



# Stereotype of Beauty and Ugliness in Soman Chainani's *The School for Good and Evil*

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## Abstract

This research analyzes the stereotypes of beauty and ugliness in Soman Chainani's *The School for Good and Evil*. This research aims to identify the stereotypes of beauty and ugliness constructed through the characterization of the two main characters, Sophie and Agatha, as well as how the novel challenges and reconstructs traditional expectations of beauty and ugliness. Using a qualitative approach and descriptive analysis methods, this research identifies narrative elements that reinforce and challenge these stereotypes. The research results show that beauty is often associated with good, while ugliness is associated with evil. Sophie, who is described as very physically beautiful, was initially considered good, but later developed into a character full of selfishness. Agatha, who is perceived as ugly, actually displays kindness and strong morality. The novel *The School For Good and Evil* subverts the traditional stereotype, showing that physical appearance does not always reflect a person's morality. This research uses the theories of Janice Radway and John Cawelti. Radway explains that beauty is often associated with the role of the female hero, while Cawelti discusses the balance between convention and invention in popular works. This research identifies beauty not only through outer beauty such as physical appearance but also inner beauty. Good deeds such as defending, forgiving, helping, giving, and loving are the essence of goodness. With the meaning that inner beauty involves honesty, sincerity, and good deeds that reflect the values of true goodness.

**Keywords:** *beauty stereotype; characterization; formula; ugliness stereotype; soman chainani.*

## Introduction

Beauty is an interesting topic to discuss because it is closely associated with women, especially concerning physical appearance. Every country in the world has its own standards of beauty, which change over time (Banurea, 2015). Generally, beauty is understood as something that looks beautiful or attractive. Basically, beauty in Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI) means to elegance in appearance. We often see various media showcasing different forms and types considered beautiful. The meaning of beauty has shifted over time, following evolving beauty myths. Nowadays, beauty is often defined as women who are slim and have fair skin (Syata, 2012). According to Naomi Wolf in her book *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty are Used Against Women*, women's efforts to become beautiful are part of a culture inherent to them. In other words, women's appearance is seen as a manifestation of the beauty myth, aimed at making them look more attractive and gaining recognition from their peers.

The facial features, character, traits, and complexion are fundamental determinants of an individual's appearance (Swanson in Maulina, 2018). However, beauty is relative for every woman because ideal beauty is based on the beauty standards of a particular country. Nowadays, beauty in women is no longer considered relative but has become something universal. Donna states, each country has different beauty standards that continuously evolve over time. The media plays a significant role in introducing and popularizing the concepts of ideal beauty and ugliness that develop in line with the changing times. A woman's beauty is often considered limited to physical appearance. Yet, beauty is usually associated with virtues such as goodness, kindness, and purity, while ugliness often implies evil, malice, and deceit. Therefore, beauty often carries certain stereotypes within society.

In the world of popular literature, beauty is often represented through characters that reflect traditional stereotypes about beauty and ugliness. Nurholis (2019) states, literary works, especially novels, utilize and explore the meanings of social facts by arranging them in the form of fiction. In many popular novels, female protagonists are often depicted as having physical beauty that symbolizes goodness and virtue, while female antagonists are usually given less attractive physical characteristics, reinforcing the view that beauty is closely related to goodness, while ugliness is associated with evil. These stereotypes not only reinforce social norms about appearance but also influence how readers perceive the relationship between morality and physicality within the context of fictional narratives. This means that there are traditional stereotypes regarding the characterization of women in literary works. For example, like the fairy tales Cinderella, Snow White, or Sleeping Beauty. This is explicitly stated in Janice

Radway's book titled *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature*. There are several key characterizations that must be possessed by the female protagonist in the formula. Two of them are beauty and kindness.

