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The seeds they plant, like all of the other marigolds that year, never bloom. During a conversation with Pecola, Maureen Peal expresses some bitterness that Miss Erkmeister wears shorts instead of bloomers during the girls' gym class. Pecola internalizes their neglect and, believing the reason for her suffering to come from some personal deficiency
and longs to understand what it is that makes her so unlovable. The MacTeer girls return home following Mr. Henry's encounter with China and the Maginot Line. Big Papa plays the violin for her alone. LOOKLOOKHERECOMESAFRIEND THEFRIENDWILLPLAYWITHJANE
THEYWILLPLAYAGOODGAMEPLAYJANEPLAY The next chapter consists of the internal dialogue between Pecola and the alter ego that emerges in the wake of her rape and pregnancy by Cholly. Williams family, the (Ada, Foster, Pauline, Chicken, and Pie and nine other children) The Williamses are Pauline's family of origin. Claudia and Frieda relish
this imperfection and tease her. He is utterly alone and free of obligations to or responsibility for anyone else. Poland's songs make Pecola wonder about love and how it comes about. But Claudia's world is filled with realities unexpressed in the stereotypical world inhabited by Dick and Jane. When Mrs. Frieda consistently defends those who are
weaker than she is and who are abused and oppressed. Although not such a central character as Mama (Mrs. Pecola is not accepted by blacks or whites. The Failure of Community is directly connected to the demise of childhood innocence in Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye. As an obese and unapologetic prostitute, Marie
garners the censure of the community. On the day of Aunt Jimmy's funeral, mouths were "set down" (150). Junior is a boy who goes to school with Pecola. After the father of a family attending the picnic breaks a watermelon against a rock in order to open it for his children, Blue retrieves the heart, the seedless sweet core of the melon, and gives it to
Cholly. While the two share a feast of muscadine grapes, Darlene stains her dress with the dark juice of the fruit. Soaphead tricks Pecola into killing the dog and convinces himself that the act is for the greater good. Spring The third section of The Bluest Eye, Spring, contrasts the traditional expectations of the season—hopefulness, regeneration—with
the realities of human existence. HEREISTHEHOUSEITISGREENANDWHITE ITHASAREDDOORITISVERYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRE
Throughout The Bluest Eye, the destructive impact of the construct of physical beauty affects the self-esteem of almost every character. Maureen and Pecola begin to quarrel about whether Pecola has ever seen her father naked as the boys earlier accused. Living alone in a decrepit structure on the edge of the woods, she is a mysterious and awesome
figure, especially to young Cholly. Claudia and Frieda are impressed with Pecola's emerging womanhood. Blue works as a drayman at Tyson's Feed and Grain store where Cholly also works. After her visit to Soaphead, Pecola seems to believe that she has blue eyes; however, her psyche is utterly fragmented and she communicates only with an alter
ego, a critical voice in her head. When Aunt Jimmy dies, Cholly is again an orphan and without a home. This event is a critical turning point in Cholly's life. Cholly runs first to Miss Alice's house with the news of Aunt Jimmy's death. In addition to this emotional trauma, Della also suffers a series of strokes that leave her unable to communicate
effectively or to recognize those around her. Frieda overhears a neighbor, Mrs. Junior's major flaw comes from the fact that his mother has taught him to hate and shun other African-American people who do not meet certain "ideal" class and skin color characteristics. She is described as very nice. MacTeer to take Frieda to the doctor to see if she
has lost her virginity. MacTeer's uncharacteristic inability to discern the true nature and intentions of Mr. Henry. She wears clothes that the MacTeer girls only dream about owning. When the marriage between Cholly and Pauline begins to fail and Pauline state the MacTeer's uncharacteristic inability to discern the true nature and intentions of Mr. Henry. She wears clothes that the MacTeer girls only dream about owning. When the marriage between Cholly and Pauline state in the marriage between the mar
Next door to the MacTeers lives Rosemary Villanucci and her family. Claudia and Frieda think that he is scary and crazy. Neither Pecola nor her brother, Sammy, receive the love, attention, and support they need from their parents, who are preoccupied, abusive, and dysfunctional. Soaphead tells Pecola that feeding the meat to the dog will help her
to get the blue eyes she desires. MacTeer. The girls find Mr. Henry in their house with the prostitutes China and Miss Marie. By conjoining jarring, polarized, and overtly sexualized language, Morrison embeds inthese descriptions a reflection of the violent differences that traditionally characterize human desire, aggression, and submission. (138) Lips
and Mouths In The Bluest Eye, the lips of various characters provide important information about the meanings of their words and/or their intentions. It is the community's abandonment of the protagonist Pecola Breedlove and her family that ultimately results in her psychological destruction. M'Dear M'Dear is the midwife and healer in Cholly's
hometown. They live in the same building as the Breedloves and share conversations with Pecola. Left to her own imagination, Pauline embraces a fantasy about romantic love, particularly potent in the post-
Depression 1930s and early 1940s, the people of Lorain have to work hard to ensure that their existence is secure. Since Cholly has such a limited range of emotions and of ways to express his feelings, he translates his possible compassion and affection for Pecola into a sexual expression and repeats his seduction of Pauline on his helpless daughter
MacTeer), Mr. Mac Teer is a powerful force in his daughters' lives and, in contrast to Cholly and some other fathers in the novel, is responsible for and contributes to his family's well-being. The novel takes place in the 1940s in the industrial northeast of Lorian, Ohio, and tells the story of Pecola Breedlove, a young African-American woman who is
marginalized by her community and the larger society. Claudia does not understand what the doll represents and why those around her are so enamored of it. On the other hand, Claudia knows from her mother's care of her when she is ill that she is loved. Along with giving up on creating her identity, Pauline stops trying to create a home. When
Cholly finds Sampson Fuller, the man humiliates him and, after throwing money at him, abusively tells the boy to leave. Pecola finds herself in the middle of taunting school boys who surround her and plague her with their mean verbal jabs. When Cholly arrives in her life, Pauline is susceptible to believing that he is what she has been longing for and
missing. "Texts, Primers, and Voices in Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye," African American Review 33, no. Soaphead Church (Elihue Micah Whitcomb) Soaphead Church is a self-proclaimed psychic healer who is born into a West Indian family that is deeply invested in the white
elements of their racially mixed heritage. Learning to Love and Be Loved Throughout the novel, the characters are able to survive adversity and psychological erosion in direct correlation to the extent that they feel loved. As light-skinned black people, Soaphead and his family gain privilege from their relative whiteness, and Soaphead, therefore, feels
he is superior. She feels that the bath removes all of her inventiveness and creativity, the essence of herself; however, Claudia discovers that conformity is a necessary element of maturity and, eventually, she learns to love her white dolls and Shirley Temple, and to take baths without complaint. Listerine and Lucky Strike Breath Listerine and Lucky
Strike Breath is the descriptive name given to the man who sells a sofa to Cholly Breedlove. Love thick and dark as Alaga syrup eased into that cracked window. His father, said by Aunt Jimmy's death. The Maginot Line smiles with a "genuine" smile at Claudia,
Pecola, and Frieda—a smile that is, ironically, more sincere than that of other adults who interact with the children—but her smile fades when she learns that Claudia and Frieda are not allowed to come into her apartment. Frieda participates in Claudia's hopeful but futile planting of marigold seeds for Pecola's unborn baby. "Black and 'Cause I'm
Black I'm Blue: Transverse Racial Geographies in Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye," Gender Place and Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography 7, no. Similarly, Claudia is disturbed by the false, almost macabre smiles of her dolls. Pauline uses her hands to hit Pecola after she knocks over the blueberry cobbler. Dick is a character in the Dick and Jane
book series. This may provide information about the nature of the African-American characters' encounters with whiteness in the larger culture. Mr. Henry molests Frieda by fondling her breasts. Claudia utters the novel's final reference to night, completing the circle she began by saying that the summer of Pecola's misfortune, the summer of selling
seeds that would never grow, was just a series of sticky nights. MacTeer, hearing Rosemary's accusation, begins to punish her children by spanking them until she realizes what has occurred. SEEFATHERWILLYOUPLAYWITHJANE FATHERSMILESMILE Cholly's story is bleaker than
Pauline's. She says that neither she nor Frieda felt anger or bitterness toward Henry Washington when they thought back on the incident. From the beginning of her daughter's life Pauline describes Pecola as eager, but ugly. Breedlove. She notices her father's face and the way in which the concern about keeping his family warm and fed in the winter
symbolically freezes his expression. Darlene is broken by the event and by Cholly's hostile response to her as they walk back to the banquet. It is this longing that is the source of Pecola's parents, their narratives reveal vastly differing, yet
significantly overlapping experiences. She is not there, and Miss Marie tells them that Pecola is with her mother at a house by the lake. Darlene during Aunt Jimmy's funeral banquet. Alice reads First Corinthians while amens "drop" from Aunt Jimmy's lips (136). At the
end of the novel, the narrator states that "Love is never any better than the lover" (206). During their walk, it begins to rain. Morrison's conjoining of seemingly opposite ideas creates the tension between The Bluest Eye's opening line, "Nuns go by quiet as lust," and the narrator's statement near the end of the text that describes the incestuous rape
of Pecola by her father, "he fucked her tenderly" (162-63). The most significant act he performs in the novel occurs when Henry Washington molests Frieda. Jane (Dick and Jane) The most significant act he performs in the novel occurs when Henry Washington molests Frieda.
to read. MacTeer and Woodrow's mother, that he still wets the bed. She attributes this invisibility to a deformed foot that manifests after she eats candy during a Gable and Harlow film. This singular event becomes a defining moment in Cholly's
life history as he can aptly be described as alone in every sense of the word. 4 (Winter 1994): 109-128. These constructs are a particular issue for African-American communities that often are excluded from representation. Similarly, Claudia and Frieda learn the meaning behind the conversations of their mother and her friends not by listening to the
words they say but instead by reading the motion and nuance of their hands. SEETHEDOGBOWWOWGOESTHE DOGDOYOUWANTTOPLAYDOYOU WANTTOPLAYWITHJANESEETHEDOGBOWWOWGOESTHE DOGDOYOUWANTTOPLAYDOYOU WANTTOPLAYDOYOU WANTTOPLAYDO WANTTOPLAYDO WANTTOPLAYDO WANTTOPLAYDO WANTTOPLAYDO WANTTOPLAYDO WANT
name, Elihue Micah Whitcomb. The couple has children that Marie refuses to speak about. The incident illustrates the ways in which disadvantaged African Americans were often cheated and powerless to change their circumstances. Mr. Henry's smile evokes that of the minstrel character, masking his true identity and intent behind a wide deceptive
smile. Likewise, Pecola and her child/sister are doomed to stillbirth. In the next line, Mrs. Cholly's Aunt Jimmy dies from eating a peach cobbler she receives at night. In spite of his general loathing of people, Soaphead Church collects their personal effects. African Americans traditionally have been excluded even from consideration as attractive and
as such, suffer from the resultant lack of affirmation. She comes to ask him for blue eyes, a gift she believes will change her life and make her adored. In such a state, Cholly is outside of the boundaries of human interaction and, with no moral framework, is inevitably doomed to be a destructive force in the lives of others. Even as a girl, Claudia
MacTeer is aware of the indignities associated with racial discrimination. She also gives Pecola food nicknames. Geraldine, socialized to conform unquestioningly to the definitions of normalcy, rigidly adheres to convention. Unlike Pecola, though, the MacTeer girls have enough self-esteem to fight back. She wants to eat peaches in her grandmother's
kitchen, smelling violets while her grandfather plays the violin just for her. In the tension of her parent's concern lies evidence of their deep and abiding love for both Claudia and her sister Frieda. Geraldine's investment in assimilation leads her to avoid and despise blacks that she deems unacceptable. Cholly does, however, respect Aunt Jimmy and
has sincere affection for her. The series was designed to help children learn how to read. Ivy Ivy is a member of the choir in Pauline's hometown in Kentucky, Ivy has a voice that seems to resonate with a young woman named Darlene.
