

The Influence of Parenting Styles Towards Children's Personality in *The Bluest Eye* Novel by Toni Morrison

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Abstract: Parents are the first circle of children, where they learn and experience many things in early age. This study is centered on the influence of parents and their parenting styles on children's personality as seen in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*. The writers analyzed how different parenting styles and behavior from parents can affect children's personality such as in emotional and social areas. The research used qualitative research through a literary psychology approach. The data of study were gathered from the novel as the main source. Much researches have been conducted on the role of parents' influence on children's development, yet, comprehensive study needs to be conducted to understand more about the connection between parenting styles and children's personality. This paper seeks for the answer to the question of whether parenting styles really have influence on their children as reflected in *The Bluest Eye* novel. The finding reveals that neglecting parenting style could make children not understand about self-worth and misbehavior, while authoritative can help children to understand about their autonomy.

Keywords: children personality; parental; parenting style

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Toni Morrison is one of the greatest writers in America. Her work focuses on African American during the past life. It can be seen from some of her remarkable novels such as *Beloved*, *Tar baby* and her first published novel entitled *The Bluest Eye* that is discussed in this paper. Morrison's work usually concerns the life of a female African-American, and she makes sure that her works are not dominated by white gaze. Morrison always emphasizes her works on the past life of Blacks and distinguishes herself from other modern writers.

Literary work comes from the author's experience during their life, and it also channels from society then inspire the author to express it on literature work or novel. Every literature work has elements to support the story, extrinsic elements come from outside of the story. They relate to social and psychological context of society, that can influence the story and the characters in the story. As the author of *The Bluest Eye* novel, Morrison delivers her story's ideas from her own environment and society condition

The Bluest Eye novel tells us about a life of Pecola Breedlove, she is African American girl who lives with lack of affection from her parents and family. She experiences harrasement from

her surrounding including her family. Pecola must live with MacTeer family after her father burnt their house down. Pecola spent her time with MacTeers family members, especially their daughter, Claudia and Frieda McTeer.

MacTeer family is described as functional family. Mr. McTeer is responsible father. He tries to keep his family fed and clothed while Mrs. McTeer always takes care of her children and also Pecola. In contrast with Pecola's parents who never give affection to their children even sometimes abusive. Even, it makes Pecola doesn't understand about love and affection. Morrison on her works usually shows that an event or emotional connection between one person to others can impact someone's life's condition and personality, especially during childhood.

Personality itself comes from the word "Personal". In dictionary, personal is defined human as an individual. According to (Schultz & Schultz, 2017) that your personality is one of your most important assets. It has already helped shape your experiences up to now, and it will continue to do so for the rest of your life. Meanwhile, (Weinberg & Gould, 1999) describes personality is something that attaches to a person, each person has the personality that differentiates them from another person. Personality itself has various definitions by theorists. Allport defines personality as the dynamic organization in every individual with physical systems that determine his characteristic behaviour and thought (1976). Based on those definition, the writers sum up that personality is something that describes an individual; it can be seen in behaviour or the way of one individual's thinking.

Many factors can support building children's personality, yet, parenting styles is one of fundamental factors in this process. One study states that children learn about how people think and feel from directly observing; asking questions; and conversing about people's mental states with trusted informants, such as parents (Bartsch and Wellman, 1995; Dunn, 2002; Thompson et al., 2003). Another study has been done by Oktafiyani, Solihatin, and Japar (2013) and shows that "there is a correlation between parenting patterns and children's emotional intelligence". Parental role is matter to support healthy growth and children's personality because the way you interact with your child and how you discipline her will influence her for the rest of their life. General parenting styles have been found to relate to children's development (Collins, Maccoby, Steinberg, Hetherington, & Bornstein, 2000). Hence, parents become children's first learning area and the first circle of protection, not only the biological.

The way children raised and how they see the world around them can shape their personality; thought, and behavior. The problem of this research is limited to reveal parenting styles in the novel and its influence to personality of the children character; Pecola Breedlove and Claudia MacTeers

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Toni Morrison is one of the greatest authors, and there are some of the studies that discussed her novel, yet, most of them discuss the racial discrimination issue in Toni Morrison novel, A study about parenting styles and personalities of characters has been done by Pratiwi, Rinda (2017) entitled The Impact of Two different styles of parenting on Kevin's Personality Development Seen in Lionel Shriver's We Need to Talk about Kevin. The study aims to reveal Kevin's personality development as the impact of two different parenting styles. To analyze the topic, Pratiwi applied a psychological approach with parenting style theory, theory of character and characterization, self-rejection theory and juvenile delinquency theory. Her study reveals that Kevin is raised with an authoritarian and permissive parenting style. Those kinds of

parenting styles negatively impact Kevin's character and make him develop self-rejection, which leads him to be cruel, evil and duplicitous.

