subjugated. This, ultimately lead their life into full of sorrows, humiliation by losing their chastity that tends to move them to the edge of their society.