THE CONCEPT OF WHITE BEAUTY STANDARD IN THE NOVEL

“THE BLUEST EYE” BY TONI MORRISON

(AN INTRINSIC ANALYSIS ON THE MAJOR CHARACTER)

A Thesis

Submitted to Letters and Humanities Faculty in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Strata One Degree

ENGLISH LETTERS DEPARTEMENT
ADAB AND HUMANITIES FACULTY
STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY “SYARIF HIDAYATULLAH”

JAKARTA

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ABSTRACT


This research analyzes Toni Morrison’s novel entitled “*The Bluest Eye*”. Here the writer studied the novel as the unit analysis. The theory of intrinsic and the concept of white beauty standard in America 1970’s are used as theoretical framework of the research. The method of the research is descriptive qualitative, which tries to describe and explain the data of concept beauty in the novel *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison through by describing and explaining the novel.

The research is aimed at finding out the practice of the concept of white beauty standard by looking into the main character’s ways to fulfill the concept. It also reveals the threaten impact of the concept which is experienced by the main character, Pecola Breedlove, that made her losing her mind.

In the analysis, the writer finds the main character’s ways to fulfill the concept of white beauty standard, such as: using Shirley Temple Cup, eating Mary Jane’s Candy and asking to the Soaphead Church for the blue eyes.
APPROVEMENT

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LEGALIZATION

A thesis entitled *The Concept of White Beauty Standard in the Novel “The Bluest Eye” By Toni Morrison (An Intrinsic Analysis on the Major Character)* had been examined before the Letters and Humanities Faculty’s examination committee on Wednesday, June 04, 2008. This thesis has already been accepted as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for Strata One Degree.

Jakarta, June 04, 2008

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma of the university or other institute of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

Jakarta, June 04, 2008

Ria Kartika
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In the name of Allah the Beneficent, the Merciful
May peace and blessing of Allah be upon all of us

All praise is to Allah, The Lord of the Universe, who gives the writer guidance and strength, so she could finish this paper. Peace and blessing be upon the messenger of Allah, Prophet Muhammad SAW, his families, his relatives, and all his followers.

Some people have assisted the writer in writing this paper, so she realized that she could never finish without the help of the people around her. Therefore, the writer would like to give her sincerest gratitude to her beloved family who always give their love, support, affection, understanding, advices, contribution and moral encouragement during the study and finishing this paper. Her lovely parents, Bachtiar and Dedeh Rohana. Her beloved brother and sisters, Nina Lusiana, Erna Yunita, Andi Hakim. And her beloved fiancée, Hadi Ismanto.

The writer also wants to give her gratitude to Mrs. Inayatul Chusna, M. Hum as her advisor who has given her times, guidance, patient, kindness, and contribution in helping her to finish this paper. The writer realizes without her critics and help this paper will mean nothing.

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5. All lecturers in English Letters Department, for teaching precious knowledges and giving wonderful study experiences.

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7. Her lovely friends of BSI/B, especially for Diah, Ika, Lika, Bariroh, Kiki, and Icha (thank you for your support).

The writer wishes this paper would be useful, particularly for her and for those who are interested in it.

Jakarta, June 04, 2008

The Writer
TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT........................................................................................................i
APPROVEMENT.................................................................................................ii
LEGALIZATION.................................................................................................iii
DECLARATION...................................................................................................iv
ACKNOWLEDGMENT........................................................................................v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....................................................................................vii

CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study..........................................................1
B. Focus of the Study.................................................................4
C. Research Question...............................................................5
D. Significance of Study..............................................................5
E. Methodology of the Research................................................5
   1. The objective of Research .................................................5
   2. The Method of Research..................................................6
   3. Technique of Data Analysis..............................................6
   4. Unit of Analysis...............................................................7
   5. Time and Place of Research.............................................7

CHAPTER II THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A. Intrinsic Theory.................................................................8
   1. Character.................................................................8
2. Characterization ......................................................9
   B. The Concept of White Beauty Standard in America 1970’s....11

CHAPTER III RESEARCH FINDING
A. Data Description ..................................................15
   a. Characteristics of Pecola .......................................15
   b. Pecola’s Fulfillment of the Concept White Beauty
      Standard ..........................................................17
B. Analysis ..............................................................19
   1. An Analysis of The Main Character, Pecola Breedlove...19
   2. Pecola and The Concept of White Beauty Standard……..27

CHAPTER IV CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION
A. Conclusion ..........................................................33
B. Suggestion ..........................................................34

BIBLIOGRAPHY

WEBSITE

APPENDIXES

The Biography of Toni Morrison
A. Background of the Study

In a society, there are manifold relations of power that permeate, characterize and constitute the social body, and these relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a knowledge.\(^1\)

Power and knowledge is interrelated. Knowledge cannot exists without power, because knowledge only can be declared by those who have power.

Michel Foucault asserts a new model of the relations of power and knowledge. He called it "power/knowledge." Michel Foucault has demystified power. Foucault’s analysis states that power is situated among a cacophony of social practices and situations. The knowledge within these social formations are manifested in an economy of knowledge. For Foucault then, power is directly tied into the economy of knowledge itself. Foucault states that human understanding exists in knowledge, in an economy of knowledge. As Scholar Barry Allen clarifies, having knowledge “is to have the privilege of making a statement pass among others as known or

true...speech acts are dialogical, intersubjective exchanges with reciprocal effects on many speakers.” Knowledge has its object (what is known) and its “other,” the person whom it is offered and received as knowledge, passing over the other as “truth”.2

The knowledge identified within the social structures brings power to existence in social relations and gives credibility to the ideology that the exercise of power is created by these means. The knowledge can be also a hindrance for those who have power, it means knowledge is not only as an instrument and an effect of power, but also a stumbling block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. Knowledge transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it.

