



**THE REPRESENTATION OF BEAUTY DISCOURSE BY MEDIA TEXT IN  
TONI MORRISON'S *THE BLUEST EYE***

**THESIS**

**Written by:**

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**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT  
FACULTY OF LETTERS  
JEMBER UNIVERSITY  
2015**



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**THESIS**

A thesis presented to the English Department, Faculty of Letters, Jember University as one of requirements to obtain the award of Sarjana Sastra Degree in English study

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## DEDICATION

**This thesis is dedicated to:**

1. The greatest father, Totok Hartono, who has been my inspiration and teach me how to be a responsible person until I can finish my study,
2. The loveliest mother, Sumiati, who always beside me when I need her and thank you for your prayer,
3. My beloved sister, Hendriati Pertiwi, thanks for your support.

**MOTTO**

“Beauty is how you feel inside, and it reflects in your eyes. It is not something physical”  
(Sophia Loren)

**DECLARATION**

I hereby state that this thesis entitled “The Representation of Beauty Discourse by Media Text in Toni Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye*” is an original piece of writing. I certify that the analysis and the result in this thesis have already been not submitted for any other degree or any publication in this situation. I certainly certify to the best of my knowledge that all sources used and any help received in the preparation of this thesis have been acknowledge

Jember, 22<sup>th</sup> April 2015

The writer,

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6. All of my friends in the Faculty of Letters, Jember University.

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(Viyantini Rakita Sari)

**SUMMARY**

**THE REPRESENTATION OF BEAUTY DISCOURSE BY MEDIA TEXT IN TONI MORRISON'S *THE BLUEST EYE***; Viyantini Rakita Sari, 090110101091, 2015; 47 pages; English Department Faculty of Letters Jember University.

This research analyzes how the representation of beauty discourse by media text in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* that leads to the Afro-American women's oppression in the United States in 1960s. In the novel, almost all the black women characters try to imitate the characteristics of beauty standard that is created by the white. This research focuses on beauty discourse that leads to the Afro-American women's oppression in the novel. There are two problems to discuss in this research. The first is beauty discourse that is constructed by media text that lead to Afro-American women's oppression and the second is ideology beyond the representation of beauty discourse.

This thesis uses theory of representation by Stuart Hall. The representation theory is used in this thesis as a frame before discussing further about encoding/decoding. Hall's concept of decoding is used to answer the first question; the data about beauty discourse by media text that lead to the black women's oppression will be categorized into three positions of decoder; dominant-hegemonic, negotiated and also oppositional position. In addition, Gramsci's hegemony also will be used to support the analysis of position of the characters. Then, the result of this analysis will lead to answer the next research question, about ideology. In this step, Althusser's ideology will frame the discussion to go beyond the text.

Furthermore, since this research is a qualitative research, a documentary method is used to collect the data. The primary data are collected from information and facts that construct beauty discourse that lead to black women's oppression through the statements and narration in the novel. The secondary data are information

and facts about beauty discourse in the United States in the 1960s taken from some books, articles and also journals.

The result of this research shows that beauty discourse which is constructed through media text is the main cause of Afro-American women's oppression in the novel. Beauty discourse has set the ideal standard beauty for American women and also American black women. Moreover, not all the black women can imitate and accept the beauty standard because every black woman has a different perspective in understanding and interpreting the beauty standards. This different perspective refers to the Hall's conception about decoding, they are; dominant-hegemonic, negotiated and oppositional position. By this position, they can choose, whether they accept or reject the beauty standard.

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## CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 The Background of the Study

Literature is essentially creative act of the writer's imagination in selecting, ordering and interpreting life experiences in form of written works. It also gives more lessons through the aspect of human life such as social, cultural, moral and religious aspect. According to Wellek and Warren (1956:94):

“Literature represents “life” and life in large measure, in social reality, even though the natural world and the inner or subjective world of the individual have also been object of the literary imitation”.

The quotation above states that literature expresses reality without ignoring the environment, which influences the writing. The portrait of environment in the literary works is used as experience and knowledge of the author. Therefore, literature represents the real situation of human experiences.

As a place of life representation, literature shows issues and social phenomena in the world. Among hundreds of issues and social phenomena, the women's problems are the most common issue that still exists until now days. The famous women's problems are about beauty standard. One of the novels that explain about beauty standard is *The Bluest Eye*. This novel is written by Toni Morrison. She is one of the Afro-American women writers that exist in America. *The Bluest Eye* is Morrison's first novel and became best seller at that time. It is published in the 1970.

*The Bluest Eye* represents beauty discourse which is constructed by media text that leads to Afro-American women's oppression. Furthermore, the presence of this discourse makes the black women in the novel such as Pauline, Pecola, Geraldine, Frieda and also Claudia feel uncomfortable because their existence is marginalized and they are not beautiful women. Therefore, almost all the black women characters in the novel try to imitate the beauty standard. They have a perception in their mind

that they should change their performance like the white, loses their culture in order to get better life, love and respect from other community and also their own community.

The construction of beauty discourse by media text is illustrated through film, glass, the wrapper of candy, billboards and etc. Media shows that beauty is always identified through blue eyes, white skin, blonde hairs and slim body. The beauty standard is constructed by media text through actors and actresses, such as Shirley Temple, Mary Jane, Greta Garbo and Ginger Rogers. The presence of actors and actresses in the media will instill the values and concepts of the new beauty ideal. Indirectly, those beauty's icons will construct an ideology about the meaning and concepts of beauty for black women in the novel.