Grinning Hattie Grinning Hattie is one of Della Jones's sisters who never seems mentally competent. From that point on, he is rootless and without context. Geraldine responds by calling Pecola a bitch. CHARACTERS Aunt Jimmy Aunt Jimmy is Cholly's aunt, his mother's sister. Soaphead obsesses about what he sees as the disturbing physical
infirmities of the mutt and desires nothing more than to bring about the dog's demise. Unlike Cholly, Pauline comes from a large and intact family, but she does not feel a part of the group. This loss signifies her self-perception as ugly with an imperfect mouth, so unlike those on the screen. Pauline's disproportionate adoration of the little Fisher girl in
comparison to her harsh and distant demeanor toward Pecola reinforces Pecola's view of herself as unworthy and unloved. The only association the girls have with the words is its use in reference to the prostitutes they have heard described as ruined and so they think that being ruined means being fat. Frieda makes an odd noise with her lips when
Claudia suggests that she, Pecola, and Frieda look at Mr. Henry's pornographic magazines or at the Bible. During one violent interaction, he angrily encourages his mother to kill Cholly. He is an array of opposites, but always is able to assure himself that he is in the right. Maureen Peal is lightskinned with long straight hair and green eyes. Toni
Morrison (Photo by Deborah Feingold/Corbis via Getty Images) The first chapter of the Autumn section of the novel presents the details of Claudia MacTeer's life with her family. Ralph is not a very interesting partner to Louis as Ralph is thoughtful rather than active. His hand scratches here when he finally reaches to take the pennies she tries to give
him to pay for the Mary Janes. The MacTeer girls experience some shame about their father as well. She is also impregnated and even more desperate to acquire her blue eyes. Pecola's gesture of scratching the back of her calf with her foot reminds Cholly of Pauline and the vulnerability that attracted him to her. As Claudia, Pecola, and Frieda
explore their world, adults often give them advice and tell them about the world. In retrospect, she concludes that her impatience is a sign not of indifference but of profound love and concern. The family's exchanges consist almost entirely of
verbal, physical, and ultimately sexual abuse. The Fisher Girl The Fishers' young daughter is a favorite of Pauline as she works as a maid in the Fisher home, a place where she finds orderand respite from the dysfunction and chaos of her life with her own family. The family lives next to the playground of the school, and Junior, in his isolation, longs to
interact with his peers but is forbidden to do so. Like his sister and father, Sammy calls Pauline Mrs. The marigolds do not grow. M'Dear has prescribed a diet solely of pot liquor for Aunt Jimmy. They think that Frieda will grow fat. When Geraldine walks in on the scene, Junior blames Pecola for everything that has happened. Miss Marie (Maginot
Line) Miss Marie is one of the three prostitutes who live above the Breedloves in the storefront. When a situation is imbalanced or precarious in The Bluest Eye, there are indicators of this state by portrayals of unusual or contrasting lips. The girls sense that Rosemary's sexuality is somehow valuable and that they preserve their own self-esteem by
refusing to see her nakedness. MacTeer is a singer, and her songs convey information to her daughters that is both practical and generative. Older than the memory of most of the townspeople, the town depends on M'Dear in cases of illness that are particularly difficult to overcome. Mother is a character in the Dick and Jane book series. Bay
Boy Bay Boy is one of the boys in town who harass and torment Pecola as she walks with Claudia, Frieda, and Maureen Peal. She describes her father's protective stance toward his family and the elements, including winter weather, that threaten it. The Fishers give Pauline a nickname, Polly, a gesture she missed and did not receive from her own
family. Before throwing her pop bottle at Claudia, Frieda, and Pecola in disgust when she learns that the MacTeer's women friends as they discuss why Henry Washington is coming to board at the MacTeers' home. The Fishers' house is neat, well-
decorated, and orderly. Morrison's artful language defies simplistic categorization and compartmentalization. Pauline the negives up on trying to imitate the beauty ideals of the dominant culture and settles on adopting the role of wronged wife. Presumably, this voice is the adult Claudia looking back on her childhood and trying to reconcile her
successful survival of childhood with the tragedy of Pecola's face. Pecola's face. Pecola's face. Pecola's face of the novel's primary narrator, Claudia MacTeer, whose coming of age, while challenging, is not the alienating, ultimately
impregnates his daughter Pecola when she is 12. This narrative of family life is artificial and flat, yet, in its use as such a central tool in teaching millions of children to read, the narrative became a powerful sign of what is normal and desirable—a story that inevitably impresses itself upon the child who is in the process of acquiring literacy. In the
wake of the Coke bottle the Maginot Line throws at them, Claudia and Frieda meet Pecola at the house on the lake and are surprised to find her smiling. She, for example, defends Pecola begins to menstruate. Immediately
following the incident with Maureen Peal, Claudia and Frieda have another discovery that impacts their understanding of the world and their corresponding loss of innocence. O.V. is reputed to be a Christian who has a house worthy of admiration. Pecola opens her mouth in horror and then coversher mouth to prevent herself from vomiting. Here
Morrison critiques the premise of assimilation—the idea that one has to conform completely to the ideal constructions of the dominant culture. Like Pecola, Junior is abused, but in a different way. Pecola lacks the rootedness that, by contrast,
allows Claudia to survive the difficulties of growing up as a little black girl. In the wake of their feasting on the grapes, renowned for their dark sweetness, Cholly and Darlene kiss and, eventually, begin to have intercourse. Significantly, Pecola never calls either of her parents mom or dad, demonstrating the psychological and emotional distance
between the young girl and her parents. Claudia and Frieda invoke the only power they think they have, planting seeds, to try to assist Pecola and her unborn child. Junior has been given everything he needs to survive. The marriage between Velma and Soaphead Church is a union of opposites and her positive energy stands in opposition to his
pessimism, despair, and enervation. This channeling of frustration to those weaker than him is a pattern he will repeat throughout his life with devastating consequences for those close to him. When Henry Washington inappropriately pinches her breast, characteristically, she protects herself by telling her parents. As such, smiles, genuine or
artificial, are crucial to Morrison's character development in The Bluest Eye also echoes the public expressions of many African-American women in the late 1960s and early 1970s that addressed their particular situation and concerns. She passes this way of thinking on to her son, Louis Junior, who is isolated from his peers as a
result. MacTeer fusses at her and does not fit a model or stereotype of motherhood; however, her way of dealing with frustration as a hard worker and as one who does not live a life
outside the strict public rules of the community. Both Claudia and Frieda know that their parents will protect them as evidenced by Frieda's impulse to tell her parents immediately when Henry Washington molests her. At first, Mr. and Mrs. Claudia wishes that, instead of presents for Christmas, she could sit in Big Mama's kitchen, a warm safe space
and eat Big Mama's food. ". In The Bluest Eye, Morrison also uses lips to indicate a boundary or border. Pecola, having no such reassurance, falls through the cracks created by history, racism, and sexism, and, at the novel's end, is permanently psychologically fractured. McKittrick, Katherine. Claudia is disturbed by the false, almost macabre smiles
of her dolls. Cholly is a throwaway child whose mother abandons him upon his birth. Cholly meets and marries Pauline Williams and, for a brief period, seems to genuinely connect with her as they begin to build a life together. Pauline finds both a purpose and solace through her work as their maid. The dialoguereveals that Cholly rapes Pecola more
than once. The boys' mockery indicates their insecurity and, like their role models in the town, they compensate for their fear by positioning themselves as superior to Pecola and the Breedlove family's self-definition, Cholly gets into bed with Pauline and she feels the grooves of his rough callused hands even before
he touches her. Claudia has her family, which, while challenged by the post depression realities of African-American life, manages to convey to their daughter the knowledge that her intact survival to adulthood is one of their central concerns. Of great significance in understanding the major themes of the novel is Pecola's struggle to exist within the
narrow spaces in which her community places her. Miss Bertha Reese The proprietor of a neighborhood candy and tobacco store, Miss Bertha has a reputation for selling stale candy and for frequently running out of stock. In spite of this, Claudia thinks that Marie has kind eyes that remind the child of water. Both Mr. and Mrs. The response that
Maureen, an upper-middleclass, light-skinned, green-eyed, well-dressed child receives from the adults and to recognize that characteristics as superficial as physical appearance are often determiners of the treatment one receives in the world. This conversation
leads to a larger argument that ends with Maureen Peal accusing all of the girls of the same thing the boys had earlier accused Pecola of—being dark-skinned, poor, and, most pointedly, of falling outside normative behavior. "Re-membering the Body: Body Politics in Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye," Literature Interpretation Theory 12, no. Suky Suky
gray hair. This final chapter of Winter begins with an account of a type of middle-class African- American woman who traveled north in the GREAT MIGRATION in search of education and better opportunities. In the first of the two final chapters, the invitational narrative voice introduced at the beginning of the novel returns as the adult Claudia
reflects upon her discovery of the truth of what happened to Pecola. The foursome go on a walk and discover an unripe muscadine grape grove. MacTeer is a strong woman who provides for her children an environment in which they learn to value themselves. The salesman refuses to replace the damaged goods and therefore the Breedloves receive
the defective furniture rather than a new, inviting sofa. Both of these primary characters, Claudia MacTeer and Pecola Breedlove, move through the four seasons of the novel, autumn, winter, spring, and summer, in search of validation of their lives. The Dick and Jane Reader begins with the line, "Here is the house" (1). She rescues Cholly as a baby
after his mother abandons him and subsequently raises Cholly on her own. Like the Autumn section, Winter begins with Claudia's narration. When Aunt Jimmy falls ill and the remedies of her friends fail to enact a cure, M'Dear is summoned to render a diagnosis and prescribe a cure. She also examines Jimmy's hands for further diagnosis. As he
watches Blue hold a melon up in the air, Cholly watches Blue's hands and wonders if this is what God looks like, but he decides that Blue better represents the devil. The woman's husband is said to have a slash instead of a mouth. MacTeer's hands are ambiguous to her daughter as they cause her pain, yet, under the surface, they convey to Claudia and the surface is the devil.
deep, abiding mother love. Dewey Prince is the only man that Miss Marie likes. In this instance, the mouth becomes a space for acceptable, more adored. Mr. Buford After the MacTeers discover that Henry Washington has molested Frieda, Mr. Buford gives
Mr. MacTeer a gun to shoot Henry Washington. The family, while stable and solid, has to contend with the challenges of life as African Americans in the post-depression era. Consuming the Mary Janes becomes for her a fleeting opportunity to imagine herself to be the little girl depicted on the wrapper, a girl who is desirable enough to be consumed.
