

The Bluest Eye



TONI MORRISON

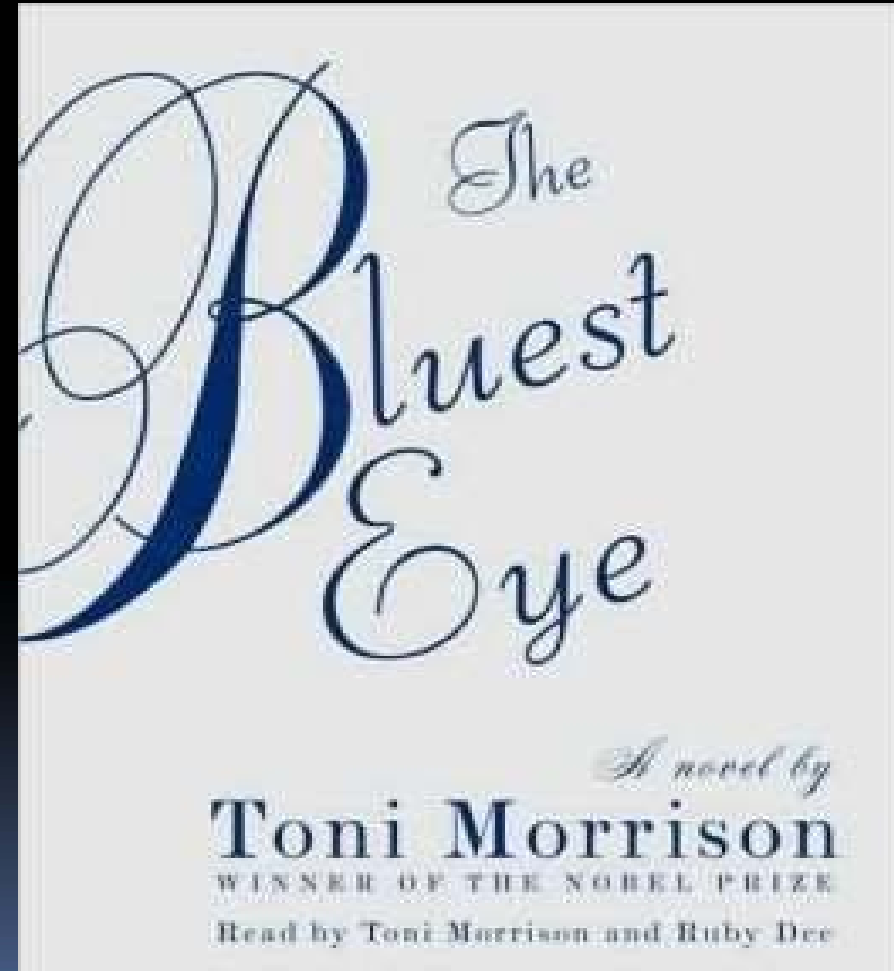
TONI MORRISON

- Born – Chloe Ardelia Wofford.
February 18, 1931
Lorain;
Ohio, London.
- Occupation – Novelist and Writer.
- Genre – **American Literature.**
- Notable Works :
 - ❖ **The Bluest Eye**
 - ❖ Beloved
 - ❖ Song of Solomon
- Notable Awards :
 - Presidential Medal of Freedom (2012)
 - **Nobel Prize in Literature (1993)**
 - Pulitzer Prize for Fiction (1988)



The Bluest Eye

- Published – 1970
- Setting - 1940, Lorain; OH
- Narrator – Claudia MacTeer
- Protagonist – Pecola Breedlove
- 4 parts of this novel –
 - ❖ Autumn- Beginning (school year)
 - ❖ Winter- Bareness, Emptiness, Death
 - ❖ Spring- Rebirth, New life, Change and fruitfulness is ironical, Fondled by Henry, Beaten by Pauline, Raped by Cholly
 - ❖ Summer- Isolated, Insane Pecola



Psychoanalysis

This is a practice based upon specific theories of how the mind, the instincts and sexuality work.

The Bluest Eye

- **The Bluest Eye**, debut novel by Nobel Prize-winning author Toni Morrison, published in 1970. Set in Morrison's hometown of Lorain, Ohio, in 1940–41, the novel tells the tragic story of Pecola Breedlove, an African American girl from an abusive home. Eleven-year-old Pecola equates beauty and social acceptance with whiteness; she therefore longs to have “the bluest eye.” Although largely ignored upon publication, *The Bluest Eye* is now considered an American classic and an essential account of the African American experience after the Great Depression.

Structure

- *The Bluest Eye* is divided into four sections, each of which is named for a different season. (The novel begins with “Autumn” and ends with “Summer.”) The four sections are further divided into chapters. Most of the chapter titles are taken from the simulated text of a Dick and Jane reader. Three versions of the simulated text appear at the beginning of the novel. The first version is clear and grammatically correct; it tells a short story about “Mother, Father, Dick, and Jane,” focusing in particular on Jane, who seeks a playmate. The second version repeats the message of the first, but without proper punctuation or capitalization. The third version lacks punctuation, capitalization, and spaces between words. It reads:
- *Hereisthehouseitisgreenandwhiteithasareddooritisveryprettyhereisthefamilymotherfatherdickandjaneliveinthegreenandwhitehousetheyareveryhappyseejanesheshasareddressshewantstoplaywhowillplaywithjaneseethecatitgoesmeowmeowcomeandplaycomeplaywithjanethekittenwillnotplay...lookherecomesafriendthefriendwillplaywithjanetheywillplayagoodgameplayjaneplay*
- The three versions symbolize the different lifestyles explored in the novel. The first is that of white families like the Fishers; the second is that of the well-adjusted MacTeer children, Claudia and Frieda, who live in an “old, cold, and green” house; and the distorted third is that of the Breedloves. Morrison’s references to Dick and Jane—an illustrated series of books about a white middle-class family, often used to teach children to read in the 1940s—help contextualize the novel. They also comment on the incompatibility of those “barren white-family primer[s]” (as Morrison called them) with the experiences of black families.

