An Ecofeminist Reading of Toni Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye*

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Abstract:

Toni Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye* is a study of the dichotomised relation between man and woman and man and nature through the lens of ecofeminism. This article attempts to see man’s domination over woman and human’s domination over nature analysed through an ecofeminist reading of Toni Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye*. Perceiving this twin domination, the study of the text will reveal the resultant apocalyptic vision when the eleven year old girl Pecola Breedlove is raped by her father Cholly Breedlove. Symbolising Pecola with Nature’s quality as passive, weak, and submissive, the article will focus on the impending danger for man if woman and nature are deliberately tampered and displaced by them. This activity of willful annihilation leads to the ecological breakdown. As Vandana Shiva observes that this “ecological breakdown and social inequality are intrinsically related to the dominant development paradigm which puts man against and above nature and women” (48).

Key words:

Ecofeminism, ecocritics, apocalypse, objectification, theriomorphism, green movement, ecocide.
Toni Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye* is a pathetic story of Black children in the American context where race, gender and class exploitation play a pivotal role in shaping their lived experiences within the white supremacist domain. While the text is a representation of various intersecting oppressions of varied social issues; race, class and gender have gained recognition to ecocritics who have begun to see a relationship with these issues affecting women and children by relating it to the natural world. My article will analyse how the patriarchal oppression of women (throwing light on race, class and gender matrix) is seen in relation to the human domination of non-human nature, since ecofeminism analyses the relationship between the patriarchal oppression of women and human domination of non-human nature. This twin domination (i.e. patriarchal oppression of women and human domination of non-human nature) will be studied in this article and will focus on how women and nature are intrinsically linked, holding a marginalised position within capitalist America. This domination shall be perceived as one form of violence and, the immoral sexual behaviour on women will be viewed as ‘bestial’ or ‘animal’ (Garrad141). In Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye*, the Black children and women are exploited and seen as victims like the natural world in the hands of men. The following extract by Zora Neal Hurston, well illustrates this concept of domination.

> Honey, de white man is de ruler of everything as fur as ah been able tuh find out. May be it’s some place way off in de ocean where de black man is in power, but we don’t know nothin’ but what we see. So de white man throw down de load and tell de nigger man tuh pick it up. He pick it up because he have to, but don’t tote it. He hand it to his women folks. De nigger woman is de mule uh de world so fur as ah can see. (qtd. in Collins 52, emphasis original)

Zora Neale Hurston’s fiery passage indicates power and omnipotence of the white man who transfers his physical burden on to the Black man. The Black man then becomes the ‘beast of burden’. He is forced to carry the load thrown down by the white man, but instead hands it over to the Black woman. The Black woman is then supposed to do the job left undone by man. Man considers himself to be more powerful than woman and boasts of his physical prowess. His supposed indomitable strength makes him the ruler of the world, then why does not he exhibit his strength in carrying his own burden? Why does he hand it over to women?
This brings in the question of domination and subordination, violence and silence, oppressor and oppressed and the argument related to these have catered interest among ecofeminists who protest and resist such violence on the “other”. Ecofeminist theorists like Carolyn Merchant, Ynestra King, Carol Bigwood, Vandana Shiva, Maria Mies, Mary Mellor and others resist this sort of continued domination of men over the disempowered groups such as women, children, the disabled, animals, nature and men of colour. Ynestra King argues in her essay “Healing the wounds: Feminism, Ecology and Nature/Culture Dualism” that “The ecological crises is related to the systems of hatred of all that is natural and female by the white, male western formulators of philosophy, technology and death inventions” (qtd. in Madsen 23). This system of hatred can be observed in The Bluest Eye and will form an interesting study on violence and suffering.