Both parents unhesitatingly defend their daughter. Claudia and Frieda relish Maureen's imperfections and tease her about them. Pauline sees Lorain, Ohio, as "the melting pot on the lip of America" and she is disappointed with the realities of the town and of her life there. She arrives in Lorain in the middle of winter from the comparatively big city of
Toledo, Ohio, and is assigned the locker next to Claudia's. During his parents' endless fights, Sammy often pretends to sleep. As they do so they lick their lips and empathize with Jimmy's pains by remembering their own. 2 (June 2000): 125-143. He is last seen running in sock feet down the street in the wake of Mr. MacTeer's gun shot. In this in
between nowhere land, the child is ultimately lost, unable to root herself in the firm ground of love and understanding that is necessary for any successful maturation. The Fishers Pauline's employers, the Fishers Pauline's employers employers, the Fishers Pauline's employers employers, the Fishers Pauline's employers employers employers employers employers emp
Through her experience of their actions, Claudia grows secure in her belief in the relative safety of her immediate world. The subsequent humiliating interruption and exploitation of this first sexual experience by racist and abusive white hunters leaves Cholly powerless to defend himself or to retaliate. Marie tells Pecola that she met Dewey when she
was 14 and that she ran away from Jackson, Mississippi, to Cincinnati, Ohio, with him and that they lived together like a married couple for three years. As the nearest relative to Cholly, he would be the one to assume responsibility for Cholly. In defense of Pecola, Frieda breaks up the circle of boys, and the girls invite Pecola to join them. Henry
Washington is a major catalyst in Frieda and Claudia's loss of innocence. Ironically, Henry Washington reacts by singing the hymn, "Nearer My God to Thee." Mrs. Sammy acts out because he is perceived as ugly, and his appearance draws his friends to him as they are daunted and awed by the intimidation his looks cause. The boys' mockery
indicates their insecurity; like their role models in the town, they compensate for their fear by positioning themselves as superior to Pecola and the Breedlove family. Pauline then proceeds to use the same hands to comfort the white child of her employers. This habitual redirection of his anger at relatively helpless individuals occurs most frequently
with his family. Eventually, he leaves town permanently. Maureen Peal and Pecola Breedlove present opposing points on the spectrum of acceptability, with Claudia falling somewhere between the extremes of adoration and rejection the other two girls receive. Aunt Jimmy's death leaves Cholly completely orphaned. She continues to wonder if her
eyes are the bluest. The novel also demonstrates that the pervasiveness of the ideal of the house/family as depicted in stories, films, and songs can make individuals feel deficient. Her next-door neighbor, Rosemary Villanucci, embodies that discrimination when she informs Claudia and her sister Frieda that they cannot come into her house. The novel
suggests that objective definitions of physical beauty are created by the ideals of the dominant culture in order to reinforce power dynamics. Despite her attempts at make up, the narrator describes her face as unflattering. The Y-shaped crack seems to belong to her, perhaps the only thing that does. When Frieda and Claudia stop the boys' abuse of
Pecola, the boys act in typical male macho style by leaving and pretending that standing up to the girls is not worth the trouble. Pecola Breedlove is largely voiceless throughout the novel. She is attracted to Jake and ventures into the woods with him and Cholly and Darlene during the repast following Aunt Jimmy's funeral. Significantly, the hands of
Claudia's white baby doll, the hated Christmas present, are rough and scratch her as she sleeps. Junior, the son of one of these "perfect" women, is a product of her lack of emotion and caring. Resources are valued and her parent's anxieties about their ability to sustain their family permeate Claudia's existence. Essie Foster Essie Foster is a
wonderful cook and well-intentioned woman who brings Aunt Jimmy a peach cobbler when Aunt Jimmy is ill. Their voyeurism and vicarious rape of both Darlene and Cholly is an action meant to affirm their power and serves as a way for the men to assert their assumed superiority. Ralph Nisensky Ralph Nisensky is the lone playmate of Louis Junior.
MacTeer that the girls are playing in inappropriate way. Soaphead despises people and physical contact, messiness, and slovenliness. The constant in the Breedlove home is the perpetual emotional, verbal, and physical battle between Cholly and Pauline, whom he always refers to as Mrs. M'Dear, the town midwife and healer, warns Jimmy not to eat
solid food. The last chapter of the Winter section again contrasts the coming-of-age experiences of Claudia and Frieda and Pecola. Mermann-Jozwiak, Elisabeth. Another instance of hands functioning as a tool for diagnosis occurs in Cholly's youth. But we listened for the one who would say, "Poor little girl," or, "poor baby," but there was only head
wagging where those words should have been. Throughout the novel, Pecola is located in spaces in between two oppositions. She even offers to hold the funeral banquet at her house. She is a daughter with a father and a mother a
examines Jimmy's hands for further signs. When he is a boy, Pauline often yells at and physically abuses her son. According to the narrator, Pauline sees Lorain, Ohio, as "the melting pot on the lip of America" and she is disappointed with the realities of the town and of her life there (117). A new girl, Maureen Peal, arrives in town from the big city of
Toledo, Ohio. Pecola's brother, Sammy Breedlove, copes with the bleak realities of the family's life by regularly escaping, running away. When Pecola seeks his services, Soaphead is genuinely moved by her desire for blue eyes and, for the first time, sincerely wishes for the power to grant her wish. Breedlove and her friends are ambivalent about
whether Aunt Julia should be committed to the county mental hospital. Another incident involving Rosemary Villanucci occurs when Pecola has her first menstrual period while she is staying at the Breedloves' house. China is very interested in her own appearance and is always transforming her looks by changing her makeup from one style to
another. The cat scratches Pecola, and she tries to escape the house, but Junior will not let her go. Acquiring Discernment Some of the most precarious work of maturation is the task of figuring out what messages to believe and follow. At the end of Cholly's life story, the chapter concludes with Cholly's rape of Pecola. African-American communities
often internalize definitions of beauty from the dominant culture and find beautiful its members that most closely match those ideals, individuals such as Maureen Peal, and exclude and isolate those of its own who least resemble the dominant ideals, marginalized souls like Pecola Breedlove. He is not beaten or yelled at, but Junior never receives
affection or love from his mother. She says that most of her house is clouded in darkness during the night, a darkness that invites roaches and mice. "What the Bluest Eye Knows about Them: Culture, Race, Identity," American Literature: A Journal of Literary History, Criticism, and Bibliography 78 (March 2006): 141-168. This experience of a loss
within the mouth totally changes Pauline's self-perception. Bertha's store is in a oneroom brick building in her yard and it is close to the MacTeer home. After Jake gives Cholly his first cigarette, the two quickly bond and Jake suggests that Cholly should introduce him to some of the local girls who are attending the funeral. Individually and collectively
people mark Pecola and her dysfunctional family as falling outside the boundaries of what is normal and, thus, as undesirable. As he contemplates her request, he purses his lips. The adults in the community only gossip about the rape of Pecola and do not do anything to intervene on her behalf. He assaults the man physically and shoots after him in
an attempt to defend his daughter. When Pauline is a young and lonely child, she dreams of a stranger coming simply to hold her hand. HEREISTHERFAMILYMOTHERFATHER DICKANDJANETHEYLIVEINTHEGREEN ANDWHITEHOUSETHEYAREVERYH The disregard and abuse Pecola experiences within her home are echoed in her encounters in
the world beyond the storefront. The dog is old and physically repulsive to Soaphead and seems to represent all that he despises about existence. Conversely, in the present tense of the novel, adult characters tend to refer to reproduction as he tells
her she is locked in the house and is his prisoner. Pauline's affection and consideration is reserved for the white daughter of the family for whom she works. Although he does not sexually abuse Pecola, he manipulates her into killing his landlady's dog, Bob. Dewey Prince is the great love of Miss Marie (Maginot Line). As a result, Claudia
is able to show affection for and love people in her life, namely Frieda and Pecola. Buddy Wilson is one of the boys in town who harass and torment Pecola as she walks with Claudia, Frieda, and Maureen Peal. Summer The final section of The Bluest Eye is Summer. Instead of receiving a white baby doll, Claudia wants a more sensual
experience. A sister, who is thought to have intentions of claiming Della's house, is said to be coming from North Carolina to care for Della in Henry Washington's absence. Despite the burns Pecola receives from the hot berries, Pauline hits and violently rebukes her child while consoling and comforting the little Fisher girl who is unsettled but
unharmed by the event. The MacTeers also have another visitor about the same time as the arrival of Mr. Henry. MacTeer rubs Vick's salve on Claudia's chest and puts some in her mouth, telling her to swallow it. She tries to imitate the appearance of the movie stars until she breaks a front tooth eating candy. When Aunt Jimmy dies, O.V. brings his
wife and children to the funeral to pay his respects and to claim Aunt Jimmy's possessions. The novel addresses the social forces that drive understanding and definition of cultural constructs such as beauty, normalcy, family, and sexuality. The Role of Environment in Growth and Development The Bluest Eye explores the question of environment, the
atmosphere in which the main characters, Claudia and Pecola, are nurtured. MacTeer attack him physically. When Claudia encounters the Maginot Line, she is unable to speak, finding her mouth immobile. An example of this clarity occurs when Mr. Henry lies to Claudia about the reasons why the prostitutes, Marie and China, are in the Mac-Teers'
house. Cholly hates him. When frightened by the prostitute, the Maginot Lane, Claudia and Frieda reach for each other's hands. Claudia misreads her abrupt and straightforward mannerisms for disregard. The Bluest Eye (1970) is Toni Morrison's first published novel. Cholly meets Jake for the first time at Aunt Jimmy's funeral. Despite the impression
the town holds of him, Henry Washington reads pornography, cavorts with prostitutes in the MacTeer house, and, ultimately, molests Frieda by touching her breasts. Aunt Jimmy's mouth is in an O shape the next morning when she is found dead. Utilizing an opposite approach, Pauline greets her despair by becoming a staunch and devoted church
