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# The Influences of Social Standard to Woman Psychology in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*

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Abstract. The aim of this study is to analyze the influence of social standard to woman's psychology in Toni Morisson's the Bluest Eye. The theory which had been used is social psychology from Handerson and Clarke. The additional theory is reader response from Richard Beach. This research utilizes the qualitative research design. The primer data collected by scrutinizing the novel Toni Morisson's the Bluest Eye and the secondary data were taken from others resources. The finding shows the relevance of the social standard which had influences the African – American little girl, the main character. Conversely, during the creation of The Bluest Eye, Toni Morrison similarly encountered the prevailing societal mindset that equates whiteness, blue eyes, harmonious family in the real world. Consequently, the worldview Morrison presents in the novel reflects historical and social conditions which affect the psychology the woman character in the novel. Morrison aims to convey the message that social standard should not be regarded as the ultimate ideal of beauty because its implication into metal wellness.

Keywords: social standard, woman psychology, moral development, readers response. Psychoanalysis

# 1. INTRODUCTION

The expectation from the social regular delivered in the form of stereotypes and gender roles which could lead to build woman's life option and identities. Study by Henderson (2019) discusses the repercussions of being perceived as the "gender person" within academic environments, emphasizing the burdens women face to obey to precise characters and beliefs in proficient settings (Henderson, 2019). Furthermore, Koch, D'Mello, and Sackett (2015) stated a meta-analysis of gender stereotypes and prejudice in governing decision-making, underlying the systemic borders women had in attaining professional accomplishment (Koch et al., 2015).

In the novel, the bluest eye, Toni Morrison gets across a very powerful idea that is found in every society today, that is about social influence that effected women psychology. Although the book is written during the 1940's and most of the events that occur mirror that time period, the main idea transcendent to this day and age. The effect of social outlooks on psychological wellbeing is another serious area of apprehension. Sánchez-López et al. (2012) scrutinize variance personality flairs in men and women, conforming light on how social norms influences to gender-related aggravation and emotional condition (Sánchez-López et al., 2012).

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Morrison's argument is how influential society can be on individual and how strongly its ideas and views are impressed upon that individual. The ideas and views that she speaks of mostly pertain to beauty and what makes an individual beautiful. This idea of beauty can turn someone's life upside down and in the end lead them to madness. Thus Morrison is trying to impress upon her readers what a negative effect society's ideas and views can have on an individual's life is changed forever. Clarke et al. (2020) investigate the developing adequate of social support for maintaining self-identity during generating decision-making, highlighting the requirement for compassionate systems to ease the weights women have.

The psychological effect of social standards on women is not only to decision-making practices but spreads to their general sense of self-respect and assurance. A reader might easily conclude that the most prominent of social issue presented in the Bluest Eye is that of racism, but more important issues lie beneath the surface. The concept of physical appearance as a virtue is the center of the social problems portrayed in the novel. Thus the novel unfolds with the most logical responses to this overpowering impression of beauty, acceptance, adjustment, and rejection. Like the example through Pecola Breedlove, Morrison presents reaction to the worth of physical criteria. The beauty standard has no places for Pecola. She must live up to causes her to have on identity rises.

In The Bluest Eye, Morrison uses her ability with language to take her readers into the black community in Lorain Ohio and into the various levels of that society. She utilizes several point of view, both first person and third person omniscient, and universal themes such as love, hate, hope, despair, fear, courage, ugliness and beauty to brings her character and their struggles to life.

In this paper, a writer uses social psychology as theme that will be represents entire story of this novel. Social psychology is the study of how social condition and also social standard influence human beings. That's social condition is when the actions of thoughts of individual(s) are changed by other individual(s). This is the effect of other people on a person's behaviors.

Regularly, we don't know and conscious that our lives is controlled by social standard. People include ourselves, created some rules or standard value to judge or just giving idea about something or someone else. It created for a long time ago. It is like legacy that always inherited and influence next generation. Even though it is changed but it produced the same rules, with just have little differences. And of course, it is still have some bad effect, such as influences people daily life, people psychology, people character, people appearance and people opinion.

As the result, the public standards on women's personal choices which effecting their mental condition are a critical area of study that generate wide examination. By exploring the elaborate system of social norm which shaping woman's identities, relationships, and mental health, this research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges women face and inform strategies to support their autonomy and well-being. Morrison focused on how people react to this standard. The African-American has to follow the standard that they do not even make it and is impossible to follow all the rules. Although some people start to forget the racial issue, the discomfort still dwells in most African-American people. They cannot change the standard. However, they can repair their self-impression and start to realize that they are beautiful without white skin and blue eyes.