Summary

- Pecola's story is told through the eyes of multiple narrators. The main narrator is Claudia MacTeer, a childhood friend with whom Pecola once lived. Claudia narrates from two different perspectives: the adult Claudia, who reflects on the events of 1940–41, and the nine-year-old Claudia, who observes the events as they happen.
- In the first section of the novel ("Autumn"), nine-year-old Claudia introduces Pecola and explains why she is living with the MacTeers. Claudia tells the reader what her mother, Mrs. MacTeer, told her: Pecola is a "case...a girl who had no place to go." The Breedloves are currently "outdoors," or homeless, because Pecola's father, Cholly, burned the family house down. The county placed Pecola with the MacTeer family until "they could decide what to do, or, more precisely, until the [Breedlove] family was reunited."
- Despite the tragic circumstances of their friendship, Claudia and her 11-year-old sister, Frieda, enjoy playing with Pecola. Frieda and Pecola bond over their shared love of [Shirley Temple](#), a famous American child star known for her blonde curls, babyish singing, and tap-dancing with Bill ("Bojangles") Robinson. Claudia, however, "couldn't join them in their adoration because [she] hated Shirley." In fact, she hated "all the Shirley Temples of the world." The adult Claudia recalls being given a blue-eyed baby doll for Christmas:
 - *From the clucking sounds of adults I knew that the doll represented what they thought was my fondest wish...all the world had agreed that a blue-eyed, yellow-haired, pink-skinned doll was what every girl child treasured. "Here," they said, "this is beautiful, and if you are on this day 'worthy' you may have it."*
 - Claudia remembers dismembering the doll "to see of what it was made, to discover the dearness, to find the beauty, the desirability that had escaped me, but apparently only me." Finding nothing special at its core, Claudia discarded the doll and continued on her path of destruction, her hatred of little white girls unabated.

- The second section (“Winter”) consists of two short vignettes. The first of these is narrated by Claudia, and in it she documents Pecola’s fascination with a light-skinned black girl by the name of Maureen Peal. Friendly at first, Maureen ultimately humiliates Pecola and her friends by declaring herself “cute” and Pecola “ugly.”
- The second vignette, narrated by a third-person omniscient narrator, focuses on Geraldine and Louis Junior, a young mother and son in Lorain, Ohio. Geraldine and Junior’s connection to Pecola is not immediately obvious; she does not appear until the end of the vignette. On a particularly boring afternoon, Junior entices Pecola into his house. After she comes inside, he throws his mother’s beloved cat at her face. Scratched and verging on tears, Pecola attempts to leave. Junior stops her, claiming she is his “prisoner.” Junior then picks up his mother’s cat and begins swinging it around his head. In an effort to save it, Pecola grabs his arm, causing them both to fall to the ground. The cat, released in mid-motion, is thrown full-force at the window. At this point Geraldine appears, and Junior promptly tells her that Pecola has killed the cat. Geraldine calls Pecola a “nasty little black bitch” and orders her to leave.
- The third section of the novel (“Spring”) is by far the longest, comprising four vignettes. In the first vignette, Claudia and Frieda talk about how Mr. Henry—a guest staying with the MacTeers—“picked at” Frieda, inappropriately touching her while her parents were outside. After Frieda told her mother, her father “threw our old tricycle at [Mr. Henry’s] head and knocked him off the porch.” Frieda tells Claudia she fears she might be “ruined,” and they set off to find Pecola. In the second and third vignettes, the reader learns about Pecola’s parents, Pauline (Polly) and Cholly Breedlove. According to the omniscient narrator, Polly and Cholly once loved each other. They were married at a relatively young age and migrated together from Kentucky to Lorain. Over the years, their relationship steadily deteriorated. One disappointment followed another, and sustained poverty, ignorance, and fear took steep tolls on their well-being. At the end of the third vignette—just before the events of the first section begin—Cholly drunkenly stumbles into his kitchen, where he finds Pecola washing dishes. Overwhelmed by conflicting feelings of tenderness and rage, Cholly rapes Pecola and leaves her unconscious body on the floor for Polly to find.

- The fourth vignette picks up not long after the rape. It begins by delving into the personal history of Soaphead Church, a misanthropic Anglophile and self-proclaimed spiritual healer. Soaphead is a deceptive and conniving man; as the
- narrator observes, he comes from a long line of similarly ambitious and corrupt West Indians. His latest scheme involves interpreting dreams and performing so-called “miracles” for the black community in Lorain. When Pecola goes to him asking for blue eyes, Soaphead initially sympathizes with her:
 - *Here was an ugly little girl asking for beauty...A little black girl who wanted to rise up out of the pit of her blackness and see the world with blue eyes. His outrage grew and felt like power. For the first time he honestly wished he could work miracles.*
 - Soaphead forms a plan to trick Pecola. He gives her a piece of raw meat and demands that she give it to his property owner’s dog. If the dog “behaves strangely,” he tells her, her “wish will be granted on the day following this one.” Unbeknownst to Pecola, the meat is poisoned. After the dog eats the meat, gags, and dies, Pecola believes her wish has been granted. Thus begins her sharp descent into madness.
 - The fourth and final section (“Summer”) takes place after Pecola loses her mind. In the beginning, Claudia and Frieda learn that Pecola has been impregnated by her father. The sisters hope that the baby will not die; they pray for it and even offer a sacrifice (a bicycle) to God. Meanwhile, Pecola converses with an unidentified person—presumably, herself—about her new blue eyes, which she still thinks “aren’t blue enough.” In the final moments of the novel, the adult Claudia tells the reader that Pecola gave birth prematurely and the baby did not survive.

Origin And Analysis

- Questions of race and gender are at the centre of *The Bluest Eye*. In a 2004 interview Morrison described her motivations to write the novel. She explained that in the mid-1960s “most of what was being published by black men [was] very powerful, aggressive, revolutionary fiction or non-fiction.” These publications “had a very positive, racially uplifting rhetoric.” Black male authors expressed [sentiments](#) like “black is beautiful” and used phrases like “black queen.” At the time, Morrison worried that people would forget that “[black] wasn’t always beautiful.” In *The Bluest Eye*, she set out to remind her readers “how hurtful a certain kind of internecine racism is.”
- Morrison conceived of the idea for the novel some 20 years before its publication. During an undergraduate creative writing workshop at [Howard University](#), she worked on a short story about a young black girl who prayed for blue eyes. The story was in part true; it was based on a conversation with a childhood friend who wanted blue eyes. “Implicit in her desire,” Morrison observed, “was racial self-loathing.” The soon-to-be author wondered how her friend had internalized society’s racist beauty standards at such a young age.
- By 1965 Morrison’s short story had become a novel, and between 1965 and 1969 she developed it into an extensive study of socially constructed ideals of beauty (and ugliness). In *The Bluest Eye*, Morrison foregrounded the demonization of blackness in American [culture](#), focusing on the effects of internalized racism. Through Geraldine, Polly, Pecola, and other characters, she demonstrated how even the most subtle forms of racism—especially racism from within the black community—can negatively impact self-worth and self-esteem.