In the research written by Darwoto, Adelia Agatha (2021) with the title *The Influence of Lindo Jong's parenting Style Towards Her Daughter's Characteristics in Amy Tan's The Joy Luck Club*. It shows how is parents' role is significant in the children's growth which can be seen through their children's character. In this research, the writers uses two theories: Diana Baumrind's parenting style theory and characterization theory by M.J Murphy. This study aims to described the characteristics of Linda Jong and Waverly Jong and the influence of parenting style on Waverly's characteristics.

The two related studies above support the resource and become a helpful reference in conducting this study since there are several similarities, such as having the same main topic, object and approach applied in order to analyze this study. Furthermore, the studies above give broader information to the researchers of this study to better understand how parenting style influences children's personalities.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study is kind of a qualitative research which is based on library research by using content analysis technique in order to find the answer of the problem. The object of this research is a novel written by Toni Morrison entitled *The Bluest Eye* and was focused on the connection between parenting style and children personality namely Claudia Mcteer and Pecola Breedlove.

This research applied a literary psychology approach and *the Bluest Eye* Novel is the primary source of this study, while other information were collected as secondary source, which were taken from some supported references, journals, articles and many more dealing with parenting style and children personality.

To get better understanding and deep insight about the research, the researchers did several steps. First was close-reading. The researchers collected the data and took the notes, which were words, phrases, and paragraphs from *The Bluest Eye* novel. Second step was collecting supporting resources. The researchers obtained the supporting data then analyzed them. To reveal about how the parenting styles effect children's personality, literary psychology approach was applied as well as Diana Baumrind (1966) and Maccoby & Martin, 1983 theory of parenting style. Meanwhile, self-actualization theory by Carl Rogers was applied to explain personality of Claudia Mcteer and Pecola Breedlove.

Personality Theory

One theory about personality that has received wide recognition is a self-actualization theory by Carl Roger (Schultz & Schultz, 2017), rooting in the humanistic psychology approach. This theory is also known as self-concept theory as its focuses on it. Roger's believed that there are three keys as a form of self-concept: ideal self, true self, and self-image.

Self-image is about how we perceive ourselves and relates to self-esteem of person. Self-image directly affects how a person feels, thinks, and acts in the world Rogers (1954). Ideal-self is about what we want, what humans strive to achieve in life as their goals or ideals (Ismail

&Tekke, 2015). Roger also suggest that there are some things situated beyond our reachable that might result from the gap between the self-image and ideal self (Boeree;2006, Tekke& Ismail, 2015). Furthermore, true image is about a given that appears on people as individual.

On roger's theory, he also mentions and emphasizes congruence and incongruence. According to Rogers (1956), the closer the person's self-image and self-ideal are to each other, the more congruent or consistent and the higher person's sense of self-worth. A person that congruence will feel worthy under all conditions. Also, they can develop and actualize all facets of the self, proceeding toward the goal of becoming a fully functioning person (Schultz & Schultz, 2017). In contrast, incongruence is a discrepancy between a person's self-concept and aspect of his or their experience (Schultz & Schultz, 2017). Roger (1956) also stated that anxiety results from a discrepancy between experience and the perception of the self. Rogers believed that people must be in a congruence situation to achieve self-actualization as a fully functioning person.

Parenting Style Theory

Parents need to support their children to step and thrive in that stage. They have to help the children so that their children can thrive in their own lives. Parental behavioral control consists of parenting behavior that attempts to control, manage or regulate child behavior, either through enforcing demands and rules, disciplinary strategies, control of rewards and punishment, or through supervisory functions (Barber 2002; Maccoby,1990). Baumrind identified three parenting styles based on parental demandingness and responsiveness, namely authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting.

