
The Bluest Eye By Toni Morrison: A Life Changing Challenge Of Pecola

Many people experience some kind of a challenge, or an extreme struggle in their lifetime, and often it can change their life entirely. Often, their journey also reveals the values of their community, and the society they live in. In Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, many characters suffer a life changing challenge, but none more than Pecola. Pecola's unsuccessful, extreme struggle to integrate herself into her community reveals how society is irrationally biased against her, and it shows how all societies make quick decisions on people, and specifically races, instead of slow, logical, moral thinking. Pecola wanting to feel beautiful, desire to be accepted and struggle for a positive self-image are all refused irrationally by her stubborn, uneducated community on a basis of hatred and prejudice, despite it not being a morally good or logical decision. The society in *The Bluest Eye*, like most societies, tells and shows people of colour like Pecola that they are not beautiful, due to a lack of representation in media all based on hate driven race prejudice, and coloured people like Pecola thus often unjustly feel ugly.

The qualities of 'black' and ugly' are constantly associated with one another despite it being unfair and untrue. This is clearly evident during the course of the novel, but never more than when Maureen says to Pecola "You ugly! Black and ugly!" (Morrison 73). Society has black and ugly intertwined, as well as completely ingrained in their brains, and thus Pecola strongly feels this as well, and this ends up strongly negatively affecting her. Pecola is constantly told and shown what society thinks is beautiful - everything she is not. Without doing any moral thinking and just jumping to a conclusion, "Everyone in the world had agreed that a blue eyed, yellow haired, pink skinned doll was what every girl child treasured" (20). Pecola possess none of these qualities, because society decided on beauty standards solely based upon race, despite this being clearly immoral. This constant impossibility to fit society's beauty standards due to being a different race hurts Pecola so much that she ends up believing she needs to change to be beautiful. Since Pecola's race prohibits her from fitting society's ideals, and thus the following travesty occurs; "Pretty eyes. Pretty blue eyes ... each night she prayed for blue eyes" (46). It is unfair to a young child, or any person of colour, that society is so prejudiced against them that they feel they must change to feel beautiful, and yet this only occurs because society makes a decision too quickly without any thinking. Pecola's struggle to feel beautiful is irrationally refused by a hateful society, clear evidence of how a community makes decisions of race too quickly. Pecola also wants to be accepted by her prejudiced community, yet her biased society turns her away without any moral thinking that skin color was not her choice.

Pecola, like all people of colour, are unfairly disadvantaged from birth due to hate-driven race

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prejudice. This is most obvious when a white child's mother "did not want him to play with him to play with niggers. She had explained to him the difference between people and niggers ... people were neat and quiet, niggers were dirty and loud" (Morrison 87). It is clear that the mother of this white boy, like most of society made a rash decision on all people of colour, that they are 'niggers,' dirty and loud, not taking a moment to think that race was not a choice, that it is wrong to judge a person based on race, and thus Pecola like all people of colour cannot be accepted despite their skin colour not being a choice they made. This hateful reject influences everyone in society so much, including Pecola who feels that she needs to change to be accepted. In a conversation with a church official, Pecola tells him about her eyes; "My eyes. " "What about your eyes?" "I want them blue" (Morrison 174).

Despite Pecola's eye colour, like her race, not being a choice, her community decided that she needs to have a different eye colour, an illusion for race, to be accepted, despite how awful this is. This even gets worse, with Pecola, again like most of colour, being completely excluded so the immoral people who decided on the race stereotypes can feel included and live with their insecurities. At the end of the novel, Claudia laments how Pecola let everyone else feel better about themselves; "We were so beautiful when we stood astride her ugliness. Her simplicity decorated us, her guilt sanctified us, her pain made us glow with health, her awkwardness made us think we had a sense of humor" (205). Pecola's village has dump all of their problems on her to make themselves feel better, but for no reason, she never wanted to have these problems and as a result she never fits in with her peers. Overall, Pecola is excluded from her community like most people of colour, based only on the colour of their skin and nothing else, showing how society makes decisions on entire races too quickly. Pecola desires to have a strong self-image and confidence in herself, but her society is driven by hate against her race, so she accepts her so-believed 'fate' in shame and timidness. Society associates and intertwines beauty and happiness, or a positive self-image, despite it not being true. Especially for people of colour who never match the standards set by society, hearing that "This [white doll] is beautiful ... and if you are worthy [happy] you may have it" (Morrison 21). The fact that society decided to attribute physical with happiness is immoral, and worse when this applies specifically to people of colour. Prejudiced society judges too quickly, insensitive to the problems of people of colour, and do not even attempt to understand the problems they go through just for the colour of their skin. "People frowned and hussed ... 'I never had a baby doll in my whole life and used to cry my eyes out for them.

Now you got a beautiful one and you tear it up what's wrong with you?" (21). Claudia, a person of colour like Pecola struggles with the overrepresentation of white beauty in the media, but not a person cares for it. As for Pecola, in the end society actually decided to prohibit Pecola from having a good self-image from the start solely because of her skin colour. Through the words of Claudia; "All of our waste which we dumped on her and which she absorbed. And all of our beauty, which was hers first and which she gave to us" (205). In the case of Pecola, like so

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many people of colour, society does not even let her feel good about herself since they quickly judged her of the colour of her skin rather than, in the immortal words of Martin Luther King, 'the content of their character. ' Society disallowing Pecola to have a good self image is clear evidence of how society judges people, races, too quickly. Pecola's struggle to merge into society reveals how society is people are irrationally biased against her race and it shows how all societies make quick decisions on people instead of slow, logical, moral thinking. Pecola attempts to feel beautiful, but society decided because of her race she can not be beautiful. Pecola tries to be accepted in her community, but society judges her because of the colour of her skin.

Finally, her society denies her a good self-image because she was judged too quickly. These are all clearly immoral, and clear proof of how people judge other people too quickly because of their race. This happens not only to Pecola in *The Bluest Eye*, but to thousands and millions of people a year around the world judged by the colour of their skin. Society needs to take the time to do some thinking and judge people morally, or coloured people will continue to suffer being judged unfairly and treated as such.

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