However, the construction of beauty discourse has an enormous influence on the Afro-American women's lives. This discourse becomes an ideal discourse for black women in the novel. Then, as the consequence, almost all the black women characters are burdened by their blackness; they hope they can change their race, or even some of their inherently black features.

Furthermore, this research tries to analyze the representation beauty discourse by media text in *The Bluest Eye*. This research uses Hall's theory of representation to analyze the representation of beauty discourse by media text that lead to Afro-American women's oppression and to find ideologies in the beauty discourse which are structured in the novel.

## **1.2 The Problems to Discuss**

The problems that will be discussed in this research are formulated in three questions:

1. How is beauty discourse constructed by media text that leads to Afro-American women's oppression in the novel?
2. What are the ideologies beyond the representation of beauty discourse by media text in the novel?

## 1.3 The Scope of the Study

In order to answer the formulated problems appropriately, the scope of the study is needed to avoid any complicated discussion. In this research, I focus on analyzing how beauty discourse is constructed by media text that lead to Afro-American women's oppression and also ideology beyond the representation of beauty discourse as expressed in *The Bluest Eye*. Then, this research uses the theory of representation by Stuart Hall.

## 1.4 The Goals of the Study

The goals of writing this research are to reach some goals; there are several goals in this research:

1. to provide a description about beauty discourse that lead to Afro-American women's oppression in *The Bluest Eye*,
2. to describe the ideologies that is represented in the beauty discourse in *The Bluest Eye*.

## CHAPTER 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, there are four discussions. The first subchapter presents the previous research. Previous research is very important for this thesis; it is aimed to prove that this research never analyzed by any other students. The second subchapter is about ideology and hegemony. The third subchapter is about theory of representation by Stuart Hall. Finally, the last subchapter presents encoding/decoding process which deals with the discussion in this research.

### 2.1 Previous Research

Previous research is the previous work that has relation to the main topic of this research. It is used as a reference to arrange this research in order to avoid the similarities of the discussion. Then, the previous research is also needed as the reference source to determine the topic of discussion besides the additional source which can be obtained from the previous works. I choose two previous researches related to my research. The previous researches are found in Jember University. The first is *The Beauty Myth in Tony Morrison's The Bluest Eye* by Risqiatur Rahmah (2012). The second previous research is *Materialistic Society in USA 1980s Crystallized in "Material Girl" and "Dress You Up" Song Lyrics popularized by Madonna*. This thesis was written by Andrik Martha Prayoga (2012).

#### 2.1.1 The Beauty Myth in Tony Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* by Risqiatur Rahmah

This thesis describes about the beauty myth and the influences of beauty for the main character in the novel. She uses feminist and Marxist approach. Then to support this thesis, she uses structure of society and Marxist theory. Rahmah presents three major goals in her thesis. The first goal is to find the reasons of Pecola's beauty obsession. The second goal is to find the ways Pecola goes through her obsession. The last goal is to find the construction of beauty discourse and its function in the

novel as well as to measure or not it is effective to be applied to the society (Rahmah, 2012: 4).

This research explains that whiteness is associated with beauty, innocence, goodness, cleanliness, and purity. She also finds that the ideal beauty depicted in the novel are light skin and blue eyes, it is even less possible for women of color (Pecola and her community in particular) than for white women to achieve this ideal (Rahmah, 2012: 41-42).

I use this thesis as one of my previous research because I use the same novel, *The Bluest Eye* written by Toni Morrison but I have a different topic to discuss, which is about the representation of beauty discourse by media text. Then, in this previous research, I find some data about the reason of Pecola's obsession, Pecola's struggles and the construction of beauty discourse to support my discussion.

## **2.1.2 Materialistic Society in USA 1980s Crystallized in “*Material Girl*” and “*Dress You Up*” Song Lyrics popularized by Madonna by Andrik Martha Prayoga**

In this research, the Andrik uses sociological approach to get clear understanding the representation in the Madonna's lyrics and the American society. Then to support this thesis, he uses Stuart Hall's theory about encoding/decoding (representation) to analyze the materialistic society in the Madonna's lyrics. Through Hall's theory, it can be seen that the representation of materialistic society in Madonna's lyrics has been chosen to follow the standardization of the discourse of materialistic society. Then, the conditions influence the process to understand the meaning of those song lyrics (Prayoga, 2012: 54).

I use this thesis as my previous research because I find that we have the same theory to discuss, it is about encoding/decoding (representation) and we also use Hall's concept to analyze the data. Through this research, it will help my research because I can study more about encoding/decoding and how to use Hall's theory to analyze the data from different novel, *The Bluest Eye*.

## 2.2 Ideology and Hegemony

Before discussing further about the Stuart Hall's theory of representation, in this subchapter will be explained a brief explanation about ideology and hegemony that are involved in discourse as factors of meaning construction in the literary criticism. The term of ideology and hegemony has existed for a long time. Ideology and hegemony is a part of the literary criticism because they are produced in the literature.