Hurston’s statement of “the nigger woman is de mule of de world” has been a frequent reference to Black woman and the comparison of her to a mule has become a familiar rhetoric. Even African American female writers like Sojourner Truth, bell hooks, Toni Morrison and others make constant reference to the mule while talking about woman. The Bluest Eye has many interesting images of flora and fauna that lends the text to an interesting study of ecofeminism. Ecofeminism is an activist movement that perceives a critical connection between the domination of nature by humans and the exploitation of women by men. According to Mary Mellor, “ecofeminism is a movement that sees a connection between the exploitation and degradation of the natural world and the subordination and oppression of women. It emerged in the mid-1970s alongside second-wave feminism and the green movement. Ecofeminism brings together elements of the feminist and green movements, while at the same time offering a challenge to both. It takes from the green movement a concern about the impact of human activities on the non-human world and from feminism the view of humanity as gendered in ways that subordinate and exploit, and oppress women” (www.wloe.org/WLOE-en/background/ecofeminism.html). The Bluest Eye begins with the image of the marigold flower and ends with it. The metaphoric analysis of the marigold flower is discussed in the later part of this article. The narrative then opens up with several glimpses of the fauna images and the most common one is the comparison of the mule to the ‘nigger woman’. Treated as and equated to mules, doing hard domestic work, Black women and children are relegated to the much lower strata of the social ladder. This devalued projection of women is protracted and ecofeminist theorists resist this sort of
marginalisation. Ecofeminism claims that the domination of women and the domination of nature are intrinsically linked and, the source of this domination is capitalism and America. Appropriation and domination are the main factors of subjugating both women and the natural world that encourage violence, and this works along the intersecting oppression of race, class and gender. Women and the mule both are victimised and considered as dehumanised objects. As the mule is beaten and burdened with heavy loads, and its passive submission to human order, so is the Black woman, synonymous with an animal like the mule who is subjugated and burdened with the pressures of work both inside and outside her home. As Collins says in her book *The Black Feminist Thought*: “Making black women work as if they were animals or ‘mules of the world’, represents one form of objectification” (Collins 78), since objectification has become a central issue in the process of oppositional difference. This oppositional difference brings into focus the binary thinking that categorises people, ideas, and things in terms of their difference. Therefore we have man/woman, white/black, culture/nature, adult/children, human/non-human, civilisation/wilderness, and this dualism is seen and understood in terms of their relation with the other. The above dualism shapes our thinking and understanding such differences where the first part of the binary is privileged over the second.

The mule is a domestic animal tamed in carrying out human orders, so are the Black women performing their assigned roles in their own families as well as white “families” as ‘mammies’ or domestic servants. A glimpse of African American women working like mules is seen in the following extract when Pecola’s mother yells at her father to get her some coal to burn during the freezing winter month of the year and the father is reluctant to provide this for his family:

“I said I need some coal. It’s as cold as a witch’s tit in this house. Your whiskey ass wouldn’t feel hellfire, but I’m cold. I got to do a lot of things, but I ain’t got to freeze.”

“Leave me alone.”

“Not until you get me some coal. If working like a mule don’t give me the right to be warm, what am I doing it for? You sure ain’t bringing in nothing. If it was left up to you, we’d all be dead…” (*The Bluest Eye* 30)
This is the way a Black woman like Pauline Breedlove slogs the whole day while the Black man like Cholly Breedlove spends his time drunk and contributing nothing towards his family.