In the Western Societies, Knowledge is created by those who have power. And The Whites are believed as a knowledgeable and powerful community. They have power because of their dominance. They always dominate the black and have higher position than the black in number and status as regards every important position and in every aspect of life.3 In reality, the white or the western societies usually think that the black and the eastern societies are lower than they are, so they completely become a community who have a right to make a knowledge.

The concept of ‘Beauty’ as knowledge, in the Western Societies

also created by the White. The face and the complexion have often been seen as the key to female beauty. Western European tradition equates fair skin with beauty and includes many glowing references to peaches-and-cream and lily-white complexions, white shoulders, alabaster brows, and pale beauty. Fair, blue-eyed, silky-haired blondes are still a mainstay of Hollywood’s crafted images of female perfection. Women of dark or olive complexions have sometimes been frustrated because they cannot match the standards of beauty promoted by White Culture. African American college women who are dissatisfied with their skin color are also likely to be dissatisfied with their body image. In the United States, the writings of African American women illustrate the pain of perpetually facing a standard of beauty that is shaped by White images. Many dark-skinned women have experienced rejection by others, even by members of their own racial or ethnic group, because of the notion that “fair is beautiful.”

The concept of beauty knowledge has been internalized and implemented by many colored women in every aspects of life including literary works. There are many novels represent this knowledge, one of them is *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison. The novel shows a young African American girl confronting the realization that the world agreed a blue-eyed, yellow-haired, pink-skinned doll was what every girl-child treasured. It was Pecola Breedlove, a young black girl living in Ohio in the late 1940's. The

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novel illustrates the cruelty of white, middle class American images of beauty, as Pecola will be driven insane by her obsession for white skin, blonde hair, and blue eyes. Pecola feels invisible in society because of her ugly appearance and corrupt family. All she wants is to be noticed and each night she prayed for blue eyes.

Pecola Breedlove is the main character of the novel. At eleven she was a confused child experiencing puberty, racial harassment, and later on rape and incest. Pecola's appearance was considered unbearably ugly. She, along with the rest of the Breedlove family, had small eyes set closely together under narrow foreheads. Shapely lips, crooked noses with insolent nostrils and heavy eyebrows decorated their faces. Pecola compares herself to the perfect world of the happy white family unlike any world she knows. In her neighborhood there are no green and white houses and families are not happy. In Pecola's world no one laughs or plays and there are no happy mothers and fathers. Pecola passionately prays for blue eyes believing that if they were pretty ugly things would not happen.

Pecola desires are closely related with the white beauty standard. How she fullfills the standard is very interesting to be analyzed. This at the end imply superiority of Whites over Black people.

B. **Focus of the Study**

In this research, the writer limits the scope of research by focusing on main character and characteristic of Pecola Breedlove in the novel *The
*Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison. Also, the writer is going to further analyze the concept of white beauty standard that revealed in the novel.

**C. Research Question**

Based on the background of research above, the problem will be discussed in this research are:

1. How are the characteristics of Pecola Breedlove in the novel *The Bluest Eye*?
2. How does Pecola Breedlove fulfill the concept of white beauty standard?

**D. Significance of the Study**

This research is expected to help the readers understand what the story of the novel is all about by looking into the Pecola’s ideology about standard of beauty that symbolize with anyone’s having of the blue eyes. Moreover, by analyzing the novel, the writer hopes the readers will understand more about the universal opinions of the Westerns towards other people.

**E. Methodology of the Research**

1. The Objective of Research

   The objective of research which to be reached is to know:
a. How are the character and characteristics of a major female character in the novel *The Bluest Eye*.

b. The ways of major female character to fulfill the concept of white beauty standard.

2. The Method of Research

The method which used in this research is qualitative method by using analytical description and the description of this research will be attached with the intrinsic analysis. In the study of this novel, the writer will find the Pecola’s ideology about standard of beauty. The writer also explains the ways of Pecola Breedlove to fulfill the concept of White beauty Standard.

3. The Technique of Data Analysis

In this research, the writer uses descriptive analysis technique. First, the writer reads the novel and underlines sentences which reveal the character and characterization, for structural analysis which analyzed with Black American Women’s point of view about standard of beauty. Then, the writer tries to see and find the ways of Pecola to fulfill the concept of white beauty standard as purpose to be more accepted among her community through the words and her actions in the novel *The Bluest Eye*.

4. The Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis in the research is the novel of *The Bluest Eye* was written in 1970 by Toni Morrison. The novel
5. Time and Place of Research

The research is expected to be accomplished in tenth semester 2007/2008 in English Letters Department, Adab and Humanities Faculty. This research will be applied at Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta’s Principal Library and another Library in Jakarta which can give references and information about the material that need.
CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

I. **Intrinsic Theory**

Every literary work has intrinsic and extrinsic elements. Intrinsic elements are the internal structure of literary work such as plot, characters, theme, etc. And extrinsic elements are the external factor such as history, author’s background, socio economic and culture when the literary work has been created.

In this research, the writer only focuses on the main character to be analyzed.

a. **Character**

Character is complex of potentialities of action.\(^5\) The characters are the people in the story. They do some action according to their part and role in the story or we also can say that character is person presented in dramatic or narrative work.