One of the most popular theorists that concern on ideology is Louis Althusser. He states that, "Ideology is a 'Representation' of the Imaginary Relationship of Individuals to their Real Conditions of Existence" (1971:162). The relationship between imaginary and the real condition will produces an imaginary consciousness which ideology induces gives a presentation of the way individuals relate to their real conditions of existence. Therefore, this imaginary consciousness is attained through "ideological states apparatus (ISAs)" that perpetuate the dominant ideology in society. Ideological state apparatus (ISAs) include all social institution such as education, politics, law, religion, media communications (literary work), and so on. Then, the unity of the different ideological state apparatus (ISA) is secured, usually in contradictory forms by the ruling ideology, the ideology of the ruling class (1971: 149).

Dealing with Hall's concept about representation, Hall gives comment that Althusser's explanation about ideology is more sophisticated than the classical Marxist notion of top-down 'false consciousnesses. He explains about Althusser's suggestion that ideology is forced from above by elite powers upon the unknowing masses. ISAs point for Hall is a 'more linguistic or discursive' conception of ideology that is reproduced by various institutional practices and structures (Hall, 1997:30).

Besides using Althusser's ideology, Hall also uses concept of hegemony which is formulated by Antonio Gramsci to convey the power of cultural hegemony in society. Therefore, before discussing about the encoding/decoding theory, in the following subchapter will be explained in brief the Gramsci's theory of hegemony.

## 2.3 The Brief Explanation of Hegemony

Gramsci's hegemony refers to "a condition in process in which a dominant class (in alliance with other classes or class fractions) does not merely rule a society but leads it through the exercise of 'intellectual and moral leadership' " (Storey, 2008:79-80). Leadership is a result of agreement of culture from the high class and the lower class after doing process of negotiation. The agreement of lower class comes after being dominated by the higher class. Therefore, when a culture becomes hegemonic, it becomes "common sense" for the majority of the population. Belsey states that;

"Common sense" refers to "the telling the truth- about the period which produced them, about the world in general or about human nature-and that in doing so they express the particular perceptions, the individual insights, of their authors and also common senses as the way of approaching literature not as a self-conscious and deliberate practice, a method based on a reasoned theoretical position, but as the 'obvious' mode of reading, the 'natural' (1980:2).

In other word, Foucault reinforces Gramsci's hegemony on his work. Foucault in Rabinow states about the truth;

"Truth" is to be understood as a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation, and operation of statements. "Truth" is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produces and sustains it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extends it. A "regime" of truth. This regime is not merely ideological or superstructural; it was a condition of the formation and development of capitalism (1984:74).

From the statement above, power become an important thing in the Foucault's thought. Power is a foundation of the construction a regime of truth. The regime of truth is the result of scientific discourse and institutions, and reinforced constantly through the education system, the media, and the flux of political and economic ideologies.

By the explanation about hegemony above, it will leads to Hall's explanation on his work that will be discussed further on the next subchapter.

## 2.4 Stuart Hall's Theory of Representation

According to Hall in the *Representation: Cultural Representation and Signifying Practices*:

“Representation connects meaning and language to culture...Representation is an essential part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture. It does involve the use of language, of signs and images which stand for or represent things“ (1997:15).

The quotation above tells that representation is a part of the production and the exchange of meaning. Language and sign are media for the process of production and the exchange of meaning. Therefore, through the representation, a meaning of the text can be produced and exchanged by society.

In the representation, language can be a media to construct a meaning until the user can understand their environment because of the working system of language through representation's system. The relationship between language and representation is strong because the concepts of representation need language as a media's application in the culture while the working system of language can be understood through the meaning of representation.

In the Hall's perspective about representation, there are two systems of representation; they are Mental Representation and Language (Hall, 1997:17). As Hall explain below;

“..Mental Representation: all things which we carry around in our heads. Meaning depends on the system of concepts and images formed in our thought which can stand for or represent the world. Language: to represent or exchange meanings and concepts, we can only do that when we also have access to shared language. Language depends on constructing a set of correspondences between our conceptual map and a set of signs, arranged or organized into various

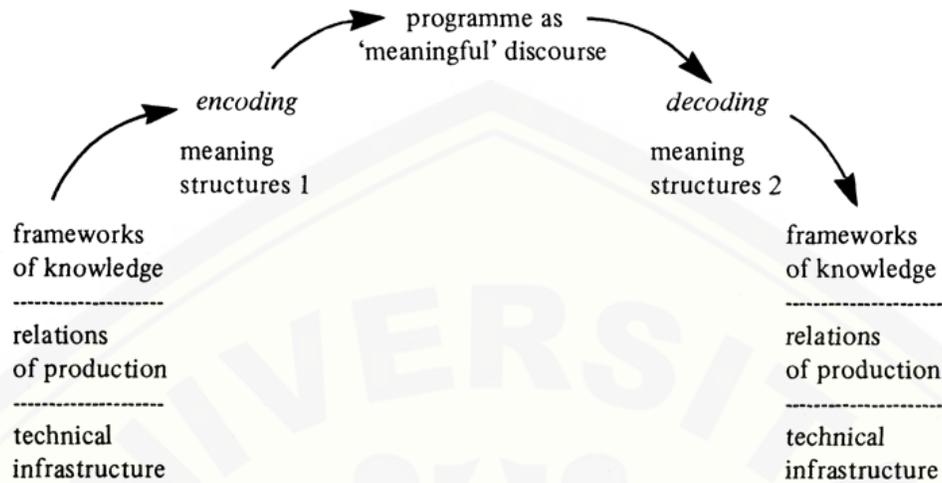
languages which stand for or represent those concepts” (Hall, 1997:17 -18).

