

THE INFLUENCES OF TONI MORRISON'S *THE BLUEST EYE* (1970) ON THE READERS' PERSPECTIVE TOWARDS RACIAL DIFFERENCES: A READER-RESPONSE ANALYSIS



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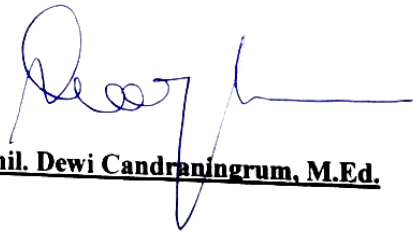
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Sincerely,



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Abstrak

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk memeriksa pengaruh dari novel *The Bluest Eye* terhadap pandangan para pembaca mengenai perbedaan ras. Teori yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah Reader-response dari Richard Beach dan Attitude in Social Psychology dari Eagly & Chaiken. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif. Data dalam penelitian ini terdiri dari dua jenis yaitu data primer dan data sekunder. Data primer adalah respon dari para pembaca terhadap novel pada website Goodreads. Sedangkan data sekunder didapat dari sumber lain seperti jurnal, artikel, internet dan sumber lain yang relevan dengan penelitian ini. Teknik pengumpulan data menggunakan cara analisis dokumen dengan menerapkan random population sampling dari website Goodreads. Teknik analisis data dengan menggunakan metode deskriptif dengan cara mengkategorisasi data, menjabarkan isu dengan detail menggunakan teori reader-response dan teori lain yang mendukung, dan menarik kesimpulan akhir serta menggunakan metode dari Miles & Huberman untuk menunjukkan hasil penelitian dengan mengurangi data, menampilkan data, dan menarik kesimpulan. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa pengaruh dari novel *The Bluest Eye* terhadap pandangan para pembaca mengenai perbedaan ras adalah dalam hal perubahan sikap. Hal itu terdiri dari tiga aspek yaitu afektif, behavioral, dan kognitif. Dalam hal afektif, sikap para pembaca terhadap perbedaan ras yaitu sedih, takut, dan benci. Dalam hal behavioral, sikap para pembaca yaitu menghargai, menerima, dan sadar. Dan dalam hal kognitif, sikap para pembaca terbagi dalam dua macam yaitu pandangan negative terhadap rasisme dan pandangan positive terhadap perbedaan ras.

Kata kunci: reader-response, perbedaan ras, perubahan sikap

Abstract

The aim of this study is to inspect the influence of *The Bluest Eye* novel on the readers' perspective toward racial differences. The theories used in this study are Reader-response by Richard Beach and attitude in social psychology by Eagly & Chaiken. This study used qualitative method. The data of this study consist of two kind namely primary data and secondary data. Primary data is the response from the readers to the novel on Goodreads website. While the secondary data obtained from other sources like journal, article, internet and another that related to the study. The technique to collect the data is using document review by applying random population sampling from Goodreads website. The technique of analyzing data is using descriptive approach by categorizing the data, exposing the issue in details using reader-response theory and some supporting theories, and making conclusion to get the final result and using method from Miles & Huberman to show the result by reducing data, displaying data, and drawing conclusion. The result of this study shows that the influence of *The Bluest Eye* novel on the

readers' perspective toward racial differences is in term of attitude change. It consists of three aspects namely affective, behavioral, and cognitive. In affective, the readers' attitudes toward racial differences are sadness, anxiety, and hatred. In behavioral, the attitudes are respectability, acceptability, and awareness. And in cognitive, the readers have two kinds of attitude namely negative perspective toward racism and positive perspective toward racial differences.

Keywords: reader-response, racial differences, attitude change.

1. INTRODUCTION

We as human cannot live like what we are expected in every aspects. For example, in social life human always face social problems. One of social problems that still become a problem is racial discrimination or popular as racism. Racism is kind of social problem that still occur in our society nowadays. Racism makes superior community to harsh or discriminate inferior community. Racism can be differentiated in term of skin colour, physical, and even beauty. Hence, human as social being cannot be separated from interaction, whether it is with other people or with a literary works. The different perspectives also occur when people make interpretation toward a literary work. The interaction between readers and text is called reader-response criticism. According to Cuddon (1999), reader-response concerned with the relationship of a reader and a text, with the emphasis on the different ways in which a reader participates in the course of reading a text and the different perspectives which arise after a reader read the text.