According to Jeremy Bentham, a Utilitarian philosopher suggested “that cruelty to animals was analogous to slavery and claimed that the capacity to feel pain, not the power of reason, entitled a being to moral consideration” (Garrad 136). So, Black women as slaves lack the power to reason which is meant only for the fathers, who possess them. Looking into the history of slavery in America and Africa, one can recollect those moments when Africans and African American men and women were mistreated and even worse than animals. Morrison’s Beloved is one of the best examples of the lives of slaves, where the Blacks are almost equated to animals, chained with iron rods and beaten for asking breakfast (Beloved 127). The long voyage of the Africans as slaves during the Middle Passage from Africa to America and the inhuman treatment meted out to them is a signification of cruelty and injustice. As the Utilitarian ‘principle of equality’ states that “everyone is entitled to equal moral consideration, irrespective of family, race, nation or species…” (Garrad 137), then why are the Blacks ruthlessly beaten and discriminated by the mainstream culture? The race factor has proven to be the main issue, interlocked with gender and class category that causes pain and suffering in myriad ways. Most of the animal similes and lowly connotations are referred to women and children. They are even considered as insentient beings. So the dominant groups most of the time combine humans with animal characteristics and use them for the purpose of mockery to which the marginalised are meant for. This form of looking at the powerless and marginalised humans according to Steve Baker is theriomorphism which is the opposite of anthropomorphism (Garrad 143). Theriomorphism is the representation of humans as animals usually with satirical purpose (143). Most often we observe that humans feel better to raise animals than humans as the latter becomes incorrigible to manage. Morrison’s The Bluest Eye has glimpses of such observation where human beings feel difficult to raise another human being. An animal would be better than them. Mrs. MacTeer, mother of the Black children—Claudia and Frieda finds it difficult to raise her children and gets tired when she notices them ‘playing nasty’ (The Bluest Eye 22). Here the adult/children binary asserts that the former which is in the privileged position claims to assert power on the latter (i.e the powerless). Not only the mainstream deploys several animalistic references to the marginalised but we also see it within the marginalised section itself. The mother
admonishes her children, “What you all doing? Oh. Uh-uh, Uh–huh. Playing nasty, huh? … “I’d rather raise pigs than some nasty girls. Least I can slaughter them!” (22, emphasis original) Nasty children are equated to pigs that are dirty and designed to be destroyed. As worthless objects, they are designated to be “slaughtered” and butchered. This “animalistic” connotation of slaughtering innocent children and seeing them identified with pigs, doubly asserts that the children’s lives are set in a precarious situation at the hands of the adult. Here the mother actually is in no way to slaughter her own children, but her poverty and hard labour to manage her family drives her to make such helpless utterances over her children. This is a sort of venting her emotions over the continued drudgery of her existence and raising her family.

‘Pigs’ signify dirt and Black children are associated with all that is ugly and dirty. Not only the whites are proud of their refinement but also the coloured people see themselves superior to the Blacks. Morrison here speaks of another African American family, the “Geraldines” (aside the McTeers’s) who disassociate themselves from the African community by placing themselves among the “coloured”, a term that is used to refer to people belonging neither to the whites nor the Blacks. She observes how some of her community people aspire to be and live like their oppressors (the white Americans). The coloured family in The Bluest Eye comprising Geraldine, Louis and Louis Junior are proud of their neatness and cleanliness. Geraldine advises her son Junior not to mingle with Black children and the narrator explicitly explains Geraldine’s fuss about the clean/dirt concept…“his mother did not like him to play with niggers. They were easily identifiable. Coloured people were neat and quiet; niggers were dirty and loud” (67). This culturally constructed notion of Blacks being ‘dirty’ and associated with pigs sums up the idea that Black men, women and children are perpetually subjugated within the realm of the dominionist assumption of power and authority. The narrator says: “The line between coloured and nigger was not always clear; subtle and tell tale signs threatened to erode it, and the watch was constant” (68). The “coloured” boy named Louis Junior loved and “enjoyed bullying girls” (68), because he felt it was very easy making them “scream and run. How he laughed when they fell down and their bloomers showed” (68). He loved playing with Black boys because “he wanted to feel their hardness pressing on him, smell their wild blackness…” (68). This explains the wild/domestic divide where the coloured boy yearns for the wild, the hardy, and the enterprising. Greg Garrard argues that the:
wilderness narrative deploys a gendered hierarchical distinction between wild and domestic animals in which the former are linked to masculine freedom, and often predation while the latter are denigrated as feminine servants of human depredation. (150)