The main problems which are illustrated in the representation involve how the reality of the object and how the codes of representation are related to social class, or can be categorized in the society (patriarchy, materialism and so on).

Finally, the representation involves not only how identities are represented within the text, but also how they are constructed in the process of production and reception by people. Absolutely, a text which is involved in the representation system creates ideology and hegemony. Therefore, the representation above is used to analyze both ideology and hegemony process.

## **2.5 Encoding/Decoding**

In the reception theory, Hall’s analysis refers to the study of the meaning, production and community experiences in relation to media texts. In this theory, he focuses on the decoding process, interpretation, and the concept of reception. In the process of communication, Hall has conceptualized the process of communication in terms of a circulation circuit or loop. This model has been criticized for its linearity (sender/message/receiver) for its concentration on the level of message exchange and for the absence of a structured conception of the different moments as a complex structure of relations” (Hall, 2005:117). Through the quotation, it can be seen that the model of linear communication explain that the first component will influence the next component. Therefore, a message which is produced by media will be accepted by viewers/readers as an effect from media. In his theory, Hall explains some levels in his communication’s model. It can be seen in this diagram below;



Picture 1 (Hall, 2005: 120)

From the diagram above, it can be seen how 'meaning' is produced and how 'meaning' is received by viewer/reader. This process is called as the moment of "production/circulation" of meaning (Hall, 2005:117). On the diagram, it is explained that 'meaning structure 1' (encoding) and 'meaning structure 2' (decoding) may not be the same. The codes of encoding and decoding may not be perfectly symmetrical. The meaning of symmetry in this theory refer to the 'understanding' and 'misunderstanding' in the exchange of messages in the process of communication, it depends on the relation of equivalent (symmetry or not) that is formed between the encoder and decoder.

A message in the media's discourse contains the dominant meaning which is given by the producer. The purpose of the formation of the dominant meaning is to get acceptance from the reader without any questioning. Hall state that, "the domains of 'preferred meanings' have the whole social order embedded in them as a set of meanings, practices and beliefs: the everyday knowledge of social structures, of 'how things work for all practical purposes in this culture', the rank order of power and interest and the structure of legitimating, limits and sanctions" (2005:124).

The delivery process of meaning between the media and the reader cannot be given directly but there should be the articulation of the meaning by both, producer and audience/reader. Therefore, to connect between the producer and the reader, Hall offers a hypothetical analysis on some of the possible positions of the audience decoding or reading position on a message. Hall identify that there are three hypothetical positions of decoding by viewers/readers, they are *Dominant Hegemonic Position, Negotiated Position, and Oppositional Position*. The explanation of those is explained in below;

For the first position of decoding is *Dominant Hegemonic Position*. Hall states that;

When the viewer takes the connoted meaning from, say, a television newscast or current affairs programme full and straight, and decodes the message in terms of the reference code in which it has been encoded, we might say that the viewer *is operating inside the dominant code*. This is the ideal-typical case of ‘perfectly transparent communication’—or as close as we are likely to come to it ‘for all practical purposes’ (Hall, 2005:125)

This position is happens when the viewers/readers take a connotation’s meaning (message) from an image or text through dominant codes that produced by the producer and this message which is received by viewers/readers will be decoded directly. In this position, the producer uses specific codes in order to reinforce the image/text in the discourse.

Then, the second one is *Negotiated Position*. As Hall states that;

Decoding within the *negotiated version* contains a mixture of adaptive and oppositional elements: it acknowledges the legitimacy of the hegemonic definitions to make the grand significations (abstract), while, at a more restricted, situational (situated) level, it makes its own ground rules it operates with exceptions to the rule. It accords the privileged position to the dominant definitions of events while reserving the right to make a more negotiated application to ‘local conditions’, to its own more *corporate* positions. This negotiated version of the dominant ideology is thus shot through with contradictions, though these are only

on certain occasions brought to full visibility. Negotiated codes operate through what we might call particular or situated logics: and these logics are sustained by their differential and unequal relation to the discourses and logics of power (Hall, 2005:127).

This position is a mixture of accepting and rejecting the dominant codes in the discourse. The viewers/readers partly share the dominant codes in text and broadly accept the preferred reading, but sometimes resist and modify it in a way which reflects their own experiences and interest.

The last decode position is *Oppositional Position*. Hall says that *Oppositional Position* is possible for a viewer perfectly to understand both the literal and the connotative inflection given by a discourse but to decode the message in a *globally* contrary way (Hall, 2005:127). His statement is supported by the quotation below;

He/she detotalizes the message in the preferred code in order to retotalize the message within some alternative framework of reference. This is the case of the viewer who listens to a debate on the need to limit wages but 'reads' every mention of the 'national interest' as 'class interest'. He/she is operating with what we must call an *oppositional code*. One of the most significant political moments (they also coincide with crisis points within the broadcasting organizations themselves, for obvious reasons) is the point when events which are normally signified and decoded in a negotiated way begin to be given an oppositional reading (Hall, 2005:127).

From this position, it can be seen that the viewers/readers understand the literal and connotative meaning that are produced within a discourse but they do not share the text's codes and rejects it and also decode the message in a contrary way.