TABLE 4.1  
*Binary Oppositions in Character Portrayal at Beginning of the Romantic Narrative*

Oppositional Pair	Heroine	Female Foil	Hero	Male Foil	Oppositional Pair	Villain
Virginal	+	-	-	Uncoded	Virginal	-
Experienced	-	+	+		Promiscuous	+
Desires love	+	-	-	+	Desires love	-
Desires wealth and position	-	+	+	-	Desires sexual pleasure	+
Unself-conscious	+	-	+	+	Unself-conscious	-
Vain	-	+	-	-	Vain	+
Beautiful	+	+	+	+	Handsome	-
Plain	-	-	-	-	Ugly	+
Nurturant	+	-	-	+	Tender	-
Demanding	-	+	+	-	Indifferent	+
Independent	+	-	+	Uncoded	Honest	-
Dependent	-	+	-		Corrupt	+
Intelligent	+	Uncoded	+	-	Courageous	-
Confused (gullible)	-		-	+	Cowardly	+
Fears men	+	-	+	-	Emotionally reserved	-
Desires men	-	+	-	+	Emotionally expressive	+

Radway, J. A. (1991). *Reading the romance: Women, patriarchy, and popular literature* (p. 133)

Radway states, these two characterisations are essential in the characterisation of heroines in stories. Where beauty is closely related to goodness. Characters with beautiful faces are usually depicted with good characterisation as well. On the other hand, characters with ugly appearances are usually portrayed with moral flaws or as villains. This is conveyed in the binary opposition in formulaic characters according to Janice Radway. This means that the characters in the story have the stereotype that beautiful characters are usually considered good, while ugly or unattractive characters are often considered evil.

This characterisation has inadvertently shaped perceptions of beauty and goodness. One of the novels that tells the story of the phenomenon of beauty stereotypes is Soman Chainani's *The School for Good and Evil*. *The School for Good and Evil* is a fantasy novel by Soman Chainani that tells the story of two best friends, Sophie and Agatha, who live in the village of Gavaldon. Sophie, who is beautiful and dreams of a fairy tale life, is sure she will be placed in the School of Good, while Agatha, who looks gloomy and quiet, seems suited for the School of Evil. However, when they were kidnapped and taken to the school, the situation reversed. Sophie is placed in the School of Evil, while Agatha enters the School of Good. Through its main character, Sophie is depicted as a very beautiful figure, with the great hope

that her beauty will make her a kind-hearted hero in the fairy tale world. On the contrary, Agatha is a girl who is physically unattractive according to traditional beauty standards but possesses a kind hearted nature. The stereotypes of beauty and goodness in Soman Chainani's *The School for Good and Evil* can be analysed through the concepts of convention and invention.

Popular works usually balance both convention and invention. In this case, stereotypes in novels often occur within the plot narrative or the characters in the novel itself (Cawelti, 1976). One of the stereotypes often found in characterisation in literary works is the stereotype regarding beauty and ugliness. Beauty is an important characteristic for the female protagonist in romance narratives.

Based on previous studies, it is evident that stereotypes of beauty and ugliness in literary works often address certain cultural values through characters and their traits. For example, Donna Yulinda Putri's thesis titled *Representasi Stereotip Kecantikan Perempuan Dalam Drama Korea* analyzes how beauty stereotypes are represented in the Korean drama *My ID Is Gangnam Beauty*. Through the character Mi-rae, the research reveals how the drama creates a myth that physical beauty is directly linked to happiness, challenging societal views. Similarly, Faza Najmi Tsaniya and Asih Prihandini's a journal article titled *Stereotip Perempuan Yang Dialami Oleh Tokoh Amina Dalam Cerita Pendek Amina Karya Shirley Saad* analyzes the stereotypes experienced by the character Amina in the short story *Amina*. It highlights how societal perceptions about women reinforce the stigma that women are often subjected to labeling.

Another research, titled *Representation of Beauty in the Novel Eka Kurniawan's Cantik Itu Luka*, written by Aisyah Nur Asri, Sugandi, and Kheyene Molakandella, examines how beauty is represented in the novel *Cantik Itu Luka*. It identifies beauty as being portrayed through physical appearance, lineage, behavior, and as a form of social control. In contrast, Siti Khodifatul Fauziah's a journal article, *Confronting Beauty Standards in Scott Westerfeld's Uglies*, investigates the beauty standards faced by the main character in Scott Westerfeld's novel *Uglies* (2005). It focuses on the criteria for beauty standards and how the protagonist challenges them. Another thesis, Ria Kartika's *The Concept of White Beauty Standard in the Novel The Bluest Eye by Toni Morrison: An Intrinsic Analysis on Major Character*, discusses the standards of white beauty in 1970s America. It examines these concepts by describing and analyzing the novel.