According to the book *Introduction to Literature* written by Larry M. Sutton, character can be divided into four types, they are; flat character, round character, static character and dynamic character.\(^6\) A flat character embodies one or two qualities, ideas or traits that can be readily described in a brief summary. They are not psychological complex characters and therefore are readily accessible to readers. Some flat characters are recognized as stock characters. Round character are more complex than flat or stock characters, and often display the inconsistencies and internal conflict found in most real people. They are more fully developed and therefore are harder to summarize. Static character does not change throughout the work and the reader’s knowledge of that character does not grow. Dynamic character undergoes some kind of change because of the action in a plot.

b. **Characterization**

Character and characterization are different; the book *Mastering English Literature* written by Richard Gill said that, a character is a person in literary work and characterization is the way in

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which a character is created. From those distinctive, characterization can be understood as a method and character is the product. From those understanding, we can conclude that characterization is a method used by the author in developing his story and character is the product of the story.

The author presents the readers with many clues for recognition and evaluation of character in his story. These clues are comparable to the ways by which we evaluate people in the world around us, they are:

1. Action. We judge characters by the way they act, particularly in crucial situation.

2. Words. It consists of three ways. They are monologue (an extended speech by one character), dialogue (an exchange of words between two characters), soliloquy (a speech revealing a character’s thoughts and feelings, directed at the audience and presumed not to be heard by other characters).

Those descriptions can be concluded that characterization is the process by which a writer makes the character seems real to the reader or we also can say that characterization is the method used by a writer to develop a character in his story.

According to Perrine Lawrence, there are three principles that need to be observed in characterization, they are:

1. The characters are consistent in their behavior; they do not behave one way on one occasion and a different way another unless there is clearly sufficient reason for the change.

2. The character are clearly motivated in whatever they do, especially there is any change in their behavior, we must be

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able to understand the reason for what they do, if not immediately, at least by the end of the story.

3. The characters are plausible or life like.  

Based on the three principles above, characterization will be easily investigated.

II. The concept of white beauty standard in America 1970’s

Beauty is often defined as a peculiarly feminine attribute, and preoccupation with appearance is one aspect of stereotypical femininity in many cultural groups. Indeed, Susan Brownmiller’s best selling book *Femininity* (1984) is almost totally concerned with the female body: body shape, hair, voice, clothes, and skin. Her work asserts that, in many ways, we equate femininity with beauty—and beauty with youth. This impression is reinforced if we read the writings of the many women who have clearly feared that in accepting “middle-age spread” or gray hair, they would be losing their femininity. Germaine Greer (1992) suggests that femininity is a “condition of perpetual girliness.”

The German researcher Frigga Haug and her colleagues (1987) coined the phrase “body-identified identity” to describe their observation that in a culture that values women according to appearance, women construct their identities mainly through their relationship to their bodies. Standards of beauty vary across time and place, and women are pressed to conform. As Greer (1992) notes in writing about women’s aging, it is often not until a woman begins to lose her youthful beauty that she realizes how much she has counted on her appearance to make her visible and give her influence in her world.

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9 Lips M. Hilary, Op Cit, P. 52.
10 Ibid, P. 106
In the United States 1970’s, Black Americans, perhaps more than anyone else, carry a heavier psychological burden. The mental damage of centuries of bombardment with Euro-American standards of beauty has had tremendous impact on how we view ourselves within what is essentially an alien White culture. The society within 1970, just as now, establishes a standard of beauty that its members must conform to. Since the whites are still the dominant force in the community, beauty is considered being as close to white as possible. Black people and black culture is looked down upon as being dirty and inappropriate. Beauty, in essence, is having blond hair, blue eyes, and clean.11 The roles of each member of the family are fixed, and each person fulfills them with good cheer. This standard of beauty is then applied to everyone as a kind of scale of quality. A person who matches this standard is "good" and is respected for being so. A person who does not match the standard, or does not choose to conform to it, is not looked down upon. Not only are all people measured by this standard, people are aware of it at an early age.

Black people were whitewashed into believing that everything African or Black was inferior, backward and ugly, while everything White or Caucasion was superior, beautiful and desirable. Yet this perceptual distortion could not be effective without a kind of mental slight-of-hand regarding the historical and cultural validity of Africa and African "Black" beauty standards. Black people were ingrained with a sense of inferiority.

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They were persuaded in hundreds of ways, by beatings, whippings and by
the most vicious verbal, and physical castigations that they were ugly.

Thus those African traits and characteristics which had been
naturally beautiful and adorable among them for hundreds of thousands of
years began to perceived as ugly, be it the color and curl of the hair, the
shape of the nose, the fullness of the lips, the darkness of the skin or the
fullness of the posterity. They all (instead of manifestations of strength,
vigor and beauty) became transformed into badges of shame, rejection,
ridicule and hatred.¹²

The recipient of an insidious forced/ learned behavior, their minds
were methodically crippled into a state of insanity. This insanity was
activated when they merged their perceptions with the perceptions of their
White oppressors and exploiters at the expense of their own Black
empowerment, liberation and salvation. They were force-fed the poison of
White racism into their minds and they began to look at the world (and their
selves) through strange, inverted glasses. And their world, the marvelous
world of Blackness, the African world of strength and beauty; was
effectively turned upside down and they began to believe the lies and to
accept them as facts and (even more devastating) they began to assault the
minds and the spirits of their children with the bitterness of their self-hatred.
They threatened in their fits of anger, to "beat all the Black" off of them.