By those models, Hall applies his conception about encoding/decoding as a moment in meaning construction. Dealing with the production of meaning, in *The Bluest Eye*, there is also production of meaning. In *The Bluest Eye*, meaning is constructed through a text about beauty discourse. This discourse is constructed by media text. Therefore, through those models, it will be easy to know how are the responds toward decoding process in the media related to the construction of beauty discourse in *The Bluest Eye*.

## CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Type of Research

This research uses qualitative research since the data are in the form of sentences or words. As Best states, “Qualitative data realized in the form of words or description of something not in the form of number” (1981: 156). It means that the analysis of *The Bluest Eye* is qualitative or nonnumeric data in a form of sentences or words. Following the statement, I use qualitative research for my research, because I interpret and analyze the representation of beauty discourse by media text in *The Bluest Eye*.

As the qualitative research which is used in this research, in this step, the data are divided into two: primary and secondary data. The primary data of this research are taken from *The Bluest Eye*. The data are information and facts that construct beauty discourse as the main causes of Afro-American women’s oppression through the statements and narration in the novel. The secondary data are information and facts about beauty standard in United States in the 1970s taken from some books; *Feminist Thought, Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices, Culture, Media, Language* and I also support the information from journals, articles and anything that will help and support the analysis.

### 3.2 Data Collection

In this research, to collect the data I use documentary technique. The technique is appropriate for a research that uses qualitative data. Blaxter (2006: 154) says, “Documentary data collection uses written materials as a basis of research by the reading”. The data used in this thesis are all information or facts about beauty discourse which leads to the Afro-American women’s oppression which are taken from books, journal and internet.

In this data collection this method is close reading. I read *The Bluest Eye* novel more than once. Then, I look for some sources related to the theory of

encoding/decoding to analyze the novel especially to analyze the construction of beauty discourse by media text. Then, the last step is looking for the data that discuss about ideology beyond the representation of beauty discourse especially the sources that discuss about the beauty discourse in America in 1960s related to the novel.

### 3.3 Data Processing & Data Analysis

After collecting data, the next step is data processing and data analysis. The data processing is completed by categorizing the information acquired. All of the data about beauty discourse by media text which construct Afro-American women's oppression in the novel are used to answer the first question. Then the data about the formation of ideology in the beauty discourse by media text are used to answer the second question. Then, it is processed by the theory of encoding/decoding by Stuart Hall to show the respond of black women toward beauty discourse in the novel.

In detail, this research uses inductive method to analyze the data. Shaw states that in inductive method, movement of thought, expressed or implied is always from the specific to general (1972:107). It is a process of general thinking that sets out from particular events relate to the story in the novel to general knowledge. In this research I use theory of encoding/decoding from Stuart Hall to find the production of meaning in the media text as the representation of beauty discourse in *The Bluest Eye*. Then, the next step will be done through Hall's concept of *Decoding* to answer the first question; the data about beauty discourse by media text will be categorized into three positions of decoder; dominant-hegemonic, negotiate and also oppositional position. In this step, Gramsci's hegemony also will be used to support the analysis of position of the characters.

Furthermore, the result of the representation of beauty discourse by media text will lead to answer the second research question about ideology. Then, in this step, Althusser's ideology will frame the discussion to go beyond the text, to find the signification of meaning produced in the novel as a language practice.

**CHAPTER 4. THE REPRESENTATION OF BEAUTY DISCOURSE BY  
MEDIA TEXT IN TONI MORRISON'S *THE BLUEST EYE***

This chapter is the main discussion of the thesis that is divided into four subchapters. The first subchapter tries to map the representation beauty discourse that lead to racism in the novel. The second subchapter deals with hegemonic model of the white. The third subchapters deal with media constructed in the United States. Then, the last subchapter discusses beyond the representation of beauty discourse by media text constructed in *The Bluest Eye*.

**4.1 The Representation of Beauty Discourse by Media Text in *The Bluest Eye***

*The Bluest Eye* explains how the representation of beauty discourse which is constructed by media text in the United States in 1960s. In the novel, media has important role to influence society's thought on the perception of beauty through billboards, magazines, movies by showing actors and actresses that have good performance that only represented by the white. It means that media tends to be racist. However, by presence of media in the novel, women feeling insecure about their own appearance and therefore, in this context, beauty discourse can be said as complicated and prolonged phenomena from beginning until nowadays.

The representation of beauty discourse in the novel is a form of the white's dominance culture that leads to black women's oppression. Beauty discourse has created a beauty standard such as blue eyes, white skin, and straight hair as the representation of beautiful women. Then, as the consequence of beauty standard, the black women in the novel more oppressed and marginalized because they cannot change their performance based on the beauty standard which is constructed by media text.

Therefore, in order to make a clear discussion about beauty discourse and racism, this subchapter will explain further about it.

## 4.1.1 Beauty Discourse and Racism

This subchapter discusses the beauty discourse which is constructed by media text that leads to racism in *The Bluest Eye*. This beauty discourse can be categorized racist because this standard represents the white's characteristics and this discourse can be categorized as colonial discourse because in the construction beauty discourse there is an implicit message which is conveyed to black people. As Ashcroft states that, "colonial discourse tends to exclude the exploitation of the colonized and define the colonized society as 'barbaric' or 'uncivilized' which justifies the colonizer intervention to improve it" (2007:43). Therefore, in this case, the construction of beauty discourse can be one tool of western colonization.

