

# A Dandelion in the Desert of the World: The Love Chase in *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison

---

Andriana Hamivka

FACULDADE DE LETRAS DA UNIVERSIDADE DO PORTO – CETAPS

Citation: Andriana Hamivka. "A Dandelion in the Desert of the World: The Love Chase in *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison." *Via Panoramica: Revista de Estudos Anglo-Americanos*, série 3, vol. 12, n.º 1, 2023, pp. 11-22. ISSN: 2182-9934. Web: <http://ojs.letras.up.pt/>. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.21747/2182-9934/via12\\_1a1](https://doi.org/10.21747/2182-9934/via12_1a1).

## Abstract

*The Bluest Eye* gives a detailed account of the ways that Afro-American girls' and women's lives are distorted by internalized white standards of beauty. Implicit messages that whiteness is superior are everywhere, from the white baby doll given to Claudia, the idealization of white beauty in the movies, to Pauline Breedlove's preference for the young white girl she works for over her daughter. Adult women who have learned to hate the blackness of their bodies cannot help turning that contempt on their kids: Mrs. Breedlove believes Pecola is ugly, and Geraldine, who has lighter skin, curses Pecola's blackness. Pecola is, indeed, the character who suffers the most from white beauty standards. For her, being beautiful is the required condition for being loved. That is why she feels that having blue eyes will make the harshness in her life disappear and be replaced by healthy affection. This hopeless desire ultimately leads to madness, which suggests that white beauty may destroy black sanity.

**Keywords:** *The Bluest Eye*; Afro-American identity; White beauty standards; Love quest

## Resumo

*The Bluest Eye* oferece um retrato detalhado das formas como a vida das raparigas e mulheres afro-americanas é distorcida por padrões de beleza definidos pelos brancos e internalizados por todos. As mensagens implícitas de que a branca é superior estão por toda a parte, desde a boneca branca dada a Claudia, a idealização da beleza branca nos filmes, até à preferência de Pauline Breedlove pela jovem branca para quem trabalha em vez da sua filha. As mulheres adultas que aprenderam a odiar a negritude dos seus corpos não podem deixar de desprezar os seus filhos: a Sra. Breedlove acredita que Pecola é feia, e Geraldine, que tem a pele mais clara, amaldiçoa a negritude de Pecola. Esta é, de resto, a personagem que mais sofre com os padrões de beleza branca. Para Pecola, ser bela é a condição necessária para ser amada. É por isso que sente que ter olhos azuis fará desaparecer a dureza da sua vida e será substituída por um afeto saudável. Este último desejo leva, em última análise, à loucura, o que sugere que a beleza branca pode destruir a sanidade negra. Para além de não ser aceite pela sociedade

dominante, esta rapariga é desprezada pela sua própria comunidade, especialmente depois da violação perpetrada pelo seu próprio pai. Sofrendo de uma visão distorcida do que o amor poderia e deveria ser, Pecola é um dente-de-leão, uma flor delicada que teve a infelicidade de nascer em solo violento e sem amor.

**Palavras-chave:** *The Bluest Eye*; Identidade afro-americana; Padrões de beleza da raça branca; Necessidade de amor

“Amor será dar de presente um ao outro a própria solidão?”

- Clarice Lispector, *Uma Aprendizagem ou o Livro dos Prazeres*

Although a dead baby’s ghost is at the centre of *Beloved* (1987), it is the intensity of a mother’s love and its embodiment that haunts the novel. *Beloved* encourages readers to reflect on the ethics of love. Does love play by different rules at distinct times or in diverse situations? Is it conceivable that Paul D is right - Sethe’s affection is too thick? Toni Morrison’s fascination with love and death, two intimately related realities, can be perceived even through a casual study of her canon. Morrison reframes, problematises, and explores the depth of love not only in her love trilogy - *Beloved*, *Jazz* (1992), and *Paradise* (1998) - but also in her debut novel, *The Bluest Eye* (1970).

The aim of this article is precisely to analyse how love is manifested in Morrison’s first novel and to access the consequences of its expressions. Relatively little research has been done on *The Bluest Eye* and existing research has not sufficiently stressed the importance of the representation of love in the novel. They rather focus on the topics of alienation (Ahmad, Chaudhary & Murtaza), naturalism (Cormier-Hamilton), or body politics (Mermann-Jozwiak).

In Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye*, even though the characters are unaware of love, they seek it and imagine it incessantly, providing space for reflection on how love can be understood and the various dimensions it can embody. This search for love is carried out by Pauline, Cholly, Soaphead and, of course, Pecola, the eleven-year-old female African American protagonist, who is affected in any possible way by the dominant American culture. Love, that conception that is about strong emotional affection and attachment, whether towards a child, a lover, a father, or a mother, remains elusive. It is possible, however, to think of it as a feeling of protection, servitude and deep devotion directed towards an object of desire.<sup>1</sup>

The characters in Toni Morrison’s novel weave dreams and projections of what love can be. Ultimately, what they get are distorted samples of what it can be. Pecola

is, in a sense, the product of a dream of a love that never materialised, and the adults are victims, too, of the lack of love they suffered when they were as young as Pecola. In one way or another, they sought, and still seek, ways to receive what they had been denied. Pauline, Pecola's mother, tries to do so through the Fisher family home where she works, receiving praise and a general sense of satisfaction from their family members. Cholly, the protagonist's father, had sought love, as a young boy, in the search for his father's whereabouts, a search that brings him the displeasure of being confronted with a father figure totally uninterested in the one who tells him, "I'm your boy" (Morrison 155). Soaphead Church, a light-skinned West Indian misanthrope and self-declared "Reader, Adviser, and Interpreter of Dreams" (Morrison 163), tries to find the beauty and affection forbidden to him by an austere and celibate upbringing through young girls, the victims of his obsession. Pecola, for her part, dreams of one day possessing a pair of blue eyes, a white American ideal of beauty that is more than evident and desirable above all things. She dreams of someone who will love her and praise her beauty. She dreams of the iconic figures of actresses with the blue eyes she longs for. Pecola seeks, in her own way, a glimpse of understanding and attention; she seeks the little things that make her forget, for a moment, a world in which love is difficult to find and in which inferiority complexes reign above all, together with deep-rooted prejudices, shame, anger, dissatisfaction and restlessness. Not even the family name, Breedlove, is a mirror or indicator of the existence of love. In Pecola's world, there is only room for dreaming, which is always a dream of love.

Pecola's dream of love is also that of her parents and, in a way, constitutes the ultimate portrait of that search. As a young girl, Pauline, Pecola and Sammy's mother, and future Mrs Breedlove, felt out of place in her own home, her hometown. Her foot disability prevented her from moving according to the rhythms of her family. For that reason, from an early age, Pauline learned to feel apart from her own family, from the other children and from the concept of beauty into which a dysfunctional foot did not fit:

why nobody teased her; why she never felt at home anywhere, or that she belonged anyplace. Her general feeling of separateness and unworthiness she blamed on her foot. Restricted, as a child, to this cocoon of her family's spinning, she cultivated quiet and private pleasures. (Morrison 109)

Pauline learned to enjoy the little things and refined her imagination which became vivid, making her tremble with excitement for the future, for the one who would arrive one day and levitate her in a warm wave of affection. The moments of

*daydreaming* that Pauline cultivated were marked by the arrival of a silent *Presence* that promised her peace and serenity:

Someone appeared, with gentle and penetrating eyes, who - with no exchange of words - understood and before whose glance her eyes dropped. The someone had no face, no form, no voice, no odour. He was a simple Presence, an all-embracing tenderness with strength and a promise of rest. (Morrison 111)

Indeed, when Pauline met Cholly, she was visited by a synesthetic moment, as if her desire for a *Presence* had finally been embodied in this boy. In Pauline's description of her first meeting with Cholly, the reader is presented with an almost idyllic, harmonious scenario in which the foot, which was Pauline's shame, takes on another meaning, not conditioning her at all:

When I first seed Cholly, I want you to know it was like all the bits of colour from that time down home when all us children went berry picking after a funeral and I put some in the pocket of my Sunday dress, and they mashed up and stained my hips. My whole dress was messed with purple, and it never did wash out. Not the dress nor me. I could feel that purple deep inside me. And that lemonade Mama used to make when Pap came in out the fields. It be cool and yellowish, with seeds floating near the bottom. And that streak of green they june bugs made on the trees the night we left from down home. All of them colors was in me. Just sitting there. So when Cholly come up and tickled my foot, it was like them berries, that lemonade, them streaks of green the june bugs made, all come together. Cholly was thin then, with real light eyes. He used to whistle, and when I heard him, shivers come on my skin. (Morrison 113)