Similarly, a journal analyzing Novia Caessar Mayasakti, Chris Asanti, and Fatimah's, *Stereotype of Black Female Characters in Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye*, focuses on black female stereotypes and how they are formed within the narrative. Regarding beauty, a journal Krensia Lenge, Maksimilianus Doi, and Febe F. Irawati Wanggai's titled *The Portrayal of Beauty Myth in Mieko Kawakami's Novel Breasts and Eggs* analyzes how beauty myths affect the main character, Makiko, and

examines the impact of beauty stereotypes on her life. Another research by Tatiana et al., *Beauty as Fairy Tale in Fay Weldon's Novel The Life and Love of a She-Devil*, critiques the dominance of beauty norms in both classical fairy tales and modern culture. There are numerous articles and journals that discuss beauty stereotypes in novels. Focusing on characterization, a journal by Annisa Harli Tanjung and Nenden Rikma Dewi, *Beauty Stereotype Portrayed Through Celie's Performance in The Color Purple Novel by Alice Walker*, explores how beauty stereotypes are depicted through the character Celie in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*.

The concept of beauty has existed for centuries, as discussed in Dr. Tatiana et al.'s journal, *The Recreation of Beauty as Revealed in the Postmodern Novel Birds Without Wings by Louis de Bernières*. It examines beauty concepts in *Birds Without Wings* by deconstructing and reconstructing them within a changing world. Beauty stereotypes presented in children's stories often perpetuate the idea that beauty aligns with goodness. For instance, a journal by Doris Bazzini, Lisa Curtin, Serena Joslin, Shilpa Regan, and Denise Martz, *Do Animated Disney Characters Portray and Promote the Beauty Goodness Stereotype?*, investigates the prevalence of the stereotype that is beautiful is good in Disney animated films. It highlights how Disney films entertain while reinforcing cultural narratives about beauty and morality. One such example is Belle, whose characterization is analyzed in a journal by Nadia Ayu Putriwana and Karlina Karadila Yustisia, *Characterization of Belle as the Main Role in the Beauty and the Beast Movie by Bill Condon*. This research identifies Belle's character as an evolving portrayal of a female protagonist who reflects modern values while maintaining classical narrative elements.

Several previous studies used the characterisation of the main character to analyse the beauty stereotypes found in the selected novel or object. Most studies also use Roland Barthes' theory to analyse and identify stereotypes in novels. In contrast, my research not only examines the stereotypes of beauty within the novel, but also pinpoints the stereotypes of ugliness. Using Janice Radway's theory on archetypal characterisation, the researcher analyses and identifies narratives about beauty and ugliness through the story's narration. The author also seeks invention in the archetypal characterisation, in accordance with Cawelti's statement regarding the balance between convention and invention in literary works.

Among the many previous studies, there has been no research focusing on Soman Chainani's *The School for Good and Evil*. Although many mass media have identified beauty stereotypes in novels, none have written about beauty and ugliness stereotypes using Soman Chainani's novel *The School for Good and Evil* as the object. Thus, this research will be the latest research for readers. This research also has uniqueness compared to previous studies discussing Soman Chainani's *The School for Good and Evil*. This research is more specific in examining the

stereotypes of beauty and ugliness constructed within the novel.

The researcher is interested in searching for and identifying beauty and ugliness constructed through the characterisation of the two main characters because the researcher wants to gain insights into how the concepts of beauty and ugliness are narratively built through the characterisation of the two main characters. The researcher is also interested in examining how that representation is reinforced through literary works. In addition, this research aims to find out how beauty and ugliness are constructed through the characterisations of the two main characters in *The School for Good and Evil*. The researcher hopes to uncover the implicit message through invention conveyed by the narrative regarding the stereotypes of beauty and ugliness and their implications for the characterisation of the main characters.

## Method

This research uses a qualitative approach with descriptive analysis methods to uncover beauty and ugliness stereotypes in the Soman Chainani's *The School for Good and Evil*. Qualitative research focuses on the patterns of meaning that emerge from the data, often presented in the words of the subjects. A series of questions and procedures, data collection, and data analysis, organised inductively from details to main themes, comprise the research process. The researcher also strives to understand the meaning of the data. As stated by Creswell (2009, p. 22), the goal of qualitative research is to find patterns in words and actions that are then presented for evaluation by others while maintaining a perspective that closely resembles the original experiences of the participants.

