



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

The Bluest Eye: Internalized Racism, Beauty Standards, and the Dehumanization of Black Girlhood

Mubasheera kasim*, Vijayakumari Narayana samy

Department of English, Vels Institute of Science, Technology and Advanced Studies (VISTAS), Chennai, India

Abstract

Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970) presents a harrowing exploration of how racialized beauty standards and systemic oppression shape Black identity, particularly through the tragic life of Pecola Breedlove. Set in 1940s America, the novel critiques the psychological impact of internalized racism, colorism, and societal beauty norms that position whiteness as the ultimate standard of desirability and worth. Through the contrasting perspectives of Pecola and Claudia, Morrison illustrates how white-dominated aesthetics lead to self-hatred, alienation, and the erasure of Black girlhood. This study examines the novel's intersectional themes of race, gender, class, and trauma using Black feminist criticism, psychoanalytic theory, and postcolonial discourse. The paper explores how *The Bluest Eye* deconstructs Eurocentric ideals of beauty, exposes the sexual and racial violence inflicted on Black girls, and critiques the complicity of both white supremacy and internalized anti-Blackness within Black communities. Employing close textual analysis alongside Black feminist, psychoanalytic, and postcolonial frameworks, this study argues that Morrison's nonlinear narrative and fragmented storytelling reflect the psychological fractures of her characters, reinforcing the novel's central argument: that systemic racism does not merely oppress Black individuals—it erases them. The study concludes that, through Pecola's tragic fate, Morrison forces readers to confront the consequences of a society that refuses to see Black girls as worthy of love, protection, or humanity, and that such literary representation carries urgent contemporary relevance.

Keywords

Internalized Racism (IR), Beauty Standards, Black Girlhood, Sexual and Racial Violence, Colorism, Toni Morrison

1. Introduction

Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970) is a profound exploration of the psychological destruction inflicted upon Black identity through racialized beauty standards. Set in 1940s America, the novel follows Pecola Breedlove, a young Black girl who

internalizes society's equation of whiteness with beauty, longing for blue eyes as a means of attaining love, acceptance, and worth. Morrison dissects how institutionalized racism operates within the most intimate spaces of Black life, exposing how beauty

norms, family dysfunction, and societal rejection intersect to erode the self-worth of Black girls. Through Pecola's tragic descent into madness, Morrison confronts the violent consequences of a world that denies Blackness both aesthetic and human value.

The novel is deeply informed by Black feminist thought, particularly the works of bell hooks and Audre Lorde, who argue that mainstream beauty standards serve as instruments of white supremacy, alienating Black women and girls from self-acceptance. The concept of beauty, traditionally framed as an apolitical and aesthetic concern, is revealed to be a potent mechanism of racial and gendered oppression. Morrison illustrates how these standards do not simply exist in abstract cultural discourse; they are violently enforced, shaping the lived realities of Black women in ways that determine their access to love, security, and even basic human dignity [2-4].

Morrison contrasts the responses of two central characters—Pecola and Claudia—to these oppressive beauty norms. Pecola, subjected to relentless devaluation by her family, community, and larger society, passively absorbs the message that Blackness is synonymous with ugliness. Her longing for blue eyes signifies her desire not simply to be seen as beautiful but to be visible as a person deserving of love and care. Claudia, on the other hand, offers a counter-narrative of resistance, rejecting the racial hierarchy of beauty imposed upon her. Her disdain for the white dolls gifted to her as a child and her anger at Shirley Temple's idealization signify an unformed but instinctual rejection of assimilation. Through these contrasting trajectories, Morrison examines the psychological consequences of internalized racism—how some succumb to its dictates while others fight against them [1, 7].

This research paper seeks to explore three primary areas within *The Bluest Eye*: first, the psychological consequences of internalized racism, particularly how beauty standards function as a form of social control that fractures Black identity; second, the role of the Black family in either reinforcing or resisting these white-centric ideals, particularly through Pauline Breedlove's worship of white femininity and its damaging impact on Pecola; and third, the novel's broader critique of the dehumanization of Black girlhood, as seen in Pecola's sexual victimization and society's utter indifference to her suffering.