¹² Amos N Wilson, "The Falsification of African Consciousness," African World Info Systems,
From the explanation above, with the existence of the concept of white beauty standard has implanted the longing for several communities, in particular the Black to fulfill the concept. At the end, the fail of the fulfillment process only can do to the most vulnerable member of the community—a young girl.
CHAPTER III

RESEARCH FINDING

A. Data Description

In chapter III, having read the novel, the writer finds some statements as the corpus of the research. They are classified into two groups: characteristics of the main character and the concept of white beauty standard. They are presented in the following tables.

1. Characteristics of Pecola

<table>
<thead>
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<th>No.</th>
<th>Statement</th>
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<th>Characteristics of Pecola</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>“The only living thing in the Breedloves’ house was the coal stove, which lived independently of everyting and everyone, its fire being “out,” “banked,” or “up” at its own discretion, in spite of the fact that the family fed it and knew all the details of its regimen: sprinkle, do not dump, not to much. . . . The fire seemed to live, go down, or die according to its own schemata. In the</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>A poor black girl</td>
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morning, however, it always saw fit to die.”

2 “…The eyes, the small eyes set closely together under narrow foreheads. The low, irregular hair lines, which seemed even more irregular in contrast to the straight, heavy eyebrows which nearly met. Keen out crooked noses, with insolent nostrils. They had high cheekbones, and their ears turned forward. Shapely lips which called attention not to themselves but to the rest of the face. You looked at them and wondered why they were so ugly…”

3 “It had occurred to Pecola some time ago that if her eyes, those eyes that held the pictures, and knew the sights—if those eyes of hers were different, that is to say, beautiful, she herself would be different. Her teeth were good, and at least her nose was not big and flat like some of those who were thought so cute. If she
looked different, beautiful, maybe Cholly would be different, and Mrs. Breedlove too. Maybe they’d say, “Why, look at pretty-eyed Pecola. We mustn’t do bad things in front of those pretty eyes.”

| 4 | “Long hours she sat looking in the mirror, trying to discover the secret of the ugliness, the ugliness that made her ignored or despised at school, by teachers and classmates alike. She was the only member of her class who sat alone at a double desk. The first letter of her last name forced her to sit in the front of the room always. But what about Marie Appolonaire? Marie was in front of her, but she shared a desk with Luke Angelino. Her teachers had always treated her this way. They tried never to glance at her, and called on her only when everyone was required to respond. She also knew that when one of the girls at school wanted to be | 61 | Lack of Confident |
particularly insulting to a boy, or wanted to get an immediate response from him, she could say, Bobby loves Pecola Breedlove! Bobby loves Pecola Breedlove!” and never fail to get peals of laughter from those in earshot, and mock anger from the accused.”

2. Pecola’s Fulfillment of the Concept White Beauty Standard

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<th>Pecola’s Fulfillment of the Concept White Beauty Standard</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>“Frieda brought her four graham crackers on a saucer and some milk in a blue-and-white Shirley Temple Cup. She was a long time with the milk, and gazed fondly at the silhouette of Shirley Temple’s dimpled face.”</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Using Shirley Temple Cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>“Each pale yellow wrapper has a picture on it. A picture of little Mary Jane, for whom the candy is named. Smiling with face. Blond hair in gentle disarray, blue eyes looking at her out of a world of clean comfort. The eyes are petulant, mischievous. To Pecola”</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Eating Mary Jane’s Candy</td>
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</table>
they are simply pretty. She eats the candy, and its sweetness is good. To eat the candy is somehow to eat the eyes, eat Mary Jane. Love Mary Jane. Be Mary Jane.”

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<th>3</th>
<th>Miserable and desperate, Pecola believes more than ever that blue eyes would change her life. She goes to a pedophilic fortune-teller named Soaphead Church to ask for blue eyes. “Soaphead Church told her to come in. “What can I do for you, my child?” She stood there, her hands folded across her stomach, a little protruding pot of tummy. “Maybe. Maybe you can do it</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>137</td>
<td>Asking to the Soaphead Church for blue eyes</td>
</tr>
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</table>
“Do what for you?”
“I can’t go to school no more. And I thought maybe you could help me.”
“Help you how? Tell me. Don’t be frightened.”
“My eyes.”
“What about your eyes?”
“I want them blue.”

Soaphead pursed his lips, and let his tongue stroke a gold inlay. He thought it was at once the most fantastic and the most logical petition he had ever received. Here was an ugly little girl asking for beauty.

B. Analysis

1. An Analysis of The Main Character, Pecola Breedlove

In determining the main character, it is not the frequent appearance that we must observe, but the involvement intensity of the character in the story’s events that develop the whole story. In the novel *The Bluest Eye*, the writer assumes that Pecola Breedlove, is the main character of the
novel. In the story, Pecola Breedlove appears from the beginning to the end of the story.