This description has both kinaesthetic and dreamlike qualities since we are confronted with olfactory and chromatic memories that come together in a light and natural way with the emergence of first love between Mr and Mrs Breedlove; a sequence of images that in no way resembles the chaos into which the Breedlove home had become and her present contempt for her husband, Cholly. Pauline stopped being Pauline, the young girl who immersed herself in dreams of love, to become Mrs Breedlove, a bitter woman who lives her days according to arguments with her spouse. The love that had once blossomed freely is now shaped through these quarrels and has become a possibility of imprisonment, a way to possess destructively: "The tiny, undistinguished days that Mrs Breedlove lived were identified, grouped, and classified by these quarrels" (Morrison 39). Mrs Breedlove went from dreaming to believing in

the form of love that is little more than destructive and unhealthy possession: “She regarded love as possessive mating . . . . It would be for her a well-spring from which she would draw the most destructive emotions, deceiving the lover and seeking to imprison the beloved, curtailing freedom in every way” (Morrison 120).

Once her marriage to Cholly begins to degrade, Mrs Breedlove seeks a fuse of beauty that she can follow, a subterfuge for her unhappy and loveless life. Eventually she finds that outlet in going to the movies. Therefore, as Harold Bloom points out: “when her marriage to Cholly deteriorates she has little else to do but go to the movies, where she is introduced to romantic love and physical beauty” (*Toni Morrison’s The Bluest Eye* 25). The films end up destroying her even more, making her awaken to a reality where she is not conceptually beautiful like the actresses. In this sense, her daughter Pecola will similarly victimise herself, evaluating herself according to the same standards of beauty that her mother had also deluded herself with. Mrs Breedlove only finds love in the white family home where she works, where she is praised and called “Polly” by the neat, beautiful, and well-dressed Fisher girl, the antagonistic pole to her daughter, Pecola. In McKay’s words, “Pauline . . . finds heaven, hope, life and meaning as a servant to the white, blond, blue-eyed, clean, rich, family to which she dedicates her love and her respect for an orderly life that poverty does not afford” (19).

On the other hand, Cholly was confronted from an early age with a blatant lack of love. At a very young age, he tries to find a father figure and, with him, the possibility of support and guidance. However, none of this is what he finds, and little by little Cholly’s naïve search for love turns into complex feelings ranging from sexual desire to repulsion and hatred. Cholly’s first dream of love was M’Dear, the woman who made his aunt convalesce, and Blue Jack was the only one, apart from Aunt Jimmy, who had treated him like a human being. However, all good memories of that attention he had been given dissipate with the events that gradually shaped his destructive character. As Harris underlines, “Cholly’s brief and emotionally violent interaction with his father serves to wipe away everything he has remembered of good treatment by his Aunt Jimmy, and it sets him on a path of destruction and death” (38). The episode of the hunters, who surprise Cholly and Darlene, just as they were becoming sexually involved for the first time, illustrates quite clearly Cholly’s negative growth and misdirected hatred, which is not channelled towards the voyeur hunters but rather towards Darlene, the victim of the hunters’ “hunger to look” and Cholly’s mute acquiescence to that same hunger:

Never did he once consider directing his hatred toward the hunters. Such an emotion would have destroyed him... His subconscious knew what his mind did not guess - that hating them would have consumed him, burned him up like a piece of soft coal, leaving only flakes of ash and a question mark of smoke. (Morrison 148-9)

The situation of humiliation by the white hunters functions as a psychological castration, “His ‘rape’ by white men denies him just as his rape of Pecola denies her” (McKay & Erle 125). Similarly, the contempt he suffered is repeated with Pecola, in different contours but with the same negative feelings surfacing from the events - just as his father despised him, Cholly also despises Pecola, and in this way the destructive force of the past on the present can be observed. However, Claudia MacTeer, an independent and strong-minded nine-year-old, at the end of her narration and her reflection on the events, reveals that Cholly had a love for Pecola, a love that we can read as a distortion, since it is marked by an incestuous physicality and an act of rape, a love that ultimately destroyed Pecola: “Cholly loved her. I’m sure he did. He, at any rate, was the one who loved her enough to touch her, envelope her, give something of himself to her. But his touch was fatal, and the something he gave her filled the matrix of her agony with death” (Morrison 204).