By analyzing the novel through psychoanalytic

theory, postcolonial criticism, and Black feminist thought, this study argues that Morrison not only exposes the destructive impact of Eurocentric beauty ideals but also underscores the urgent need for self-definition and cultural reclamation within Black communities. She forces readers to question the seemingly innocent structures—advertisements, media, dolls, and fairy tales—that perpetuate racial hierarchies, showing how beauty, far from being a neutral or subjective concept, is a site of power and oppression. Ultimately, Morrison's novel is not just about Pecola's suffering; it is about the cultural conditions that make such suffering inevitable. Through *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison challenges us to reimagine beauty outside the framework of whiteness, asserting the necessity of affirming Blackness in all its forms [2, 5, 6].

2. The Psychological Consequences of Internalized Racism in *The Bluest Eye*

Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* dissects the devastating impact of internalized racism, showing how the Black psyche is shaped and wounded by a society that equates whiteness with desirability and worth. At the heart of the novel is Pecola Breedlove, a young Black girl who absorbs these dehumanizing messages, believing that only by obtaining blue eyes can she be loved and valued. Morrison portrays Pecola's psychological deterioration as the inevitable result of a system that erases Black identity, replacing it with self-loathing [1, 7].

2.1. Beauty as a Mechanism of Oppression: The Violence of White Standards

The novel establishes early on that beauty is not merely an aesthetic preference but a tool of social control. White femininity, as epitomized by Figures like Shirley Temple, is portrayed as the ultimate standard of desirability, while Blackness is synonymous with ugliness and undesirability. Morrison's critique of these standards emerges through various cultural markers: [2, 3].

Dolls and Media Representations: Claudia, as a child, instinctively rejects the white dolls she is given, feeling anger instead of admiration. She dismembers them, sensing the ideological violence behind their presence in her life. Pecola, in contrast, worships white beauty, believing in its [1, 9] transformative power.

Pauline Breedlove's Hollywood Fantasy:

Pecola's mother, Pauline, idolizes the beauty of white actresses, absorbing and perpetuating the very standards that oppress her. She internalizes her own ugliness, which she then projects onto her daughter.

Community Reinforcement: Even within the Black community, beauty is measured by proximity to whiteness. Maureen Peal, a light-skinned girl with green eyes, is adored while Pecola is mocked and shunned. The division between "beautiful" and "ugly" Blackness reveals the insidious nature of internalized racism, which forces Black people to police each other based on colorist ideals [9, 10].

Morrison illustrates that white-centric beauty ideals are not simply individual preferences but deeply entrenched in social structures, shaping Black self-perception from childhood. By showing how these values are absorbed, reinforced, and weaponized, she exposes the psychological violence inherent in racialized aesthetics [2, 3].

2.2. Pecola's Descent: The Psychological Impact of Self-Hatred

Pecola's belief that blue eyes will make her lovable is a symptom of deep psychological trauma, illustrating how internalized racism fractures identity. Throughout the novel, she encounters relentless rejection: [6-8].

2.2.1. Her Own Family's Rejection

Pecola's parents, Pauline and Cholly Breedlove, are trapped in their own cycles of self-hatred and abuse. Pauline projects her frustrations onto Pecola, while Cholly—unable to love due to his own trauma—eventually becomes her greatest source of violation. In one of the novel's most heartbreaking moments, Pauline chooses her white employer's daughter over Pecola, reinforcing that whiteness is associated with care and tenderness, while Blackness—even within one's own child—is associated with unworthiness [1, 12].

2.2.2. Community and Peer Rejection

Pecola is bullied and ostracized not only by white society but also by her own Black community. The

lighter-skinned Maureen Peal treats her with condescension, while the local boys, taught to equate beauty with whiteness, torment her. This rejection underscores that racism is not only an external force but an internalized disease, dividing the Black community along lines of color and desirability [9, 10].