In this subchapter, the construction of beauty discourse illustrates how the beauty standard that leads to racism exist within Afro-American women can be seen as an impact of the white's oppression. Here, racism in the beauty discourse is not only defined by the color of one's skin, the shape of one's features or the texture of one's hair, but also by one's place of origin, socioeconomic class, and educational background. In this subchapter describes Pauline, Pecola, Claudia and Frieda as the victims of beauty discourse that lead to the black women's oppression. This subchapter will be divided into two parts based on the environment where the black experience oppression dealing with the beauty standard.

### 4.1.1.1 Neighborhood

*The Bluest Eye* is opened by the description of Claudia and Frieda's rejection by their neighbor, Rosemary Villanucci. She lives above Claudia and Frieda's father's café and she believes that they are different and they cannot join together, it can be seen from the quotation below,

Rosemary Villnucci, our next door friend who lives above her father's café, sits in a 1939 Buick eating bread and butter. She rolls down the window to tell my sister Frieda and me that we cannot come in... We stare at her, wanting her bread (Morrison, 1970: 9).

The quotation above show that Rosemary's act when she rolls the window down just to let Claudia and Frieda knows that they cannot come in her house is a form of the white's rejection. Then, the rejection becomes apparent by the description of eating bread and butter. Bread and butter are always identified by the white and rich people and also typical the white's food.

Another the white's rejection is also experienced by Pauline. She grows up in Alabama as Pauline William. Then, when she is fifteen years old, she falls in love with Cholly, marries him and after getting married, they decides to move into in North especially in Loraine, Ohio where there are more jobs that can be found. Their move is a part of the Great Migration of Afro-American that occurred from 1910s to 1940s in the United States to get a better job and life.

In Ohio, Pauline does not have any friend, the other women such as the white and also the black women are unfriendly to her because of her performance. Therefore, Pauline feel alone and lonely.

Pauline felt uncomfortable with the few black women she met. They were amused by her because she did not straighten her hair. Then, when she tried to make up her face as they did, it came off rather badly...The women in the town wore high-heeled shoes, and when Pauline tried to wear them, they aggravated her shuffle into a pronounced limp (Morrison, 1970: 118).

The quotation above shows Pauline's humiliation by the black women in the northern due to her ugliness. Pauline does not straighten her hair at the time. Straight hair becomes the symbol of modernity and middle class status. Walker states that "Historically, and still to some extent today in African American culture, hair that would grow long and was straight or wavy was widely referred to as "good," whereas hair of the extremely curly or kinky variety common among African Americans was often described as 'bad' " (2007:147). It means that, straight hair is still considered more attractive and gorgeous for Afro-American society. In other words, straight hair is always identified with beauty. Therefore, the black women change their kinky hair because they want to distance themselves from their heritage to appear the white.

On the other hand, Pauline also tries to make up her face and wear high heels to imitate the women's style in the north. However, when she tries to make up her face, her face even looks strange and also when she tries to wear the high heels, the shoes are not suitable because there is a problem with her foot because Pauline's lame foot makes it difficult to wear high heels. This condition makes Pauline increasingly alienated as a black woman. Pauline says that;

“Everything changed. It was hard to get to know folks up here, and I missed my people. I weren't used to so much white folks. The ones I seed before was something hateful, but they didn't come around too much... Northern colored folk was different too. They could make you feel just as no-count, 'cept I didn't expect it from them. That was the loneliest time of my life.” (Morrison, 1970:117).

The quotation shows that Pauline as the black southern who has migrated to the north found herself in an alien setting where the characteristics and behavior of the black in the northern is different with the black in the southern. The beauty standard influence Pauline's mind to tries some ways to make herself as the women in the north. In reality, although Pauline tries some efforts to improve her performance in order to join the group of elite black women in town, she is still ignored because Pauline is not a sophisticated woman as northern women. As White stated in *African American Literature: A Contrast between North and South* that;

“Southerners are described as family-oriented, friendly, hospitable and loyal. They are said to be more religious, secure and approachable. Southerners also are though to be naïve, culturally deprived and not as competitive, focused and aggressive as their Northern counterparts. Black from the South have a stronger self-identity, and more comfortable with their Blackness...Words like energetic and aggressive are used to characterize Northern Blacks, who are perceived to be more sophisticated, fashionable, more culturally aware and enterprising. Northerners also are viewed as callous, skeptical and suspicious” ([www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1991/1/91.01.07.x.html](http://www.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1991/1/91.01.07.x.html)).

By the quotation above, it can be concluded that the black in south more comfortable with their race as the black than black in the north.

Not only Pauline who experience rejection in her life but also her daughter, Pecola. She is eleven years old and she has experienced double rejection in her life, she is rejected in internal and external environment because of her race and her ugliness. She is also rejected by her mother. It happens because Pecola's performance is ugly. She does not have white skin and blue eyes whereas Pauline hopes that she has a beautiful daughter, white skin and blue eyes like American girl.