Based on Hikmat (2014, p. 40), qualitative research prioritises the process over the final outcome, allowing for the identification of real relationships among the studied objects and providing complete and contextual meaning to the research focus. In addition, this method also applies descriptive analysis to support its process, which means the data is detailed and thoroughly analyzed. Therefore, in this analysis, the research aims to present the entire data within the literary text. This research focusses on identifying and analyzing how the narrative constructs character representations according to standards of beauty and ugliness.

The subject of the research is the text of Soman Chainani's *The School for Good and Evil*, which is analysed as the primary data source and primary data. HarperCollins published this novel on May 14, 2014. The research includes physical descriptions, dialogues, and character actions that reflect stereotypes of beauty and ugliness. We employed the documentation research method as our data collection technique. Researcher collected data by closely reading the novel to identify narratives, characterisations, and themes that align with beauty and ugliness stereotypes. We recorded important notes and quotes pertaining to those

stereotypes and grouped them based on emerging themes. As a descriptive-qualitative approach to discussing the formulaic narrative in the novel *The School for Good and Evil*, there are secondary sources, including academic texts, that support the theoretical analysis, including John Cawelti's genre formula theory, which highlights conventions and inventions in popular culture. Additionally, Janice Radway's theory focusses on the conventions within the romance genre. There are two types of data used by the author in this research. The primary source is the narrative in the novel itself, and then, as secondary data, the author searches for and studies several pieces of literature, including various theses, journal articles, and books related to the themes of stereotypes, beauty, and ugliness. The combination of primary and secondary sources provides a strong academic foundation for analysing the themes and stereotypes present in Soman Chainani's *The School for Good and Evil*.

### Results

From Soman Chainani's *The School for Good and Evil*, the researcher took 11 data points about the construction of stereotypes of beauty and ugliness. The data consists of 6 narrative dialogues related to the stereotype of beauty and 5 narrative dialogues related to the stereotype of ugliness.

Table 1. Beauty and Ugliness quotation in Soman Chainani's *The School For Good and Evil*.

No	Beauty Narrations	Stereotype Aspects	No	Ugliness Narrations	Stereotype Aspects
1	But just as she came to one who seemed better than the rest, with brilliant blue eyes and ghostly white hair, the one who felt like Happily Ever After ( <i>The School For Good and Evil</i> , p. 8).	Eye color, hair color.	7	Her hideous dome of black hair looked like it was coated in oil. Her hulking black dress, shapeless as a potato sack, couldn't hide freakishly pale skin and jutting bones. Ladybug eyes bulged from her sunken face. ( <i>The School For</i>	Hair, dress, skin, facial features.

				<i>Good and Evil, p. 13).</i>	
<b>2</b>	She studied her face in the mirror. The rude awakening had taken its toll. Her waist-long hair, the color of spun gold, didn't have its usual sheen. Her jade-green eyes looked faded, her luscious red lips a touch dry. Even the glow of her creamy peach skin had dulled. But still a princess, she thought. Her father couldn't see she was special, but her mother had. "You are too beautiful for this world, Sophie," she said with her last breaths. Her mother had gone somewhere better and	Body shape and appearance.	<b>8</b>	One girl had a hideous overbite, wispy patches of hair, and one eye instead of two, right in the middle of her forehead. Another boy was like a mound of dough, with his bulging belly, bald head, and swollen limbs. A tall, sneering girl trudged ahead with sickly green skin. The boy in front of her had so much hair all over him he could have been an ape. They all looked about her age, but the similarities ended there. Here was a mass of the miserable, with misshapen bodies, repulsive faces, and the	Body shape, skin color, expression.



	now so would she. ( <i>The School for Good and Evil</i> , p. 9).			cruellest expressions she'd ever seen, as if looking for something to hate. ( <i>The School For Good and Evil</i> , p. 34).	
3	Two hours of rigorous grooming later, she stepped from the house in a breezy pink dress, sparkling glass heels, and hair in an impeccable braid. ( <i>The School For Good and Evil</i> , p. 10).	Appearance.	9	Her dress was buried beneath sludge and yolk, her face shined with stinky black grime, and her hair was home to a family of earthworms. ( <i>The School For Good and Evil</i> , p. 33).	Dirtiness.
4	Their faces, some fair, some dark, were flawless and glowed with health. They had shiny waterfalls of hair, ironed and curled like dolls', and they wore downy dresses of peach, yellow, and white, like a fresh batch of Easter eggs.	Skin tone and body shape.	10	Beneath Drogan, there was a silver frame of a skinny boy with shock blond hair, turned into one of a dozen ogres savaging a village. ( <i>The School For Good and Evil</i> , p. 39).	Body shape.