So Junior asserts his power on Pecola, the ugly Black child, indicating his strength and virility in projecting his wilderness by flinging his mother’s pet cat on her. His jealousy over his mother’s affection for the cat is expressed through his wild, violent behaviour. His destructive nature in almost killing the cat symbolises the power of the wild over the domestic, the “predation” over “depredation” and the “masculine freedom” over the “feminine denigration”. So when we take up the categories of ‘man’, ‘woman’ and ‘animal’, the hierarchical structure depicts that man is superior to woman and woman is superior to animal. Therefore animals are available to be exploited by human (as seen by Junior’s exploitation of the cat) and woman’s domination by man (as seen by Junior’s domination over Pecola). Thus the mule, the cat, and the pig—animals which Morrison makes use of has connotation to the female and the objectified other.

The ugly, eleven year old Black girl, Pecola in Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye* craves for blue eyes. “A little black girl who wanted to rise up out of the pit of her blackness and see the world with blue eyes” (138) is a desire much beyond her reach. She is driven to insanity on account of her craze for them. A victim of severe racist politics, monitored by patriarchy, Pecola, the little Black girl is equated with the natural world, helpless and praying for protection and freedom to live. The novel also views the whites’ domination over the Blacks and the adults’ domination over children. Blacks are regarded as dirty and almost seen to the level of animals. Pecola’s blackness and her ugliness are the prime cause for being ignored and despised by everyone. The teachers ignore her by making her “to sit alone at a double desk” (34). While at the candy shop the white shop owner refuses to touch her when she hands him three pennies for a candy. The treatment she receives from her teachers, classmates and the shop owner is the kind of treatment received by non-human nature where both are ignored and are made to remain invisible in the patriarchal set up. Her innocence, vulnerability and ugliness make everyone to look upon her as an “objectified other”. Morrison, apart from using the fauna imagery also uses the flora images to associate the female objectification. As women and children are identified with nature, and succumbing to
male power and dominance, the image of the dandelion (that Morrison frequently uses) is also part of nature and is analogous to Pecola.

The dandelion is a small common bright yellow wild flower which has a lot of long thin petals arranged in a circular pattern around a round centre. It grows everywhere with its yellow petals in gardens, on the wayside passage and in vast stretch of land. To Pecola, the dandelions look beautiful and she is unable to understand:

“Why… do people call them weeds?” She wonders and listens to the grown-ups talk: “Miss Dunion keeps her yard so nice. Not a dandelion anywhere. Hunkie women in black babushka go into the fields with baskets to pull them up. But they do not want the yellow heads—only the jagged leaves. (35)

The garden of Miss Dunion is tamed and, all natural wild plants are destroyed. It is wilderness versus civilisation where the latter is given more importance. The fields with dandelion are totally cleared thereby upsetting the biotic community. Human intervention in the biotic community, takes place by clearing of the unwanted plants like the dandelions, and Pecola later understands why people uproot them. “They are ugly. They are weeds”, (37, emphasis original) and that is why they are unwanted and therefore cleared and removed by the Hunkie women and hence destroyed. The dandelion plants and the flowers add beauty to the ecological system and removing them because of its ugliness creates an imbalance in the natural environment. Pecola aligns herself with the dandelions. Both are unwanted and therefore destroyed. She is unwanted by the whites as well as by her own community but is utilised for other jobs allotted for the Blacks as domestic servants. Similarly, the heads of the dandelions are thrown away because they are no longer needed but the leaves are utilised to make the dandelion soup and dandelion wine. Pecola wonders: “Nobody loves the head of a dandelion. May be because they are so many, strong and so on” (35). Thus women and nature when we fit them in the binary thought system, they always fall into unprivileged section of the system. The mind /body binary of which the former is privileged can be linked to the dandelion’s head. It is thrown out for nobody loves the head and it is believed that women and nature lack reason and intellect that is associated with the head. That is why the dandelions’ body like the female body in much desired, for extracting dandelions soup and wine in the former and, sensuous pleasure in the latter. The society does not want to nurture both Pecola and the dandelions.
To an ecofeminist, the dandelions are weeds and, weeds are a part of the wilderness culture. Pecola admires the dandelions that add beauty to the landscapes and she embraces the scene and ultimately desires for them. Therefore Pecola is a part of nature and speaks for the dandelions that look pretty especially when they grow “at the base of the telephone pole” (38). The clearing and the destroying of the dandelions either from the fields or in Miss Dunion’s yard is a sort of ecocidal attack on nature by human. This form of ecocide may invite the apocalyptic vision of Nature very soon.