member and a tireless worker for her employers for whom she works as a domestic. The family lives in a storefront that has been converted to a two-room apartment. When the woman she works for gives her a pair, she thinks that it is a hat. Junior is, therefore, malicious and abusive. Pecola is a casualty of the malignant love of her father, the failures
of her mother, the disinterest of her community, and a culture that defines her as disposable, insignificant, and ugly. As she makes this statement, Rosemary is eating bread and butter. Pecola may be a misspelling of Peola, the character from the film named Peola, played by actress Freddi Washington. CRITICAL COMMENTARY Morrison's first novel,
The Bluest Eye, outlines the coming-of-age of an African-American female protagonist, Pecola Breedlove, who originates in circumstances that make her success, her survival even, unlikely. For the first time in his life, Church wants to act with sincerity and tries to fulfill his promise. When she discovers that her husband is trying to convert her to his
gloomy outlook and lifestyle, she abandons him. . He forces Pecola to stay in the house with his hands. The idea of being ruined frightens Frieda, mainly because she does not understand what is meant by the word. The girls retaliate by beating Rosemary up when she emerges from the car. MacTeer is revealed as the source of this information. This
loss signifies her self-perception as an ugly woman with an imperfect mouth, so unlike those on the screen. Sammy Breedlove Sammy Breedlove is 14 years old. The most significant encounter between Blue and Cholly occurs at a Fourth of July church picnic. Although Soaphead momentarily transcends his emotional inertia while in a relationship with
a woman he loves named Velma, he succumbs to even greater isolation and despondency when she leaves him in frustration. The complicated transition from the rural South to the relatively urban North, coupled with Cholly's complete lack of knowledge of how to be a husband and father, as well as his excessive drinking, snuff out his desire for
Pauline and his capacity to bond with or care for his children Sammy and Pecola. The mouth can also function as a symbol of a character's condition. After M'Dear leaves with the preacher, the women at Aunt Jimmy to follow the wise woman's advice. The
split personality is Pecola's way of coping with the devastating impact of the rape. Pauline begins to purchase clothes and makeup to bolster her self-esteem, while Cholly begins to drink heavily. As such, Soaphead moves his lips as he pretends to pray. Although Aunt Jimmy rescues him from the tracks, she is able to provide a home for him only until
his early adolescence, as a result ofher death in Cholly's 13th year. M'Dear, taller than the preacher who accompanies her, arrives holding a hickory stick. Throughout the novel, Morrison questions the frequent differential between what people say and what they actually mean, and she suggests that acquiring this discernment is one of the primary
tasks of becoming an adult. When the marriage between Cholly and Pauline's romantic hopes fade, she cannot seem to keep her hands off Cholly. Ironically, his violation of Pecola is complicated by Cholly's perverse, alcohol-bleary perception that he is somehow demonstrating tenderness toward his daughter. The girl makes
an odd noise with her lips when Claudia suggests that she, Pecola, and Frieda look at Mr. Henry's pornographic magazines or at the Bible. Pecola is silent throughout the encounter and is left unconscious on the floor of the kitchen. Dick's only role in the recreation of the primer at the beginning of The Bluest Eye is that he lives in the same green and
white house as the rest of the family. One lonely afternoon, Junior lures Pecola into his house, under the guise of wanting to play with her. The mouth functions as such a space in other instances in the novel as well. This man travels with Marie when she is 14 from Jackson, Mississippi, to Cincinnati, Ohio, and, although unmarried, they live together as
a couple. Pecola uses the exact opposite strategy and internalizes her feelings, transforming them into self-hatred and an overwhelming longing to disappear. The sofa, when delivered, is slit in the back. Soaphead gives Pecola poisoned meat to feed him. After eating the grapes, Jake and Suky return to the gathering, leaving Cholly and Darlene alone.
As the girls fall asleep that night, Pecola, after having been informed that she can now have a baby, ponders how that happens. They are black and poor and do not see any affirmation of their reality anywhere. The Bluest Eye's protagonist/narrator Claudia recalls the abrasive quality of her mother's hands as the overworked woman anxiously applies
balm to her ailing daughter. Often, however, there is a decided difference between what Claudia perceives and what she is told. Della Jones's husband says that Trifling Peggy's smell is the one a real woman should have. She then throws a pop bottle at them and laughs. Upset by Junior, Pecola holds her face with her hands as she cries. The black and
rather than what she observes adults doing. Obsessively cared for by his mother, Geraldine, Louis Junior feels the care is physical only, and he longs for her affection and warmth—attentions his mother seems to be able to express only to the family cat. Marie tells Pecola stories of this man. In her acceptance of or acquiescence to these
inconsistencies, Claudia learns how to conform to the expectations of those around her. Analysis of Toni Morrison's Novels FURTHER READING Cormier-Hamilton, Patrice. Mr. MacTeer's face reflects the harsh realities faced by the family during winter. Cholly merely responds to stimuli in his environment and is incapable of functioning as anything
other than an abuser. The chapter begins with the revelation of Claudia and her sister Frieda's envy of their next door neighbor, Rosemary Villanucci. They were disgusted, amused, shocked, outraged, or even excited by the story. She prefers the order she can create in the homes of her white employees where she feels in control and valued. Ivy's
singing seems to Pauline to give sound to a range of feelings that Pauline associates with romantic love and with her hopes for a prince to come and rescue her from her situation at home. With Dick and Jane those answers are easy, simple, and exclusive. Jane is a character in the Dick and Jane book series. After Pecola feeds Bob the poisoned meat,
the dog moves his mouth strangely. Claudia learns from her mother's conversations with other adult women in the town. When they ask him who the women are, he takes a drink of pop with his lips and this gesture makes the girls intuitively unsettled. Like Cholly, Pauline is an outcast and is not embraced or claimed by her family in the ways that she
needs in order to feel valued. The community and members of Jimmy's family gather for her funeral. Father far her funeral. Father for her funeral frequently and with his teeth. She runs her hands over Jimmy's body to determine the cause of the woman's
 illness. Pecola, who never has been loved, wonders how someone gets another to love them. While in the midst of this encounter, hunters stumble upon the couple and violate them by shining a flashlight upon them and forcing them to continue. Particularly, the boys repeat over and over that Pecola's daddy sleeps with no clothes on, a jibe that refers
both to the family's poverty and suggests some sort of sexual impropriety. As the two young people begin to discover how sexuality works, hunters stumble upon them and force the two to copulate under their violating gaze. Rosemary may respond to Claudia and Frieda's violence by offering her sexuality because that is a way in which she has
successfully averted physical violence in the past. Pecola comes to see Soaphead after her rape by Cholly. Darlene is the first in a long series of women that Cholly will use as the focus of his frustration and anger at the oppression he experiences. Frieda and Claudia also witness Pauline's favoritism and neglect of Pecola as they are present at the
Fisher home when Pecola, out of childish curiosity, accidentally spills a hot blueberry pie her mother has just made. In order to make ends meet, the MacTeers take a boarder into their home, Mr. Henry. Claudia MacTeer is nine years old at the beginning of the novel. Claudia, the adolescent, dreams of simple sensual pleasures; instead she is given
things—particularly, white dolls—that are supposed to substitute for connection and affection. The mouth is capable of language and therefore of major significance in Morrison's depiction of her characters in the novel. The mouth is capable of language and therefore of major significance in Morrison's depiction of her characters in the novel.
Geraldine is an overbearing but disinterested mother who saves her fondest attention and adoration for her cat. Although Aunt Jimmy's women friends do not look like the culture's definition of beautiful. She observes her mother's
women friends; by hearing the tone of their conversation, she understands not what they say, but how they say it. Pauline is perhaps most revelatory in a series of flashback memories. We looked for eyes creased with concern, but saw only veils. In one of them, she tells of a white employer who spoke out of one side of her mouth and casually informed
Pauline that she should leave her marriage to Cholly. This abandonment colors and determines Cholly's entire future. The boys tease Pecola about her skin color and her poverty. Of course, the most significant meaning lips can convey is the affect of a person—the representation of their emotions on the canvas of the face. Henry Washington's
calculated abuse of Frieda contrasts with Cholly Breedlove's spontaneous violation of Pecola and helps to extend the reality of child abuse beyond the particular context of poverty and abnormal behavior and to position abuse as a pervasive social problem. Although he says that the women are there for Bible study, Claudia and Frieda know, from the
sound of his voice, that he is lying to them. She is thin with brown teeth and bandy legs. Rosemary's behavior may be the first introduction to the issue of incest, an issue that pervades The Bluest Eye. Pauline Williams Breedlove, the mother of Sammy and Pecola and the wife of Cholly Breedlove, is one of the nine children
of Ada and Fowler Williams. He goes in search of his unseen father in Macon, Georgia. Like the MacTeers, the prostitutes Marie, China, and Poland, who live in an apartment above the Breedloves' storefront home, acknowledge Pecola's humanity and treat the child decently. The adult Claudia concludes the novel with her reflections about the
situation. Although not traditionally nurturing, Mrs. Observing the culture around her that seems to embrace and adore little girls with blue eyes, she would have the love and attention that she needs and desires. Marie peppers her conversations with
references to food. In addition to living happily in the green and white house with Father, Mother, and Dick, Jane wants to play. The southern black women who fight off the "funkiness" sleep with their hards folded across their stomachs, exemplifying their desire for order and control, and their attempt to bar the sexual advances of their husbands.