2.2.3. Madness as an Escape from Reality

By the novel's end, Pecola retreats into a delusion, believing she has acquired the blue eyes she so desperately desired. Morrison presents this descent into madness as a psychological defence mechanism—when the external world offers no validation, the mind creates its own illusions. Her imagined blue eyes do not bring her happiness; instead, they isolate her further. She speaks to herself in fragmented conversations, mirroring the dissociative effects of extreme trauma [6, 7].

2.3. Claudia as a Counter-Narrative: Resistance to Internalized Racism

While Pecola succumbs to internalized self-hatred, Claudia MacTeer represents an alternate response—resistance and defiance. Unlike Pecola, Claudia instinctively rejects white beauty norms, destroying her white dolls rather than worshipping them. She refuses to view Shirley Temple and Maureen Peal as superior and questions why whiteness is considered the pinnacle of beauty [1, 15].

- 1) Unlike Pecola, Claudia is raised in a stable household, where her parents, though strict, provide a foundation of love and survival. Morrison implies that Black familial strength can serve as a buffer against racist beauty standards, helping to counteract their psychological impact.
- 2) Claudia does not long for blue eyes or white skin but instead critiques the structures that enforce such desires. Her anger—though not yet fully articulated—is the seed of Black feminist resistance, an early assertion that Blackness should not be measured against whiteness [2, 3].

While Pecola's arc represents the tragic consequences of internalized racism, Claudia's narrative offers hope that beauty standards, though powerful, can be resisted through conscious rejection and communal affirmation of Black identity [2, 13].

Table 1. Contrasting Psychological Responses to Internalized Racism in The Bluest Eye.

Character	Response to White Beauty Ideals	Psychological Consequences	Symbolism in the Novel
Pecola Breedlove	Desires blue eyes, equates whiteness with worth	Falls into self-hatred and eventually madness	Represents the most extreme consequence of internalized racism
Pauline Breedlove	Worships white Hollywood beauty, rejects her own identity	Reinforces racism in her own family, emotionally neglects Pecola	Symbolizes how Black parents pass down white beauty standards
Claudia MacTeer	Rejects white beauty, resents Shirley Temple	Develops early Black consciousness, resists internalized racism	Represents the potential for self-definition and resistance

Through these contrasting trajectories, Morrison reveals that internalized racism is not a fixed fate—while some, like Pecola and Pauline, succumb to its pressures, others, like Claudia, fight back, challenging the narrative that whiteness is the only measure of worth.

3. The Role of the Black Family: Reinforcing or Resisting White Beauty Ideals

In *The Bluest Eye*, Toni Morrison explores how the Black family—both as a nurturing force and as a site of inherited trauma—plays a crucial role in either reinforcing or resisting white-dominated beauty standards. While family structures can offer protection against internalized racism, they can also become spaces where self-hatred is passed down through generations. The Breedlove and MacTeer families serve as contrasting models, demonstrating how parental influence shapes Black children's perception of self-worth and beauty [11, 12].

3.1. The Breedlove Family: A Legacy of Self-Hatred and Destruction

The Breedlove household is dominated by violence, alienation, and emotional neglect, making it an environment where Pecola's internalized self-loathing festers. Morrison presents this family as a

tragic example of how racism deforms Black identity—not just externally but within the home [1, 7].

3.1.1. Pauline Breedlove: A Mother Who Rejects Her Own Child

Pauline, Pecola's mother, has fully internalized white beauty ideals, idolizing Hollywood actresses while considering herself and her family inherently ugly. Her job as a housekeeper for a white family provides a stark contrast—she dotes on her white employer's daughter while neglecting Pecola, reinforcing to her own child that whiteness is deserving of care while Blackness is not. Her refusal to nurture Pecola reflects a larger historical reality, where Black mothers, often subjected to servitude, were forced to prioritize white families over their own. Morrison critiques this dynamic, showing how racism forces Black women into roles that devalue their maternal bonds [9, 13].