	<i>(The School For Good and Evil, p. 35).</i>				
<b>5</b>	Finally, one of the girls stepped forward, with waist-length gold hair, succulent lips, and topaz eyes. She was so beautiful she didn't look real. <i>(The School For Good and Evil, p. 37).</i>	Body shape.	<b>11</b>	The walls were covered with different-colored frames, showing children turning into witches, monsters, and trolls <i>(The School For Good and Evil, p. 39).</i>	Body shape.
<b>6</b>	Higher up on the obelisk were gold-framed portraits of students who became princes and queens after graduation. In the middle were silver frames, for those who found lesser fates as jaunty sidekicks, dutiful housewives, and fairy godmothers	Social status, beauty associated with success.			

	<i>(The School For Good and Evil, p. 43).</i>	
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The primary data was obtained from the novel *The School For Good and Evil*. The data obtained includes character portrayals, dialogues, and narrative descriptions that demonstrate how these stereotypes are constructed and used in the story's narrative.

## **Discussion**

### ***Stereotypes of Beauty and Ugliness in The School For Good and Evil***

Stereotypes of beauty and ugliness often become an integral part of the narrative in popular literature. Naomi Wolf divides beauty into two categories, outer beauty and inner beauty. Inner beauty, as defined by Gunawan in the article by Sharon Jessie & Muhammad Adi Pribadi in 2013, primarily refers to mature traits or aspects of personality. Soman Chainani uses this stereotype to build characters and plot in his novel *The School for Good and Evil* while simultaneously challenging traditional reader expectations. This research data reveals how Sophie and Agatha's characterizations embody physical and moral beauty and ugliness.

Popular literature tends to associate beauty with goodness and ugliness with evil. Many classic fairy tales, where the beautiful female protagonist typically possesses good and loving traits, often depict the ugly antagonist as evil and vengeful. Chainani, in *The School for Good and Evil*, uses these stereotypes to build her story's world, but the novel also deconstructs some of these traditional beauty and ugliness stereotypes to provide a more complex narrative.

### ***The School for Good and Evil Novel as a Means of Presenting Traditional Physical Beauty Stereotypes***

Janice Radway (1991) asserts that the female hero in the formula must possess several characterizations, such as beauty and goodness. Radway describes beauty as an important trait of the ideal romantic heroine. This physical beauty is considered important when portraying her as a charming and innocent figure. Radway mentions that these heroines often possess special attributes, such as beautiful hair and fiery eyes, smooth skin, a slim yet soft body, and a sweet or innocent facial expression. "Kecantikan berfungsi sebagai daya tarik utama dari sang pahlawan wanita, menjadikannya objek hasrat sang pahlawan dan sering kali mencerminkan ideal kesucian dan kelembutan." Radway, J. A. (1991), p. 141-143, also often associates it with affection and care. In Radway's analysis, the female hero is depicted through acts of nurturing, such as caring for the wounded. "Heroine ideal sering kali mencerminkan sifat yang penuh kasih dan perawatan,

memenuhi perannya sebagai pusat moral dari narasi." (Radway, J. A. (1991). p. 143-144). The novel depicts female characters as caring and loving figures, particularly when it comes to supporting or nurturing other characters. The physical beauty mentioned by Janice Radway is present in the narrative of the novel *The School For Good and Evil*. The novel describes Sophie as a beautiful character.

*"Her waist-long hair, the color of spun gold, didn't have its usual sheen. Her jade-green eyes looked faded, her luscious red lips a touch dry. Even the glow of her creamy peach skin had dulled. But still a princess, she thought." (The School For Good And Evil, p. 8).*

Sophie is portrayed as a character who rigorously conforms to established beauty stereotypes. Long golden hair, jade-green eyes, and glowing skin symbolize the classic beauty often associated with female protagonists in traditional tales of fantasy. Sophie sees herself as a "princess" based on her appearance, reinforcing the notion that physical beauty is the main attribute determining a person's worth in the context of the story. In this narrative, Sophie's character also demonstrates how beauty serves as an indicator of good moral character in the society of Gavaldon.