Form And Style

- *The Bluest Eye* is a work of tremendous emotional, cultural, and historical depth. Its passages are rich with allusions to Western history, media, literature, and religion. Morrison's prose was experimental; it is lyrical and evocative and unmistakably typical of the writing style that became the hallmark of her later work. Some 20 years after its initial publication, Morrison, reflecting on the writing of her first novel in a 1993 afterword to *The Bluest Eye*, described her prose as "race-specific yet race-free," the product of a desire to be "free of racial hierarchy and triumphalism." In her words:
- *The novel tried to hit the raw nerve of racial self-contempt, expose it, then soothe it not with narcotics but with language that replicated the agency I discovered in my first experience of beauty. Because that moment was so racially infused...the struggle was for writing that was indisputably black.*
- The form of this novel was also experimental and was highly innovative: Morrison built a "shattered world" to complement Pecola's experiences. She changed narrators and focal points within and between the four sections. The narration itself alternates between first person and third-person omniscient. Although the events of the novel are, as Morrison wrote, "held together by seasons in childhood," they are narrated mostly nonchronologically. The novel itself is fairly short; it concludes after only 164 pages.
- The temporal structure and frequent shifts in perspective are a key part of Morrison's attempt to imagine a fluid model of subjectivity—a model she hoped could offer some kind of resistance to a dominant white culture. By shifting the point of view, Morrison effectively avoids dehumanizing the black characters "who trashed Pecola and contributed to her collapse." Instead, she emphasizes the systemic nature of the problem. She shows the reader how the racial issues of the distant and not-so-distant past continue to affect her characters in the present, thereby explaining, if not justifying, many of their actions.

Publication And Reception

- After several rejections, *The Bluest Eye* was published in the U.S. by Holt, Rinehart and Winston (later Holt McDougal) in 1970. Somewhere between 1,200 and 1,500 first-edition copies were printed; Morrison had expected only about 400. At the time, Morrison—a single mother living in New York City—was working as a senior editor in the trade division of the publisher Random House.
- *The Bluest Eye* was not a commercial success. In a [2012 interview](#) with *Interview* magazine, Morrison claimed that the black community “hated [the novel].” The little critical attention the novel received was generally positive. *The New York Times* [celebrated](#) Morrison’s willingness to expose “the negative of the Dick-and-Jane-and-Mother-and-Father-and-Dog-and-Cat photograph that appears in our reading primers...with a prose so precise, so faithful to speech and so charged with pain and wonder that the novel becomes poetry.” All things considered, Morrison felt that “the initial publication of *The Bluest Eye* was like Pecola’s life: dismissed, trivialized, [and] misread.”

Legacy

- Since its publication in 1970, there have been numerous attempts to ban *The Bluest Eye* from schools and libraries because of its depictions of sex, violence, racism, incest, and child molestation; it frequents the American Library Association's [list of banned and challenged books](#) .

-

Psychoanalysis of Pecola



Pre-Raped

- ❖ Hegemonies
- ❖ Displacement
- ❖ Intellectualization

Post-Raped

- ❖ Maniac

Defense Mechanism

- **Allenation**
- **Repression**
 - ❑ White Culture
 - ❑ Game with Junior
 - **Denial**
- **Displacement**
 - ❑ Shirley Temple Cup
 - ❑ Mary Jane
 - ❑ The Bluest Eye
 - **Regression**
- **Reaction Formation**
- **Low self-esteem**

Alienation

Apart from the love of all



DENIAL

**Racial Conflict
made by white
people**



Repression

White Culture Game with



Displacement

Shirley Temple Cup

Mary Jane Candy



Displacement

The Bluest Eye



Regression

**Relationship
between Pecola
and Cholly.**



Reaction Formation

**Relationship
between Maurine
and Pecola**



Low Self-Esteem

- ❖ Claudia's last words towards Pecola.
- ❖ Pecola's ugliness.



My Opinion About Pecola

- **Every human being is created by God.**
- **God is the architect of human being's luck and life but sometimes men can change luck by their own efforts.**
- **Some are – Black, White, Tall, Short, Abnormal and Autistic.**
- **Pecola tried to change her luck by fighting.**
- **We should love and respect every human being like Pecola beyond social class , racial and physical condition.**

Psychoanalysis in Pauline character



About pauline

- Pauline was the ninth of eleven children
- Cholly was pauline husband
- She was sammy and pecolas Mother

- She from the very childhood almost abandoned by her parents.
- All incidents or accidents build into her bit perverted mentality and inter-racial feeling.



`Socialization` and Mirror stage`

- The period of her life when she could develop her self by distinguishing herself from society through her another.
- She was deprived of the vicinity of her mother.
- As a result her self or conscious never could grow up.

Signified and signifier

- She remained as a mere signified rather than becoming a signifier.
- Saw herself from the perspective of society
- As a result the `` Repressive state Apparatus`` impost on her becomes ``Ideological state apparatus .
- she firm believer that Blacks are ugly.

Denial

- Her hatred stresses to her own child Pecola and her husband



Sublimation

- Sublimation means to bring something positive from negative.
- Quarrel about the money .
- Pauline decided to go to work.