#### 2. METHOD

This study uses a qualitative – descriptive – research, which discusses the main object of the study based on its fact (Nawawi & Martini, 2005). The main data of this study was from the novel The Bluest Eye by Toni Morrison, printed in 1970. Moreover, the supplementary materials for this analysis were sourced from external references including books, journals, and articles that emphasize the discussion and implementation of Lucien Goldmann's Genetic Structuralism Theory, the socio-cultural framework of whiteness as the ideal of beauty, along with the author's social and historical context that are pertinent to this research topic. The data analysis for this research is performed through the following phases. Initially, the cognitive structure of the imaginative society depicted in the novel is identified through an objective evaluation of the text. Next, a socio-cultural background analysis reveals society's cognitive framework in real life. Subsequently, the imaginative society's cognitive structure within the novel is compared. Finally, the worldview that Toni Morrison aims to convey in her book is explored.

### 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of this research uncover the significant psychological effects of societal norms on women's individual decisions, emphasizing three key themes: Identity and Self-Image, Social Connections, and Mental Wellness and Emotional Health. This discussion segment seeks to analyze these findings within the framework of current literature and examine their wider consequences. This finding reflected in Cacciari and Padovani (2007) statement, which depicted how gender stereotypes in language strengthen societal norms about attractiveness and feminineness (Cacciari & Padovani, 2007).

"Here the house. It is green and white. It has a red door. It is very pretty. "Here is the family. Mother, father, Dick and Jane live in the green-and-white house. They where very happy." See Jane. She has a red dress. She wants to play. Who will play with Jane? See the cat. It goes mew-meow. Come and play. Come play with Jane. The Kitten will not play. See mother. Mother is very nice. Mother, will you play with Jane? Mother laughs. Laugh, mother, laugh. See father. He is big and strong. Father, will you play with Jane? Father is smiling. Smile, father, smile. See the dog. Bowwow goes the dog. Do you want to play with Jane? See the dog run. Run, dog, run. Look, look. Here comes a friend. The friend will play with Jane. They will play a good game. Play, Jane, play." (Morrison Prologue)

The prologue gives enough prediction of what happens in the novel. All the characters and the conflicts are pictured in prologue. The first paragraph is written in normal formation with punctuations and spaces. It indicates that at first, the social standard of perfect family can be seen and understood yet it is difficult to follow. The second paragraph is written without any punctuation. This condition makes us difficult to understand. It indicates that although people know the social standard but they do not know how to follow it. They do not know on which space they should stop.

The third paragraph is even harder than the other two paragraphs. It is written without spaces and punctuations. It shows that the characters keep following the social standard but they get more confused. They do not know what to do, where to start and where to stop. The function of the spaces is to get to know each word. It symbolizes the rules of the social standard. It indicates what things that should be followed and what values that need to obey. The function of the punctuations is to tell us how to read the words, to separate one sentence with another, etc. It symbolizes the ways or the clues to follow the rules. It means, the characters do not know what things that they need to do and how to do it.

"Here the house. It is green and white. It has a red door. It is very pretty." (Morrison 1)

The Bluest Eye was full of examples of social standard. It is influence people's lives emotionally and physically. At prolog, we read a physical appearance of house. It is shows house standard at that time. People evaluate social economy someone else from their house appearance. If they have a beautiful house, we can conclude their social statue. As the result, people struggle to have a beautiful house, even thought their economic condition incapable. They just force their self. In many cases, such as in our country, Indonesia, some of villagers who went out to other country as TKI, they works harder just to repair their house and made it like a house in TV.

Morrison uses the house which is green and white in color. *Green* has special meaning. It is often associated to something peaceful, comforting and safe. Jane's family live peacefully,

comfortably and safe. They live that way because they love each other and protect each other. And they live happy. Every people must want to live in such house and family. So, this house is the ideal house for everyone.

The Breedloves do not have real house. They live in a storefront because they are black and poor, and because they beliefe they are ugly.

"the Breedloves did not live in a storefront because they were having temporary difficulty ... they lived there because they believed they were ugly." (Morrison 38)

Honestly, they are not very ugly. They decided that they were ugly because peoples said that they were ugly. People decide their social class is ugly or minority classes. They should not accept that social standard. But they did not have much pride to deny it. They do not have something that is essential to raise a family with. That is the reason why Pecola is being put out doors. The house is not green in color. So it means it is not peaceful as Pauline and Cholly always fight each other. It is not comfortable since the condition is really messed up. It is not safe as Sammy chooses to run away rather than to live in the house. It is not the place where they love each other and show it to each other. They do not have all those things. As a result, they end up living separately.