Pecola Breedlove is a young black girl living in Ohio in the late 1940's. At eleven years of age she was a confused child experiencing puberty, racial harassment, and later on rape and incest. Pecola does not meet the society standard of beauty, because she was ugly. Society’s standard of beauty in this story was a white skin, blond hair, and blue eyes. However, Pecola did not meet the standard. She, along with the rest of the Breedlove family, had small eyes set closely together under narrow foreheads. Shapely lips, crooked noses with insolent nostrils and heavy eyebrows decorated their faces. 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 feels most alive when she is at work, cleaning a white woman’s home. She loves this home and despises her own. “Here she could arrange things, clean things, line things up in neat rows. Here her foot flopped around on deep pile carpets, and there was no uneven sound. Here she found beauty, order, cleanliness, and praise.”13 Pecola’s mother does not give Pecola love and affection. She treats Pecola with cold and cruel manner because she thought that her own daughter, Pecola, was ugly. This is why she treated her daughter of the people she worked for. She finds her daughter too ugly to love,

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13 Morrison 1970, 101
although her family had its own problems and issue to deal with, perhaps if Pecola was beautiful, she may have treated her better. She may have paid her more attention or taken greater investment in her happiness. However Pecola was not and although she had tended to her needs, she did not express her love to her.

Cholly, Pecola’s father, was abandoned by his parents and raised by his great aunt, who died when he was a young teenager.

“His Great Aunt Jimmy, who had seen her niece carrying a bundle out of the back door, rescued him. She beat his mother with a razor strap and wouldn’t let her near the baby after that. Aunt Jimmy raised Cholly herself, but took delight sometimes in telling him of how she had saved him.” (Morrison 1970, 105).

Cholly 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. Pecola has an older brother, Sammy Breedlove. Sammy was Cholly and Mrs. Breedlove's one son. Sam's part in this novel was relatively low key. Like his sister Pecola, he was affected by the disharmony in their home and dealt with his anger by running away from home.

Pecola compares herself to the perfect world of the happy white family unlike any world she knows. Her family is not happy and in her world there are no laughs or plays of her mother and father. Pecola is a
fragile and delicate child when the novel begins, and by the novel’s close, she has been almost completely destroyed by violence. At the beginning of the novel, Pecola has two desires form the basis of her emotional life. First, she wants to learn how to get people to love her. Second, when forced to witness her parents’ brutal fights, she simply wants to disappear. Neither wish is granted, and Pecola is forced further and further into her fantasy world, which is her only defense against the pain of her existence. She believes that being granted the blue eyes that she wishes for would change both how others see her and what she is forced to see. As the novel ends, she delusively believes that her wish has been granted, but only at the cost of her sanity.

The characteristics of Pecola are the main causes from Pecola’s obsession to be white. In this section, the writer is going to describe the characteristics of the main character. We have read in the theoretical framework that characterization is a description of characters and story behavior and relates to how the author creates and describes the characters of a story.

As we know, Pecola Breedlove is the main character of the novel *The Bluest Eye*. And from the novel, the writer is going to describe her characteristics as follows:

a. A poor black girl

Pecola is poor, unhappy, and troubled. Pecola lives in dirty place on the southeast corner of Broadway in Lorain, Ohio. Her
house looks simple and her poverty were traditional. She has just two rooms; there was a living room and bedroom. The kitchen was in the back of her apartment, a separate room. There were no bath facilities, only a toilet, inaccessible to the eye, if not the ear, of the tenants.

The only living thing in the Breedloves’ house was the coal stove, which lived independently of everything and everyone, its fire being “out,” “banked,” or “up” at its own discretion, in spite of the fact that the family fed it and knew all the details of its regimen: sprinkle, do not dump, not too much. . . . The fire seemed to live, go down, or die according to its own schemata. In the morning, however, it always saw fit to die. (Morrison, 1970: 33).

Pecola's home is cold and incapable of nurturing her: it cannot provide warmth, pleasant memories, or a sense of pride in ownership or belonging. The Breedlove's apartment is most often referred to not as the Breedlove's home, but as the Breedlove's storefront, reminding us of the type of building it was meant to be and the comfortable home that it can't be.

From the quoted data above, the writer thinks that Pecola is from the poor family. And it is not fair if she wants to achieve white beauty standard. The writer equates femininity with the beauty, as Germaine Greer (1992) said, “femininity is a “condition of perpetual girlishness.” The writer thinks that the author of the novel wants to underestimate the Black American girl.

b. Ugly

Pecola was very ugly. She had a dark black skin, small eyes, shapely lip, crooked nose and irregular hair lines.

“…The eyes, the small eyes set closely together under narrow foreheads. The low, irregular hair lines, which seemed even
more irregular in contrast to the straight, heavy eyebrows which nearly met. Keen crooked noses, with insolent nostrils. They had high cheekbones, and their ears turned forward. Shapely lips which called attention not to themselves but to the rest of the face. You looked at them and wondered why they were so ugly….” (Morrison, 1970: 34)

Because of her ugliness, Pecola totally becomes an object of harrassment arround her community.

“… A group of boys was circling and holding at bay a victim, Pecola Breedlove. Bay Boy, Woodrow Cain, Buddy Wilson, Junie Bug—like a necklace of semiprecious stones they surrounded her. Heady with the smell of their own musk, thrilled by the easy power of a majority, they gaily harrased her.


Once, a young girl shouts to Pecola, "I am cute! And you ugly! Black and ugly!" leaving her deeply hurt with misery. Pecola imagines that she is ugly because of the actions and remarks of people. She is ridiculed by most of the other children and is insulted and tormented by black schoolboys. No one will play with her, socialize with her, or be seen with her.

The quoted data above explains that Pecola is an ugly black girl. In the 1970’s, blonde hair, blue eyes, and white skin were the envy of most young African American girls. Pecola begins to fulfill the white beauty standard which is established in her society. Pecola thinks by being white, she could change how others see her.

c. Obsessed
Pecola is obsessed with blue eyes. She prays for them constantly, and is convinced that by making her beautiful the blue eyes would change her life.

