

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 The Background of the Research

A psychological phenomenon is one of the most frequently encountered issues in everyday life. The psychological side of life can be distorted as a psychopath or different personalities encountered in normal life. The character is one of the main elements in reviewing literature through a psychological approach, by telling the events experienced by the characters as well as a variety of payloads emotions, feelings, hopes, dreams and habits.

Certain psychological problems were experienced by black people in America as a result of racism in the United States as a cultural heritage of earlier generations, where black people were discriminated in many areas of life. In life, black people could not be separated from problems which included the issue of life in their interactions with white people, their interactions with white people, within family and the society. This discrimination caused conflicts and psychological pressures to black people regardless of age.

Psychological phenomenon experienced by black people gives inspiration to literary circles. This inspiration is expressed in the form of literary works such as short stories, plays or novels. One of them is Toni Morrison, a black woman author who was born in 1931, a period in which the social life was volatile in terms of slavery, racism, emancipation. Her parents moved to the North to avoid the problem of racism, in order for her to grow and evolve away from the fear of racial prejudice.

She became interested in literature at a very young age. Almost all of her novels discuss the discrimination experienced by the blacks in America.

She began to write fiction in 1957 and completed her first novel *The Bluest Eye* in 1970 which get less readers' attention. Then in 1973, she published the second novel entitled *Sula*, became the nominee of the National Book Awards. Furthermore, a novel which was finished in 1977 entitled *Song of Solomon* was the best seller novel and received several awards. In 1987, Morrison published a novel that won the Pulitzer Prize and the American Book Award, *Beloved*. As a famous author, Morrison had her own style in telling her story. By using a modernist flow, she takes the reader on a free thought.

In this research, the writer focuses on *The Bluest Eye*. This novel is set in the 1939-1941 period. It is Morrison's first novel that finished in 1970. *The Bluest Eye* tells the story of a family's life and focuses on the main character, Pecola Breedlove, an eleven years old black child who has a dream to have blue eyes like white people. She often experienced discrimination from the school and the community where she lived because of having different eyes. She was hit just because she saved a cat and insulted by boys at school because she did not have blue eyes. At that time, the standard of beauty was to have blue eyes like white people. It made Pecola hate herself. At eleven years old, Pecola was raped by her father who was drunk. One day, Pecola went to a spiritualist to change her eyes, but she failed and she created an imaginary friend who admitted about her beautiful blue eyes. Her imaginary friend asked a question about her father, Cholly, who had raped her, her mother beaten her senseless and did not believe her, and Cholly raped her the second time.

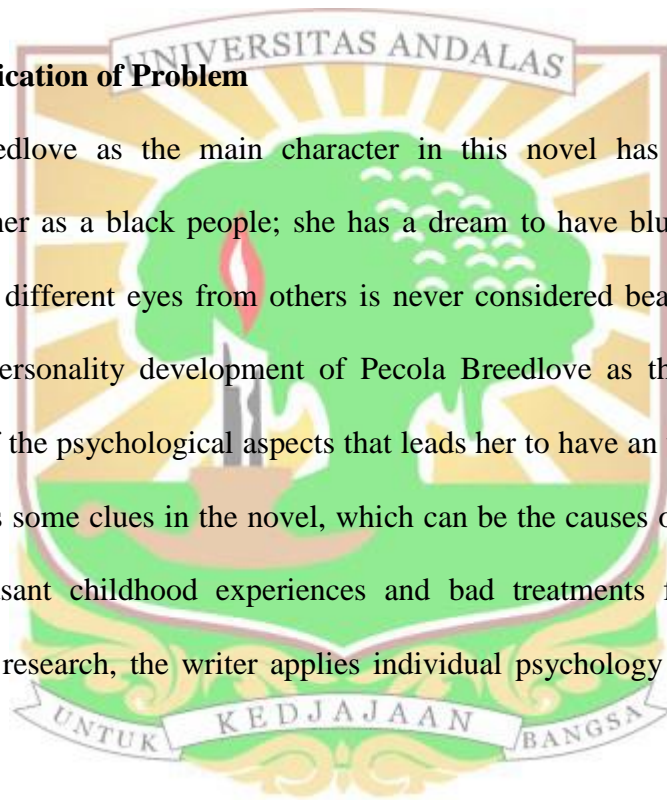
Based on the explanation above, the writer is interested in discussing Pecola's personality that leads to psychological problems of her. The novel describes how the treatments of family and community have great impact on someone's personality. The treatment from the family and society has led her to a thought that it is not realistic. The writer finds *The Bluest Eye* as a social critique delivered in the form of literature.