Displacement

- watching movie
- Look like Jean Harlow





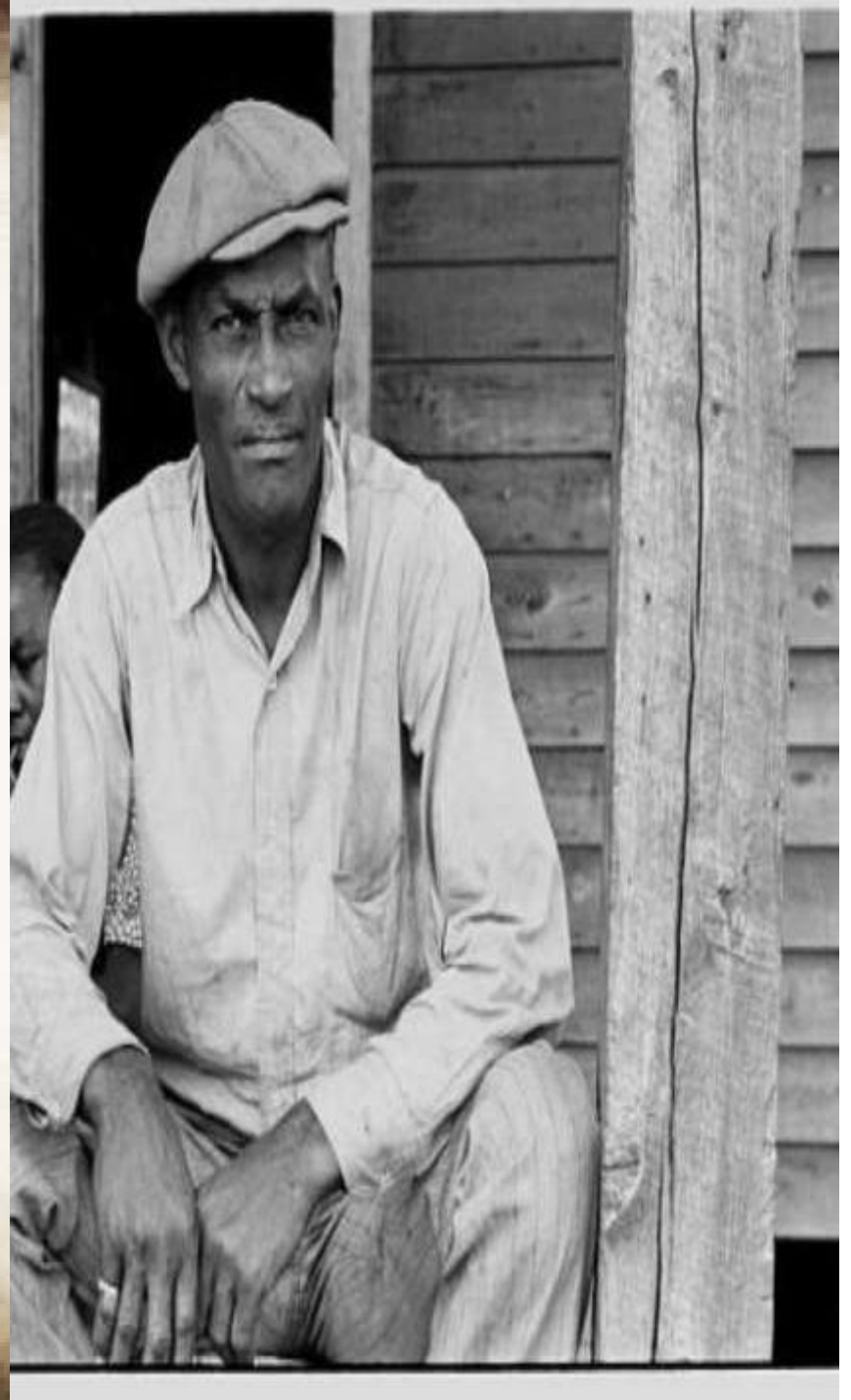
Hegemony

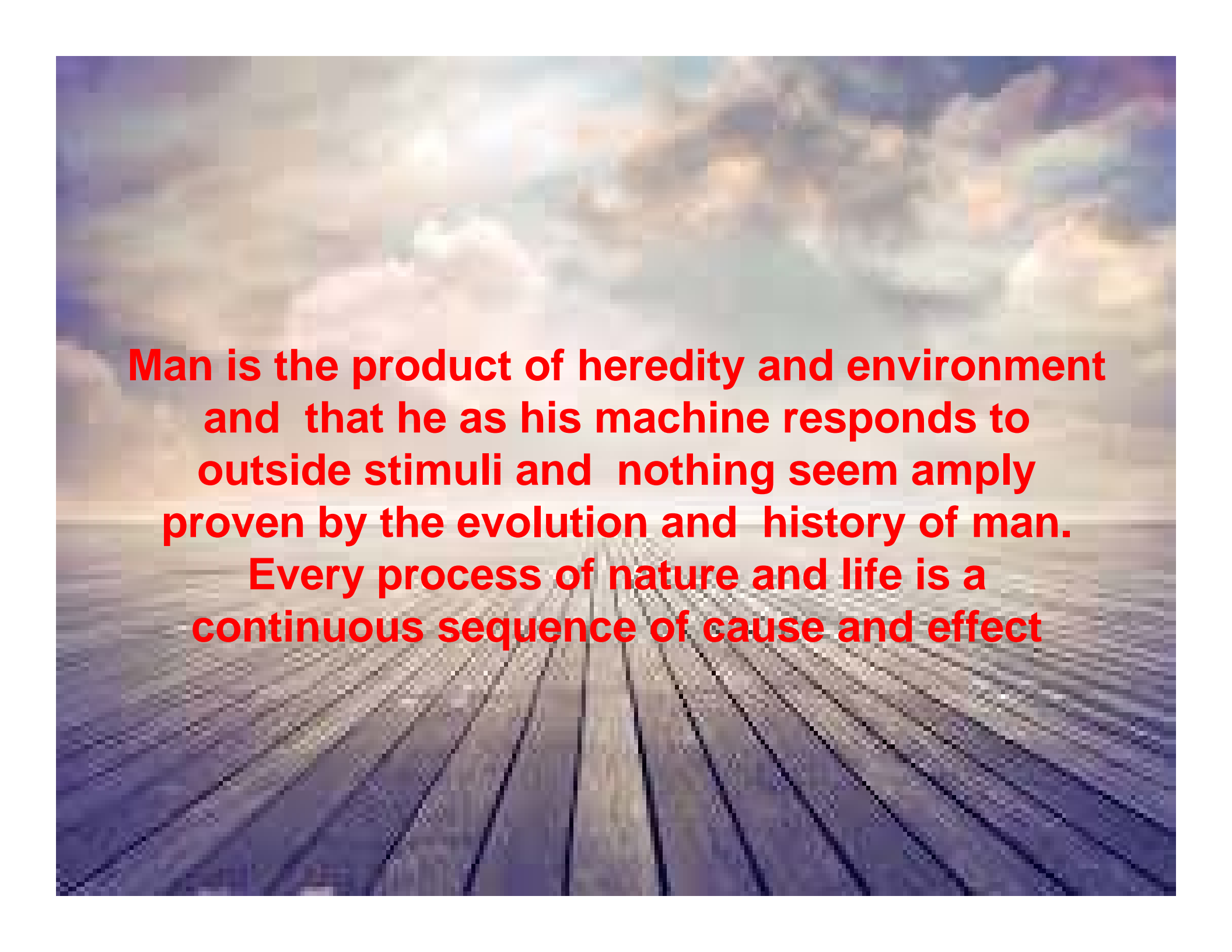
- Love the little white child

My Opinion About Pauline


Perverted characteristic of Pauline
Represented of socially repressed Obsessed
with black colour

**Psychoanalysis of
CHOLLY BREEDLOVE**



A perspective view of a wooden boardwalk or pier extending into the ocean under a cloudy sky. The wooden planks of the boardwalk lead the eye from the bottom center towards the horizon. The sky is filled with soft, white and grey clouds, with a bright light source, likely the sun, breaking through near the top center. The overall color palette is muted, with blues, greys, and browns.