3.1.2. Cholly Breedlove: The Role of Black Male Trauma in Family Dysfunction

Cholly is a deeply traumatized and broken man, having endured humiliating sexual violence at the hands of white oppressors during his youth. Rather than directing his rage toward the white system that dehumanized him, he inflicts it on his family, beating Pauline and ultimately raping Pecola—one of the

most harrowing moments in the novel. Morrison presents Cholly as a victim of systemic racism, but she does not absolve him of his cruelty. His actions demonstrate how Black masculinity, when stripped of power in a racist society, can turn inward, harming those most vulnerable [5, 6].

3.1.3. The Breedlove Home: A Symbol of Deprivation

Morrison describes the Breedlove house as ugly and neglected, mirroring the emotional emptiness within the family. Unlike the MacTeers, who struggle financially but maintain love and structure, the Breedloves have succumbed entirely to generational cycles of oppression, making it impossible for Pecola to develop self-worth.

Ultimately, Morrison illustrates how the absence of parental affirmation and the internalization of white standards within the home can psychologically destroy Black children, as seen in Pecola’s tragic fate [1, 11].

3.2. The MacTeer Family: Love as a Shield Against Racism

In contrast to the Breedloves, the MacTeer family represents resilience and survival, showing how Black parental affirmation can serve as protection against the destructive effects of white beauty standards.

3.2.1. Parental Toughness and Love

Claudia and Frieda’s parents, though strict, pro-

vide a foundation of care and structure. Unlike Pauline, who lavishes affection on a white child while ignoring Pecola, Mrs. MacTeer prioritizes her own daughters’ well-being. This protective love, though not always gentle, ensures that Claudia does not internalize the same self-hatred that consumes Pecola [1, 14].

3.2.2. Claudia’s Defiance as a Product of Family Support

While Pecola passively absorbs messages of inferiority, Claudia actively resists them, refusing to admire white dolls or accept white beauty as the norm. Unlike Pecola, who is abandoned emotionally, Claudia has a familial foundation that allows her to question societal norms rather than succumb to them [1, 2].

3.2.3. Sisterhood and Collective Resistance

Unlike Pecola, who faces bullying and isolation, Claudia and Frieda support one another, demonstrating the power of Black female solidarity in resisting racial oppression. Their attempt to save Pecola by planting marigolds—hoping they will bloom as a symbol of Pecola’s survival—underscores their belief in the possibility of change, even in the face of systemic injustice [2, 13].

Through the MacTeers, Morrison suggests that while racist beauty standards pervade Black communities, they do not have to be accepted. Love, self-definition, and cultural pride can serve as antidotes to the psychological destruction seen in the Breedlove family.

Table 2. Contrasting Family Structures in The Bluest Eye.

Family	Parental Attitude Toward Beauty & Identity	Impact on Child’s Psyche	Symbolism in the Novel
Breedlove Family	Internalizes white beauty standards, rejects Blackness	Leads to Pecola’s self-hatred and ultimate breakdown	Represents the generational damage of internalized racism
MacTeer Family	Encourages strength, provides structure and care	Fosters Claudia’s abil-	Symbolizes Black resilience and survival

Family	Parental Attitude Toward Beauty & Identity	Impact on Child's Psyche	Symbolism in the Novel
		ity to resist racial oppression	

Through these contrasting family structures, Morrison reveals that internalized racism is not an inevitable fate—it can be either perpetuated or challenged within the home.

3.3. The Role of the Black Community: Complicity or Support

While the novel focuses on individual families, Morrison also critiques the broader Black community, showing how it can either reinforce or resist white beauty norms [9, 10].

Maureen Peal and Colorism: Lighter-skinned and admired, Maureen embodies how colorism operates within the Black community, creating hierarchies of desirability.

Gossip and Scapegoating: Instead of protecting Pecola, the Black community ridicules and ostracizes her, making her a scapegoat for its own internalized insecurities.

Soaphead Church and Predatory Figures: A self-hating Black man who exploits Pecola's desperation, Soaphead represents how certain Figures within the community reinforce white supremacist ideals rather than uplift their own people.

Despite this, Morrison also hints at resistance and healing, as seen through Claudia and Frieda's compassion and their symbolic attempt to restore life through the marigolds.