Some studies have shown that those three parenting styles have some impacts on children. Authoritarian parenting itself refers to the parent that wants and attempt to control their children that parents also evaluate their children's behaviors and attitude with a certain standard that they already set as an indicator, this type of parents usually force their children to obey the rules that they make, and if their children break the rule, the result is punishment. Authoritarian parenting focus on the discipline and obedience of the children. Everything should work as they order and do not need any explanation. Meanwhile, authoritative parenting is a parenting style known as one of the best parenting styles, this kind of parental is high in demanding and high responsiveness to children's needs. Authoritative parents control and support their children to live in their perspectives (Baumrind, 1991). Permissive parents are undemanding but responsive typed of parenting, this type of parents is super responsive to children's emotional needs, whilst children's responsibility and the boundary is low.

Later on, Maccoby and Martin expanded Baumrind's theory by dividing the permissive parenting style into two different styles, namely indulgent and neglectful. Indulgent parents are very loving and often act like their children's friends (Baumrind, 1991; Maccoby & Martin, 1983). They provide a few guidelines and rules and do not expect their children to behave responsibly (Tashjihhan, 2018). Meanwhile, Neglectful parents are almost not involved in their children's lives. They are undemanding and unresponsive. Neglecting parents are those that show a deficient level of involvement as well as strictness with their children (Kremers, Brug, de Vries& Engels, 2003)

The role of the parent in shaping the personality of children is essential. It is needed to guide and assist children in recognizing and determining their future in life. According to (Brown & Iyengar, 2008), parenting style impacts children's emotional and psychological areas such as their identity development, self-awareness, and self-esteem, which are engaged to personality

traits of the children. Another study explains that the connection between the role of parents and parenting towards children's personality is unambiguous, not only in mental and emotional areas, yet, also in a cognitive area such as in children's academic achievement. (Brown & Iyengar, 2008) state that: the decision between parents and children, whether they are cooperating or against each other, also impacts the progress of children's achievement. In this case, parenting style also provides and shows a learning pattern about children's emotional, behavioral, and cognitive traits. According to (Pomerantz & Thompson, 2008), parents transmit their effect to their children, contributing to their children's effective resources. When parents transmit positive affect in their interaction with the children, they sustain even foster positive emotions in them.

In contrast, when parents transmit the negative affect to children, they also transfer negative emotion to them, and all of it can be appears from the infancy stage of the children. Another study shows the connection between children and parenting styles exists, such as in the research conducted by (Pratiwi & Ekowani, 2015, as cited in (Asbari et al., 2019). The research shows that the children who receive an authoritative parenting style have higher moral intelligence than children under the authoritarian parenting style, permissive, and uninvolved (neglectful) parenting style. Other factors can be influenced children's personality, environment, social context, and children's temperament also has a role in creating children's personality, although, in childhood moment parents and parenting style can be one of the significant factors that influence the personality of the children.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Parenting styles influence to children personality and thought

Parenting influence children personality in the way the children's perception towards their self and others thing, it also including connection to children's cognitive. It goes along with statement by (Por & Peixato, 1991) Parents affect may shape children's cognitive resources in several ways. When they demonstrate positive and negative affect toward their children, parent's convey that their children are worthy.

As a seen in the novel when Pauline said that "But I knowed she was ugly. Head full of pretty hair, but Lord she was ugly" from that line we can see that actually Pauline have judged her Pecola as something that not beautiful, and unstructured creature as she compare the baby as a ball of hair and mention her as an ugly thing. As on the statement by (Schultz & Schultz, 2017) regarding to personality theory by Roger's that infants develop a need for what Rogers called positive regard, by including acceptance, love and approval from other people especially their mother during infancy. From early year of life, children already understand about affection and acceptance especially from their parents. Pecola perceives lack of affection from her own mother, even without understand or listen that sentence directly, yet, the kind of poor affection can be feel by her.

Pauline also teaches Pecola that herself is unworthy, especially compare to white people which can be seen on Pauline attitude and behavior towards Pecola. "The familiar violence rose in me. Her calling Mrs. Breedlove Polly, When even Pecola called her mother Mrs. Breedlove" (Morrison, 1970). As a child Pecola is not allowed to call her mother as mom or mother. However, the children of Fisher's family could call Pauline with a nickname Polly.

This kind of relation has a consequences to character of Pecola Breedlove, it rise an understanding that having a black skin and African features means that the person is ugly and has low value as an individual As the result, Pecola believes that violent, sexual abuse and poor treatment that occurs on her life is directly correlated to her appearance as an African American.

