

E-Content

American Literature

Semester: III

Lecture 24

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Session 2020-2021



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UNIVERSITY**

(Established under Galgotias University Uttar Pradesh Act No. 14 of 2011)

COURSE CONTENT UNIT-V

Lecture 24: Toni Morrison: The Bluest Eye:
reading of the novel, Discussion Continued.

- Nine-year-old Claudia and ten-year-old Frieda MacTeer live in Lorain, Ohio, with their parents.

- It is the end of the Great Depression, and the girls' parents are more concerned with making ends meet than with lavishing attention upon their daughters, but there is an undercurrent of love and stability in their home.

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Course Name: Data structures using C

- The MacTeers take in a boarder, Henry Washington, and also a young girl named Pecola.
- Pecola's father has tried to burn down his family's house, and Claudia and Frieda feel sorry for her. Pecola loves Shirley Temple, believing that whiteness is beautiful and that she is ugly.

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- Pecola moves back in with her family, and her life is difficult. Her father drinks, her mother is distant, and the two of them often beat one another.
- Her brother, Sammy, frequently runs away. Pecola believes that if she had blue eyes, she would be loved and her life would be transformed.



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- Meanwhile, she continually receives confirmation of her own sense of ugliness—the grocer looks right through her when she buys candy, boys make fun of her, and a light-skinned girl, Maureen, who temporarily befriends her makes fun of her too.
- She is wrongly blamed for killing a boy's cat and is called a “nasty little black bitch” by his mother.

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- We learn that Pecola's parents have both had difficult lives. Pauline, her mother, has a lame foot and has always felt isolated.
- She loses herself in movies, which reaffirm her belief that she is ugly and that romantic love is reserved for the beautiful. She encourages her husband's violent behavior in order to reinforce her own role as a martyr.
- She feels most alive when she is at work, cleaning a white woman's home.

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- She loves this home and despises her own. Cholly, Pecola's father, was abandoned by his parents and raised by his great aunt, who died when he was a young teenager.
- He was humiliated by two white men who found him having sex for the first time and made him continue while they watched. He ran away to find his father but was rebuffed by him.
- By the time he met Pauline, he was a wild and rootless man. He feels trapped in his marriage and has lost interest in life.

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- Cholly returns home one day and finds Pecola washing dishes. With mixed motives of tenderness and hatred that are fueled by guilt, he rapes her. When Pecola's mother finds her unconscious on the floor, she disbelieves Pecola's story and beats her.
- Pecola goes to Soaphead Church, a sham mystic, and asks him for blue eyes. Instead of helping her, he uses her to kill a dog he dislikes.

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- Claudia and Frieda find out that Pecola has been impregnated by her father, and unlike the rest of the neighborhood, they want the baby to live.
- They sacrifice the money they have been saving for a bicycle and plant marigold seeds.

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- They believe that if the flowers live, so will Pecola's baby. The flowers refuse to bloom, and Pecola's baby dies when it is born prematurely.
- Cholly, who rapes Pecola a second time and then runs away, dies in a workhouse.
- Pecola goes mad, believing that her cherished wish has been fulfilled and that she has the bluest eyes.

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Reference Page

<https://blindhypnosis.com/the-bluest-eye-pdf-toni-morrison-book.html>

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