

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The Bluest Eye is 1970's novel written by Toni Morrison, which took place in America's Midwest during 1940s as the following years of the Great Depression Era. The reason why the study of the novel of *The Bluest Eye* is interested to be done is because of the depiction of characters from the novel, which is portrayed through Pecola.

Pecola is an Afro-American adolescence who comes from a very poor family. Her father, Cholly Breedlove and her mother, Pauline Breedlove are both irresponsible parents. Her father spends most of his time in drinking, while her mother spends most of her time in serving the white family; in fact, she loves the white family more than her own black family.

No matter where Pecola goes, either in family, at school, or in society, she is always treated as a scapegoat because of her blackness. Pecola's mother seems to love the white family's daughter more than her own daughter by staying with and giving more attention to the whites'. However, it is not apart from the fight that she and Pecola's father always have. The trigger of the fight always comes from Pecola's father's drunkenness. To Pecola's father, drinking has become his habit and his escapement of the reality and the experience that he had before, which then made him insensible with his family needs. At school, Pecola becomes her friends' mockery; even her teacher tries hard to ignore her. In society, people always see her as an ugly poor disgusting black girl. Consequently, she grows into an adolescent who is lack of self-confident and is always abused by her environment.

The things which are afflicted by Pecola become the basis of the study and the analysis of *The Bluest Eye*, bringing Child Abuse and Adults' Failures as its main topic. In addition, the reason why the study of Child Abuse and Adults' Failures are interested to be done is because it is a very common yet crucial issue which can happen to anyone. In Indonesia itself, it is showed in national.kompas.com that in the year of 2007, the cases of violations rights against children is risen up to 40.398.635 cases, it has been more than in 2006 which had 13.447.921 cases. Moreover, during the first semester of 2008, there are 21.872 children become the victims of physical and psychological violence in their social environment with as many as 12.729 children are the victim of child sexual abuse from the people who are closed to them.

The term of Child Abuse is generally defined as an unfair treatment towards a child. These abuses can be divided into child neglect, physical abuse, child sexual abuse, and psychological abuse. When a child starts to enter early adolescence period, the child becomes more aware that people may have numerous and possibly conflicting and intentions at the same time. Here, the term of Child Abuse is referred to Pecola, an adolescent girl who is always treated badly physically, verbally, sexually, and emotionally. First, she becomes the object of her environment – being told repeatedly that she is an ugly girl, which then makes her full of desired to possess the bluest eyes. Second, she becomes the object of her parents' – being unloved by her mother and raped by her father.

Adults are mature human beings that are supposed to be a good role model for children, yet, through this novel, reader can find out the failures of adults in dealing with their life. Things that can be categorized as Adults' Failures are moral failures, parents' centrism, and life desperation. The reason why Child Abuse can also happen in Pecola's family is the discord of her parents' relationship as the Adults' Failures.

Her father, Cholly, is a drunker and the reason why he becomes like that is because he can't stand with his life pressure; while her mother, Pauline, only feels happy and alive when she is working for a rich white family, here she tries to escape from her reality since she can never stand with Cholly's behaviour at home, so both of them somehow lost the love that they once had for one and another in the end.

Personality is usually developed from a person's childhood experiences, so with the experiences that are befallen by Cholly when he was rejected by his father and was discarded by his mother, and the memory of his first sexual encounter, made him become an adults who fails when he abuses his daughter (Pecola) sexually. Since the experience that Pecola gets from his father, added with the experience of meeting and talking with the Soaphead Church, not only Pecola starts to hallucinate that she has blue eyes, but also she tends to have a split personality by talking to herself through the mirror; she becomes insane at the end. Still no one cares.

1.2 Problems of the Study

Through the novel of *The Bluest Eye*, there are two main problems which are going to be discussed in this thesis:

1. What are the types of child abuse in *The Bluest Eye*?
2. What are the failures of adults in *The Bluest Eye*?

1.3 Objective of the Study

Here are the objectives of studying the novel:

1. To find out types of Child Abuse i.e. Child Neglect, Physical Abuse, Child Sexual Abuse, and Psychological Abuse.

2. To define the Adults' Failures i.e. Moral Values Denial, Parents' Centrism, and Life Desperation.

1.4 Scope of the Study

The study of *The Bluest Eye's* novel will be limited by only analyzing Child Abuse in terms of isolation, torture, rape, and introvert, which is part of child neglect, physical abuse, child sexual abuse, and psychological abuse, as well as Adult's Failure that includes moral values denial, parents' centrism, and life desperation, which can be seen through the characters: Pecola Breedlove, Cholly Breedlove, Pauline Breedlove, and the Soaphead Church aka Elihue Micah Whitcomb.

1.5 Significance of the Study

There are two benefits why this thesis is written:

1. Theoretical benefits

Theoretically, this study is expected to give an overview and understanding about what Child Abuse and Adults' Failures are as well as what the relation between Child Abuse and Adults' Failures are. In addition, it is also expected to give an overview of how psychology can be involved in literary works.

2. Practical benefits

Practically, this study is made as a reference or as an additional reading material for those who are also interested in studying and discussing literary psychology; besides, this study is also expected to give readers knowledge of what and how they supposed do when dealing with adolescences in order to avoid child abuse.