*"Two hours of rigorous grooming later, she stepped from the house in a breezy pink dress, sparkling glass heels, and hair in an impeccable braid." (The School For Good And Evil, p. 10).*

Sophie's activity of spending two hours getting ready shows her obsession with physical appearance. Fashion choices like pink dresses and sparkling glass slippers become visual elements of beauty often associated with princesses in fairy tales. Sophie sees beauty as a tool to gain attention and validation from others, demonstrating the importance of beauty in creating an image of perfection in the story. Her obsession with appearance also reflects how Sophie interprets the internalized gender roles from classic fairy tales, where beauty often becomes the main characteristic that determines a princess's worth. By focusing on physical aspects, Sophie tries to conform to the beauty stereotypes in the novel. Sophie's obsession with beauty also made her obsessed with the school. The school describes how the students are prepared to become heroes, leaders, and respected figures in society. Here, physical beauty is considered one of the main attributes that determine who is worthy of being accepted and given attention.

"Their faces, some fair, some dark, were flawless and glowed with health. They had shiny waterfalls of hair, ironed and curled like dolls." (*The School For Good And Evil*, p. 35).

The novel portrays the students at the School for Good as perfect entities. Their features are described as having glowing skin and doll like hair, symbolizing the ideal aesthetics in beauty stereotypes. This reinforces the separation between good and beauty, as if both must go hand in hand, thereby showing how the School for Good exploits these stereotypes to determine who is considered good. As explained by Radway, beauty is often identified with in many fairy tales. This marks the inception of the beauty stereotype and its origin. The stereotype is also included by Soman Chainani through the characters at the beginning of the novel's story.

*"Her waist length gold hair, succulent lips, and topaz eyes. She was so beautiful she didn't look real." (The School For Good And Evil, p. 37).*

One of the characterizations in the novel is Beatrix, depicted with perfect physical attributes. Beatrix, one of the students at the School for Good, is depicted with perfect physical attributes, such as a beautiful face, an ideal body, and captivating charm, reinforcing the deeply ingrained beauty stereotype in many fairy tales. Not only does this reinforce the classic beauty stereotype, but it also creates the impression that extraordinary beauty is a prerequisite for inclusion. The extraordinary beauty present in the character of Beatrix underscores a social structure that considers physical appearance as the primary factor in assessing a person's worth. Beatrix with all her perfection serves as an example of how beauty can create privilege, shaping the perception that beautiful people deserve more attention. This aligns with Aisyah's argument in the article by Sharon Jessie and Muhammad Adi Pribadi (2021), which asserts that beauty frequently confers social advantages for women.

*"A gold-framed portrait of a princess showed her standing regally with her knight beside her." (The School For Good And Evil, p. 43).*

Not only Beatrix, the portrait referred to in the above narrative shows an idealization of beauty in the narrative of fairy tales. Here, beauty is identified by beautiful women depicted in graceful poses. Where it symbolizes the relationship between traditional beauty and power. This portrait also reinforces that beauty is often associated with a happy ending in fairy tales. It carries an implicit message about traditional beauty, where beauty in literary works is stereotypically associated with a good ending.

The main character in the formula is the protagonist. The protagonist in this context refers to the main female character, who must possess good morals and be graceful. Often, depictions of the protagonist emphasize her beauty. This has become the perspective of society, where a beautiful character will always have

good behavior and become the protagonist. The formula, especially in romance, often depicts characters who embody ideal or desired qualities, such as beauty and morality (Cawelti, 1976, p. 41). From these quotes, it is evident that *The School for Good and Evil* deliberately uses beauty stereotypes to create a separation between good and evil characters. Sophie, who is obsessed with beauty, reflects a character that reverses the traditional relationship between beauty and morality.

### ***The School for Good and Evil Novel as a Means of Presenting Traditional Physical Ugliness Stereotypes***

Stereotypes in traditional narratives often associate physical beauty with goodness and physical ugliness with evil. This pattern has shaped popular cultural perceptions regarding the relationship between physical appearance and a person's moral character. The novel *The School for Good and Evil* utilizes this stereotype to build an engaging narrative while simultaneously maintaining and reconstructing traditional understandings of ugliness. Not only does *The School for Good and Evil* utilize stereotypes about beauty, but it also constructs traditional stereotypes of ugliness through its characterization and plot. In traditional narratives, characters often follow certain stereotypes. For instance, we often portray heroes as brave and kind-hearted, and villains as cunning or evil.