“It had occurred to Pecola some time ago that if her eyes, those eyes that held the pictures, and knew the sights— if those eyes of hers were different, that is to say, beautiful, she herself would be different. Her teeth were good, and at least her nose was not big and flat like some of those who were thought so cute. If she looked different, beautiful, maybe Cholly would be different, and Mrs. Breedlove too. Maybe they’d say, “Why, look at pretty-eyed Pecola. We mustn’t do bad things in front of those pretty eyes.” (Morrison, 1970: 40).

Pecola's desire for blue eyes, while highly unrealistic, is based on one correct insight into her world: she believes that the cruelty she witnesses and experiences is connected to how she is seen. If she had beautiful blue eyes, Pecola imagines, people would not want to do ugly things in front of her or to her. The accuracy of this insight is affirmed by her experience of being teased by the boys—when Maureen comes to her rescue, it seems that they no longer want to behave badly under Maureen's attractive gaze. In a more basic sense, it is true that Pecola and her family are mistreated in part because they happen to have black skin. By wishing for blue eyes rather than lighter skin, Pecola indicates that she wishes to see things differently as much as she wishes to be seen differently. She can only receive this wish, in effect, by blinding herself. Pecola is then able to see herself as beautiful, but only at the cost of her ability to see accurately both herself and the world around her.

From the explanation above, the writer assumes that Pecola's obsession for the blue eyes is related with how people in her society treat her. Pecola thinks by having blue eyes, people would not to do ugly things in front of her.

d. Lack of Confident

Pecola felt invisible in society because of her ugly appearance and corrupt family.

“Long hours she sat looking in the mirror, trying to discover the secret of the ugliness, the ugliness that made her ignored or despised at school, by teachers and classmates alike. She was the only member of her class who sat alone at a double desk. The first letter of her last name forced her to sit in the front of the room always. But what about Marie Appolonaire? Marie was in front of her, but she shared a desk with Luke Angelin. Her teachers had always treated her this way. They tried never to glance at her, and called on her only when everyone was required to respond. She also knew that when one of the girls at school wanted to be particularly insulting to a boy, or wanted to get an immediate response from him, she could say, Bobby loves Pecola Breedlove! Bobby loves Pecola Breedlove!” and never fail to get peals of laughter from those in earshot, and mock anger from the accused.” (Morrison, 1970: 61).
Pecola's self esteem is incredibly low. She did no have the emotional stamina to defend herself against the kids who harassed her or her father. Pecola lacks the self-confidence because of her unloving family and people used to look down on Pecola, there is no one encourages or loves her.

From the quoted data above, the writer thinks Pecola’s lack of confident because of her ugliness. Therefore she tries to fulfill the beauty standard in her society. This standard of beauty is established by the society in which she lives, and then supported by members of the community. Beauty is also linked with respect and happiness. Both people who reach the standard of beauty, and those who try, are never really satisfied with who they are. This never-ending race to become beautiful has devastating effects on their relationships and their own self-esteem. Pecola feels that she must be aesthetically beautiful. She, on the other hand, believes that beauty is the only way for her and her family to be happy.

2. Pecola and The Concept of White Beauty Standard

Black people were whitewashed into believing that everything African or Black was inferior, backward and ugly, while everything White or Caucasian was superior, beautiful and desirable. Yet this perceptual distortion could not be effective without a kind of mental slight-of-hand regarding the historical and cultural validity of Africa and African "Black" beauty standards. Black people were ingrained with a sense of inferiority. They were persuaded in hundreds of ways, by beatings, whippings and by the most vicious verbal, and physical castigations that they were ugly.

*The Bluest Eye* provides an extended depiction of the ways in which internalized white beauty standards deform the lives of black girls and women. Implicit messages that whiteness is superior are everywhere, including the white baby doll given to Claudia, the idealization of Shirley Temple, the consensus that light-skinned Maureen
is cuter than the other black girls, the idealization of white beauty in the movies, and Pauline Breedlove’s preference for the little white girl she works for over her daughter. Adult women, having learned to hate the blackness of their own bodies, take this hatred out on their children—Mrs. Breedlove shares the conviction that Pecola is ugly, and lighter-skinned Geraldine curses Pecola’s blackness.

The person who suffers most from the concept of white beauty standards is, of course, Pecola. She connects beauty with being loved and believes that if she possesses blue eyes, the cruelty in her life will be replaced by affection and respect. Pecola's desire for blue eyes is a desperate wish to become the white child. It is a complete acceptance of the white cultural icons, and rejection of herself as an African-American female. Pecola hopes for a miracle, that her eyes will disappear and she will have new blue eyes. Because she believes herself ugly, others believe it of her; she becomes the depository for all the ugliness that they see in themselves as well. Yet this hopeless desire leads ultimately to madness, suggesting that the fulfillment of the wish for white beauty may be even more tragic than the wish impulse itself. She wants blue eyes for two reasons—so that she can change what she sees, and so that she can change how others see her.

In the novel, we can find the ways used by Pecola to fulfill the white beauty standard. Here are the ways which are found by the writer:

a. Using Shirley Temple Cup

Having joined the MacTeers, Pecola loves drinking milk out of their Shirley Temple cup. She always spent a long time while she drank with the glass, she gazed fondly at Shirley Temple’s dimpled face, wondering she could be as cute as Shirley Temple was.