When Cholly finds Pecola washing dishes in the kitchen, the sequence of emotions that overtake him demonstrates the complex process that his thought goes through and that triggers the grotesque act of rape: “The sequence of his emotions was repulsion, guilt, pity, then love” (Morrison 129). Memory is essential here, as Cholly cannot stop the memory of Pauline and the movement she made with her foot when the two met, and love blossomed. Pecola, innocently reproducing that same movement, triggers in Cholly’s mind the memory of something that had marked him deeply. In this way, the repulsion he initially feels for Pecola because of her smallness, ugliness, and insignificance is transformed into guilt for feeling so, into pity for her, and finally into love, a love distorted by the memory of the past:

The timid, tucked-in look of the scratching toe - that was what Pauline was doing the first time he saw her in Kentucky. Leaning over a fence staring at nothing in particular. The creamy toe of her bare foot scratching a velvet leg. It was such a small and simple gesture, but it filled him then with a wondering softness. Not the usual lust to part tight legs with his own, but a tenderness, a protectiveness. A desire to cover her foot with his hand and gently nibble away the itch from the calf with his teeth. He did it then, and startled Pauline into laughter. He did it now. The tenderness welled up in him, and he sank to his knees, his eyes on the foot of his daughter. (Morrison 160)

In a sense, Cholly physically gives himself to Pecola because it is the only thing he can give her; it is the only form of love, albeit distorted, that he knows. The violation constitutes one of the examples of the various “brutal acts that tragically appear as the only possible version of acts of love” (Caldeira 259, my translation). This father could easily be understood as the villain who robs Pecola of any hope of survival in a cruel and chaotic world. However, placing Claudia as the narrator of Cholly’s past and the path he has taken to become a man incapable of love makes one seek to understand the man’s seemingly inhuman act. It is because the narrator presents us with a monstrous act that we are forced, as readers, to reflect on the “human monster” who committed it, driven by confused feelings of contempt and despair and the subversion of an idea of love. Thus, “Cholly despises Pecola for loving him in spite of his painful failure, and in drunken stupor, in attempt to give the love to his ‘ugly’ daughter that she has never experienced, he ‘tenderly’ rapes her” (Tally 15). It is essential to understand that his act is also devoid of moral notions and instigated, above all, by emotional chaos:

When Cholly approaches his daughter he does so crawling on all fours like a child or the animal which whites have made him feel. Nibbling the back of her leg he regresses into the most primal of experiences, while his closed eyes suggest how he is unable to see the full moral implications of what he is doing. (Bloom, *Toni Morrison’s The Bluest Eye* 37)

It is through Pecola, the eternal scapegoat, that, like many of the remaining characters, Cholly tries to reach again the *poetry* he experienced with Pauline when they were both young and full of hope and dreams. However, he does so by perpetrating suffering and terror:

He had heard the poetry for the first time with Pauline and tried to capture it again from time to time. This time he tries with Pecola, his own daughter. It is around and through Pecola, the scorned and rejected girl who longs to be beautiful and to be loved, that most of the main characters plod through a desperate, pitiful search for meaning and personal definition. (McKay 19)

Like Cholly, Soaphead Church grew up lacking love. Raised harshly by his father, he has become a celibate man repulsed by all but young girls, in a state of physical and spiritual purity that is a sexual trigger for him. Locked hermetically in his obsession, Church feels that the sexual abuse he perpetrates is proof of love, and it is

through this belief that he finds for himself the satisfaction that no one else has ever given him. For Church, his sick obsession is the only way to love someone: “Have you ever seen them, Lord? . . . One could not see them and not love them” (Morrison 177). When he meets Pecola, who asks him for a pair of blue eyes, Soaphead’s obsession as if suspended to make way for more purified compassion: “I looked at that ugly little black girl, and I loved her” (Morrison 180). The compassion Soaphead Church feels for Pecola and her blue-eyed dream eventually makes the reader share her anger at a god indifferent to little Pecola and all the other Pecolas out there: “Church’s passionate critique of God for allowing the pain of the Pecolas of the world introduces an oddly sympathetic note” (Duvall 33).