This ability to love transcends her coming of age and explains her sense of responsibility for Pecola even after she is an adult and Pecola is beyond help. Rather than turning his rage on the hunters, against whom he is powerless, Cholly turns his ire upon the young girl, Darlene. The plot of the novel begins with an invitational narrative voice that tells
the reader the secret of Pecola's rape and impregnation by her father. Her family is economically more comfortable than the MacTeers and most of the town's African- American residents. She asks the cat, Mother, Father, and they are unresponsive. While Pecola is at the MacTeers', Claudia contrasts Pecola and Frieda's adoration
of white girlhood— in the form of white baby dolls and the child star, Shirley Temple —with her own disdain for white girls. She is affectionate, strong, and full of life. P.L. P.L. is a companion of Bay Boy and is idolized, for a time, by Geraldine's son, Louis Junior. Ultimately, the failure of the marigolds to grow may represent the futility of Claudia's
attempt to defy the realities of maturity that the adults in her life have already accepted. Rosemary Villanucci sees the girls trying to help Pecola and accuses them of playing inappropriately. Claudia's interactions with Pecola and the
girl's smile as separate entities. The two begin to argue and Pauline turns to motion pictures for comfort. The reality of Henry Washington's character is more evidence that the public face of the town hides a very different reality. Soaphead maintains that this is a charitable act that will grant Pecola's wish, at least within the confines of her own
perceptions. Miss Dunion After Henry Washington molests Frieda, Miss Dunion is present at the MacTeer home. Old Slack Bessie is a resident of Elyria and the mother of Trifling Peggy. Maureen Peal, the perfect, light-skinned girl at school, has six fingers on one hand. Dick The novel begins with a replication of the Dick and Jane
texts that were widely used by American educators in the 1940s and 1950s to teach primary school students how to read. Bertha is upset when she discovers the dead dog. Blue Jack Described as old and as a ladies' man, Blue Jack is a former slave and one of the few people for whom Cholly expresses affection. 2 (2001): 189-194. The boys surround
Pecola and taunt her with jibes about her family and the darkness of her skin color. Claudia responds with an unrealized desire to humiliate Rosemary by hitting her in the mouth while she chews. In the midst of the collision of these extremes exists the life of their daughter, Pecola Breedlove. The novel begins with a display of hostility from Claudia
and Frieda generated as Rosemary taunts the girls while eating bread in her family's 1939 Buick. Their function as the first books in children's lives and as the books that introduce them to written narrative underscores their cultural significance. As she tries to defend Pecola against the taunts of Bay Boy and his friends, Bay Boy threatens Claudia
with a fat lip (66). The simple phrase resonates with questions about the nature of the family: What is a family? Maureen defends herself from the girls and asserting that she is cuter than them and, therefore, better than them and, therefore, better than them and, therefore, better than them and the family is a family? Maureen defends herself from the girls and asserting that she is cuter than them and, therefore, better than them and the properties the properties that the properties that the properties that the properties the properties that the
that messy, uncomfortable, disordered space Morrison claims as paradise, the only possible honest and lived paradise, a space in which the rubble and collapse of oppressive categories dismantle patriarchal notions of contradiction, of difference—black/white, male/female, good/evil, sexual/pure, rich/poor—the structural pillars and hierarchies of
meaning that encourage Pecola's isolation. Velma Velma is Soaphead Church's former wife. Frieda is the victim of sexual abuse at the hands of Mr. Henry Washington, a boarder in her family's home. Rosemary taunts Claudia and Frieda by telling them that they cannot come into the Buick. Categories: African Literature, American Literature,
Feminism, Literary Criticism, Literary Criticism, Literature, Novels, Feminism in The Bluest Eye, Novels, Feminism in The Bluest Eye, Character Study, The Bluest Eye Novel, Racism in The Bluest Eye, Symbolism in The Bluest Eye, The Bluest
Characters, The Bluest Eye Criticism, The Bluest Eye Novel Summary, The Bluest Eye Novel Summary
the men in the woods who make a spectacle of Darlene and Cholly's sexual encounter. A fly settles in the corner of her mouth until Cholly waves it away. "The Bluest Eye: Notes on History, Community, and Black Female Subjectivity," African American Review 27, no. "Normal" houses have families with a mother, father, and children with strictly
defined rules and roles. The Bluest Eye, written during the 1960s, reflects the increasing awareness during that time of the impact of representation on identity formation. The truth about what happened to Pecola is shocking to Claudia, but what is more disturbing to her is the response of the town. One day, Claudia, Frieda, and Maureen Peal are
walking home from school and encounter a bunch of boys taunting Pecola. Frieda's instincts about Mr. Henry may be better than her mother's. In many ways Claudia functions as a contrast to Pecola who is without parental protection and nurturance. Winter The section of the novel entitled Winter follows the first section entitled, Autumn. Cholly and
Pauline's lives are revealed in the novel through flashback sequences of their lives. Aging, China is resistant to being thought of as old. Born as the ninth child of the Williams family, Pauline begins life in Alabama before her family moves to Kentucky. Despite her care, Cholly is often repulsed by Aunt Jimmy's age, appearance, and smell. Later, Cholly
dies in the workhouse. She is deeply invested in appearance and channels all of her feeling and emotion into the work of creating order and fighting against anything—dirt, poverty, free expression—that threatens her efforts. The chapter also exposes Pecola's persistent insecurity in spite of the fact that she seems to believe that she has at last
acquired her much-desired blue eyes. Dunion, suggesting that some permanent damage may have occurred to Frieda. She also loves church music and conflates the images of a savior with her teenage romantic fantasies. Mr. Henry Washington is a charming and manipulative child abuser who comes to live in the MacTeer
home in the autumn as a result of the parents' attempt to secure more money for the family. Claudia also learns how to read her environment, a lesson vital to internalizing behaviors and adapting to adult ways of behaving. The phrase, "truth in timbre," refers to the ability of the girls to understand the world more honestly and truthfully from adults'
sounds, the tones in their voices, rather than from the literal meanings of the words themselves (15). Hands Mrs. Pecola enjoys visiting Marie and Marie treats the girl with affection and tells her stories. She journeys to the local spiritualist/psychic Soaphead Church, who is also a pedophile. She is obsessed with appearance—her house, her clothes,
her hair—and values the order of her life above relationships with her husband and her child, Junior. The incident is marked by the disturbing staccato laughter of the men as they sadistically watch the helpless pair obey their commands. Pecola exists in the narrow spaces between the opposite extremes of her parents and of the various communities
she inhabits. When Frieda and Claudia stop the boys' abuse of Pecola, the boys enact male machismo by leaving and pretending up to the girls is not worth the trouble. He is so driven by his own desires and by his complete inability to identify with another and to adhere to moral boundaries that he rapes his daughter in an act that, in his
delirium, he believes is tender. This event helps Darlene to explain her stained and dirty dress to her mother, who does not react with excessive anger. The MacTeer girls dwell on Maureen's imperfections, namely a dogtooth and evidence of an extra finger on each hand, in order to balance the injury to their self-esteem caused by the disparity in the
way people treat Maureen and themselves. In the spring of Cholly's 13th year, Aunt Jimmy falls ill after sitting on a damp bench at a camp meeting. Cholly is abandoned at four days old by his mother who has some mental deficiency. MacTeer learns of Pecola's situation, she immediately stops scolding the children and goes to help Pecola. After this
rejection, Cholly acquires a freedom, a detachment unconstrained by responsibility or conscience and therefore becomes dangerous and destructive. The plot of the narrative involves Jane's attempt to find a playmate. Pauline suffers through Cholly's unloving intercourse in the night. Poland is the name of one of the prostitutes that live in the
apartment above the Breedloves' storefront. Pecola's ultimate psychological break stems from the brutally she has experienced, but, more fundamentally, her psychological fragmentation has roots in the absence of relationships—with self, with family, with community. Pecola is 11 years old at the beginning of the novel. The girls find Pecola at the
lake in front of the house where Pauline works as a maid and they decide to walk home together. Remembering one evening when their father checks on them while he is naked, the girls are embarrassed by Maureen Peal's question asking whether they have seen a man naked. Pauline is enamored of Hollywood films and may have gotten her
daughter's name from the character Peola in the 1934 version of the movie Imitation of Life. In response to Claudia and Frieda's assault, Rosemary offers to pull down her underwear, an offer that perplexes Frieda and Claudia. When Aunt Jimmy dies and Cholly, with no information about sex, thinks that his ill-fated sexual encounter with Darlene may
have impregnated her, the young man seeks out Blue for advice. Marie is the symbol of a "bad" woman, and Claudia and Frieda are forbidden to speak with her or go into her home. She owns a mangy dog named Bob that Soaphead finds disgusting. China applies a "cupid-bow" mouth and changes her hairstyle repeatedly. Jane is the central figure in
the recreation of Dick and Jane at the beginning of The Bluest Eye. When people come to see Soaphead for healing, they seem to acquire peace of mind and he enjoys a regular clientele. This adoration comes from all the adults she knows, black and white. This role makes her a perpetual victim and gives her a way to justify and organize her emotional
and psychological life. Claudia's mother's hands are ambiguous to the little girl as they cause her pain, yet convey to Claudia a deep abiding motherlove. Cholly and newfound cousin, Jake, begin a youthful flirtation with two girls, Darlene and Suky. While at the MacTeers', Pecola marks one of the passages from girlhood to womanhood when she
begins her menstrual period. M'Dear is also the town midwife. Each of these elements is in some way unyielding and uncompromisingly resistant to the girls' healthy maturation. The books are characterized by simple phrases that describe the activities and feelings of the characterized by simple phrases that describe the activities and feelings of the characterized by simple phrases that describe the activities and feelings of the characterized by simple phrases that describe the activities and feelings of the characterized by simple phrases that describe the activities and feelings of the characterized by simple phrases that describe the activities and feelings of the characterized by simple phrases that describe the activities and feelings of the characterized by simple phrases that describe the activities and feelings of the characterized by simple phrases that describe the activities and feelings of the characterized by simple phrases that describe the activities and feelings of the characterized by simple phrases that describe the activities and feelings of the characterized by simple phrases that describe the activities and feelings of the characterized by simple phrases that describe the activities and feelings of the characterized by simple phrases that describe the activities and feelings of the characterized by simple phrases that describe the activities and feelings of the characterized by simple phrases that describe the activities and feelings of the characterized by simple phrases that describe the activities and feelings of the characterized by simple phrases that describe the activities and feelings of the characterized by simple phrases that describe the activities and feelings of the characterized by simple phrases that describe the activities and feelings of the characterized by simple phrases that describe the activities and feelings of the characterized by simple phrases that describe the activities and feelings of the characterized by simple phrases that describe the activities are activitit
against poor and/or darker skinned blacks contributes to Junior's frustration and isolation. Junior again throws the cat at nearly the same moment his mother arrives. During Aunt Jimmy's final illness, Miss Alice visits her. After he runs away, in search of his father, Cholly is "drymouthed" in anticipation of the ill-fated meeting. Despite some of her
crudeness, Poland seems to care for Pecola and asks her questions that seem to suggest genuine concern for the girl. He tries to avoid touching her hand when taking her money. At other times, he participates in their conflicts in an attempt to defend Pauline. Even though Frieda is more withdrawing than Claudia, she often demonstrates an enormous
strength of character. At the time, Marie is so unworldly that she has never owned a pair of underwear. One of them, Jake, offers him a cigarette. Hard of hearing, Bertha Reese leaves her tenant to his own devices. Big Mama Big Mama is Mrs. She is 10 years old at the beginning of the novel. MacTeer misunderstanding the situation and punishing
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her girls until Frieda tells her what is really happening. Night and Day In The Bluest Eye Morrison differentiates between night and day, darkness and light, and night becomes a time to be feared. Interestingly, Morrison differentiates between night and monosyllabic use of English, the men appear to be extremely limited. These characteristics reflect the very real difficulties, she succumbs to her family face. Despite these qualities, she succumbs to her family face.