“Frieda brought her four graham crackers on a saucer and some milk in a blue- and- white Shirley Temple Cup. She was a long time with the milk, and gazed
fondly at the silhouette of Shirley Temple’s dimpled face.” (Morrison, 1970: 19).

“The ‘folks’ my mother was referring to was Pecola. The three of us, Pecola, Frieda, and I, listened to her downstairs in the kitchen fussing about the amount of milk Pecola had drunk. We knew she was fond of the Shirley Temple cup and took every opportunity to drink milk out of it just to handle and see sweet Shirley’s face.” (Morrison, 1970: 22).

As a child star, Shirley Temple embodied cultural ideals of innocence and instinctual understanding believed inherent in idealized childhood. A talented young singer, dancer and actor, she no doubt deserves acclaim for her abilities, but as a cultural representation, she symbolizes far more than uncanny, childhood innocence. Morrison's choice of the Shirley Temple glass as a point of interest for Pecola, indicates that Pecola wants the love and attention lavished on Shirley Temple.

The quoted data above explains that Pecola wants not just the attention given to the little white girl, she wants to be a little white girl. Pecola's desire to constantly drink from the glass is a desire to consume Shirley Temple's image and thus to make her own image that of Shirley Temple. The fact that she drinks a large quantity of white milk from the glass adds to the idea of her trying to consume white beauty.

b. Eating Mary Jane’s Candy
Mary Jane candy is little sweets with wrappers that have a picture of a blonde and blue-eyed girl. Pecola buys the candies at Mr. Yacobowski's store.

“Each pale yellow wrapper has a picture on it. A picture of little Mary Jane, for whom the candy is named. Smiling with face, Blond hair in gentle disarray, blue eyes looking at her out of a world of clean comfort. The eyes are petulant, mischievous. To Pecola they are simply pretty. She eats the candy, and its sweetness is good. To eat the candy is somehow to eat the eyes, eat Mary Jane. Love Mary Jane. Be Mary Jane.” (Morrison, 1970: 43).

Pecola used to walk down Garden Avenue to a small grocery store which sells penny candy, Yacobowski’s Fresh Veg. She is so nice to buy Mary Jane’s candy, only by three pennies have bought her nine lovely orgasms with Mary Jane.

From the quoted data above, by eating Mary Jane candy as much as possible, Pecola thinks she could be Mary Jane. She uses the candy as her way for getting blue eyes. She thinks, if she could be Mary Jane, she could change how others see her because of her beauty.

c. Asking to the Soaphead Church for the blue eyes

After many ways she thought nonsense to get the blue eyes, to be truly beautiful girl, and to be adored not harassed. At last, she just prayed to God who made her ugly.
“Each night, without fail, she prayed for blue eyes. Fervently, for a year she had prayed. Although somewhat discouraged, she was not without hope. To have something as wonderful as that happen would take a long, long time.” (Morrison, 1970: 40)

Miserable and desperate, Pecola believes more than ever that blue eyes would change her life. She goes to a pedophilic fortune-teller named Soaphead Church to ask for blue eyes.

“Soaphead Church told her to come in.
“What can I do for you, my child?”
She stood there, her hands folded across her stomach, a little protruding pot of tummy. “Maybe. Maybe you can do it for me.”

“Do what for you?”
“I can’t go to school no more. And I thought maybe you could help me.”

“Help you how? Tell me. Don’t be frightened.”
“My eyes.”
“What about your eyes?”
“I want them blue.”

Soaphead pursed his lips, and let his tongue stroke a gold inlay. He thought it was at once the most fantastic and the most logical petition he had ever received. Here was an ugly little girl asking for beauty.” (Morrison, 1970: 137).

Soaphead is confused what he has to do because he
surely knows that he could do nothing for Pecola, he could not give what she wished for. Suddenly, he has an idea to play God. Soaphead Church decides that he can use her for a small task, and so he uses an unwitting Pecola to kill a dog that he hates. She completes the task, which she believes will be like a transformative spell. The dog dies in a gruesome manner, and Pecola runs away in terror. The next time we see Pecola, she's lost her mind. She spends all of her time talking to a new "friend"; he/she is an imaginary friend who is now the only person with whom Pecola speaks. The topic of conversation is most frequently the blueness of Pecola's eyes. Pecola spends the rest of her life as a madwoman.

From the explanation above, could be displayed how much Pecola longed for blue eyes, she carried everything out to get them with the ways that evaluated as the innocence ways which only a child could do. Her obsession to be white and has blue eyes is because her appearance. She becomes an object of harassment around her community because her ugliness and her poverty. She believes by being white and having blue eyes, she could change how others treat her. However, her wish to get blue eyes and to be white is only hope. Pecola’s insanity at the end of the novel is her only way to escape the world where she cannot be beautiful.
CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

A. Conclusion

The concept of White Beauty Standard begins when there is a basic standard of beauty promoted by White Culture. The Bluest Eye is one of some novels showing how the concept of white beauty standard influence a threaten effect to a young black girl. The title of the novel provides some interesting insights about standards of beauty. Society’s standard of beauty in this story was a white skin, blond hair, and blue eyes.