**Man is the product of heredity and environment
and that he as his machine responds to
outside stimuli and nothing seem amply
proven by the evolution and history of man.
Every process of nature and life is a
continuous sequence of cause and effect**

- 
- Pecola's father
 - One of the major characters of the novel
 - A complex character
 - Care free person who was dangerously free

Cholly Breedlove

Chronology of Cholly's life

Abandoned by his mother at the day of four ,he born and brought up by his aunt jimmy



went Macon to meet with his father but he deny to recognize him



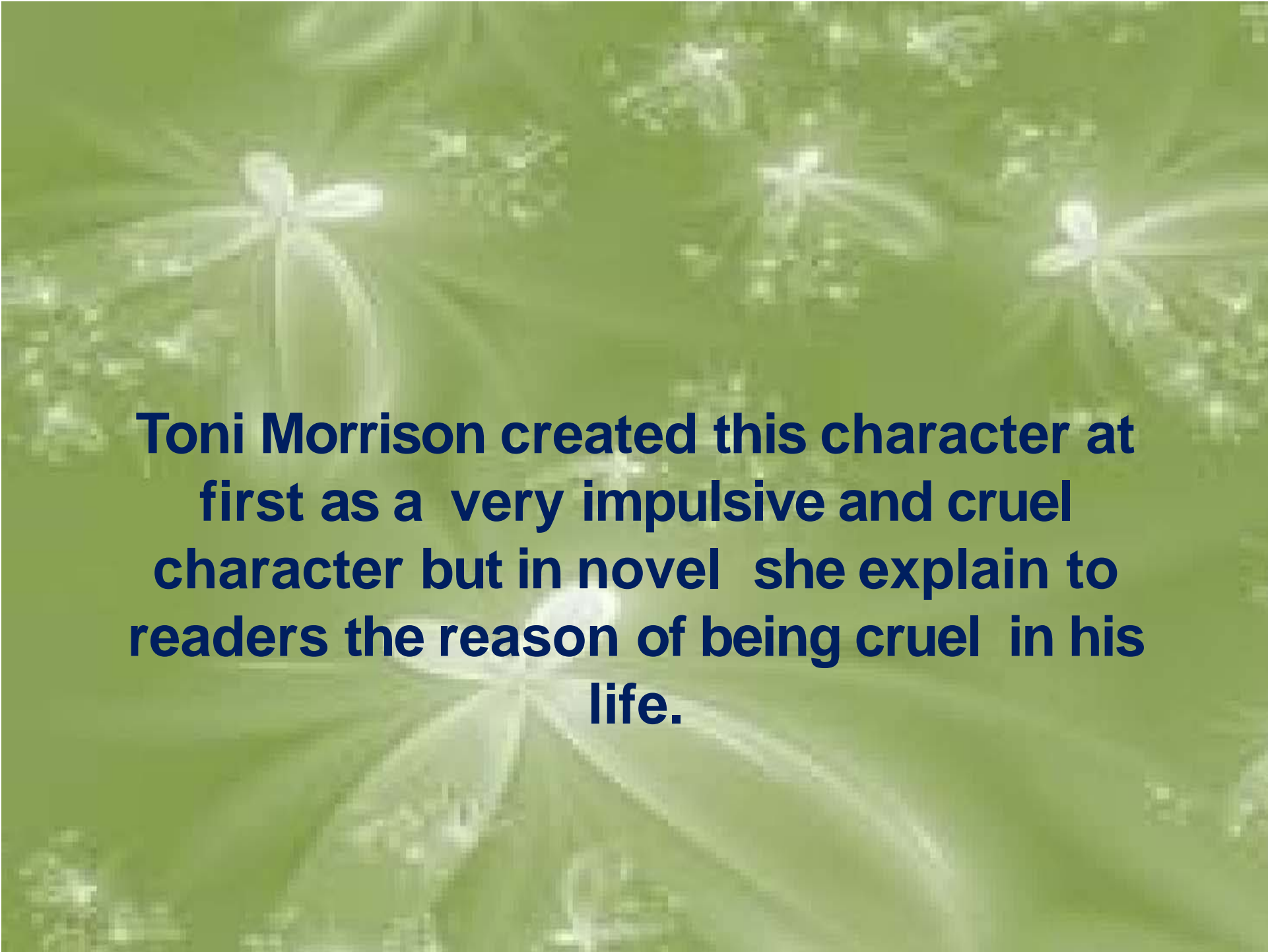
Got married to Pauline , and married life became unhappy



Raped her own daughter Pecola



Died alone in work house



Toni Morrison created this character at first as a very impulsive and cruel character but in novel she explain to readers the reason of being cruel in his life.

