

## Ecological Feminism in *The Bluest Eyes*

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**Abstract.** Ecological feminism fuses feminism and ecologism together, bringing significant influence. However, as the first black woman writer who awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in the history, she expresses her ideas of feminism with her broad mother's love and care, and her deep feelings rich of love. Especially in the work of *The Bluest Eyes*, the writer also reveals her humanistic care. The brilliance of *The Bluest Eye* largely attributes to the embodiment of racial discrimination and sexual discrimination. As a representative work of feminism, the work *The Bluest Eyes* fully embodies the ecological feminist ideas of Morrison. The thesis aims to analyze the perspective of ecological feminism from *The Bluest Eyes*.

### Introduction

Toni Morrison is a uniquely distinguished contemporary novelist in the history of American literature of the 20th century. All her novels do with African American characters and communities. As the first black woman who won the Nobel Prize for literature, Morrison is qualified to be the opinion leader for black. Born in a worker's family in Lorain, Ohio, Morrison was brought up in a black community where she imbibed much of the black cultural heritage. Morrison grew up with love of literature and received her undergraduate degree from Howard University. This dissertation aims to let the reader know more about the racial discrimination and sexual discrimination in *The Bluest Eye*. This work starts with a black little girl of 10 years old as the heroine, telling a story of the girl's miserable experiences, and eventually ended in a tragedy story. It is valuable for Morrison that she could be so serious in her first book.

In this work, the author tells the story of the heroine of being bullied, and yearning for the change of the situation. The heroine was raped by her father and was pregnant. The premature infants died shortly after it was born. The poor black girl Pecola Breedlove has the desire to have a pair of blue eyes and becomes insane at last. In the novel, Pecola had to endure pressure and scorn from many aspects, both from the neighborhood and also from her mother. Pecola's tragedy is the epitome of the victims of the racial discrimination in American society. The personality of her parents is distorted and twisted severely. So blue eyes became the spiritual attachment for Morrison. The whole work fully expresses oppression and the situation of being bullied of the black, especially black women. This reality is the foundation of feminism. The author wants to call the human nature with the sad ending of tragedy, and to show the importance of feminism. Moreover, it was the time that ecological feminism arose when this novel was published.

### Background

Ecological feminism is the combination of ecologism and feminist, and can either be feminism under the ecological branch, and also can be ecologism under feminism. Ecofeminism approves the relation between women and ecological thought. And it has the similar state with the nature in their creating functional aspects of life. Of course, they can resonate. Ecofeminism aims so to find the relationship between women and the nature, such as the nature feeds everything in the world, which is very similar with the feeding of the infants from women. In this novel, women were compared with dandelions, because that although the dandelion has a critical medicinal value, it has been ignored by others all the time.

In the theoretical system of ecological feminism, there are not species levels in the universe.

Ecological feminism focused on the equal relationship between species, and they think that people should be equal with each other. They also think that the world should be built under the relationship of equality and freedom, so that they can set up a harmonious developing world for human beings. After the Civil Rights Movement, black Americans got some basic human rights such as the political rights. Their economic situation got better. Their struggle for human rights got some wonderful achievements. Morrison created this work in 1962. It was the bud of the ecological feminist thoughts.

### **Ecological feminist thoughts of the novel**

**Women and nature.** In the work, *The Bluest Eyes*, women and ecological nature were showed the same many times. For example, Pecola's first menstruation was not very well, which is a metaphor. The author means to tell the reader that was a violation of the natural law. Later, she was raped by her father. In the novel, marigold seeds was described. The author associated fertility with seed germination, uterus with the land, and baby with marigold seeds. It seems that women has completely become the embodiment of nature, which represents the nature itself has the qualities such as gentle, tolerance, harmony. While men are in the opposite of nature, which represents forces of oppression, destruction and conquer. The author showed an attitude with a compassion of sympathy to women and nature to call for social care and attention to women.

**A General Review on Discrimination Against Black Americans and Women.** The politics of human rights of America have been depriving the blacks Americans' and other races' human rights for such a long time in history. Binary opposites refers to the relationship between men and women, while in the ecological system, it refers to the contradictory relations between the human race. Ecological feminism advocates the equal and harmonious relationship. In this novel, the author arranged many stories to refute the hierarchical relationship of binary opposition. Claudia received many presents on Christmas, but she hate s gift blonde doll. Although Mrs McDowell was very angry with her, she still loves children deeply. In the opposite thinking of traditional thinking, blacks are often depreciated. In the work, the author depicts the warm side of the blacks. When Jimmy was ill, the black people take turns to take care of her, and also bring a lot of vegetable soup to her.

