

Toni morrison's the bluest eye

Literature



3 July Who narrates the italicized section *Quiet* as it's kept, there were no marigolds in the fall of 1941. What other sections does this voice narrate? What sorts of connections are made with the failed seeds? How does this image of seeds that won't bloom suggest the principal themes of the novel? Claudia Macteer narrates the italicized section. The failed seeds represent the lack of growth of human beings, because of their racial discrimination and self-loathing, and the emotional and spiritual death that accompanies these attitudes and actions. The seeds will not bloom, because several characters cannot accept who they are, especially when the rest of society keeps discriminating against black people. Moreover, the seeds of hope inside Pecola also failed to bloom and died. She wanted "the bluest eye," but she never truly gets it. Life serves her different and numerous challenges that obstruct her way to happiness and finding her identity, until she becomes insane.

§ What is the meaning of "the bluest eye"? How does Morrison establish the sense of racial self-loathing that the girls are learning? How do Claudia's dolls contribute to that sense? Shirley Temple? What evidence of racial self-hatred do you find in Maureen Peal? in Geraldine? in Soaphead? [See Morrison's comment on why she wrote this novel in the "Afterword" (209-210).

The bluest eyes signify the ideal form of beauty. Pecola believes that if she has the bluest eyes, her parents will love her more and stop fighting. It means that they can have a happy family, and she will feel loved and cherished. Pecola also knows that if she has the bluest eyes, other students and neighbors will stop making fun of her and her ugliness. If her eyes were blue, she will earn society's respect and admiration. These feelings and wishes show her self-loathing, because of the differences between the ideal

self and the real self. It illustrates the harmful effects of a racist society on black girls, who do not fit ideal notions of beauty.

Morrison establishes the sense of racial self-loathing through the symbols and personalities that Claudia and Pecola love and loathe, and how characters see and treat other colored people. Claudia hates Shirley Temple and similar icons, while Pecola loves them. These symbols represent white beauty and power that assail their sense of self-worth and self-esteem.

Maureen hates her race too, because she is a bully to her own kind. She uses her beauty and lighter skin to command respect and to earn love, while bullying darker-skinned girls like Pecola. Geraldine also expresses self-hatred by showing anger and violence against “ niggers” (Morrison 87). For her, colored people are different from the niggers: “ Colored people were neat and quiet; niggers were dirty and loud...The line between colored and nigger was not always clear; subtle and telltale signs threatened to erode it, and the watch had to be constant” (Morrison 87). Soaphead shows self-hatred, through molesting black girls. His pedophilia comes from his intense belief that he is better because his black skin is lighter than other black people.

Work Cited

Morrison, Toni. *The Bluest Eye*. New York: Plume, 1994. Print.