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Mayo, James "Morrison's The Bluest Eye," Explicator 60, no. Pauline grows up longing for rescue and for love from an unknown and mysterious lover who will rescue her from her disconnection. The story becomes a litmus test against which the characters measure their self-worth. Relying on what remains of childhood belief and faith, the sisters
plant marigold seeds with the hope that this act will somehow ensure Pecola's baby's survival. 4 (Summer 2002): 231-234. Displacement The Bluest Eye explores the theme of outdoors as it exposes the vulnerability of the community depicted in the novel. Disembodied lips state that Mr. Henry will be a boarder in the MacTeer home. White men
objectify and sexually abuse Cholly and Darlene during the night and, at the turning point of his life, Cholly lays in his own feces until dark. Claudia's house is green, but it is also old and cold. HEREISTHEHOUSEITISGREENANDWHITE ITHASAREDDOORITISVERPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTYPRETTY
and to their house and their lives. For example, early in their relationship, the sound of Cholly's whistle "pulls" Pauline's lips into a smile. Maureen's main defense is her cry that she is cute. Junie Bug Junie Bug is one of the boys in town who harass and torment Pecola as she walks with Claudia, Frieda, and Maureen Peal. When she journeys to the
candy store to purchase her favorite candy, Mary Janes, the storekeeper Mr. Yacobowski does not even look at her and tries to avoid touching her when they exchange money. The novel traces Claudia's development througha series of problems she encounters. When she is given a white baby doll for Christmas, those around her expect that she, like
they, will value it and cherish the gift. The candy provides Pecola with an artificial respite from her misery. Earlier in the novel, during Aunt Jimmy's funeral, Cholly plays with some of his cousins. SEEMOTHERMOTHERISVERYNICE MOTHERWILLYOUPLAYWITHJANE
MOTHERLAUGHSLAUGHMOTHERLAUGHLA The next three chapters of Spring tell the stories of Pauline, Cholly, and Soaphead Church. For the remainder of those with less power, the cat his mother loves and, during one
afternoon, Pecola. He writes a letter to God asking for the ability to grant her wish. As the young women characters in The Bluest Eye come of age, each of them has to confront these ideals and to explain and justify for themselves the differences between their lived realities and the picture of houses/homes as presented in the dominant culture
Although Claudia and Frieda have difficult situations to negotiate, none of them are as destructive as the circumstances Pecola faces. Like the rest of his family, Sammy is burdened with the label of ugliness. Pauline does not deliberately become pregnant with Sammy. Perhaps the defining characteristic of Pauline's childhood is the relative disregard
she experiences. Pecola represents a dangerous intrusion into her neatly arranged life. In a drunken, lustful moment, Cholly notices his daughter Pecola and her vulnerability. Sampson Fuller, leaves town. Throughout his life, Cholly confuses love and affection with violence and will take out his
frustrations and bitterness on those who are less powerful than himself—namely his family. Claudia describes women who have "lost their funkiness," women like Geraldine who put lipstick on in thin lines as only part of their mouths because they do
not want their lips to be too big (83). In The Bluest Eye, the Dick and Jane narrative represents an accepted, almost invisible controlling narrative, against which each of the primary characters unconsciously evaluates her own existence. In a flashback memory, Pauline describes making love with Cholly. This very short interaction with Jake seems to
be the only genuine camaraderie Cholly experiences in his life. They believe that whiskey will prevent Frieda from becoming fat, so they go on a quest for alcohol. Rosemary's first instinct to remove her underwear in response to violence may indicate that there is also some sexual abuse in her history. The family believes that they themselves are, like
the house and the furniture, ugly—the opposite of the fictional Dick and Jane. 4 (Winter 1999): 623-638. She witnesses Mr. MacTeer's assault of Henry Washington and advises Mrs. In Lorain, Pauline feels excluded by women who see her as country and unsophisticated. Because Aunt Jimmy eats the pie in defiance of M'Dear's advice, the town
attributes her death to the ingestion of the peach cobbler. Woodrow Cain is one of the boys in town who harass and torment Pecola as she walks with Claudia, Frieda, and Maureen Peal. One of the stories that Marie tells Pecola is of her
lost love, Dewey Prince. Big Papa Claudia and Frieda call their grandfather, Mrs. Raised by his Aunt Jimmy, Cholly loses her when he is at a critical point in his maturation. She cannot save Pecola or change the environment in which they both exist, a world where the reality is that people are bound by the stories they believe—stories like DICK AND
JANE that create hierarchies and, most frequently, place those without blue eyes at the bottom of the heap. Although hands convey important information in the cases of Mrs. The work of their hands convey important information in the cases of Mrs. The work of their hands convey important information in the cases of Mrs. The work of their hands convey important information in the cases of Mrs. The work of their hands convey important information in the cases of Mrs. The work of their hands convey important information in the cases of Mrs. The work of their hands convey important information in the cases of Mrs. The work of their hands convey important information in the cases of Mrs. The work of their hands convey important information in the cases of Mrs. The work of their hands convey important information in the cases of Mrs. The work of their hands convey important information in the cases of Mrs. The work of their hands convey important information in the cases of Mrs. The work of their hands convey important information in the cases of Mrs. The work of their hands convey important information in the case of Mrs. The work of their hands convey important information in the case of Mrs. The work of their hands convey important information in the case of Mrs. The work of the case of Mrs. The work of the work of the case of Mrs. The work of Mrs. The 
their hands like a cape they then don. In return for the comfort the family represents, Pauline is a loyal, protective, and self-effacing servant. This taste mirrors his feeling of belonging and contentment. Douglas, Christopher. Even the imagined acquisition of her long desired blue eyes does not ease Pecola's pain and anxiety. Rather than embrace her
after this horrific trauma, the community rejects Pecola and contributes to her downfall. When she is having an orgasm, she places her hands on him. The unyielding nature of the protagonists' environments may refer to their immediate families, their communities, and their culture. Lips provide a great deal of information and
foreshadowing about Mr. Henry and his perversions. Claudia's experience of the world is infused with the presence of her mother, Mrs. As a boy, Cholly idolizes a man named Blue. Morrison examines the impact of this exclusion on individuals and on the community as a whole. Trifling Peggy The daughter of Old Slack Bessie, Trifling Peggy is the
          promiscuous woman from Elyria who leaves town with Della Jones's husband. Cholly Breedlove, Pecola's father, burns down the Breedlove home, and so Pecola Breedlove temporarily lives with the MacTeers. Out of concern one of the women, Essie Foster, prepares and brings a peach cobbler to Aunt Jimmy. M'Dear resembles other
powerful female figures in African-American literature as she possesses knowledge and ability that seem nearly supernatural. Since the MacTeer girls have no money, they do not eat ice cream and are envious of Maureen's seeming wealth. Like the boys who taunt Pecola, Maureen Peal also calls her names and adds Frieda and Claudia to her insults
which all focus on the sisters' darker skin color. She also castigates Rosemary and sends her home. Claudia speaks of a childhood illness that she believes is a source of irritation to her mother. She is treated differently from the rest of the children, a difference the narrator speculates might stem from a limp Pauline develops as a child following an
accident where she steps on a rusty nail. Morrison uses night in compound words as well. The incident is traumatic for Claudia and Frieda as well. Particularly problematic, with blue eyes that gaze blankly at Pecola when she comes to his
store to buy the peanut butter-filled caramel candies called MARY JANES. The move improves the family's situation. The argumentative and violent home life of Pauline and Cholly speaks to a clash of different coping mechanisms. Before throwing her pop bottle at Claudia, Frieda, and Pecola in disgust when she learns that the MacTeer girls are not
allowed to enter her apartment, the Maginot Line puts the bottle to her lips for a last sip. When Cholly's Aunt Jimmy becomes ill, the women in the community send for M'Dear, a local conjure/medicine woman. Bob is so old and ill that he smells and oozes fluid from his various orifices. The two major deterministic forces in Pecola's young life are her
mother and father, Cholly and Pauline Breedlove. Unlike her brothers and is disturbed by the defeat written into her posture. Claudia lives in a green
house, which connects her to the Dick and Jane story at the beginning of the novel. MacTeer (Mama) and Mr. Mac Teer (Daddy) and the primary narrator of the novel. At the end of the story, Jane finds a friend and they play. Although Frieda is more reserved and shy than Claudia, she is a bit more savvy and informed about the machinations of the
adult world than is Claudia. Soaphead sees Pecola's request as an opportunity for him to rid himself of the presence of Bob, the dog. Rosemary's screams result in Mrs. These books present a sanitized version of family life and normalcy. She tells Pecola that she had children with Dewey Prince, but gives no other information about what happened to
them or to her relationship. When Geraldine finds Pecola in her home and her cat injured, the woman loses all pretense of graciousness and hurls expletives at the child. Claudia explains to the reader that she and her sister, with childlike belief, feel that they will be able to save Pecola and her unborn child/sister by planting marigold seeds. The house
in the Dick and Jane narrative has a red door. Originally the family's superior economic position by sitting in her family's notes a red door. Originally the family has a red door. Originally the family has a red door. Originally the family's superior economic position by sitting in her family's molestation of Frieda, Mr. and Mrs. Both Claudia and Pecola have to battle
against racism, sexism, poverty, and cultural mythologies in order to protect their psychological health. Community abandonment is both the family and Pecola's disintegration. Fuller's rejection of Cholly is another definitive moment in his maturation. Following the funeral and the incident in the woods, Cholly
erroneously thinks he has impregnated Darlene and runs off to find a man he believes is his father, Sampson Fuller. MacTeer's father, Big Papa. Poland seems to be an alcoholic. For example, Claudia learns that it is not alright to destroy a gift even if, fundamentally, the gift is distasteful to her. The first reference to night in The Bluest Eye is
Claudia's description of her home. The character from the film has in common with Pecola the desire to be white. 3 (1993): 421. Cholly Breedlove (Mr. Breedlove) Named after his Aunt Jimmy's dead brother, Charles Breedlove, Cholly, begins his life inauspiciously when his mentally impaired mother abandons him at a railroad track when he is four
days old. The MacTeers once again demonstrate their clear affection for their daughters and investment in their safety by violently throwing Mr. Henry out of the house. Genuine smiles are not always benign, however. Sammy is born at home and is difficult for Pauline to feed. After their marriage begins to fail, and both Pauline and Cholly adopt
ugliness as a way of being, Cholly uses his hands to fight Pauline. Later, after Aunt Jimmy's death, when Cholly believes he has impregnated Darlene, he follows in his father's footsteps and also leaves town. The Maginot Line's hands are dimpled with fat. Neighborhood women gather at Aunt Jimmy's house to help take care of her. Lip references also
occur in the novel as an external indication of the internal feelings and responses of characters. Rather than showing the girl compassion and concern, Pauline beats and violently scolds her daughter. When Claudia receives a white doll for Christmas, she destroys it in an attempt to discover what it contains that makes it so desirable. After this event,
Claudia and Frieda are left to grapple with the question of the role and hierarchies of physical beauty—hierarchies of the family
play? Soaphead tells Pecola that she will acquire her blue eyes if she feeds Bob a piece of meat, which she does not know is poisoned, bringing about the dog's death. He does not even want to touch her hand as he takes Pecola's money. Living next door to the elementary school gives Louis a false sense of ownership and an arrogance that bolsters history.