Cholly Breedlove as a father also never took care of her children, as he never understand about love and relationship in family, he always alone with his own mind.

“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, 1970)

Cholly Breedlove knows nothing about parenting. He never feels or sees how parenting works. Even the worst case is he raped her own child Pecola as it shows a dysfunctional father role on him. Cholly Breedlove is senseless and does not understand how to express his affection and love to other people. Consequently, Pecola thought that incest or physical touch was the right way to convey their affection felling with other people. Children may develop misperceptions towards something that happened to them. They cannot learn how to express their emotions and understand positive or negative perceptions towards themselves or others without guidance from their parents.

As a parents, Cholly and Pauline Breedlove are not involving of raising her children, they are not worrying about her children condition and situation. Poor treatment and violence that Pecola receives from her parents shaped and influenced her personality as a child that never valued herself. She always thought that her Africa America features as a threat and reason for everything that happened to her. She perceived herself as unworthy and appeared as a child with low esteem. External standards of judgment become internal and personal for Pecola. She believes that having a beauty standard of white like Fisher's daughter will change her life and the way others see her. She dreams about having blue eyes and white skin as an ideal self.

On the other hand, Claudia McTeer is living as a girl that understands more about life in the present. Although she is living in the same situation with Pecola, yet, her parents care and are protective toward her and her sibling, as we can see when Claudia sick, at that time MrsMacTeer complaining about cleaning the vomit, as a mother MrsMacTeer nursing her child and checking her condition at night. Moreover, when Pecola gets her first menstruation, MrsMacTeer helped and cleaned up Pecola from the mess. As a mother, MrsMacTeer also teaches the children about things they need to know in life.

In conjugation with its effect on Claudia's personality, parents provide children with the experience of reacting and solving problems in certain conditions (Por & Peixato, 1991). It shapes Claudia's personality as someone that perceives herself with self-esteem. Claudia knows her true self is worthy, and not learn self-hatred regarding her condition.

Parenting style affect to children behavior

Parenting style may affect children's behavior. Pecola's behavior can show it, She drinks three quarts of milk to see the face of Shirley Temple and with the thought that it can change her skin tone. "Each night, without fail, she prayed for blue eyes. For a year she had prays" (Morrison, 1970). Her obsession controls Pecola's behavior, she aims at something that is actually impossible to happen.

When parents are not responsive to their children's needs, they cannot help the children realize their actions, whether they are right or wrong. (Schultz & Schultz, 2017) state that, Having internalized their parents' norms and standards, they (children) view themselves as worthy or unworthy, good or bad, according to the terms their parents defined. Pecola's obsession drives her to do many things to achieve her ideal self as someone with blue eyes and white skin. It makes her live on incongruence, where the only thing that matters for her is to be an ideal self, even by doing horrible actions like poisoning the dog.

Against Pecola's parents, Mr and Mrs MacTeer always looks after their children and gives her children autonomy. One day, Claudia find her sibling Frieda is crying, it turns out that because Henry their neighbor, touched her breast, she told her parents about that incident. Furious knowing that information, Mr and Mrs. MacTeer returned, looking for Henry and attacked him. By reporting the incident to her parents, Claudia is shown that she is capable of evaluating and deciding what action she should take and react to the situation, this kind of condition matters in child development as a process to be a fully functioning person. According to (Por & Peixato, 1991), When parents support children's autonomy, they allow children to take initiative and express their opinion. Parenting style of MacTeer's family allows they children to explore their ability and allow their children to be more critics. As the character of Claudia appears in the novel, when she received a doll as a christmast present, "I could not love it. But I could examine it to see what it was that all the world said was lovable." Claudia tries to figure out why the doll is so special for people in her society

CONCLUSION

The Bluest Eye novel provides clear evidence that parents can influence children's personalities. Based on the findings and analysis, Pecola's parent is not responsive to her need or demand many things. Neglectful parenting styles affected Pecola's personality. Pecola is an incongruity to reality and appears as someone with low self-esteem. She perceived herself as unworthy due to her actual image as African American. At the same time, Claudia is defined as children under an authoritative parenting style. It can be seen in Claudia's unique trait. As a child, Claudia can control her behavior and understand that she is valuable. She never saw her true image as a problem and felt worthy as the way she is. Claudia also has her own autonomy, with her parent's control and guidance.

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