**To
Cholly**

Aunt Jimmy as
a mother
figure

**Displacemen
t**

Blue Jack as
father
figure



Abandoned
child

Racial
Inferiority

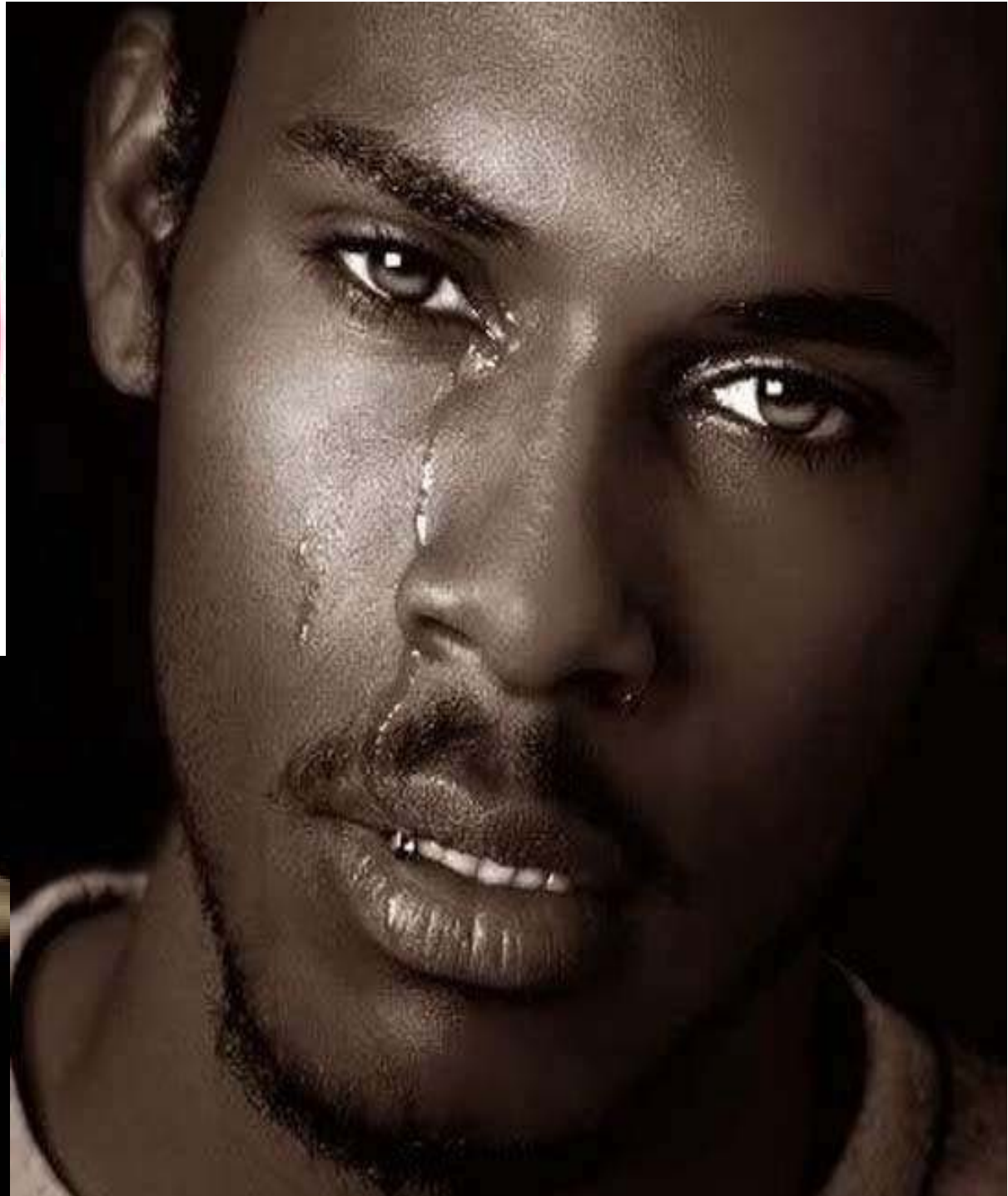
Unhappy
life

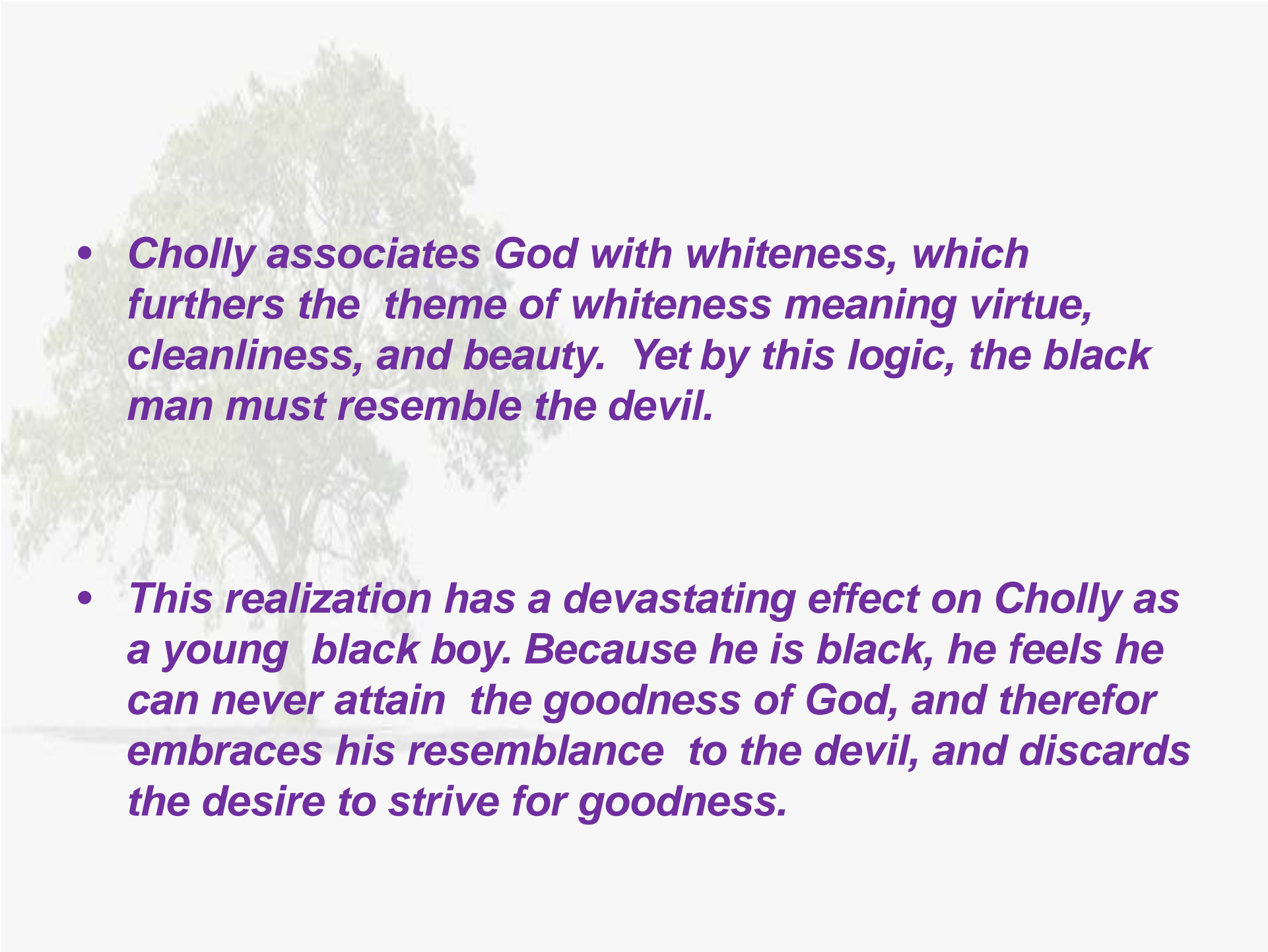
EGO

&

SUPER

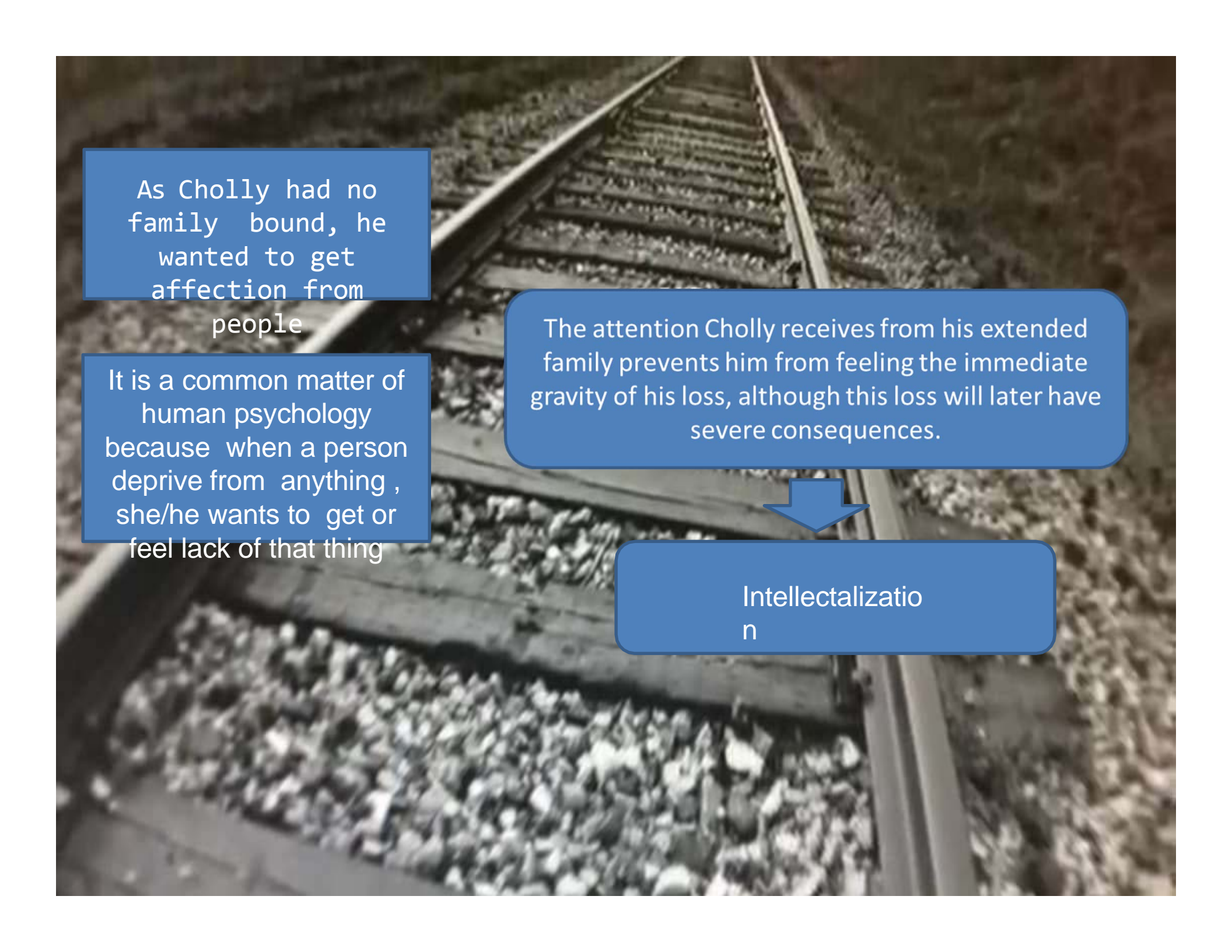
EGO



- 
- *Cholly associates God with whiteness, which furthers the theme of whiteness meaning virtue, cleanliness, and beauty. Yet by this logic, the black man must resemble the devil.*
 - *This realization has a devastating effect on Cholly as a young black boy. Because he is black, he feels he can never attain the goodness of God, and therefore embraces his resemblance to the devil, and discards the desire to strive for goodness.*

Aunt
Jimmy's
death &
Cholly's
reaction





As Cholly had no family bound, he wanted to get affection from people

It is a common matter of human psychology because when a person deprive from anything , she/he wants to get or feel lack of that thing

The attention Cholly receives from his extended family prevents him from feeling the immediate gravity of his loss, although this loss will later have severe consequences.



Intellectualization

Relationship with Darlene

Cholly could not control his tenderness towards Darlene and made a illegal relationship

- Cholly, as a black person, was too weak to protest the white people so he showed his anger to Darlene by leaving him.

But on that time he was caught by two white people & they forced him to have sex with Darlene and they humiliated him as a black person