In *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison shows that the Black family and community serve as the first sites where racial identity is shaped. When these structures internalize white beauty standards, children like Pecola suffer irreparable psychological damage. However, when they affirm Blackness, like the MacTeers do, they offer a foundation for resistance and self-love.

Morrison ultimately argues that racism is not only enforced by external white institutions—it is also perpetuated within Black spaces through colorism, generational trauma, and the failure to counteract white supremacist beauty standards. Healing, there-

fore, must begin within Black communities themselves, through the cultivation of self-worth, cultural affirmation, and intergenerational support [4, 13].

4. The Dehumanization of Black Girlhood: Sexual and Racial Violence

Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* [16] provides a searing critique of how Black girlhood is stripped of innocence, protection, and humanity due to the combined forces of racism, sexism, and class oppression. Pecola Breedlove, the novel's tragic protagonist, is a victim not only of white beauty standards and colorism but also of sexual violence and communal neglect. Morrison exposes how these intersecting forms of oppression render Black girls invisible, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation and erasure. Through Pecola's fate, Morrison underscores how societal structures normalize and perpetuate the dehumanization of Black girls, reinforcing the tragic reality that they are often unprotected, unvalued, and unheard [1, 2, 4].

4.1. The Denial of Childhood Innocence: Black Girls as the "Unprotected"

One of Morrison's most powerful critiques in *The Bluest Eye* is how Black girlhood is denied the protection and innocence that white girlhood is afforded. Black girls, unlike their white counterparts, are often seen as miniature adults rather than children, making them susceptible to hypersexualization, neglect, and abuse [2, 3, 13].

4.1.1. The Doll Test and the Construction of Black Inferiority

Morrison uses the white baby doll as a symbol of racialized beauty and childhood innocence. Claudia's destruction of the doll represents a subconscious rejection of the idea that only white children are lovable. Pecola, in contrast, internalizes these ideals, believing that blue eyes would grant her

beauty, worth, and love. Morrison critiques how white beauty standards function as psychological violence against Black girls, forcing them to see themselves as defective and undesirable [1, 9].

4.1.2. Maureen Peal and the Hierarchy of Beauty

Maureen Peal, a lighter-skinned, wealthier Black girl, is treated with admiration and preference, highlighting how colorism reinforces social stratification within Black communities. Pecola, darker-skinned and poor, is mocked, dismissed, and rendered invisible. Morrison demonstrates that it is not just whiteness but proximity to whiteness that determines worth in a racist society [5, 10].

4.1.3. Sexualization of Black Girls: The Absence of Protection

White girls in the novel, such as Shirley Temple and the idealized dolls, represent purity and virtue, while Black girls are seen as inherently sexual and disposable. Geraldine, an upper-class Black woman, reflects this internalized racism by rejecting "dirty" Black girls like Pecola. Her hatred reflects the societal complicity in erasing Black girlhood by perpetuating racist stereotypes [2-4].

Morrison's critique is clear: Black girls are denied the right to childhood. Instead of being seen as innocent, they are objectified, ridiculed, and discarded, making them vulnerable to further victimization.

4.2. Incest and Rape as the Ultimate Violation: The Tragedy of Cholly and Pecola

One of the most disturbing moments in *The Bluest Eye* is Cholly Breedlove's rape of Pecola, an act that Morrison presents not as an isolated crime but as the inevitable outcome of a system that has already destroyed both father and daughter [1, 5, 7].

4.2.1. Cholly Breedlove: A Man Broken by White Supremacy

Cholly's trauma begins in his youth when white men force him to perform sex with a girl while they watch, an act that robs him of dignity, autonomy, and self-worth. Morrison does not excuse Cholly's actions but highlights how Black men, dehumanized by racism, often turn their anger and pain inward, directing it toward those closest to them rather than the real oppressors [5, 6].

4.2.2. Pecola's Rape: A Double Erasure

Pecola, already abandoned by society, is further victimized when her father rapes and impregnates her, solidifying her status as utterly unprotected. Morrison presents the rape not as a moment of violence but as an inevitability—a culmination of generational trauma, systemic oppression, and gendered powerlessness. Pecola's pregnancy does not prompt sympathy or intervention; instead, it leads to further alienation and ridicule [1, 7].