*"Her hideous dome of black hair looked like it was coated in oil. Her hulking black dress, shapeless as a potato sack, couldn't hide freakishly pale skin and jutting bones." (The School For Good And Evil, p. 13).*

Agatha possesses traits that stand in stark contrast to conventional beauty standards. Greasy hair, shapeless clothing, pale skin, and protruding bones create an unattractive and "creepy" appearance. The emphasis on these physical traits positions Agatha as a character stigmatized as ugly. This narrative reinforces the stereotypical connection between ugliness and the role of an outsider or a character who tends to be negative, although the novel later attempts to break this stereotype.

*"One girl had a hideous overbite, wispy patches of hair, and one eye instead of two, right in the middle of her forehead." (The School For Good And Evil, p. 34)*

The description of the students at the School for Evil features grotesquely depicted physical traits, such as severe overbites, sparse hair, and a single eye. This appearance creates the impression that the students at this school are not only morally evil but also physically ugly. This narrative demonstrates the frequent use of ugliness as a visual cue to identify evil characters in traditional fairy tales. However, this also becomes an argument against the stereotype that equates bad morality with physical ugliness.

*"Her dress was buried beneath sludge and yolk, her face shined with stinky black grime, and her hair was home to a family of earthworms." (The School For Good And Evil, p. 33).*

Sophie's dirty appearance after entering the School for Evil reflects the symbolism of the transition from the world of beauty to the world of evil. This depiction is in stark contrast to the perfect aesthetic previously associated with Sophie. We can analyze this quote, which suggests that an individual's perceptions can be influenced by their environment, thereby demonstrating that beauty or ugliness is not only an inherent attribute, but also imposed by context.

*"Beneath Drogan, there was a silver frame of a skinny boy with shock blond hair, turned into one of a dozen ogres savaging a village." (The School For Good And Evil, p. 39)*

The transformation of a student into an ugly creature, such as an ogre represents a common transition in fairy tales, where the villain consistently assumes a more hideous form. This reinforces the idea that physical ugliness is a visual manifestation of moral wickedness. The novel implicitly prompts readers to explore the reasons behind the frequent use of physical deformity as a visual symbol for evil.

*"The walls were covered with different-colored frames, showing children turning into witches, monsters, and trolls." (The School For Good And Evil, p. 39)*

This description highlights how students at the School for Evil are prepared to become terrifying characters in the story. These transformation images emphasize the close relationship between physical ugliness and evil in the fairy tale narrative. This novel satirically comments on this stereotype by showing that the transformation is part of a conditioned training system, not an inherent attribute.

The narrative explains the stereotype of evil in *The School for Good and Evil* and shows how evil often serves as a visual marker for negative characterization in classic fairy tales. However, this novel invites readers to reevaluate this bias, especially through the complex relationship between Sophie and Agatha. Sophie, who is considered beautiful, is ultimately associated with "evil," whereas Agatha, who is stigmatized as ugly, shows genuine kindness and affection. This offers a subversion of traditional stereotypes and provides space for critical analysis of the relationship between physical appearance and morality.

***Invention in the novel *The School For Good and Evil****

The stereotype of beauty and ugliness through the characterization of Sophie and Agatha reflects the conventions in classic fairy tales. However, in the novel *The School For Good and Evil*, there is an invention of stereotypes through innovative narrative elements. For example, Sophie, who is depicted as a beautiful character according to society in the novel and changes after a series of events, challenges the perception that physical beauty always symbolizes goodness. On the contrary, Agatha shows a deeper emotional and moral transformation, transcending aesthetic value. This provides a critique of the idea that a person's worth can be judged solely by their outer appearance. The novel *The School for Good and Evil* not only views beauty from a physical aspect, but also encompasses the truth within a person. This is evident in the dialogue where Agatha, one of the main characters, recognizes that physical beauty cannot conceal the truth.