The novel focuses on a black girl named Pecola Breedlove. Pecola is considered ugly, she has a dark black skin, crooked nose, and small eyes under narrow forehead decorated her face. Pecola is lack of confident because of her ugliness and because her family is poor. She becomes an object of harassment around her community. Pecola longed to be white, she becomes a victim of the concept of white beauty standard which is established in her community. She does everything to making her more pleasing and acceptable. Pecola believes by having the blue eyes, cruelty in her life would be replaced. She believes that if she had blue eyes, she would be loved and her life would be transformed. All sorts of ways she has done to get blue eyes, to be really white, starting by using Shirley Temple cup every time she drinks. As the icon of idealized child star, Shirley Temple has interested Pecola to be a little white girl. The fact that she drinks a large quantity of white milk from the glass adds to the idea of her trying to consume white beauty. Another Pecola’s way to be white is by eating Mary Jane candy, Mary Jane is a little white girl with a blonde and blue-eyed. Pecola thinks by eating the candy, she could be Mary Jane, could be a little white girl. Eventually, after many ways she thinks nonsense to get blue eyes, to be really white. Until one day she meet Soaphead church and asking him for blue eyes, the Soaphead church who’s confused after heard Pecola’s wish because he could not do nothing for that unrealistic wish. Finally, he had an idea to play God, he uses an unwitting Pecola until eventually Pecola believes that she has got new blue eyes. However, at the end she could see her bluest eye only by losing her mind.

This research concludes that the concept of white beauty standard has given a threaten effect for the Black community which is represented by Pecola Breedlove in the novel The Bluest Eye. Her expectation to apply the concept has made her going insane at the end.
B. Suggestion
For the readers who will obtain a better understanding or will study about the concept of beauty, it is suggested to learn more about racism and standard of beauty in one community which has multi races. Then inspect, what has occurred to the inferior one. Do they try to internalize the concept which is created by the superior. If they do, how is the process of internalization, and what is the impact of the process.

The writer also suggests to explore author’s life and his motivation to write this kind of novel, because the writer believes that it has significant relation to his literary works.
Bibliography


**WEBSITE**


APPENDIX

BIOGRAPHY OF TONI MORRISON

Toni Morrison was born Chloe Anthony Wofford in 1931 in Lorain, Ohio, the daughter of a shipyard welder and a religious woman who sang in the church choir. Her parents had moved to Ohio from the South, hoping to raise their children in an environment more friendly to blacks. Despite the move to the North, the Wofford household was a world steeped in the oral traditions of Southern blacks. The songs, stories, and women's gossip of Chloe Wofford's childhood undoubtedly influenced her later work; a great part of Toni Morrison's struggle has been to create a literary language of black America that draws strength from the oral art forms of that culture.

She graduated with honors in 1949 and went to Howard University in Washington D.C. At Howard, she majored in English and minored in classics, and was actively involved in theatre arts through the Howard University Players. She graduated from Howard in 1953 with a B.A. in English and a new name? Toni Wofford, Toni being a shortened version of her middle name. She went on to receive her M.A. in English from Cornell in 1955.

She began teaching at Texas Southern University that year. Unlike Howard, Texas Southern University had a less assimilation-oriented approach to black education. Consciousness of a distinct Afro-American history and culture was part of the intellectual territory, and during her years there Morrison may have had her first exposure to the academic approach to the black experience. She left Texas Southern for Howard University in 1957, meeting Harold Morrison the next year. They married, and before their divorce in 1964, Toni and Harold
Morrison had two sons. It was also during this time that she wrote the short story that would become the basis for her first novel, The Bluest Eye.

1964 marks the beginning of her twenty years as an editor at Random House. With two sons in tow, she took a job in Syracuse, New York as an associate editor. She worked as an editor, raised her sons as a single mom, and continued to write fiction. In 1967 she received a promotion to senior editor and a much-desired transfer to New York City. The Bluest Eye was published in 1970. The story of a young girl who loses her mind, the novel was well received by critics but was a commercial failure. Between 1971 and 1972 Morrison worked as a professor of English for the State University of New York at Purchase while holding her job at Random House and working on Sula, a novel about a defiant woman and relations between black females. Sula was published in 1973. The years 1976 and 1977 saw Morrison working as a visiting lecturer at Yale and working on her next novel, Song of Solomon. This next novel dealt more fully with black male characters. As with Sula, Morrison wrote the novel while holding a teaching position, continuing her work as an editor for Random House, and raising her two sons. Song of Solomon was published in 1977 and enjoyed both commercial and critical success. In 1981 Morrison published Tar Baby, a novel focusing on a stormy relationship between a man and a woman. In 1983 she left Random House. The next year she took a position at the State University of New York in Albany. Beloved was published in 1987. Many consider Beloved to be Morrison's masterpiece.

In 1987 Toni Morrison became the Robert F. Goheen Professor in the
Council of Humanities at Princeton University. She is the first Afro-American female writer to hold a named chair at a university in the Ivy League. She published Jazz in 1992, along with a non-fiction book entitled Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination. The next year she became the eighth woman and the first black woman to receive the Nobel Prize in Literature. 1998 saw the publication of her seventh novel, Paradise.

One of the most critically acclaimed living writers, Morrison has been a major architect in creating a literary language for Afro-Americans. Her use of shifting perspective, fragmentary narrative, and a narrative voice extremely close to the consciousness of her characters reveals the influence of writers like Virginia Woolf and William Faulkner, two writers that Morrison, not coincidentally, studied extensively while a college student. All of her work also shows the influence of Afro-American folklore, songs, and women's gossip. In her attempts to map these oral art forms onto literary modes of representation, Morrison has created a body of work informed by a distinctly black sensibility while drawing a reading audience from across racial boundaries.