Pecola “owned the clumps of dandelions whose white heads; …she had blown away; … and owning them made her part of the world and the world a part of her” (36). Pecola is a part of the world, part of the universe, part of the planet Earth, and therefore part of nature. She understands that the dandelions forms the scenic beauty of the landscape in the fields as well as in Miss Dunion’s garden but fails to comprehend man’s brutal nature in his interference by uprooting them because they are believed to be ugly and cumbersome. All that is ugly are powerless and weak and seen as an object of subordination or the “objectified other”. Therefore Pecola ‘belongs’ to the wilderness, to the natural world, to the endless natural landscape that is tamed and finally raped of its innocence. As Pecola is raped by her drunken father, the same way the clearing of the dandelions is another form of raping the earth. The natural world is conquered by the male intrusion and the untamed wilderness is tamed and no dandelions grow in Miss Dunion’s garden. The rape of the earth becomes a kind of metaphor of the rape of woman and so the subordination of woman and nature’s degradation are the twin symptoms of the same disease. Thus the biotic community is disturbed and tampered.

Looking at the contemporary western views of Nature, Vandana Shiva has observed that nature is “fraught with the dichotomy or duality between man and woman, and person and nature” (Shiva 40) whereas in contrast to the Indian cosmology the “person and nature (Purusha- Prakriti) are a duality in unity” (40). She understands that “they are inseparable complements of one another in nature, in woman, in man” (40). Therefore there is a “dialectical harmony between the male and female principles and between nature and man…” This, then, becomes the basis of “ecological thought and action” (40). Expanding Shiva’s ideas, we note that her ideology about the Purusha (masculine principle) and Prakriti (feminine principle) are distinct from the Cartesian concept of “nature as environment” (40). The Cartesian concept views environment as separate from man. This dualism between
man and nature has allowed the subjugation of nature over man. This gives rise to a new world-view in which “nature is (a) inert and passive; (b) uniform and mechanistic; (c) separable and fragmented within itself; (d) separate from man; and (e) inferior, to be dominated and exploited by man” (40-41). With reference to Shiva’s ideology to this new world-view, I place Pecola within this ideology and analyse her fragmented life caused by her drunken father. Pecola as representing nature and aligning herself with the dandelions; we perceive her within the Cartesian concept which sees nature as “environment” separate from man. In doing so, Pecola is seen as an inferior being, dominated and exploited by those in power. She as nature is therefore ruptured which begin to “cripple nature and woman simultaneously” (41). This act of domination, exploitation, and oppression has displaced the ecological world-views and Shiva interprets this act of fragmentation as an “ecological crises… a disruption of ecological perceptions of nature” (41). Therefore the violation of nature is the violation of woman and vice versa and this is seen in relation to the unsprouting of the marigolds in the year 1941 which I have mentioned in the early part of this article. The flowers never grew because the damage done to Pecola was “total” since Pecola is nature destroyed and annihilated (The Bluest Eye 162).