The studies about Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* novel had been done by many researchers by using various methods. There were some kinds of methods used by them. Some studies that focus on study the black culture and their nature were conducted by some researchers namely Cormier-Hamilton (1994), McKittrick (2000), and Kohler (2006). While some of them focus on the effect of racism in black culture and gender violence as conducted by Havlikova (2011), Tahir (2014), and Khan and Rahman (2014). Another study focus on using approach like feminist and psychoanalytic as conducted by Ahlawat (2013), Hayes (2015), and Valarmathi and Muthukumar (2016). There were some studies that focus on linguistic and characterization as conducted by Wu and Yang (2013) and Vazquez (2014).

From the previous studies above, it can be conclude that the previous studies were focused on the linguistics feature, characterization, feminist approach, psychoanalytic, black culture, racism, and violence. Although the issues of racism have been studied, the issue on the influences of the novel on the readers' perspective toward racial differences is not conducted yet. So, the researcher wants to conduct a research concerning influences from *The Bluest Eye* novel on readers' perspective toward racial differences which has three objectives. The objectives are: 1) to describe the profile of the readers of *The Bluest Eye* novel 2) to analyze the factors that influences the readers' perspective toward racial differences and 3) to reveal the intention of the readers in giving their perspective toward racial differences issue.

The theories used in this study were reader-response theory from Beach (1993) and attitude in social psychology by Eagly & Chaiken (1998). Those theories were used to analyze the findings in this study to get the conclusion.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The type of this study is qualitative study. The data consists of two kinds namely primary data and secondary data. The primary data of this study is the response from the readers on Goodreads website. The data was taken from December 2017 until June 2018 and involving 300 readers. The secondary data are some references and material that relates to the study such as journals, e-books, articles in websites, dictionaries, and other sources. The technique to collect the data in this study is using document review by applying random population sampling. The technique to analyze the data is using descriptive approach and method from Miles and Huberman (1994) to show the results by data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

3. RESEARCH FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The main finding in this study was the influence of *The Bluest Eye* novel on the readers. The influence was in term of attitude change. Besides, the profile of the readers also showed in this study.

3.1 Finding

3.1.1 Reviewer by kinds of issue

In this study, there are 300 text reviews from the readers. The readers give their review about the novel. In Goodreads website, each page consist of 30 readers and

there are up to ten pages. The readers were classified based on the issue they talk about in the Goodreads website. The following table shows the classification of the issue from the readers.

No	Type of Review	Readers	Percentage
1.	Character	4	1,33 %
2.	Style	30	10 %
3.	Plot	37	12,33 %
4.	Accolade	67	22,34 %
5.	Criticism	37	12,33 %
6.	Racism	38	12,67 %
7.	Influence	80	26,67 %
8.	Moral Lesson	3	1 %
9.	Quotation	4	1,33 %
Total		300	100 %

Table 1.1

3.1.2 Reviewer by Age

Age can be an influence for people to give their opinion and think rationally. In giving their opinion toward issue in this novel, age also give influence of their idea. The following table shows the classification of age from the readers.

No	Age	Readers	Percentage
1.	15-22	10	3,34 %
2.	23-50	38	12,66 %
3.	51-80	10	3, 34 %
4.	Unidentified	242	80, 66 %
Total		300	100 %

Table 1.2

The table above describes the age of the readers who give their review on Goodreads. From the table the total number of the reviewer in age 15 to 22 is 10 readers. This age range is categorized as teenager readers. The reader who categorized as teenager is quite low. The reason is this novel is hard to be understood by teenager in term of the style. From the diction, sentence structure and poetic writing style of Toni Morrison are hard to be handled by them.

The total number of the reviewer in age 23-50 is 38 readers. This age range is categorized as adult readers. This category is quite high. This is assumed that adult is interesting in issue of racism, child abuse, rape, and incest as they found it in society. They also able to handle Toni Morrison's writing style which is poetic and understand it clearly.

The total number of the reviewer in age 51 to 80 is 10 readers. This age range is categorized as elder readers. This category is quite low too. It is assumed that elder people is not interested much in reading novel that has hard issue. They prefer novel that more entertaining or has less complex issue.

The rest of the number of the reviewer age is unidentified. This category is the highest in which there are 242 readers. They did not show their age in their Goodreads' profile. It is assumed that it is western culture in which telling or asking age is quite impolite and it is a privacy for them.