mean behavior. Cholly's rape of Pecola results in her pregnancy and miscarriage and instigates Pecola's mental collapse. When Claudia is ill, for example, Mrs. This imposed identity permeates Sammy's sense of self and informs his interactions with others. Although Pauline and Cholly believe that they love each other, neither is capable of
transcending their own immediate needs and insecurities because neither of them has ever been well loved or appreciated. The experience of watching their mother respond in this manner is disconcerting for both Claudia and Frieda. MacTeer tells him to keep God's name out of his mouth. Pauline showers the little Fisher girl with endearments and
affectionate nicknames while she does not provide the same nurturance for her own children, Sammy and Pecola. This love manifests in the things that they do for Claudia rather than in the things that they say to her. Cholly's Aunt Jimmy rescues the baby and raises him until her death, when Cholly is 13. She is one of the southern black women who
fight off the "funkiness" and sleep with their hands folded across their stomachs, exemplifying their desire for order and control and their attempt to bar the sexual advances of their husbands. Likewise, she receives notification in The
Bluest Eye are sharply divided between positive and negative experiences. The most peculiar aspect of this incident, however, is Rosemary's response to the violence of his home is to run away more than 27 times. While Pecola watches, Soaphead moves his lips as he pretends to
pray. When Cholly and Darlene initiate their love making, Darlene kisses Cholly on the mouth unpleasant. This rejection marks an important turning point in Cholly's life. Marie is the only person to give Pecola a nickname. For example, when Mr. Henry comes to the MacTeer house to live, the children run their hands over his
body looking for a quarter. For example, Pauline does not ever see an image of herself in the films she views. Significantly, there is a crack in the sidewalk that repeatedly causes Pecola to trip. She is not a woman given to smiling, but is taken in by Mr. Henry's seeming jocularity. Mr. Henry encourages the girls to lie to their mother—to not tell her
about his transgression. M'Dear M'Dear M'Dear is the midwife and healer in Cholly's hometown. Louis Junior, Geraldine's son, idolizes Bay Boy. Unlike Pecola, Claudia survives the damaging impacts of this invisibility. Following the examination, M'Dear tells Jimmy to drink pot liquor, the fluid that remains in the pot after cooking greens, and nothing else.
The act is told entirely from Cholly's perspective. Jake, Suky, Cholly, and Darlene then go for a walk to eat muscadine grapes. Watching Bob die is yet another trauma Pecola endures. In a moment of sincere self-revelation, Soaphead Church writes a letter to God saying that it is difficult for him to keep his mouth and hands off girl children. MacTeer
symbolically encourages Claudia to ingest her healing love. (2008). Critical companion to Toni Morrison. As such, the narrative constructs Pecola's world by exploring the experiences of those around her. Source: Gillespie, C. She is not coddled by her parents, but she is protected and cared for by them. Pauline responds by scolding her son. The
original lack of identification of the speaker may represent Mrs. Even the Breedloves' furniture reflects their status because it is torn and undesirable. In one of them, she tells of a white employer who spoke out of one side of her mouth and casually informs Pauline that she should leave her marriage to Cholly. MacTeer, Poland sings all of the time.
The Bluest Eye begins with a replication of the Dick and Jane Readers that were one of the primary instruments used to teach generations of American children how to read. Jake Jake, a young man of 15, is O.V.'s son. She then eats a piece of peach cobbler that the neighbors believe causes her death. Their parents look on approvingly, not suspecting
Mr. Henry's inclination toward pedophilia and neither Claudia nor Frieda has a negative sense of the Breedloves, the narrator states that the "shapely lips" of Mrs. The child's arrogance irritates the sisters and they promise to hit her out of frustration. He is the oldest child of Pauline and Cholly
Breedlove and the brother of Pecola, with whom he seems to have no relationship she eventually develops with Cholly. Miss Marie offers them a pop and suggests that they wait for Pecola with her on the porch. His hand scratches here when he finally reaches to take
the pennies. Moses, Cat. Mrs. Their actions are often controlled by their legitimate fear of being displaced, of losing the central marker of stability and identity, the house. A misanthropic pedophile, he is the product of a misguided and brutal father. Rosemary observes Claudia and Frieda trying to help Pecola and shouts out to Mrs. Using Pecola's
story as a focal point, The Bluest Eye reveals the destructive impact of social hierarchies and of social invisibility. Mama (Mrs. When the girls intuitively unsettled. The Bluest Eye, through its exploration of other types of houses—homes—reveals
that the answers to those questions are not so straightforward and easily apparent. They have heard the women of the community, who are clearly
attached to Aunt Jimmy, gather around, sit with her, bring her food, and attempt to nurse her back to health. Cholly and Blue eat the melon together. Perhaps, most significantly, Pecola is in the space between the black and white communities that surround her, unaccepted by and alienated from both. Despondent upon having lost the one genuine
love of his life, his wife Velma, as well as the support of his relatively wealthy family, Soaphead tries a wide array of occupations, traveling salesman, insurance agent, and desk clerk before he moves to Lorain to become a fortune-teller. Claudia learns, from overhearing a conversation between Mrs. In fact, Cholly loves Blue. She tries to replicate the
notions of beauty she finds on the screen only to find such imitation impossible because she has different hair, skin, and features—a different aesthetic. "Black Naturalism and Toni Morrison: The Journey Away from Self-Love in The Bluest Eye," Melus19, no. After an adventure with Darlene, Jake, and Suky in the grape patch, Cholly's mouth tastes of
muscadine. Pecola opens her mouth in horror and then covers her mouth in horror and the horror and the
MacTeer sings. Mother's only role in the recreation of Dick and Jane at the beginning of The Bluest Eye is that she lives in the same green and white house as the rest of the family and, that, rather than playing with Jane, she laughs. 3 (Spring 2000): 251-273. Like Cholly and Henry Washington, Soaphead is also a child molester who convinces himself
that his abuse of young girls is beautiful, even noble. The women who visit Jimmy remember their young lips, "relaxed and content." In her final deliberate act, Pecola goes to Soaphead Church to request blue eyes. Cholly learns about Sampson Fuller from Aunt Jimmy, who only speculates that Sampson Fuller is Cholly's father and barely remembers
his name. She only wants Pecola out of her house. MacTeer and M'Dear, The Bluest Eye also reveals that children are not always attuned to the information they may need in order to read someone's character. She shares with the fictional and flat Dick and Jane the same family structure. Her marriage to Cholly, migration to the North, and birth of
her children leave her disappointed and disillusioned. Similarly, the physical is used to counter words when Frieda tries to explain to Pecola about her first menstrual period and Pecola responds by placing her fingers on her mouth. Daddy (Mr. MacTeer, called Daddy by Claudia, is a man invested in the wellbeing of his family. Breedlove
Sammy, and Pecola only reinforce their unattractiveness. Frieda tells her that they are not allowed to come into her house, and Miss Marie laughs and throws a glass bottle at them. Claudia's major conflicts often come from the difference between what she has been told is acceptable and the contradictory ways in which she sees those around her
behaving. Like Miss Marie and Poland, she hates men. Pecola is fractured psychologically by this event. Miss Erkmeister Miss Erkmeister, a woman with bow legs, is Maureen Peal and Pecola's gym teacher. Older Morrisonian African-American women characters are a study in strength and contradiction. Aunt Jimmy does not comply, eats a piece of
peach pie, and is dead the next morning. Following Aunt Jimmy's funeral, Cholly has an encounter that defines the rest of his life. Although Rosemary is a frequent playmate of the MacTeer girls, they find her irritating and aggravating. Blue pays attention to Cholly and is a storyteller who captivates young Cholly with tales of what it felt like to be
emancipated. As the girls continue to walk, their conversation turns to the adolescent topics of menstruation, pregnancy, and male nakedness. Geraldine's nightgown represents her resistance to sex, and Soaphead Church writes his blasphemous letter to God on a night table. The women's concern shows Aunt Jimmy's position as a center and a
stalwart in her community. As a result, she dismantles the toy in an attempt literally to get at the heart of what is so attractive about the doll. Aunt Julia Aunt Julia Aunt Julia Aunt Julia is an aunt to Della Jones and is said to aimlessly drift up and down Sixteenth Street in an old bonnet, startling passersby. During a childhood illness, Mrs. The lessons of The Bluest Eye
reveal the complexities of coming-of-age in a culture that does not value your existence. As they pummel him, he begins to sing "Nearer My God to Thee." Mrs. They then move to Kentucky around the beginning of World War I. Junior uses violence as a means to express his anger and hurt. Claudia also rebels against the mandatory cleanliness of her
nightly bath. Marie's stories about Dewey Prince make Pecola curious about love between adults. He feels it is an indictment of his parenting. When Mr. MacTeer learns of Henry Washington's abuse of Frieda, he assaults the man and shoots at him. The sound of the song signals to Claudia her mother's state of mind. SYNOPSIS The Bluest Eye is a
coming-of-age narrative that tells the parallel, but very different stories, of its protagonists, Pecola Breedlove and Claudia Mac- Teer, two African-American young girls faced with a world that disregards their existence and undermines their existence and undermines their sense of self-worth during the adolescent years that are central to healthy identity formation. When Frieda and
Claudia stop the boys' abuse of Pecola, the boys enact male machismo by leaving and pretending that standing up to the girls is not worth their trouble. Following Aunt Jimmy's funeral, Cholly has his first sexual experience when he and a young girl, Darlene, wander off into the nearby woods and wind up having sex. Interestingly, he has a stuttering
laugh that is similar to the perverse laughter of the hunters who torture Cholly and Darlene. Blue also tells a peculiar tale about a dead white woman who was beheaded by her husband and who haunted her former home blindly in search of a comb. By reproducing the primers at the beginning of the novel, The Bluest Eye questions the story told in
the primers of the lives of the lives of the fictional Dick and Jane and their family. In spite of this temporary lapse in his normal selfishness, Church returns to his typical behavior and uses Pecola selfinterestedly to rid himself or Darlene against this attack, turns his anger and impotence
toward Darlene. MacTeer) Claudia and Frieda's mother, Mama, or Mrs. Following Pecola's rape and pregnancy, Claudia notices that the adults in the community talk about the violation of the child, but do not express sympathy for Pecola and her unborn child. Like a coward, he hits her with the palm of his hand. There is little access to her first-