Cholly was free, Dangerously free

Cholly was mentally shattered after refusing to recognize by his father .

Even he was unable to say

his mother name for
hatred

Falls
in
Anxiet

y

To drink

To sleep with
woman

To hit women

Cholly deny to accept the reality and pain of shock to get a familial connection he created him as a Regressed character.



REGRESSION

Cholly becomes a drunk.





As a black man unable to feel true freedom, his freedom comes at the expense of his concern for his life or the lives of others, which makes it a dangerous freedom.

happiness he brings to Pauline stops his dangerous behavior for a short time, but eventually his addiction to his "dangerous freedom" makes him come to view marriage as another repressive force in his life, which makes him depressed and desperate for his old sense of freedom.



Reaction Formation

- The Breedlove family were unhappy
- Cholly fought with Pauline
 - Hated his family
 - Burned the house





His relationship with his children is marred by his own lack of family, and his old ways of acting and reacting based solely on his feelings has a devastating effect on his children.

CHOLLY raped his own daughter PECOLA

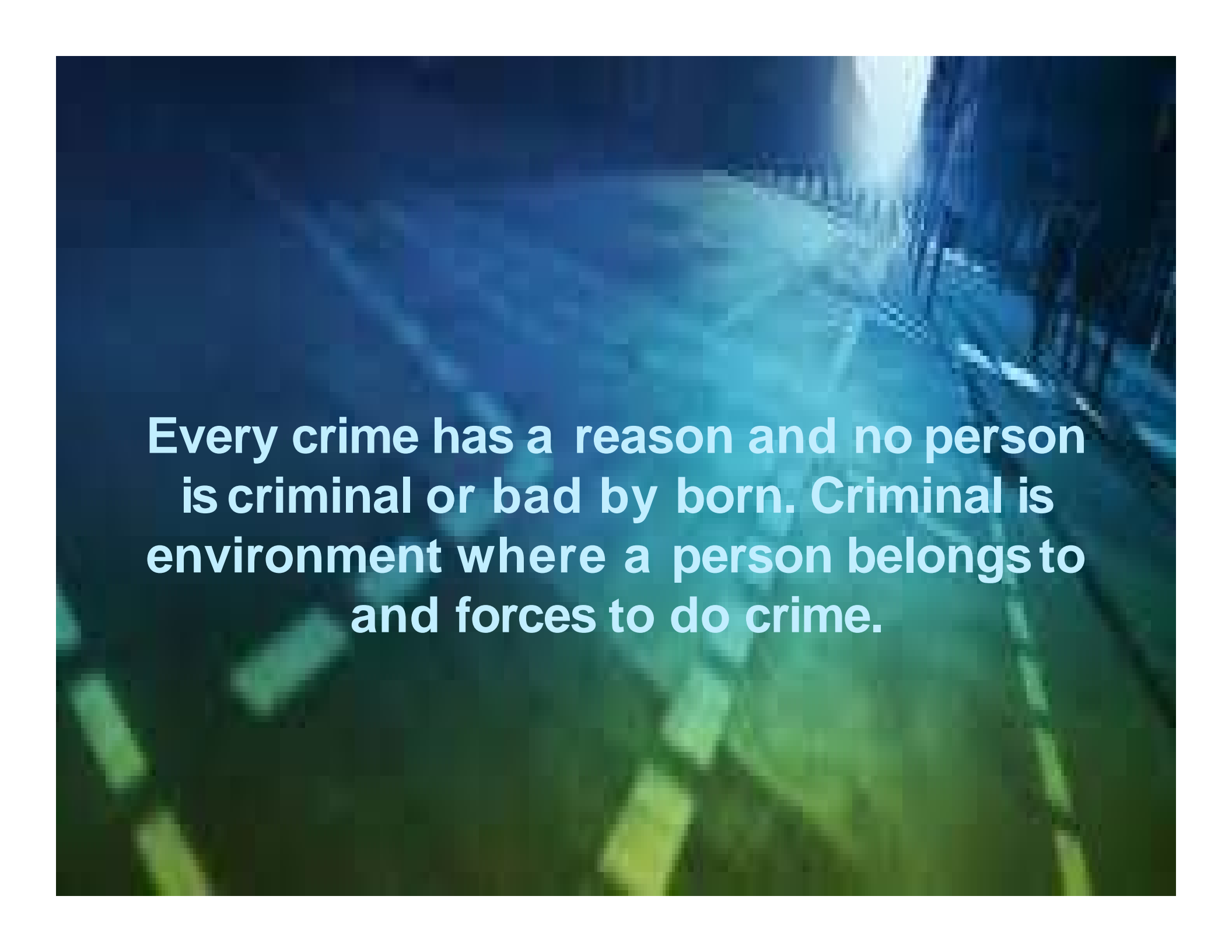


Gradually analyzing the character CHOLLY, we find how the effect of painful life deprive himself from reality and morality. We can say, according to Freud, the ID became very much powerful in his character.