Anyways, the baby come. Big old healthy thing. She looked different from what I thought. Reckon I talked to it so much before I conjured up a mind's eye view of it. So when I seed it, it was like looking at a picture of your mama when she was a girl. You knows who she is, but she don't look the same. They give her to me for a nursing, and she liked to pull my nipple off right away. She caught on fast. Not like Sammy, he was the hardest child to feed. But Pecola look like she knowed right off what to do. A right smart baby she was. I used to like to watch her. You know they makes them greedy sounds. Eyes all soft and wet. A cross between a puppy and a dying man. But I knowed she was ugly head full of pretty hair, but Lord she was ugly" (Morrison, 1970: 125-126).

The quotation above shows that Pauline's obsession about beauty leads her to imagine the ideal daughter based on the beauty standard. But, in reality Pecola is not ideal daughter. Pecola's physical appearance does not match Pauline's expectation. As the impact of Pecola's ugliness, Pauline cannot give her daughter unconditional love because she judges Pecola by her physical beauty. It is an ironic condition where Pauline dismisses Pecola, because she is an ugly daughter.

Pauline's hatred toward Pecola seems to be real when Pauline works at the white family's house. When Pecola is in the house of the Fisher's family, Pecola drops a hot pan of blueberries pie and most of the pie flashes on Pecola's legs and they are definitely painful. Then, Pecola cries out but Pauline as her mother does not try to help her, she scolds and knocks Pecola down. Then, she slaps Pecola and calls her a crazy girl before she walks over the Fisher girl. It can be seen in the quotation below.

Most of the juice splashed on Pecola's legs, and the burn must have been painful, for she cried out and began hopping about just as Mrs. Breedlove entered with a tightly packed laundry bag. In one gallop she was on Pecola, and with the back of her hand knocked her to the floor. Pecola slid in the pie juice, one leg folding under her. Mrs. Breedlove yanked her up by the arm, slapped her again, and in a voice thin with anger, abused Pecola directly and Frieda and me by implication.

"Crazy fool . . . my floor, mess . . . look what you . . . work . . . get on out . . . now that . . . crazy . . . my floor, my floor . . . my floor." Her words were hotter and darker than the smoking berries, and we backed away in dread.

The little girl in pink started to cry. Mrs. Breedlove turned to her. "Hush, baby, hush. Come here. Oh, Lord, look at your dress. Don't cry no more. Polly will change it." She went to the sink and turned tap water on a fresh towel. Over her shoulder she spit out words to us like rotten pieces of apple. "Pick up that wash and get on out of here, so I can get this mess cleaned up

Pecola picked up the laundry bag, heavy with wet clothes, and we stepped hurriedly out the door. As Pecola put the laundry bag in the wagon, we could hear Mrs. Breedlove hushing and soothing the tears of the little pink-and-yellow girl.

"Who were they, Polly?"

"Don't worry none, baby."

"You gonna make another pie?"

"Course I will."

"Who were they, Polly?"

"Hush. Don't worry none," she whispered, and the honey in her words complemented the sundown spilling on the lake".

(Morrison, 1970: 109).

The quotation above shows that Pauline's action does not reflect a mother's attitude to her daughter. Actually, as a mother, Pauline should treat Pecola in the right way such as protect and give her comfortable with attention and loves. Besides, the quotation shows that Pauline is very angry when she knows that the floor is dirty than see Pecola injured. The repetition of the Pauline's word "my floor" indicates that Pauline is more concerned with the mess on the clean floor than Pecola. Furthermore, it is very ironic condition when Pauline cleans the splatters of juice on the white girl's

dress. It is an evident from Pauline's hatred to the Pecola because Pecola is black and ugly.

The second Pecola's rejection is in the external environment. Pecola is rejected by her neighbor, Geraldine. In the novel, Geraldine is described as a middle class black woman who tries to lose her identity and also exaggerate the fact that she is above traditional black stereotype. Therefore, she hates black woman around her. It can be seen from her act toward Pecola.

Saw the dirty torn dress, the plaits sticking out on her head, hair matted where the plaits had come undone, the muddy shoes with the wad of gum peeping out from between the cheap soles, the soiled socks, one of which had been walked down into the heel of the shoe. She saw the safety pin holding the hem of the dress up . . . She looked at Pecola. . . . She had seen this little girl all of her life. . . . They were everywhere. Like flies they hovered; like flies they settled. And this one had settled in her house. Up over the hump of the cat's back she looked. "Get out," she said, her voice quiet. "You nasty little black bitch. Get out of my house" (Morrison, 1970: 91-92).

The quotation above happens in the Geraldine's house. When Geraldine looks at Pecola who has bad performance as a black girl and also she has kill her cat, it makes Geraldine do some humiliation. First, Geraldine equates Pecola's body as a fly. Fly is always identified with impurity; it means that the presence of Pecola is related to the dirtiness; therefore, Pecola is not suitable in Geraldine's house because her house is always look clean, hygienic and fragrant. Then, the second act, Geraldine is also juxtaposes Pecola with animal; she calls Pecola a "black bitch". Through Geraldine's statement toward Pecola, it can be categorized as the inhuman statement.

Geraldine's hatred toward the black also brings her to teach her son, Junior. Geraldine gives her son explanation that Junior cannot play with the black because they are different with them. It is can be seen in the quotation below.