### **1.2 The Identification of Problem**

Pecola Breedlove as the main character in this novel has a dream that is unrealistic for her as a black people; she has a dream to have blue eyes like white people. Having different eyes from others is never considered beautiful. This study examines the personality development of Pecola Breedlove as the main character from the side of the psychological aspects that leads her to have an unrealistic dream. The writer finds some clues in the novel, which can be the causes of these problems, such as unpleasant childhood experiences and bad treatments from friends and society. In this research, the writer applies individual psychology theory by Alfred Adler.

### **1.3 The Scope of The Research**

The writer focuses on the intrinsic elements of the character Pecola Breedlove. Pecola has a dream to have blue eyes like white people. As a child born out of the black race, having blue eyes is something impossible. Here the writer is analyzing the personality development of Pecola based on the psychological aspects and the factors



that support the rise of the psychological problem in Pecola's personality that makes her have to an unrealistic dream.

#### 1.4 The Research Questions

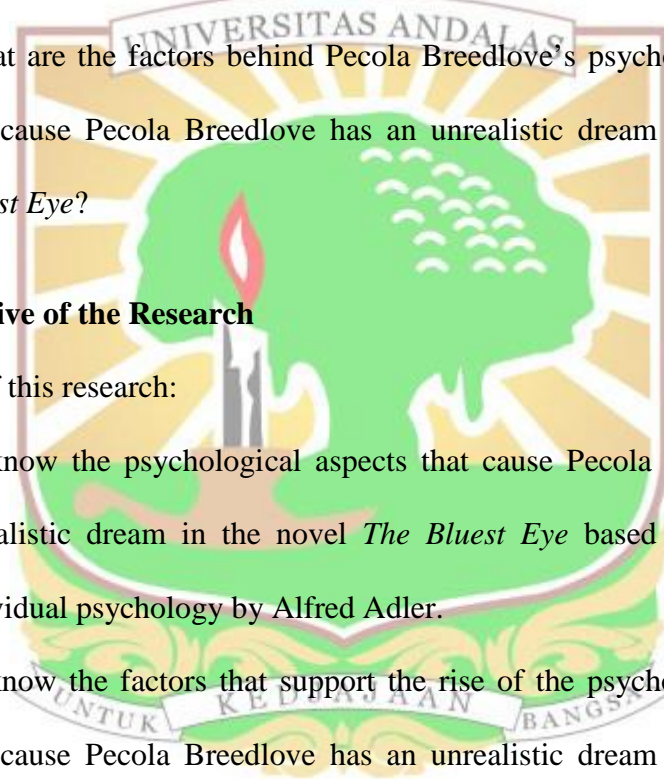
This research will answer the following questions:

1. What are the psychological problems that cause Pecola Breedlove has an unrealistic dream in the novel *The Bluest Eye* written by Toni Morrison?
2. What are the factors behind Pecola Breedlove's psychological problems that cause Pecola Breedlove has an unrealistic dream in the novel *The Bluest Eye*?

#### 1.5 The Objective of the Research

The purposes of this research:

1. To know the psychological aspects that cause Pecola Breedlove has an unrealistic dream in the novel *The Bluest Eye* based on the theory of individual psychology by Alfred Adler.
2. To know the factors that support the rise of the psychological problems that cause Pecola Breedlove has an unrealistic dream in the novel *The Bluest Eye*.



## 1.6 The Review of the Previous Studies

In order to support this research, the writer needs some previous studies which are related to this topic. This previous study is aimed as the medium of comparison to get a deeper understanding. The writer reviews other studies conducted by other researchers in order to find the different opinion to support this analysis.

This novel has been discussed by Iben Sienna Ade Rachman, Supiastutik and Erna Cahyawati in their article published in 2014 entitled “Child Abuse Rooted from Racism in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*”. This research discusses the phenomenon of child abuse depicted in the novel *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison. Racism in America is a conflict between the two races, the black (African - American) and white people. This situation makes black people suffered from repressive conditions such as position and low wages in jobs, lack of education and poverty. To escape from this condition, the black generally wrecks them into prostitution and alcohol. Alcoholism can make people lose consciousness which can cause behaviors. If this happens to someone, he will disturb those around him, including his family. Children are very likely to be a victim, such as harassment or sexual practices. Prostitution can cause a person to become dirty and small children easily become the target of sexual harassment. Poverty is almost the same as the two factors above. It makes people live under pressure due to lack of money. This research can support my research on the impact of racism that causes poverty, so parents seek an outlet, one of which is violence against children.