The Bluest Eye has lucid projection of the innocent children’s freedom hampered by the adult world. It also reveals the black women’s lived experiences and their exploitation by the privileged class. It further reiterates nature’s feedback from man which is understood from the unsprouting of marigold seeds that winter season. The novel is divided into four seasons—summer, winter, spring, autumn and through these seasons the natural world is observed. These seasons have symbolic references to the world of women and children. Since the novel has no numerical chapter divisions, they are named after seasons. Each chapter characterises nature’s inherent quality, and the individual headings suggest a cyclic movement from birth, death to rebirth. The novel begins with the autumn season with the epilogue going thus:

Quiet as it’s kept, there were no marigolds in the fall of 1941. We thought, at the time, that it was because Pecola was having her father’s baby that the marigolds did not grow. A little examination and much less melancholy would have proved to us that our seeds were not the only ones that did not sprout; nobody’s done. Not even the gardens fronting the lake showed marigolds that year. But so deeply concerned were we with the health and safe delivery of
Pecola’s baby we could think nothing but our own magic: if we planted the seeds, and said the right words over them, they would blossom, and everything would be all right.

... I had planted them too far down in the end. It never occurred to either of us that the earth itself might have been unyielding. We had dropped our seeds in our own little plot of black dirt. Just as Pecola’s father had dropped his seeds in his own plot of black dirt...what is clear now is that of all that hope, fear, lust, love and grief, nothing remains but Pecola and the unyielding earth. (3, emphasis original)

This apt and symbolic epilogue set the future of the novel. The end of the novel is set and predicted in the beginning. The Black daughter carrying her father’s guilt inside reveals nature’s reluctance to accept the baby. Pecola’s innocence is nature’s innocence and Pecola’s body is the natural landscape. The landscape is the virgin land, untrammeled by man’s conquest. Pure and serene, the natural world is made beautiful with the four seasons. Pecola’s rape by her father is the rape of the earth, rape of the natural landscape and the father’s seed “dropped in his own plot of black dirt”, therefore did not yield. This unethical, unnatural and un-nature-like act did not sanction the growth and yield of marigolds. The soil losing its virginity, and its sanctified status, reflects its obstinate ‘nature’ in not accepting a spoilt seed and, “nothing remains but Pecola and the unyielding earth”. This lucid comparison of Pecola’s innocence with nature’s sanctity drives home the point that woman and nature are both intrinsically linked and their joint venture goes in making the world a tranquil place to live in. So the marigolds did not sprout as the seeds did not yield—a sort of nature’s feedback for disturbing and venturing a land of peace and calm.

The first part of the novel titled ‘Autumn’ focuses the ‘fall’ and the miserable conditions of the Blacks. Frieda and Claudia, the Black children envy Maureen Peals’ richness and “the pride of ownership” in her possession, and feel like ‘poke[ing] the arrogance out of her eyes” (5). The first part of the novel also symbolises the fall and pollution of the natural world. The beautiful ravine is polluted and dumped with waste from the Zick’s Coal Company, at the industrial town of Ohio. The girl narrator tells us that while she and her sister walk back home from school they glance back to see the great carloads of slag being dumped, red hot and smoking, into the ravine that skirts the steel mill. … Frieda and I lag behind, staring at
the patch of colour surrounded by black. It is impossible not to feel a shiver when our feet leave the gravel path and sink into the dead grass in the field”.

(5)

The grasses are dead and the river dumped with unwanted things (‘slag’), have fallen a prey to the victim of man’s interference with the biotic set up. The beautiful lush green grass and the serene flowing ravine are trespassed due to industrialisation and, the ‘fall’ of the natural world is the metaphoric fall of woman’s degradation and denigration.

The second part is the ‘Winter’ season and it begins with the description of the rich girl Maureen Peale as ‘the disrupter of seasons’ (48) that disrupts the beautiful autumn and spring by interfering to take a position between the two. The narrator describes her beauty with the season imagery: “There was a hint of spring in her sloe eyes; something summery in her complexion and rich autumn ripeness in her walk” (48). She had the characteristics of these three seasons in her and her richness and arrogance and her status described in the second part, titled as ‘Winter’—a season representing depression, refocuses on the class status of the Black community. The rich-poor divide among the Black community symbolises the acceptance of the one and the rejection of the other suggesting regret and isolation which is associated with the winter season.