The Mac Teers are a little bit luckier than the Breedloves. Their house is old, cold and green. She raises her two daughters strictly. She rarely shows her love with tender touch and loving words. She speaks loud and rough to Claudia and Frieda but it is because she loves and cares about them. The white color of the house symbolizes wealth. The Mac Teers are poor; therefore their house is just green, not white. However, they are satisfied with that condition and at least they have safe house and it is full of love.

The house where Pauline works as a maid is large and it is white in color full of flowers. This kind of house has been long Pauline dreaming of. She works there happily. She imagines the house of her own. Therefore, she can dedicate her affection to clean the house and to serve the family.

Geraldine's house is a pretty gold-and-green house. The gold color represents her treatment to her family. She tries to fulfill all her husband and son needs. She fulfills their physical needs only. She serves her husband desire just to fulfill her duty as a goo wife. She makes sure that her son is neat and healthy but she never speaks love to him. Her false love is symbolized by the big lamp with green-and gold base and white shade. The gold represents that her love is not pure and the white represents her treatment to her son.

"Here is the family. Mother, father, Dick and Jane live in the green-and-white house. They where very happy." (Morrison 1)

These sentences show the ideal family. Once again, Morrison uses this kind of family to be the ideal standard of happy family. Commonly, a family that has two children, boys and girls, is symbolizing of perfect family. We also can see it, in our country. Our public government and also our citizen says and beliefs if a family consist of father, mother, boy and girl, they will created a health and happy family. But it is just an example of social standard. Practically people can created a perfect family depend on their parents as the leaders.

Colly and Pauline Breedlove is never done their job as parents. They never giving attention love and take responsibility as parents for their children's. It is not only their fault. They became cruel parents because basically they did not have capability to be a good parent. They have bad history that influents their character emotionally and physically. It is because they just want to fulfill social standard then they hope they could life in ideal condition like other people.

Most of other family is also has similar desire. They want to fulfill their needs then they can created perfect family. Some of them happy with their condition even thought they not capable to make their dream come true. They can accept their condition because they thought no one in this world is perfect. MacTeer's family capable to accepted their condition. Although they were black and poor family, but Mr. MacTeer and Mrs. MacTeer tried to be a good parent. They give love, attention, and safety to their daughters.

In other hand, there is also a family that did not allowed their condition. They struggle to create a perfect family as the ideal social standard and ignoring to found the true happy family it self. They believe if their dream comes true, they will be a happy family. They forget that there is something more precious, they forget the glorious feels like love. Breedlove's family was lost their loves in their house. They did not have enough love to share with others. They even did not love their selves. Geraldine's family is also lost their love. She just cares with physical appearance of her self and her family (including her husband, Louise, and her son, Junior). She feels real affection only for her cat.

"See Jane. She has a red dress. She wants to play. Who will play with Jane?" (Morrison 1)

Jane is the ideal standard of a daughter and a girl. Every girl dreams to wear a nice dress. They thought if they have it, they will look beauty and will be proud with their self. Although some people give more attention to their inner beauty, they concern more about the imperfect look of their faces or bodies. This value is promoted by the film stars and teenage idols. Films or television programs are full of beautiful and having-perfect-physical look stars. Magazines are full with thin-bodied models. The physical look is supported with branded outfit.

If you wear expensive outfits, you will be in the spotlight. The more expensive your outfit is, the more respect you can get.

Jane is the center of the attention in prologue, so is Pecola becomes the center conflict of her unsafe house. She endures all the effect of her other family's failure to follow the ideal description in prologue. Pecola wants to have a beautiful dress and a loving family. Pecola then blames herself for not being beautiful enough to be loved by her family. Her mother does not laugh, father does not smile and no one wants to play with her.

Pecola fantasizes for her own life. She decides that if she had beautiful blue eyes, her life would magically right itself. If she had beautiful blue eyes, she can change hoe others see her. She believes that how people see her (as ugly) creates what she sees. Pecola, a young girl, belief she can change what she sees only by changing herself. She did not proud with herself. When the grocer looks at her with distaste, she does not consider that he is ugly, she only consider herself to be so. She believes that the way people observe her is more real than what herself observes. It also proud that people opinion and views of our selves is influences our psychology then its deliver new perception of our beauty value.

When Pecola finally granted her wish for blue eyes, she is able to obtain blue eyes only by losing her mind. Her new imagery friend does not protect her from old suffering or insecurity. She is worried by the fact that others will not look at her. Her belief in her blue eyes is not enough. Then she really falls down into madness. That a result of social standard that affected people psychology. She lost her parents love and attention of other people. She struggle to fulfill social standard. In addition to make her parent and other people realize her existence. Then she wills get their attention.

