The Standard Of Beauty In The Bluest Eye

In “The Bluest Eye”, the author, Toni Morrison, presents in the book that the ideal beauty is having pure white skin and blue eyes. During the 1940s, two psychologists Kenneth B. Clark and Mamie K. Phipps Clarks created an experiment using dolls. They use four identical dolls but a different color to test Childrens’. The children are ages three to seven and were asked to see which one they like. According to the study, most of the children chose the white doll. This is known as “the doll tests”. This shows how young children prefer the white dolls than the black dolls. I’m am writing about how beauty is one of the biggest topics in the story. The standard of beauty is having light-skinned and blue eyes. The beauty of being white, having blue eyes, and able to be seen is what Pecola wants in her. In order to learn why beauty is a central theme in the book, I will use secondary sources to back up my point. I am stating how beauty in The Bluest Eye is express thoroughly in the novel.

This novel goes by the four seasons (Fall, Winter, Spring, and Summer). Through the four seasons, she repeated the prologue of the family Mother, Father, Dick, and Jane. This prologue helps us analysis the ideal home, family, race and the ideal of beauty. In this prologue, it shows the lack of connections between the parents and jane which also connects to the experience Pecola had for her family. The structures that the author uses to show the difference between the life of Pecola and white people. The repetition of the words is same but loses some as it goes through each season.

“LOOKLOOKHERECOMESAFRIENDTHEFRIENDWILLPLAYWITHJANETHEYWILLPLAYAGOODGAMEPLAYJANEPLAY”.

Pecola Breedlove, a young black girl with dark skin, curly hair, and brown eyes who grew up in 1940s who wants beauty. She wants blond hair and blue eyes and people will give her the attention she wants. Pecola grew up in a poor neighborhood where people in school would call her ugly and no one wants to play with her. “But their ugliness was unique. No one could have convinced them that they were not relentlessly and aggressively ugly.” (Morrison 38) The Breedlove family would consider themselves ugly and how the color white or being white is the ideal beauty. In the book, they describe how adults and girls would prefer blue eyes, yellow hair, and who wants to own a pink-skinned doll as a child. Shirley Temple was an American Actress who everyone admires because she has blue eyes, blonde hair and pale skin which during the 1930s and 40s was consider the ideal of beauty. Shirley Temple symbolize pure beauty and Pecola admire her and by drinking milk is showing the values of being white which foreshadow her for wanted blue eyes.

In the novel, Pecola had enter Mr. Yacobowski store. He didn’t bother to look at her. “At some fixed point in time and space he senses that he need not waste the effort of a glance. He does not see her, because for him there is nothing to see. How can a fifty-two-year-old white immigrant storekeeper with the taste of potatoes and beer in his mouth, his mind honed on the doe-eyed Virgin Mary, his sensibilities blunted by a permanent awareness of loss, see a little black girl?” (Morrison 48) He didn’t bother to look at her because she wasn’t white and doesn’t have blue eyes which catches the attention. Pecola thinks having blue eyes and being white would be the best thing ever for her. She can see the world differently and people will

treat/see her differently too. “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.” (Morrison 46) This explains Pecola really wants blue eyes, so it changes how the society and people see/treat her.

Here comes to the foreshadow in the beginning. When Pecola loves Shirley Temple, which symbolize pure white beauty and by drinking in her cup that made her wants blue eyes. “Please. If there is somebody with bluer eyes than mine, then maybe there is somebody with the bluest eyes. The bluest eyes in the whole world...” (Morrison 203). When Pecola asked for blue eyes and she think she has it, she wants it bluer. She obsesses with the blue eyes and the damage that she has done. “A little black girl yearns for blue eyes of a little white girl, and the horror at the heart of her yearning is exceeded only by the evil of fulfillment.” (Morrison 204). Pecola thought her eyes were blue but never did. She wanted blue eyes so badly because that’s what she thinks the standard of beauty is. Having blue eyes to be able to be seen and people would treat her differently. She never thought of what is going to happen. She been talking to an imaginary friend about her blue eyes.

In the White Beauty Standard in Toni Morrison’s The Bluest Eye, Morrison explains how the standard of beauty is socially set up. She is saying how the black women challenges their daily life due to the white beauty standard. She claims how young African American had to blend in with beauty standard while growing up to be recognized. The structure of the writing is giving background information's and an introduction to the story by giving a brief info of the character. She uses the story of Dick and Jane, and quotes in the Bluest Eye book showing how Pecola wasn’t seen because there is nothing to see. (because she is not an ideal woman during that time) This support my thesis because it depicts the theme beauty and explaining how the standard of beauty was a huge part of the society during that time and how a young girl had to grow up facing.

The author state “Morrison portrays the psychological devastation of Pecola Breedlove who searches for love and acceptance in a world that denies and does not value people of her race (blacks). The white established European standard of beauty: white skin, blond hair, and blue eyes. This Eurocentric standard of beauty which the black girl lacked was used in judging and qualifying beauty, thus causing blacks to develop disdain for their own black skin as it counters the dominant ideals” (Islam 189). This connects to my theme beauty because it connects to how Pecola wanted to look like an ideal beauty girl. People around her in school and community who called her ugly and won’t give her the attention which makes her think having blue eyes or being white has more priority.