person internal thoughts until the end of the novel when her psyche has become irreparably fractured. The women tell Pecola stories of their lives and her conversations with them feed her curiosity to discover what love is and how one becomes lovable. Della Jones is the subject of gossip by Mrs. Miss Alice reads to Aunt Jimmy from FIRST
CORINTHIANS and, although it does not help Aunt Jimmy's condition, Miss Alice's reading does soothe the sick woman to sleep. Kuenz, Jane. The conflicts Claudia navigates teach her primarily about what behaviors are acceptable and which are not, as well as what the consequences are for straying beyond the boundaries of communally defined
normalcy. Each incident, while often unresolved, demonstrates to Claudia and Frieda adore Mr. Henry because, unlike the other adults in their lives, he pays attention to them, speaks to them directly, and calls them by the names of famous
movie stars. She is the sole source of affection for Cholly during his childhood. Pauline's story traces her origins from rural Alabama where she is born as the ninth of 11 Williams children. Miss Dunion refers to this possibility as being ruined, a term both Frieda and Claudia misunderstand. Maureen Peal is the new girl in town. Many
African Americans during that time rejected cultural stereotypes and worked to create a more accurate and affirmative understanding of African-American life. He tells Pecola that if she feeds Bob meat, she will receive the blue eyes that she desires. Both Frieda and Claudia are perplexed by the adoration Maureen Peal receives. Frieda's expectation
that her parents will defend her and shield her from harm stands in marked contrast to Pecola's rape at the hands of Cholly. MacTeer are deeply invested in their family's well-being and love their daughters, but the expression of their affection is plaqued by the financial difficulties the family faces. O.V. O.V. is Aunt Jimmy's half-brother and is not
biologically related to Cholly who is the son of Jimmy's sister, O.V.'s other half-sister. Geraldine blames the entire situation on Pecola and, seeing her as a representative of all that she is trying to escape—poverty, disorder, despair—calls the child a bitch and orders her out of the house. She and her sister do not always understand the words of the
women, but they learn from the sounds, the intonations of their conversations, valuable information about becoming an adult woman. The Maginot Line smiles authentically at Claudia, Pecola, and Frieda—a smile that is more sincere than that of other adults who interact with the children, but her smile fades when she learns that Claudia and Frieda
are not allowed to come into her apartment. SOME IMPORTANT THEMES AND SYMBOLS IN THE BLUEST EYE House and Home Throughout The Bluest Eye, the question of home is central to the narrative. She touches Geraldine's cat, the cat that Junior detests, with tear soaked hands. Malmgren, Carl D. When he does begin to touch
her, she gives all of her strength into his hands. Miss Alice is one of the women friends of Aunt Jimmy's who gather to care for and comfort her when she falls ill. In The Bluest Eye, hands also represent character traits. Such maturation is always difficult, but it is impossible if one does not have the foundational support and love of primary
caretakers. The devil is compared to night when Cholly refers to Satan as a strong black figure that blots out the sun. Although Cholly asks Darlene to go on a walk with him, it is Darlene who is the one in control of the situation. MacTeer think he is an ideal boarder as he playfully teases Frieda and Claudia, does magic tricks, and calls them by the
names of famous white female movie stars like GRETA GARBO and GINGER ROGERS. (190) In the case of the Breedloves, it is the failure of community that enables their loss. They are able to own a house that does not suffer from the limitations of the economically deprived environment they had before. This sense of superiority is at the core of his
failed marriage. As with many African-American migrations north, the move improves the Williams' economic situation and they move into a house, a space that Pauline uses as an outlet for her energy and creativity. This lack of compassion prompts Claudia and Frieda
do not allow Rosemary to expose herself, understanding that the act would be demeaning to her, but even more demeaning for them. Cholly embarrasses himself by placing the cigarette over the match instead of placing it in his mouth. Pecola fears that her eyes are not the bluest and will not achieve the love and acceptance she so desperately craves.
Claudia and Frieda believe that Pecola will know where they can get alcohol, so they go to her house. While pregnant with Sammy, Pauline loses a tooth as she eats candy during a Gable and Harlow film. Geraldine is a migrant from the South who relocates to LORAIN with her husband Louis. Bob Bertha Reese owns Bob the dog. Claudia,
although struggling with her own issues, has a more supportive environment than Pecola, and thus is able to work her way through the unyielding earth while Pecola, like the marigold seeds, is not. Junior lures Pecola into his house and then throws his mother's cat in her face. As a result, he channels his frustration and anger toward Darlene,
establishing a lifelong pattern of venting his rage at the oppression he experiences on those more powerless and impotent than himself. Geraldine has no compassion or sympathy for the child. Mr. Yacobowski Mr. Yacobowski is the white, 52-year-old immigrant man who owns the Fresh Vegetable, Meat, Sundries store. Often Claudia, in her
innocence, finds conflict between the values articulated by adults and their actions. While they are waiting, Pecola knocks over a blueberry pie her mother has made and the blueberries stain Pauline's floor and burn Pecola's legs. When he arrives at the MacTeer home, Mr. Henry is described as smiling frequently with his teeth. By listening to her
songs, the girls know what her mood is, but they also think about the words, words that serve as a catalyst for the girls' imaginations. To stand up to Maureen, Frieda strikes a proud pose with her hand on her hip. Soaphead deceives Pecola intokilling the dog when he tells her that feeding Bob a piece of meat will fulfill her request for blue eyes.
Pauline receives comfort from ordering and cleaning items in her parents' home. Through exposure of the embedding of the dangerous hierarchies associated with these concepts into our primary narratives—reading primers, movies, and products—the novel demonstrates the difficulties of growing up and of surviving for African-American young
women. Father's only role in the recreation of the primer at the beginning of The Bluest Eye is that he lives in the same green and white house as the rest of the family and that, rather than playing with Jane, he smiles. As winter begins, Claudia notes that he will not "unrazor" his lips until the seasons change (61). New York: Facts On File. Breedlove,
Sammy, and Pecola only reinforces their unattractiveness (39). In order to bolster their own sense of self, the women make clear distinctions between colored people and niggers and firmly disassociate themselves from the latter. Although the experience is painful for Claudia, she recognizes that the discomfort her mother's efforts engender is rooted
in a sincere urgency and a zealous, if hasty and abrasive, compassion. [I]t was a productive and fructifying pain. She diagnoses Aunt Jimmy seemingly intuitively, feeling the sick woman's head, looking at her stools. Blue, an alcoholic, is incoherent and
incapable of responding to or providing guidance to Cholly. Darlene instigates the sexual interaction between the two and the encounter might have proven pleasurable and fulfilling for both of them if hunters had not intruded and turned their intercourse into a degrading spectacle. Maureen has more information than the girls about some things like
menstruation and seems worldlier. By envisioning hitting Rosemary's words. With this instruction, Mrs. The girls decide not to reveal Mr. Henry's secret. When Morrison shifts in her narration to the history of some of her characters, like Pauline and Cholly, the
characters often refer to reproduction in terms of their hopes for creating family. China applies a "cupidbow" mouth and changes her hairstyle repeatedly. She believes that if she, like Shirley Temple and Jane, has blue eyes, a central marker for beauty in the dominant culture, then she will be loved and her life will be bearable. Soaphead disdains
human contact except for that of little girls, whom he finds have not yet descended into the dirtiness of humanity. This conversation reveals that Della Jones is a "good" woman who regularly attends church, keeps a clean home, and perfumes herself with violet water. When Cholly and Darlene begin to have sex, Darlene kisses Cholly on the mouth and
he finds her "muscadine-lipped" mouth unpleasant. In a possible allusion to the film Imitation of Life, Mr. Fisher claims that Pauline's blueberry pies would be more lucrative than real estate. He is described physically as big and strong. The Breedloves are disconnected from their communities of origin and fail to connect with their fellow townspeople
Perhaps the defining moment in Cholly's life occurs at the funeral banquet following Aunt Jimmy's burial. Frieda MacTeer Frieda MacTeer is the older daughter of the MacTeer's mother and Claudia's sister. Maureen Peal offers to buy an ice cream cone for Pecola. MacTeer's mother and Claudia and Frieda's grandmother. Pauline and Cholly's relationship
begins with high expectation and a move north to Lorain, Ohio. Born in the British West Indies, Soaphead adopts the racial hierarchies that place whiteness at the top. The novel is, in part, the adult Claudia's desire to come to terms with her helplessness and, perhaps, to do the only thing she possibly can for Pecola: tell her story. I could smell it—
taste it—sweet, musty, with an edge of wintergreen in its base—everywhere in that house" (12). MacTeer, is a fierce woman who works hard to keep her family fed, clothed, well, and respectable. China is a prostitute who shares a residence and companionship with two other prostitutes, Miss Marie and Poland. Soaphead has a profound distaste for
human excretion of all kinds, a distaste that comes from his fear of his own inevitable demise. He is not selfless enough, however, to avoid using Pecola to kill Bob, his landlady's dog who so repulses him. Troubling, however, is Claudia's revelation of the psychological seduction Henry Washington enacts on the girls with his mannerisms. The Bluest
Eye can be characterized as a bildungsroman, or a coming-of-age story, featuring Claudia as the primary character undergoing the transition between childhood and womanhood. They call Maureen names as she runs down the street away from them. Pecola Breedlove Pecola Breedlove is the second child of Cholly and Pauline Breedlove. Mr.
Yacobowski's red and lumpy hands symbolize his contempt for Pecola. The name M'Dear is an African- American slang term for mother dear. Bertha Reese Bertha Reese Bertha Reese is the older and deeply religious woman who owns a candy shop and rents a room to Soaphead Church. The character, Geraldine, is the representative of this group of women. He
moves from the Thirteenth Street home of Della Jones, who is reputedly losing touch with reality. When Cholly loses interest in his marriage, his life, and his children, he turns to drink and idleness. After the incident of abuse, Frieda is despondent because she believes she may be ruined. All she discovers is the metal cylinder that makes the doll bleat.
When Miss Marie invites the girls up to her apartment, they tell her so. The MacTeer girls return home following Mr. Henry's encounter in their home with China and the Maginot Line.
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