Next is an article in *Advances in Language and Literary Studies* by Md. Reza Hasan Khan and Md. Shafiqur Rahman entitled “The Framework of Racism in Toni



Morrison's *The Bluest Eye: A Psychosocial Interpretation*" (2014 vol.5, no.2) which talks about five points; racism and capitalism, beauty industry and ideology, rejection of the ego and subjectivity, internalized racism and the 'other', perverse obsession racism and fear of castration. Racism and capitalism explain how racism becomes a pattern of the white community to achieve their desires in running the capitalist system. Beauty industry and ideology explain that people think the concept of beauty can be manipulated by media and movies. Rejection of the ego and subjectivity explain how the black people struggle to break their egos because they are unrealized, and they also have a standard of beauty in their community. Internalized racism and the 'other' explain that there are some black people who survive with their situation and some choose to be in a safe position, such as to move away from the community. They are fear to become a victim of stereotypes. Obsession perverse racism and fear of castration explain how a person will behave as they have been treated. *The Bluest Eye* shows that racism affects all components of the society in which they can survive or resist.

Next is an article in *International Letters of Social and Humanistic Sciences* by Mina Aghakhani Shahrezaee and Zahra Jannessari Ladani entitled "Toni Morrison's *Beloved* and *The Bluest Eye: A Cultural Materialistic Approach*" (2014 vol.30, pp. 17-23). It explains that the keywords of those novels are race, social class, slavery and women. In the black community, racism also occurs. Some experts argue that the novels written by Morrison are the result of racism, especially upon children. Beside the social class, the novel also describes the psychological condition of each character in the novel. However, this journal is not an exhaustive treatment of the causes of

racism; it only discusses the contents of the story associated with the condition of the United State at the time.

Next is a dissertation by Shubhanku Kochar entitled “Treatment of Violence: A Study of Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye* and *Beloved*” (2013) describes that *The Bluest Eye* illustrate how white people attack the psychological mind of black people, especially women, through the concept of beauty. Most black women endure these conditions, some do not care, and some struggle for equality. Pecola is a victim of it. Actually, Pecola is not ugly; it is just because she was born from parents who are victims of stereotypes. This study can support my research from the side of how Cholly, Pauline and Pecola treated badly by the white.

### **1.7 The Theoretical Framework**

Based on Abrams, there are four broad types of poetic theory; they are called mimetic, pragmatic, expressive, and objective. The writer uses objective theory to support this analysis. Abrams in *Orientation of Critical Theories: The Mirror and The Lamp*:

The Objective approach in principal regards the artwork apart from everything that is outside of the work. Art is a work of art in itself, regardless of any external factors that exist. In the analysis by itself sufficient to something that is already in the works. (1953:21)

This theory is related to the internal relation and intrinsic element. The writer applies this theory because the scope of this research is Microanalysis.

In order to analyze the character, the writer applies the psychological approach. In the book of *Theory of Literature*, the term of psychology of literature has four possibilities in meaning. The first is the psychology of the author. The second is the psychology of the creative process. The third is the psychology of a character in a literary work. The fourth is the psychology of the reader (Wellek & Warren 1948: 75). Psychology of the author explains how an author expresses his/her imagination that can be accepted by the society. Usually, an author would write the form of their anxiety, shortage or desire in their work. Psychology of creative process includes all the steps conducted by the author. This stage starts from the subconscious impulse that creates a literary work until the last repair performed by the author. Psychology of the character explains the behavior and personality of the character in a literary work that refers to psychological aberrations. Psychology of the reader explains the impact of literature on the psychology of the reader.

Based on this explanation, the writer analyzes the psychology of character in the novel *The Bluest Eye*. The writer analyzes the psychology of Pecola Breedlove by using Individual Psychology theory by Alfred Adler. Adler said in *Understanding Life: an Introduction to the Psychology of Alfred Adler* said that

Individual psychology attempts to see individual lives as a whole and regards each single reaction, each action and impulse as an expression of an individual attitude towards life (1997:1). It describes that people try to see the life of the individual in all aspects of life and assume that all forms of action, hope and desire are a form of individual attitudes in life.



There are two principles underlying this theory: (1) The Inferiority Complex is feelings of inferiority or inadequacy that produce stress, psychological evasions and a compensatory drive towards an illusory sense of superiority. (2) The Superiority Complex is one of the ways people who feel inferior try to escape from their difficulties. (Adler 1997: 43,62)

By applying this theory, the writer attempts to explain personality development of Pecola Breedlove.

### **1.8 The Method of the Research**

The writer applies three steps in this research; collecting data, analyzing data, and presenting data. These steps are applied in order to make a good research.

The first step is collecting data. There are two kinds of data used in this research, the primary data, which are taken from the novel *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison and the secondary data are taken from the literary book, article, journal related to this study. The data are collected by using library research methods: reading (the books, articles, journals), and browsing the internet.

The second step is analyzing the data. The method of analyzing the data is descriptive analysis. The analysis starts by classifying the psychological aspects of Pecola's personality using individual psychology theory by Alfred Adler. Then continued by revealing the factors of psychological aspects of Pecola.

The last step is presenting the result of analysis. Since this research is a qualitative research, the method used in presenting the result of the analysis is a

descriptive method. Therefore, the data are elaborated through words, not in the form of number and picture.