The two MacTeer sisters, Claudia and Frieda, soon welcome Pecola into their home and keep her from her loneliness for a while. Claudia, the most present voice in the novel, soon learns to question the beauty standards that the dominant white society forcibly tries to universalise. These notions of beauty, bound up with light eyes, hair, and skin, find a strong materialisation in the white dolls that the MacTeer sisters receive as gifts at Christmas. These dolls are associated with a “false love” since they equate the possibility of love only through external beauty according to preconceived and pre-established standards. As Bloom highlights: “The child Claudia learns ‘false love’ rather than cut herself off from the only model of loveliness she is offered” (Toni Morrison 11). What Claudia truly desires for Christmas is not one of these dolls at all, which she destroys as if they were the white girls they represent, but rather an ideal of family love and harmony, a dream of love somewhat similar to the *Presence* of Pauline’s daydreams:

I want to sit on the low stool in Big Mama’s kitchen with my lap full of lilacs and listen to Big Papa play his violin for me alone. The lowness of the stool made for my body, the security and warmth of Big Mama’s kitchen, the smell of the lilacs, the sound of music, and, since it would be good to have all of my senses engaged, the taste of a peach, perhaps, afterward. (Morrison 20)

When Pecola discovers that she is menstruating, Frieda and Claudia see it as a significant event, and it is in reflecting on such an event and what it entails that Pecola asks the two sisters in what way she could conceive a child:

“Is it true that I can have a baby now?”  
“Sure,” said Frieda drowsily, “Sure you can.”  
“But... how?” Her voice was hollow with wonder.

"Oh," said Frieda, "somebody has to love you."

"Oh." . . . "How do you do that? I mean, how do you get somebody to love you?" But Frieda was asleep. And I didn't know. (Morrison 30)

This step highlights a reflection on love, the feeling unknown to Pecola and, in a way, inexplicable to the MacTeer sisters. At this point of the narrative, Pecola's strongly hopes to find not only blue eyes but also love. In the young girl's mind, the answer to "how do you get somebody to love you?" seems to be the blue eyes that will bring everything else with them.

At the end of the novel, when Claudia and Frieda learn of Pecola's pregnancy, they decide to abandon their project of selling marigolds to buy a new bicycle. Instead, they plant the remaining seeds, bury the money they had accumulated in the garden of Pecola's house and pray for her and the baby she is carrying: "Let's ask Him to let Pecola's baby live and promise to be good for a whole month" (Morrison 189) The sisters' attempts to save Pecola's baby and to make Cholly's rape a fresh start for her can be seen as a form of love on the part of Frieda and Claudia, who do not receive the affection they need from adults and therefore understand Pecola's loneliness. The two sisters seem to be the only characters who rebel against Pecola's situation and against the ignorance and hypocrisy of the community, which is also guilty of the destruction of the little girl's life.

Thus, Pecola lives in a loveless house, in an environment where love never grew from an early age. Sometimes she imagines her body slowly disappearing from her home's grey and sad atmosphere. She does not find any crumb of positive attention at school, she is always met with contempt from her classmates because of her appearance and colour, and her *blackness* is constantly associated with *mess*. It is through the contempt of others for her figure that Pecola learns to despise herself: "Pecola never loved herself. Always seeing herself through the eyes of others, she never saw anything to love" (Middleton 16). Pecola ardently believes that if her appearance changes, namely the colour of her eyes, she will be different too and will finally find a possibility to be loved and, consequently, to be able to love herself too: "It had occurred to Pecola some time ago that if her eyes, those eyes that held pictures, and knew the sights - if those eyes of hers were different, that is to say, beautiful, she herself would be different..." (Morrison 44).

Just as her mother had done in the past, Pecola also learns to cultivate small pleasures, which somehow enable her to survive. In this way, she pays attention to small things that most people ignore, perhaps because she herself, a tiny existence in a superficial, cruel, and cold world, is also ignored - a dandelion in the desert of the

world. It is in her love for these insignificances that Pecola finds an alternative reality to the one she has access to in a universe full of lovelessness:

These and other inanimate things she saw and experienced. They were real to her. She knew them. They were the codes and touchstones of the world, capable of translation and possession. She owned the crack that made her stumble; she owned the clumps of dandelions whose white heads, last fall, she had blown away; whose yellow heads, this fall, she peered into. And owning them made her part of the world, and the world a part of her. (Morrison 45-6)

In her innocence, Pecola wonders about love, how it comes about and what forms it can take. She thinks of her parents, the immediate examples she has. Nonetheless, Pauline and Cholly are not an example of reciprocal, strong and mature love, since they have abandoned their dreams of love and, in their place, have left a void to grow. Pecola concludes that love could be the muffled sounds of her father paired with her mother's silence when they make love: "Maybe that was love. Choking sounds and silence" (Morrison 55).