The novel describes love and friendship between the black women and the black groups. It is this kind of love and friendship is the content of the feminist ecological. Novel attacked the social reality of white supremacy and called for the establishment of the equal relationship. Pecola and her mother were suffered abuse of men. Pecola was raped by her father and pregnant. The baby died soon after it was born. Pecola's mother brought a serious disaster to her family and her children.

**Losing of Subjective Culture and The species equality.** It is true to the blacks who have never gotten freedom intrinsically owing to the everlasting racial discrimination and cultural control witnessed by the construction of inferior black as one aspect and superior white as the other. Ecological feminism describes its unique concept of equality between species. Ecological feminism focuses on the various rules in history, discussing all about oppression, discrimination, exploitation and so on. It advocates to establish equal, harmonious and sustainable development of society, and focuses on the development of multiple value such as friendship, love, honesty and character. Ecological feminism mainly advocates the social thought of gender harmony, human society in harmony with nature, species equality. Ecological feminism has played a positive role in perfecting the social relationship. According to the ecological female point of view, violent behavior in social relationship will be kept within limits effectively. At the same time, in order to form a harmonious social relations and social culture rejecting violence is necessary. However, this is contrary with traditional patriarchal ideology. Traditional patriarchal thoughts focuses on conquest, expansion and rule, transforming nature, conquering nature. Ecological feminism expressed more concern about the human nature, while it criticized the cruelty of war severely.

The *Bluest Eyes* describes a true portrayal of black life. The novel shows the care for women of Morrison between the lines. In this novel, Morrison examines too many inequality in reality. She also describes the inequality between men and women, inequality of some race, and some class difference. The community deserves harsh criticism for Pecola's tragedy. In the surrounding community Pecola is subjected to considerable discrimination. Pecola is condemned to be ugly by the look of the dominant social order. Nevertheless, Pecola thinks herself of ugly, too.

The devastating effects of dominant white culture is embodied first in Pauline, Pecola's mother. Pauline has the most critical influence on Pecola, because she is the one who has been closest to Pecola. Pecola's father, Cholly, is impulsive and violent-free, but in dangerous way. Cholly raped his own daughter to retrieve his manhood. Pecola is led to further isolation by the harsh reality that the children at school would tease her primarily because she was dark skinned. The novel set the plot in the villages and towns, rather than set up in a big city, to show the huge inequalities between urban and rural.

***The Bluest Eyes* overturns the traditional feminism.** In the traditional society as well as the traditional ideas and the traditional value system, they support colonial ideology, and thus led to a war. The ecological feminist ideas are exactly on the opposite side. Ecological feminism appealed to people live in harmony, freedom and equality, and they opposed patriarchal and the colonial. In the novel, Morrison applied a large number of subversion based on the original writing. She has carried on the bold innovation and creation. Especially it is unique that she put a little girl of 11 years old as the hero of the whole work. Her eyes and focus on white body, to break the bondage of the traditional. Before Morrison, most of the famous writer were white. While Morrison fully represents the black. Morrison creatively adopted a more personal narratives, painting all black jazz music and the life of the blacks into the text. Morrison, pay attention to the sculpture of tragedy character. First of all, in the novel, the little girl Pecola's tragedy does let people heart broken. In the United States and the world history of literature, there are a lot of literature describing madness women. But most of these women's madness are related with love. However, Morrison's heroine's madness was because of the color of her skin and her race.

## Conclusion

In the novel the bluest eye, Morrison shaped Pecola's image. Pecola let the readers feel the existing situation of discrimination the black. The blacks' mind distorted under the cultural environment, which is the real social modality of the blacks. The author emphasis on interpersonal relations directly. The author strongly advocated species equality, against dualistic way of thinking in the novel. These all reflected the author's ecological and feminist point of view. Morrison showed her care for the nature and women in novels to encourage people to build a harmonious ecological environment. It became one of the most important features of this work that it really care about life of blacks. It is also for this reason, that makes Morrison create the emotion of the blacks more real. The cruel reality, as well as humanistic feelings as ecological feminism in this work are one of the reasons why this work can be able to be spread for such a long time.

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