3.1.3 Reviewer by Gender

The Bluest Eye novel is about racism, child abuse, and incest toward the protagonist Pecola Breedlove. She is a child and girl. Gender can be an influence for people when they making decision or opinion. When the theme of this novel is focus on woman, gender of the readers may influence in term of their interest. The following table shows the classification of gender from the readers.

No	Gender	Readers	Percentage
1.	Male	69	23 %
2.	Female	194	64,66 %
3.	Unidentified	37	12, 34 %
Total		300	100 %

Table 1.3

From the table it is described that male readers is 69 readers from total 300 readers. The number of male readers is quite low rather than female readers. It is assumed that male readers are less interesting in reading novel with issue of racism that focussed on female main protagonist. On the other hand, the number of female readers is high with 194 readers. It is assumed that female readers more interesting to read novel with the issue that focussed on female main protagonist. Female readers more interesting to deal with issue that related to them. The issue that related to them is women discrimination in this novel.

For the rest of the readers, their gender is unidentified. There are about 37 readers whose gender is unidentified. It is assumed that they do not want to reveal their gender in their Goodreads profile due to privacy. They prefer to hide their gender because it is their habit or maybe they feel it is not necessary.

3.1.4 Reviewer by Race

Race can be an indicator or influence for people to give their judgment or opinion toward certain issue. For this novel, it is about black discrimination and harassment. Race may influence people mindset when they try to response to the issue. The following table shows the classification of race from the readers.

No	Race	Readers	Percentage
1.	Mongoloid	9	3 %
2.	Caucasian	100	33, 34 %
3.	Negroid	27	9 %
4.	Unidentified	164	54, 66 %
Total		300	100 %

Table 1.4

From the table it is described that the number of reader from Mongoloid race is 9 readers. It is relative low compared to other race. It is assumed that Mongoloid people are less interesting to read the novel due to the issue. The issue that focused on racism, discrimination, and harassment on black is less interesting. It is also assumed that they are not familiar with the issue on racism since Mongoloid people did not experience racial discrimination like black people did in their life. This is influencing their interest level toward the issue.

The most race that reviewed this novel on Goodreads is Caucasian. They are interesting in reading the novel as shown as in the table there are 100 readers. It is assumed that Caucasian people are interesting with the issue especially it is about them. Their supremacy over black people also influences their interest. Caucasian people who review this novel mostly cursed the racism and discrimination although they are white people.

For the Negroid, the number of reader is 27 readers. This amount is quite low due to this issue on the novel is about black racial discrimination. It is assumed that Negroid people may sick of this issue. They always face this kind of issue almost

everywhere they are. Negroid people who reviewed this novel all of them hoped that there is no racism in this world and they can be treated equal with other race. The rest is unidentified. Their race is unknown due to their privacy. They did not display it on their Goodreads' profile. For this race category, the readers race is revealed from their profile picture in Goodreads. From their profile picture it can be seen whether they Mongoloid, Caucasian, or Negroid. They who their race is unidentified are not using their own face or using another picture that not shows their face.

3.1.5 Reviewer by Country

The readers who review *The Bluest Eye* novel on Goodreads came from different countries in the world. The total reviewer in this study is 300 readers. The following table shows the classification of country from the readers.

No	Country	Readers	Percentage
1.	USA	173	57, 67 %
2.	Canada	12	4 %
3.	UK	6	2 %
4.	Spain	4	1, 34 %
5.	India	4	1, 34 %
6.	Bangladesh	2	0, 67 %
7.	Finland	2	0, 67 %
8.	Algeria	2	0, 67 %
9.	South Africa	2	0, 67 %
10.	Switzerland	1	0, 33 %
11.	Trinidad & Tobago	1	0, 33 %
12.	Ghana	1	0, 33 %
13.	Netherland	1	0, 33 %
14.	Australia	1	0, 33 %
15.	UAE	1	0, 33 %
16.	Hungary	1	0, 33 %
17.	Czech Republic	1	0, 33 %
18.	Brazil	1	0, 33 %
19.	Argentina	1	0, 33 %

20.	Slovenia	1	0, 33 %
21.	South Korea	1	0, 33 %
22.	Germany	1	0, 33 %
23.	Unidentified	80	26,68 %
Total		300	100 %

Table 1.5

From the table above it is described that most of the readers comes from United States. The readers from United States are very interested to read *The Bluest Eye* novel. It is assumed that in United States there is still racial discrimination especially for black people or African-American. As a country that is multicultural, United States has many citizens who have different background and skin color. The American people live in the country where there are so many differences. It makes them more aware of values like tolerance, equality, and justice. Multiculturalism in United States influences them to address issue of social life more deeply and liberally.