The third part of the novel is the ‘Spring’ season, depicting birth, growth and hope unlike the winter season connoting dullness and pain. The girl narrator looks at the spring season in this way: “They beat us differently in spring. Instead of the dull pain of a winter strap, there were these new green switches that lost their sting long after the whipping was over” (75). The narrative on the ‘Spring’ part is perhaps the longest in the novel. It centers on the life of Pecola’s mother—Pauline and Cholly Breedlove, who begin their life with new hopes, aspirations and dreams like the spring season. Pauline lived in “a real town of Kentucky, spending her time usually idling by the river bank, or gathering berries in a field…,” when she met Cholly (88). She fantasised that her meeting with Cholly “would lead her away to the sea, to the city, to the woods… forever” and wanted to be amidst nature (88). The city versus town is brilliantly developed in the novel. Pauline finds peace, tranquil and hope in the ‘real town’ of Kentucky, whereas in Loraine, the industrial city of Ohio gives her what she never wanted— isolation and regret. Cholly’s job at the steel factory in Loraine steals her peace and happiness and gives her more of quarrel, since she is left alone at home.
while Cholly is at work. The spring season which is a season of hope and growth, ironically suggest the depression of winter. All the seasons do not function in their natural way and the reverse starts happening. This unnatural phenomenon in the natural cycle of the seasons suggests the drawing of the apocalypse—both in nature and in the life of Pecola. To the little Black girl narrator, the spring season brings neither joy nor hope. She says: “Even now spring for me is shot through with the remembered ache of switchings, and forsythia holds no cheer” (75). She sees her parents in the garden weeding and keeping their garden clean. Weeding a garden has become a very common activity, and this ensures the predicted risk in the biotic community. This expected apocalypse takes a dangerous turn in the last part of the novel entitled “Summer”, where “the entire country was hostile to marigolds that year” (164) and Pecola driven to madness. The apocalyptic warning predicts the destruction of the environment. This “apocalypticism” (Garrad 94) in The Bluest Eye drives home the point that the rape of Pecola is the rape of the earth and therefore according to the narrator: This soil is bad for certain kind of flowers. Certain seeds it will not nurture, certain fruit it will not bear, and when the land kills of its own volition, we acquiesce and say the victim had no right to live (The Bluest Eye 164, emphasis original).

The summer season ends with a note of consolation that human beings can do nothing for the “land”—which represents the earth, if it involves in the willful act of killing herself. This has reference to Pecola who brings in her own damage for desiring to have “blue eyes” and Morrison helplessly utters that “the little black girl and the horror at the heart of her yearning is exceeded only by the evil of fulfillment” (162). The yearning to have blue eyes of a white girl brings the fatal end of several little Pecolas existing in the American society. This gives us a warning that the danger is imminent, and the catastrophe is well under way when the entire country is absent of marigolds. This ecological explanation and the apocalyptic narrative is the striking part of the last chapter named “Summer”, where the end is suggested in the beginning. The unyielding marigold seeds and Cholly’s seed reinforce this apocalyptic sentiment that will live forever in the hearts and minds of all these people of the Black community of Lorain, Ohio.

Note

1: Green Movement is environmental movement. It is sometimes referred to as the ecology movement including conservation and green policies. It is a diverse scientific, social, and
political movement for addressing environmental issues. The green movement is associated with Rachel Carson’s book called *Silent Spring*. This environmental movement is in fact, a significant movement within the fabric of American philosophical thought. It was first developed by Henry David Thoreau—a Transcendentalist but was expanded in the latter half of the nineteenth century during the era of American pragmatism. <http://webecoist.momtastic.com/2008/08/17/a-brief-history-of-the-modern-green-movement> accessed on 13 July 2015
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