At the end of *The Bluest Eye*, Pecola, in a monologue in two voices, seems to delight in what the other voice tells her about her blue eyes, finally born from her obsession and madness - endless compliments that mirror what possibly everyone else would say about her eyes, had they turned blue: "blue because in Pecola's experience only those with blue eyes receive love: Shirley Temple, Geraldine's cat, the Fisher girl" (Bloom, *Toni Morrison* 97). At this point, reality does not seem to matter, since Pecola, in her alternative world, has finally found that which is beautiful in her eyes. In a way, "Pecola remains frozen in time - a child, trapped in the tragic first verse of her own blues, with her imagined blue eyes and the lack and self-loathing they signify, frozen in the glare of the lover's inward eye" (Bloom, *Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye* 140).

Claudia ends her long story with the certainty that love is submissive to the one who loves - love can be malevolent, violent, and pathetic if the one who loves is also malevolent: "Love is never any better than the lover. Wicked people love wickedly, violent people love violently, weak people love weakly, stupid people love stupidly" (Morrison 204). The individual stories of Pauline and Cholly, of Soaphead Church and of Pecola reflect how indescribable, indefinable, and subject to limitations, mistakes and choices love is. Not possessing only one dimension; it can be moulded and take different forms.

It is impossible to leave unscathed after reading *The Bluest Eye*. Pecola is the portrait of a flower that cannot grow in dry, infertile, loveless soil. She is a dandelion, unique but ignored, a weed, a wildflower born in aggressive and atrocious soil: “This soil is bad for certain kinds of flowers. Certain seeds it will not bear, certain fruits it will not bear” (Morrison 204).

## Works Cited

Ahmad, D. S., D. F Chaudhary, and D. G Murtaza. “Parental Hunger and Alienation in Toni Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye*.” *International Review of Literary Studies*, vol. 2, no.1, 2022, pp. 39-45.

Bloom, Harold, editor. *Toni Morrison*. Chelsea House Publishers, 1990.

---. *Toni Morrison’s The Bluest Eye*. Bloom’s Literary Criticism, 2007.

Caldeira, Maria Isabel. *História, mito e literatura: a cicatriz da palavra na ficção de Toni Morrison*. Ed. do A., 1992.

“Corinthians.” *Bible. New International Version (NIV)*, <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Corinthians%2013&version=NIV>. Accessed 26 Jun. 2023.

Cormier-Hamilton, Patrice. “Black Naturalism and Toni Morrison: The Journey away from Self-Love in *The Bluest Eye*.” *MELUS*, vol. 19, no. 4, 1994, pp. 109-27.

Duvall, John. *The identifying fictions of Toni Morrison: modernist authenticity and postmodern blackness*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

Harris, Trudier. *Fiction and folklore: the novels of Toni Morrison*. The University of Tennessee Press, 1997.

McKay, Nellie Y. *Critical essays on Toni Morrison*. G. K. Hall, 1988.

McKay, N. Y., and K. Earle, editors. *Approaches to teaching the novels of Toni Morrison*. The Modern Language Association of America, 1997.

Mermann-Jozwiak, Elisabeth. "Re-remembering the body: Body politics in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*." *LIT: Literature Interpretation Theory*, vol. 12, no. 2, 2001, pp. 189-203.

Middleton, David, editor. *Toni Morrison's fiction: contemporary criticism*. New York: Garland Publishing, 1997.

Morrison, Toni. *The Bluest Eye*. Penguin, Vintage Publishing, 1999 [1970].

Olasov, Ian. *Ask a Philosopher: Answers to Your Most Important and Most Unexpected Questions*. Thomas Dunne Books, 2000.

Tally, Justine, editor. *Cambridge companion to Toni Morrison*. Cambridge University Press, 2007.

---

<sup>1</sup> Two possible definitions of love are:

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres." (Corinthians 13:4-7, *NIV Bible*)

"A lot of people think that love is an emotion. This is almost right. It's not an emotion, because emotions don't last as long as love tends to. You don't stop loving someone when you're asleep, busy with something else, or angry at them. But if you aren't anxious at the prospect that someone will leave you, upset when they're suffering, and at least sometimes happy to see them, then you don't love them. So love is, perhaps among other things, a disposition to feel certain things about a person in certain circumstances." (Olasov 72)