"See mother. Mother is very nice. Mother, will you play with Jane? Mother laughs. Laugh, mother, laugh." (Morrison 1)

Pauline is not a nice mother. She even never laughs. And she never joins in pecola's play. She never gives attention, love and protection to her daughter. She just thought Pecola as her responsibility. She even shame with her daughter. When Pecola and her friends went to her mother's work place, she call her mother with Mrs. Breedlove, she did not intentional let fall a blueberry pie juice, and make the floor dirty. Her mother didn't care with her own daughter, but she even worried her daughter's employers. She got angry with Pecola.

"Crazy fool,,,my floor,mess..look what you.. work... get on out...now that.. crazy..my floor..my floor..my floor" (Morrison 109)

We may judge Pauline as a bad mother. She is antagonist character that we should hate with. In spite of that, we must know Pauline Williams really is. As an ordinary people, she

also has duality sides, bad character and also good character. Her past lives, will unfolds her reason that delivered those bad character.

Pauline was lived in Alabama. She has a quiet happy family. She has twin brothers.she was not only good at housekeeping, she enjoyed it. Her problem is she doesn't have people attention. She feels anonymity (like her daughter, Pecola). It is because her feet.

- "...The wound left her with a crooked, archless foot that flopped when she walked..." (page 110)
- "...why no body teased her, why she never left at home anywhere, or that belonged anyplace. Her general feeling of separateness and unworthiness she blamed on her foot..." (Morrison 111)

Our sympathy for Pauline comes in part because of the difficult sircumstances. She has faced, a deformed foot, loneliness, poverty, and racism influences her character. Society standard of perfect physical appearance affected her emotion and made her feel isolated from society.

She falls in love with Colly. She describe her feeling with colors to shows her happiest feeling, like when she remember her and Colly lovemaking. But after they had a baby and Colly began leave her alone, she feels lonely again.

"Pauline felt uncomfortable with the few black women she met. They were amused by her because she did not straighten her hair. When she tried to make up her face as they did, it came off rather badly" (Morrison 118)

This is describes her struggle to fulfill social standard. She thought if she suitable with society standard, she will not lonely and could join with society relationship. Furthermore, her relation with her husband was not good. They want much money to fulfill they needs. Pauline was developed in her desires for new clothes and Cholly needs it for his drink. Social rules said that if we had much money, we will have a happy life. Because money is solution for all your problem. It is true? Will we get happiness if we had money? And, will we can accept in society if we wear a nice dress? It is right?

Like other woman, she loves her babies. She tried to gives her love to her babies. When she had second pregnant, she felt happy. She thought she could remake her married batter.

"...I 'member I said I'd love it no matter what it looked like... they deliver right away and with no pain. Just like horses... he knowed, I reckon, that maybe I weren't no horse foaling... a right smart baby she was.. But I knowed she was ugly. Head full of pretty hair, but Lord she was ugly." (Morrison 124-126)

Pauline is not a bad woman. She just disappointed. According in her experiences, a black and ugly woman is out of criteria of beauty standard in their society. Even though, in 194, racism is not allowed by their government, but society still practice that old tradition. As

a mother she just wants to be a happy mother that proud with her baby, like she was expected before. It just a part of her dream, like in her favorites movies, a happy family with a nice dream. Her emotion and her education are not suitable to be a good mother. Social standard was influences her psychology. Than she blame other people, included her husband and also her children's. She just runs away.

"See father. He is big and strong. Father, will you play with Jane? Father is smiling. Smile, father, smile." (Morrison 1)

Pecola has a father too; maybe he is not big and strong. But her fathers never smile to Pecola. Pecola just know her father as a man, not as a father that should have giving his love to his children. Cholly Breedlove is no a good father. He even does something unforgivable; impregnate his own eleven year old daughter. Understanding how it was possible for Cholly to do those horrible things does not change our knowledge that he has caused tremendous suffering to his daughter but does change of our nature horror. Knowing Cholly story maybe makes his violence more bearable to us.

Similar with Pauline's story, we sympathize with Cholly not only because he has suffered abandonment, sexual humiliation, and racism but because Cholly was abandoned by his father and her mother died soon after giving birth to him. He does not know the way to raise children since he was not raised by his parents.

"Having no idea of how to raise children, and having never watched any parent raise himself, he could not comprehend what such a relationship should be". (Morrison: 160).