Cholly did not realized his crime because of his extreme idness but we find ego, by when he coverd Pecola with a blanket.



The background of the slide is a dark, atmospheric image of a tunnel. A bright light source at the far end of the tunnel creates a strong perspective effect, with light rays and a glow that fills the tunnel. The colors transition from deep blue and black at the top to a vibrant green and yellow at the bottom, suggesting a forest floor or a similar natural setting. The overall mood is mysterious and dramatic.

Every crime has a reason and no person is criminal or bad by born. Criminal is environment where a person belongs to and forces to do crime.

Claudia MacTeer

- Narrates the novel - allows for childlike view on things, but also adult perspective in hindsight
- Provides a contrast to Pecola: home, family, attitude
- Rejection of the white doll indicates her rejection of white standards of beauty
- Her refusal to worship Maureen highlights her lack of self loathing
- Her sympathy for Pecola is at odds with the society they live in



Conscience (Super-ego)





- The super-ego act as the conscience, maintaining our sense of morality and proscriptioin from taboos.
- Claudia is aware of her conscience(super-ego) in this novel.

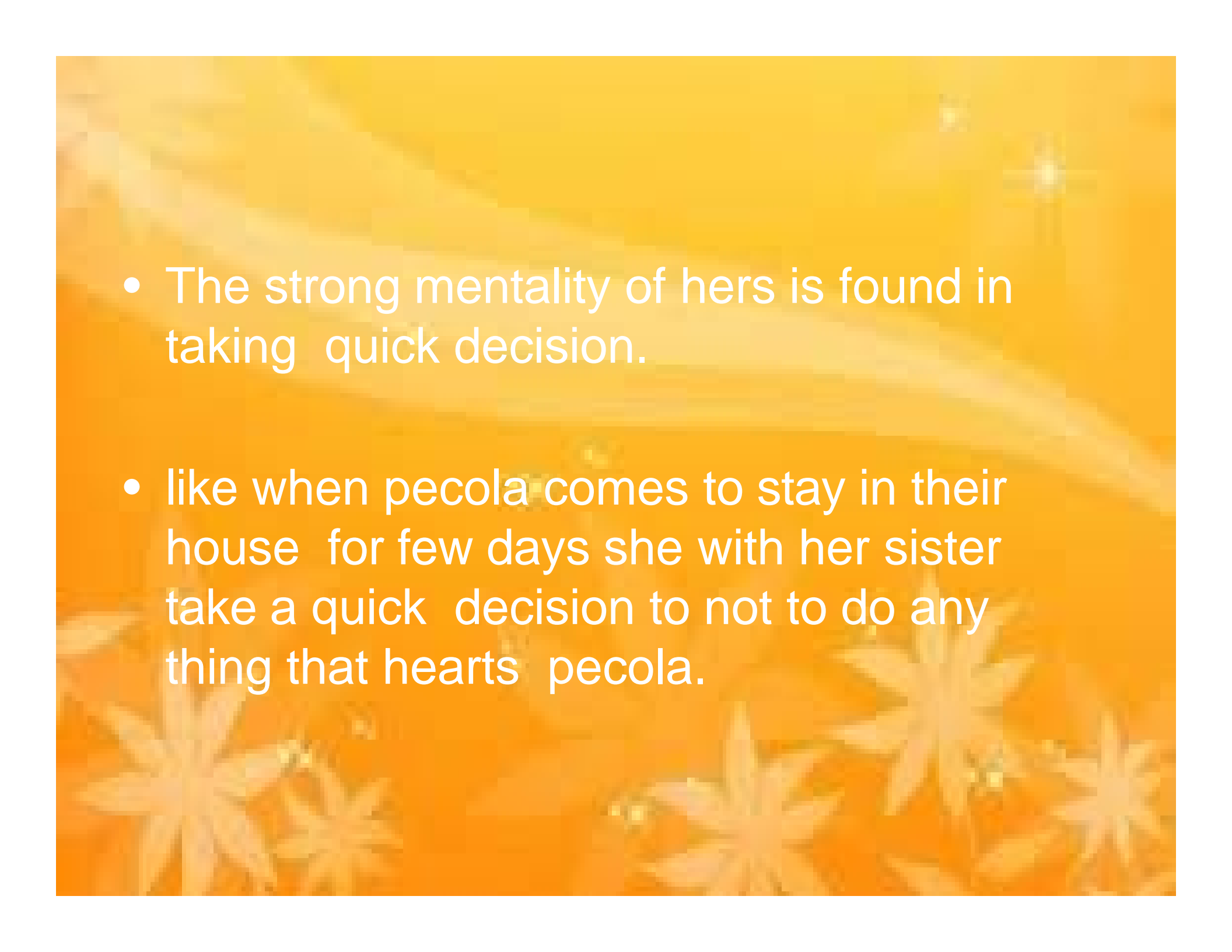


psychoanalysis of Claudia's character

- Claudia is found as a child .yet to enter in her puberty. But she possess a very strong mentality
- she is a girl with strong “consciousness” that means a strong true self is very strong into her.
- Her mental strength can described by “lacan’s” theory of “socialization” and “mirror stage” or “self realization”

- **In her mirror stage that means from 6 months to 18 months .she was well matured by her mother.**
- **she could take her as a different individual being.**
- **She aware of her conscience. we find her protest against social norms and beliefs.**
- **Like when everyone loves the beauty standard of Shirley temple. she can find out want to dismember the doll.**

- 
- ❖ Her mentality can be described by the theory of “Defense Mechanisms of Anna Freud”.
 - ❖ she has a hatred towards the white people because Claudia's community is oppressed by the white people and she show this hatred to the innocent pictures of “Shirley temple” or “berby doll”.
- 

- 
- The strong mentality of hers is found in taking quick decision.
 - like when pecola comes to stay in their house for few days she with her sister take a quick decision to not to do any thing that hurts pecola.

My thinking

- ❖ Claudia hold a strong mentality.
- ❖ Her language is that of a oppressed community.
- ❖ She tries to find out the remedy from this oppression.