*"What did you think of Beatrix the first time you saw her? Agatha stared at the candy plum in her teacher's hand. "Agatha?" "I don't know. She was beautiful," Agatha groused, remembering their fartified introduction. "And now?" "She's revolting." "Has she gotten less pretty?" "No, but—" "So is she beautiful or not?" "Yes, at first sight—" "So beauty only lasts a glance?" "Not if you're a Good person—" "So it's being Good that matters? I thought you said it was looks." Agatha opened her mouth. Nothing came out. "Beauty can only fight truth so long, Agatha. You and Beatrix share more in common than you think." "Great. I can be her animal slave," Agatha said, and bit into her plum." (The School For Good And Evil, p. 274)*

The dialogue describes that no matter how beautiful someone's appearance is, it cannot hide who they truly are for long. This shows that true beauty is more than just outward appearance; it is about how a person behaves and treats others.

The novel *The School For Good and Evil* makes readers consider how they view beauty and ugliness, both in literature and in real life. This novel subverts traditional expectations by demonstrating that a person's physical appearance does not always reflect their moral character. In other words, the novel *The School for Good and Evil* not only presents the stereotypes of beauty and ugliness but also conveys a message about the relationship between appearance and moral character.

*The School for Good and Evil* employs a fantasy world to define beauty, often misconstrued as an inseparable unity. That beauty cannot only be identified through outer beauty but also inner beauty (Naomi Wolf, 1990). Sophie, who had believed her entire life that beauty was the key to happiness and success, had to face the reality that her beauty was not enough to get her accepted into the school. On the contrary, she was placed in the School of Evil, which challenged all her initial assumptions about the relationship between beauty and goodness. This shows that



physical beauty does not always reflect a person's heart or morality. On the other hand, Agatha, who is often considered ugly by traditional standards, was placed in the school. Agatha learned that true beauty comes from actions and intentions, not from outward appearance. This conveys a strong message that it is something deeper and more complex than just physical beauty.

*"The Evil attack. The Good defend. The Evil punish. The Good forgive. The Evil hurt. The Good help. The Evil take. The Good give. The Evil hate. The Good love." (The School For Good And Evil, p. 118)*

The novel's narrative emphasizes that good actions, such as defending, forgiving, helping, giving, and loving, are the essence of goodness. Meaning that inner beauty involves honesty, sincerity, and good deeds that reflect true values of goodness.

The invention presented through the narratives in the novel identifies and constructs beauty and complex and interconnected concepts, but not always aligned. The novel shows that, although society often glorifies beauty as a symbol, in reality, true beauty transcends physical appearance. Thus, *The School for Good and Evil* becomes a construction of traditional beauty, showing that true beauty encompasses more than just physical appearance but also inner honesty.

## **Conclusion**

The stereotypes of beauty and ugliness are identified and constructed in Soman Chainani's *The School for Good and Evil* through the analysis of the main characters, Sophie and Agatha. This research employs Janice Radway's theory on archetypal characterization and John Cawelti's concepts of convention and invention to demonstrate the construction of stereotypes of beauty and ugliness within a literary work. The construction of traditional beauty and ugliness in literature shows that beauty in this novel is often associated with beauty, elegance, and high social status. Sophie, with her stunning physical appearance, is considered the ideal representative of beauty that aligns with the image of a traditional protagonist. On the other hand, Agatha, who is depicted with a physical appearance far from conventional beauty standards.

However, through the narrative of the novel *The School For Good and Evil*, this research successfully identifies the reversal of those expectations, where Sophie ultimately displays negative traits such as selfishness and ambition, while Agatha shows heart, intelligence, and courage that defy traditional stereotypes. Through the characters Sophie and Agatha, the message is conveyed that physical appearance is not the only determinant of a person's worth. He also emphasizes that true beauty is a combination of personality, actions, and good morality. Naomi Wolf identified two ways to identify beauty: outer beauty and inner beauty. In other words, beauty not only includes physical beauty, such as body shape and

appearance, but can also be identified through morals such as honesty, sincerity, and good deeds that reflect true values of goodness.

The results of this research reveal that the construction of beauty and ugliness in Soman Chainani's *The School for Good and Evil* does not only depend on physical appearance but also on the character's traits and moral actions. Sophie, although physically described as beautiful, exhibits traits contrary to goodness, such as greed and excessive ambition. On the contrary, Agatha, who does not physically meet conventional beauty standards, displays positive characteristics such as courage, intelligence, and a sincere heart. This research affirms that Chainani subverts traditional stereotypes of beauty and ugliness through the characterization of Sophie and Agatha. This shows that true beauty is more complex and cannot be measured solely by outward appearance.

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