When his first love making experience with Darlene interrupted by white mans, it is clear shows that white powers deform black community, white races dominated American country. They also created some rule that protected their right. They are white, rich, beauty and have all criteria of social standards. In other hand Black people as minority class haven't all criteria. As the result black community have no places in community and just struggle to fulfill their social value, and hope to accept in their society.

Therefore, he cannot perform an ideal father for his family. He chooses to run away and find escape to liquor. He only knew to express love by making love with the girl he loves. When he saw Pecola, he can only express his love by raping her.

"See the cat. It goes mew-meow. Come and play. Come play with Jane. The Kitten will not play. See the dog. Bowwow goes the dog. Do you want to play with Jane? See the dog run. Run, dog, run". (Morrison 1)

Commonly a rich, happy and perfect family has an animal as their pet. But pecola is not having any animals. Pecola like and love animals. She sometimes plays with cat and dog in playground. This is indicating that Pecola wants to gives her love to somebody. But no one wants' to take it. Her parents, her brother and other people just run away and leave her alone.

"Here comes a friend. The friend will play with Jane. They will play a good game. Play, Jane, play." (Morrison 1)

As a normal people, anybody has a friend. Pecola also has a friend. Even though not all of them are good friends. Her classmates monk Pecola "black e moo...black e mo..." They did not realize that they monk their own blackness. Beauty standard is had been basic problems on people to days, especially on young girls. Not only a black woman wants their skin fairer, but in other hand, white woman wants her skin mire darker and not pale. That's influenced by physically standard in their country. That depends on other people views and opinion about their appearances. They did not proud with they really is.

The light skinned black girl, Maureen reinforces a massage of the Shirley Temple-whiteness's is beautiful and blackness is ugly. That also influences of society opinions. On the other hand, Claudia has not realized the standard to be perfectly beautiful. She is still in the period where girls in her age adore themselves. She hates Shirley Temple because she danced with her idol and that she is not like Shirley. The same thing happens when she receives a white doll in Christmas. It is obvious then; the adults teach the ideal standard by giving them doll as the role model for beautiful girl.

"From the clicking sounds of adults I knew that the doll represented what they thought to be my fondest". (Morrison: 20). "Adults, older girls, shops, magazines, newspapers, window signs\_\_ all the world had been agreed that a blue-eyed, yellow-haired, pink-skinned doll was what every girl child treasured". (Morrison: 19).

Maureen introduces of menstruation, babies, and naked man, and though Cludia and Frieda try to silence her, their fear reveals that this topic has a power over them too. Their tradition and also our tradition thought that a sex explanation is harmful to be discussed. It is like a taboo.

When Pecola had pregnant by her father, everybody just sympathy and did not nothing for her. Like Soaphead Church that just let Pecola with bad solution, when Pecola ask him to help her. As a capable and intelligence man that had good relationshion with God, he did not nothing. But Frieda and Claudia even though did not capable to help her; they want to save Pecola and her babies. They thought they must make a miracle to help her. They sacrifice of their hard earned money and seeds. They imagine that their sacrifice can earn Pecola safety. But they fail and they feel guilty.

"... This soil is bad for certain kinds of flowers. Certain seeds it will not nature, 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. We are wrong, of course, but t doesn't matter. It's too late. At least on the edge of own, among the garbage and the sunflowers of my town, it's much, much, much too late." (Morrison 206)

That failure is not Claudia, Frieda, Breedloves's family, or society failure. That's because social standard that be in affected in their society. Pecola lived in unfortunate's community and destiny. Their social standard did not support her ability to grow and life happy. It is also kills her freedom. She wants to accepted and have opportunity to be her self without consider with social standard and people opinion. If she capable to ignored all that junk things, like Claudia and Frieda Macteer's, maybe pecola will not lose her happiness.

## 4. CONCLUSION

Society standard that occurs in the society has virtuous benefits and also bad affect. Consciously and unconsciously, we were contributed to create and supported that rules. We are produced some rules of social standard in many reason, to support our desires, to create a perfect people, to protect our dream as a perfect people, to support our struggle and then we could got the best thing in our life. But in other hand we also created that rules to force minority class that did not appropriate with social standard.

As a result, many people struggle to have and appearance consider with social standard. Sometimes they even sacrifice their own identity just to become a perfect people according to social standard. They let go their self-pride just to become empty people. They sold their happiness, self-esteem, identity and their love just to be a perfect people. We are should not do that junk things.

The consideration in addressing the social standard could have been the effort to be accepted in the society. It would be apparent in order to be accepted, woman especially need to be regarded by the public even it could alter some of their appearance, opinion and their attitude. However one should remember to keep the inner self. Because everyone has a unique characteristic and our identity is our freedom.

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