The second position is from Canada and followed by United Kingdom, Spain, and India in top 5 of the number of readers that reviewed this novel. The countries that dominated in giving the review of *The Bluest Eye* novel is from country that is dominated by white people. It is assumed that their interest toward the issue on the novel is influenced by their background including race and country. Countries that dominated by Mongoloid and Negroid people are quite low in term of the number of reader that read the novel.

There are also unidentified readers in the table above. They did not display their country on their Goodreads profile. The total number of the reader is 80. It is higher than Canada that is number second after United States in the table above. It is assumed that they only want to share their opinion about the novel without showing their country. They think it is not necessary due to their privacy.

3.1.6 Influences on the Readers

Influence can be seen when there are some changes on someone's attitude toward something. In this study, the influence of *The Bluest Eye* novel was shown from the readers' attitude changes. The influences of *The Bluest Eye* on the readers are divided into three categories. They are affective, behavioural, and cognitive. The influence is based on the readers' attitude after reading the novel. It was reflected

from their review toward the novel on Goodreads website. The readers attitude was analyzed based on ABC Model of attitude by Eagly & Chaiken (1998).

3.1.6.1 Affective

The first component is affective. Affective component involves a person's feelings/emotions about the attitude object. The influence of *The Bluest Eye* novel on the readers' attitude is in term of their feeling or emotion toward racial differences and racism. Their feelings or emotions were various. Their feeling and emotion in here is categorized into three, namely sadness, anxiety, and hatred.

3.1.6.2 Behavioral

The second component is behavioral. Behavioral (or conative) component is the way the attitude we have influences how we act or behave. It involves person's response (favorable/unfavorable) to do something regarding the object. Behavioral component in this study was the readers' action toward the object. In this study, the object is racism. There are some of behavioral attitude from the readers, namely respectability, acceptability, and awareness.

3.1.6.3 Cognitive

The last component is cognitive. Cognitive component involves a person's belief/knowledge about an attitude object. Cognitive refers to the thoughts and beliefs an individual has about an attitude object. In this study the cognitive component is divided into two, negative perspective toward racism and positive perspective toward racial differences.

From all of the readers' review analysis, there are some point that can be drawn in this study. There are some influences toward the readers after they read *The Bluest Eye* novel in term their attitude changes. The influences are categorized into three types; affective, behavioral, and cognitive. The following table shows the result on each type.

No	Component	Influence
1.	Affective	- The readers were felt heartbroken, sad, and speechless toward the existence of racism, discrimination, sexual and child abuse in society. - The readers were scared and disturbed toward the impact of racism and discrimination. - The readers hate the existence of racism and

		discrimination in human's life.
2.	Behavioral	- The readers were able to respect differences whether it is in term of race, gender, skin, and etc in their life. - The readers were able to accept that difference is not a problem in society. - The readers were able to aware and more sensitive toward social problems like racism, discrimination, child and sexual abuse and try to find a way solve it.
3.	Cognitive	- The readers believed that racism and discrimination must be stopped and should be solved as soon as possible in order to create a peacefully world. - The readers thought that if we can accept and respect differences in this world we can live peacefully without having any oppression and discrimination. - The readers thought that being different is not a sin and it is special. - The readers thought that inner beauty is more important rather than physical beauty as physical beauty is not eternal.

Table 1.6

From the result above, it can be concluded that the influence of *The Bluest Eye* novel in term of the readers' attitude were various. The attitude was categorized into three namely affective, behavioral, and cognitive. From affective, the readers were felt heartbroken, sad, disturbed, and speechless toward the existence of racism, discrimination, sexual and child abuse in society. They also scared toward the impact of racism and discrimination. Moreover, they hate the existence of racism and discrimination in human's life.

From behavioral, the readers were able to respect differences whether it is in term of race, gender, skin, and etc in their life. They also were able to accept that difference is not a problem in society. Moreover, they were able to aware and more sensitive toward social problems like racism, discrimination, child and sexual abuse and try to find a way solve it.