4.2.3. The Symbolism of the Marigolds: Hope that Never Blooms

Claudia and Frieda's belief that planting marigolds will "save" Pecola's baby reflects childlike hope in the possibility of justice. When the marigolds fail to bloom, Morrison makes it painfully clear that Black girls like Pecola are not given the chance to flourish. The marigolds symbolize Pecola's unborn potential, stifled by a society that refuses to nurture her. Through Pecola's sexual victimization and ensuing psychological collapse, Morrison critiques how Black women and girls are often viewed as expendable, rather than individuals deserving of protection and dignity [2, 13].

4.3. The Role of the Community: The Silence That Kills

One of Morrison's most devastating indictments in *The Bluest Eye* is that Pecola is not just destroyed by white standards of beauty but by the failure of her own community to protect her. Instead of rallying around her, the Black community uses her as a scapegoat, distancing themselves from their own internalized pain [1, 7].

4.3.1. Pecola as the Community's Outcast

Because Pecola is already seen as ugly, poor, and unwanted, her rape and pregnancy are treated as confirmation of her worthlessness rather than tragedies. Instead of challenging racism and oppression, the community directs its frustration, shame, and fear onto Pecola. Morrison exposes how oppressed communities sometimes mirror the cruelty of their oppressors, perpetuating their own internalized self-hatred [5, 7].

4.3.2. Soaphead Church and the False Promise of

Transformation

Pecola’s last attempt at salvation comes when she turns to Soaphead Church, a self-loathing Black man who claims to possess divine powers. Instead of helping Pecola, he manipulates her suffering, telling her she now has blue eyes, further disconnecting her from reality. Morrison critiques how false leaders within Black communities exploit the weak instead

of uplifting them, reinforcing cycles of abuse and disillusionment [9, 10].

By allowing Pecola to descend into madness, the community does not merely fail her—it erases her completely. Morrison forces the reader to confront a harsh reality: Pecola’s fate was not inevitable, but it was enabled by silence, neglect, and the refusal to protect Black girlhood.

Table 3. *The Systemic Erasure of Black Girlhood in The Bluest Eye.*

Oppressor	Mechanism of Erasure	Impact on Pecola
White Beauty Standards	Defines Blackness as ugly and undesirable	Pecola internalizes self-hatred and longs for blue eyes
Colorism and Classism	Positions light-skinned Black girls as superior	Pecola is socially ostracized while Maureen Peal is celebrated
Sexual Violence	Black girls are hypersexualized and denied childhood innocence	Pecola is raped and receives no justice
Community Neglect	Internalized racism causes Black people to turn against their own	Pecola is ignored, mocked, and ultimately driven to madness

Through these overlapping forces of oppression, Morrison reveals that Pecola’s fate is not just an individual tragedy—it is a societal failure that continues to repeat itself.

Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye* ultimately forces readers to confront the ways in which racism, misogyny, and generational trauma intersect to erase Black girlhood. Pecola’s destruction is not an accident—it is the logical outcome of a world that refuses to see Black girls as human. Through painful, unflinching storytelling, Morrison delivers a devastating critique of the silence, complicity, and systemic neglect that continue to rob Black girls of their worth, their agency, and their lives.

5. Conclusion

Toni Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye* [16] is an unrelenting critique of how systemic racism, colorism, sexual violence, and community complicity converge to erase Black girlhood. Pecola Breedlove’s tragic fate is not simply a personal downfall but a reflection of a society that refuses to recognize the humanity of Black girls. Through her character, Morrison illustrates the devastating psychological consequences of internalized white beauty standards, the

weaponization of colorism within Black communities, and the inescapable burden of generational trauma. The novel does not offer easy redemption—Pecola’s descent into madness serves as a stark reminder that, without societal and communal intervention, Black girls will continue to be sacrificed to the very systems that oppress them [1, 2, 7].