Pecola thinks she has blue, but she doesn’t really know that she is still black, poor, and ugly. In the novel, she thinks she has blue eyes, but she wants it bluer. “Why, look at pretty-eyed Pecola. We must not do bad things in front of those pretty eyes” (Morrison 29). However, regardless these stuffs, Pecola still is unaware that though (in case) her eyes were changes into blue she would still be regarded as a black, poor, and ugly. Nothing would change, obviously. “No one else will see her blue eyes. But she will. And she will live happily ever after” (Morrison 155). It means that she still considered as ugly and black, the blue eyes she already has do not change her identity that she is black and ugly.” (Islam 197). Pecola wanted blue eyes since the day she got call ugly and how she admires Shirley Temple. As long she gets her blue eye, she thinks the world is different, but she won’t realize she is still the same.

Another article called Out of Sight: Toni Morrison’s Revision of Beauty is about how Morrison analyzed the American culture and the nonacceptance of the ideal of white beauty in female in the novel. The author in this article is stating the standard of beauty. And how Pecola in the novel, is being compare to others why white standards. She gives examples from the novel. One example from the novel is when Pecola enter Mr. Yacobowski store. Because she is not the ideal of the white standard, she is not seen by the owner. Another example from this author is the “ugliness” that Pecola think she have to go through her rest of her life. The author said, “she hides her self behind the ugliness the mainstream culture won’t look at.”. Pecola is hiding from the society because of her color and where people absent her. The author gave background information from the Song of Soloman and What the Black Woman Thinks About Women’s Lib” And Discusses how Morrison explain the image of the black female beauty. This supports my thesis because not only explain the beauty in the novel but the image of being black facing the society of the white beauty.

Pecola is a young black girl who does not fit in to the white culture. She doesn’t have blond hair or eye blues. Because of this, she is absent for her existence. This article gave examples that connected to my theme and my examples. For example, “Pecola and the Breedlove internalize their absence and their invisibility. They “w[ea]r their ugliness,” because all the visual representations around them reject them as ugly (34)” (Walther 777). Pecola think she is not beautiful and accept what people say about her, she absence herself to the society. She cares about what people judge her and the standard of beauty forces her to have lack of confidence in herself. The only way for Pecola to fit in was having blue eyes.

Another article is They Treated Me Like A Geography Lesson:" Beauty Culture and Ethnicity in Toni Morrison's 'The Bluest Eye' and Julia Alvarez's 'How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents' is about not just the idea of beauty but the standards that woman wants to achieve. In this article the author uses the book The Bluest Eye and The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty Are Used Against Women by Naomi Wolf. The author gave examples stating how beauty is determined by people and how it affects all women of any age or color. Wolf describes the different side of beauty. They gave an example from the novel The Bluest Eye, that people called the Breedlove family: Pecola, ugly, and that’s when Pecola took it from there. Just one word she held it forever. Since then, she prayed for blue eyes and wanted to be beautiful. This related to my thesis because all women want beauty that everyone will agree and be recognized. And Pecola is a great example since she is black, and she wanted blue eye so she can look like others and see the world differently.

An example in this article is “Using this standard, society punishes people for innate traits over which they have absolutely no control. Only the beautiful faces, those leaning from the billboards, movies, and glances, are worthy of notice” (Cardona 14). This example connects to my theme and explanation because the society does affect what people see in them. Pecola classmates call her ugly and she wishes for blue eyes every day. In this article, it said society changes the people perspective and they can’t even control it. Also, people who are famous and are pretty are recognized. This connects to Shirley Temple in the novel. Shirley was an American actress and known for standard of white beauty because she has blond hair, white and pretty. Pecola relies on other peoples’ opinion, white culture, than having confidence in herself.

In the novels and articles, the author uses different perspective to explain “Beauty”. In the novel by Toni Morrison, she explains how beauty had affected Pecola through four seasons and how

she wishes every day for blue eyes after she wasn't accepted by other people. She then admires Shirley Temple and trying to be like her where she be recognized. In the article written by Cardona, she explains the white culture and how the society changes someone's thoughts. She also uses information's from other resources to connect to Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye. For example, "Beauty is a currency system like the gold standard. Like any economy, it is determined by politics, and in the modern age in the West it is the last, best belief system that keeps male dominance intact" (Cardona 12). In this case, beauty is being judge by other people. It is being judge from yourself to public. It will affect all women and no matter what age or race; all women want to be pretty. Another example from Walther, "Out of Sight: Toni Morrison's Revision of beauty" states not only beauty but also connects to sexual desire. "Women look at other women to determine social status and to make comparisons to themselves, which is an objectifying act; men look at women as sexual objects" (Walther 779). Not only beauty, but women also cares about social status. Beauty to them is white, blond hair and blue eyes and the higher your social status the better it is. Also, in Islam article "White Beauty Standard in Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye" talks about status and beauty. "These studies have demonstrated that attractive people are more successful both socially and economically" (Islam 191). This remind us of Shirley Temple from the novel. She is a success American actress who represents the ideal of beauty. Clearly, the articles give us some background information's and provides connection to the theme beauty in the novel. The differences are the articles had other resources and themes that connected to Pecola and the theme beauty.

In conclusion, the standard of beauty is connected to social classes and gender. In the novel, clearly states how beauty changes one young girls mind in wishing to have blue eyes but nothing will change for her. The ideal beauty is what every woman wants in the 30s to 70s. Being white and having blue eyes, blond hair and the nice appearance will sure give them attention. As I said in the introduction, young children prefer the white doll than the others. Just like Pecola, she is black and she wants to be white. The articles also explain the connection between the novel and other resources. Explains beauty, race, status, and gender. All these effected how women see and judge themselves. Pecola is a great example in the novel showing how beauty had affected her in her young life and she still thinks having blue eyes will change everything. The novel and articles give us a whole concept of beauty. Even though beauty in the 30s-70s, beauty standards still exist now. People still care about how they look and dress every day and afraid of what people will say to them. Not only Pecola, but we probably in the same situation as her too.