The last is cognitive, the readers believed that racism and discrimination must be stopped and should be solved as soon as possible in order to create a peacefully world. They thought that if we can accept and respect differences in this world we can live peacefully without having any oppression and discrimination. They also thought that being different is not a sin and it is special. Moreover, they thought that inner beauty is more important rather than physical beauty as physical beauty is not eternal.

3.2 Discussion

From the previous analysis it is described that the influence of *The Bluest Eye* novel on the readers is in term of their attitude changes. Their attitude changes are categorized into three components namely affective, behavioral, and cognitive. Based on the readers' attitude changes toward racism in this study, it is concluded that it is categorized as social psychology. According to Allport (1924), social psychology is a discipline that uses scientific methods "to understand and explain how the thoughts, feelings, and behavior of individuals are influenced by the actual, imagined, or implied presence of other human beings."

Social psychology is a relatively enduring organization of beliefs, feelings, and behavioral tendencies towards socially significant objects, groups, events or symbols. It is described how people give evaluation about objects, ideas, events, or other people. It also about understands how each person's individual behavior is influenced by the social environment in which that behavior takes place.

Moreover, the influence on the readers in term of attitude changes is also categorized as psychological theories of response. According to Beach (1993:71), psychological theories of response assume that readers' responses are shaped by their level of cognitive or intellectual development, cognitive abilities and processes, and subconscious forces. This theory focus on psychological effect reader feels that shaped by the literary work. The shape of psychological effect based on the level of reader cognitive development, abilities and process, and also subconscious forces. Psychological dimension has a big role in constructing reader's character.

From the readers' review toward racism, it shows that the influence of *The Bluest Eye* novel on the readers is in term of attitude changes. It is including affective, behavioral, and cognitive component. From each component of attitude, it shows

that all of the readers' attitude changes are categorized as psychological theories of response. The reason is the entire attitude changes of the readers are reflected from their level of cognitive or intellectual development, cognitive abilities and processes, and subconscious forces. It also shows psychological effect the readers feel that shaped by the literary work

4. CONCLUSION

After analyzing the influences of Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* on the readers' perspective toward racial differences, the conclusions can be drawn from this study are:

First, the profile of the readers of *The Bluest Eye* novel consists of the kinds of response and background of the readers. The kinds of responses from the readers toward racial differences are various. There are eight kinds of responses from the readers namely character, style, plot, accolade, criticism, racism, influence, moral lesson, and quotation. Each of them contains the readers' opinion toward *The Bluest Eye* novel. The most dominant response toward *The Bluest Eye* was influence. It is 26,67 % of total 300 readers. The response about influence of *The Bluest Eye* novel is about the readers' attitude changes on their perspective toward racial differences. The background of the readers is various. In term of age, adult more dominant rather than teenager or elder for about 12,66 % but the highest percentage is unidentified for about 80,66 %. In term of gender, female readers are dominating for about 64,66 %. In term of race, Caucasian readers more dominant rather than mongoloid or negroid for about 33,34 % but the highest percentage is unidentified for about 54,66 %. And the last is in term of origin country, readers from United States of America are dominating for about 57,67 %.

Second, the kinds of influences that occur on the readers about their perspective toward racial differences are in term of attitude changes. The attitude changes are divided into three aspects namely affective, behavioral, and cognitive. In affective term, the influence on the readers is their feeling or emotion toward racial differences. They are sadness, anxiety, and hatred. In behavioral term, the influence on the readers is the changes on their action or reaction toward racial differences. They are respectability, acceptability, and awareness. In cognitive term, the influence on the readers is the changes on their belief toward racial

differences. They are negative perspective toward racism and positive perspective toward racial differences.

Third, the intention of the readers in giving response to the racism issue is influenced by their social environment and psychological aspect. In which, the readers' perspective towards racial differences was reflected from their attitude changes after read the novel. From this study, it is shown that the influences are in term of attitude changes. Attitude changes are categorized in social psychology term. It is a relatively enduring organization of beliefs, feelings, and behavioral tendencies towards socially significant objects, groups, events or symbols. It is described how people give evaluation about objects, ideas, events, or other people. It also about understands how each person's individual behavior is influenced by the social environment in which that behavior takes place. From each component of attitude, it is shown that all of the readers' attitude changes are categorized as psychological theories of response. The reason is the entire attitude changes of the readers are reflected from their level of cognitive or intellectual development, cognitive abilities and processes, and subconscious forces. It also shows psychological effect the readers feel that shaped by the literary work

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