Morrison’s masterful use of nonlinear narration, shifting perspectives, and haunting imagery reinforces the cyclical nature of trauma and the way in which oppression is perpetuated through silence and neglect. Pecola’s longing for blue eyes, a desire that symbolizes her belief that whiteness equates to visibility, is a tragic distortion of self-worth—one imposed upon her by a world that tells her she is ugly, unworthy, and invisible. The fact that her suffering is met with indifference, cruelty, and ultimately erasure underscores Morrison’s central argument: racism does not merely marginalize Black children—it robs them of their very existence [1, 9].

Yet, within the novel’s bleakness, Morrison plants the seeds of resistance. Through Claudia MacTeer, Morrison offers a counter-narrative—one that rejects white beauty standards, affirms Black identity, and acknowledges the possibility of self-definition.

Claudia's defiant rejection of white dolls and her ability to critique the forces that destroy Pecola suggest that liberation begins with recognizing and dismantling the ideals that uphold oppression. While Pecola succumbs to the psychological violence inflicted upon her, Claudia represents the potential for survival, for creating a new reality where Blackness is not synonymous with erasure but with power and self-love [2, 3, 13].

Ultimately, *The Bluest Eye* is a call to action—a demand that society reckon with the ways in which it fails Black girls, not just in the past but in the present. Morrison forces her readers to confront the ugly truths about race, gender, and beauty, refusing to offer comfort in place of truth. Pecola's suffering may be irreversible, but Morrison leaves readers with the responsibility of ensuring that her story is never repeated. By challenging hegemonic ideals of beauty, reclaiming Black self-worth, and fostering communities that protect rather than destroy their most vulnerable members, Morrison argues that Black girlhood can be restored, valued, and, most importantly, saved [2, 4, 13].

Morrison's novel is a radical interrogation of oppression, identity, and survival, demanding that we not only mourn Pecola's fate but actively work to dismantle the structures that made it inevitable. *The Bluest Eye* remains an essential literary work—one that forces us to question, to challenge, and most importantly, to change [1, 5, 14, 15].

Abbreviations

IR	Internalized Racism
VISTAS	Vels Institute of Science, Technology and Advanced Studies

Author Contributions

Mubasheera Kasim: Conceptualization, Formal Analysis, Investigation, Writing – original draft

Vijayakumari Narayana samy: Methodology, Supervision, Writing – review & editing, Resources

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

References

[1] Morrison, T. *The Bluest Eye*. New York: Holt,

Rinehart, and Winston, 1970.

- [2] Bouson, J. B. *Quiet as It's Kept: Shame, Trauma, and Race in the Novels of Toni Morrison*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000.
- [3] Dubey, M. *Black Women Novelists and the Nationalist Aesthetic*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994.
- [4] Gibson, D. *Toni Morrison: Critical Perspectives Past and Present*. New York: Amistad, 1993.
- [5] Mbalia, D. D. *Toni Morrison's Development of Black Feminist Aesthetic*. Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1991.
- [6] Mobley, M. S. *Folk Roots and Mythic Wings in Sarah Orne Jewett and Toni Morrison: The Cultural Function of Narrative*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1991.
- [7] Rigney, B. H. *The Voices of Toni Morrison*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1991.
- [8] Collins, P. H. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. New York: Routledge, 1990. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203874981>
- [9] Hooks, B. *Black Looks: Race and Representation*. Boston: South End Press, 1992.
- [10] Lorde, A. *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*. Berkeley: Crossing Press, 1984.
- [11] Spillers, H. J. *Black, White, and in Colour: Essays on American Literature and Culture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.
- [12] Walker, A. *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens: Womanist Prose*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983.
- [13] Freud, S. *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. Translated by James Strachey. New York: Norton, 1961.
- [14] Fanon, F. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Trans. C. L. Markmann. New York: Grove Press, 1952. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230116290>
- [15] Erikson, E. H. *Identity and the Life Cycle*. New York: Norton, 1980.
- [16] Morrison, Toni. *The Bluest Eye*. Vintage, 1999.