White kids; his mother did not like him to play with niggers. She had explained to him the difference between colored people and niggers. They were easily identifiable. Colored people were neat and quiet; niggers were dirty and loud. He belonged to the former group: he wore white shirts and blue trousers; his hair was cut as close to his

scalp as possible to avoid any suggestion of wool, the part was etched into his hair by the barber. In winter his mother put Jergens Lotion on his face to keep the skin from becoming ashen. Even though he was light skinned, it was possible to ash. The line between colored and nigger was not always clear; subtle and telltale signs threatened to erode it, and the watch had to be constant. (Morrison, 1970: 87).

The quotation above shows that Geraldine explains Junior that he is different from other black children. She distinguishes between colored people and niggers. Geraldine states that the differences can be looked from their color and behavior. Sometimes, the white always calls “nigger” to the black. Based on the *Oxford Advanced Learners’s Dictionary*, the meaning of nigger is a very offensive word for a black person (2000:858). Niggers have different appearance; it is the source of discrimination they suffer. They have different skin color, curly hair, etc. Their hair is coarse and dark. Furthermore, as the consequence of Geraldine’s prohibition, when she does not allow his son to play with the black, Junior takes the cat which his mother loves to bully Pecola.

She was deep in admiration of the flowers when Junior said, “Here!” Pecola turned. “Here is your kitten!” he screeched. And he threw a big black cat right in her face. She sucked in her breath in fear and surprised and felt fur in her mouth. The cat clawed he face and chest in an effort to right itself, then leaped nimbly to the floor.

Junior was laughing and running around the room clutching his stomach delightedly. Pecola touched the scratched place on her face and felt tears coming. When she started toward the doorway, Junior leaped in front of her. “You can’t get out. You’re my prisoner,” he said. His eyes were merry but hard.

“You let me go.”

“No!” He pushed her down, ran out the door that separated the rooms, and held it shut with his hands. Pecola’s banging on the door increased his gasping, high-pitched laughter (Morrison, 1970:89-90).

The quotation above is a proof of the black’s mistreatment where the action is also carried out by the black. In the quotation shows that cat is used as a media to oppress

the black. This is a suitable media because cat and the black have the same color. Pecola as the victim of Junior feels that she cannot do anything to make herself free and Pecola also physically from Junior.

Another place where Pecola is rejected is in the candy's store. By her performance as the black, she is humiliated by the shop's owner, Mr. Yacobowski. He is a white man. When Pecola comes to his shop to buy some candies, he shows his disgust and anger. Mr. Yacobowski believes that black as the interference and must be rejected. It is described in the following quotation.

Somewhere between retina and object, between vision and view, his eyes draw back, hesitate, and hover. At some fixed point in time and space he sense that he need not waste the effort of a glance. He does not see her, because for him there is nothing to see...his sensibilities blunted by a permanent awareness of loss, *see a little black girl?* Nothing in his life even suggested that the feat was possible, not to say desirable or necessary (Morrison, 1970: 48).

She does not know how to move the finger of her right hand from the display counter or how to get the coins out of her left hand. Finally he reaches over and takes the pennies from her hand. His nails graze her damp palm (Morrison, 1970: 49-50).

The quotation above shows that Mr. Yacobowski is uncomfortable with her appearance. It is showed by his unwillingness to see Pecola's face and touch Pecola's hands. His unwillingness to see Pecola's face and touch her hands shows that there is a distance between Pecola as a black girl and Mr.Yacobowski as a white man. To avoid Pecola's hands, Mr. Yacobowski only grazes Pecola's damp palm with his fingernails.

#### **4.1.1.2 Public Facilities**

In the novel, the influence of beauty discourse by media text also happens in the public service such as hospital and school. It can be seen, when Pauline's pregnant for the second time. When the time of birth has come, she goes to the

hospital. In the hospital, there are a lot of doctors and nurses but Pauline feel that they look so different when Pauline come there. The doctor looks so unfriendly when they look at Pauline. In contrary, when the doctor looks at white women, he looks so friendly.

A little old doctor come to examine me. He had all sorts of stuff. He gloved his hand and put some kind of jelly on it and rammed it up between my legs. When he left off, some more doctors come. One old one and some young ones. The old one was learning the young ones about babies. Showing them how to do. When he got to me he said now these here women you don't have any trouble with. They deliver right away and with no pain. Just like horses. The young ones smiled a little. They looked at my stomach and between my legs. They never said nothing to me. Only one looked at me. I mean. I looked right back at him. He dropped his eyes and turned red. He knowed, I reckon, that maybe I weren't no horse foaling. But them others. They didn't know. They went on. I seed them talking to them white women: 'How you feel? Gonna have twins?' Just shucking them, of course, but nice talk. Nice friendly talk. (Morrison, 1970: 125).

The quotation above shows that the communication between doctor and Pauline demonstrates the shocking dehumanizing effect of racism and specifically the damage such racism imposes on black women. Physic's performance is the important thing to get good service in the public facilities because Pauline is black and ugly, so she did not get a good service.

The beauty standard has also been successful in influencing the school environment. At the school, Pecola is often alienated by her friends. She wants to join her friends but she is rejected by her friends and also her teacher. Pecola is taunted by school boys and despised by her teacher. All of them hates and look down to Pecola. It can be seen when Pecola sits alone at a double desk.

Long hours she sat looking in the mirror, trying to discover the secret of the ugliness, the ugliness that made her ignored or despised at school, by teachers and classmates alike. She was the only member of her class who sat alone at a double desk.

They tried never to glance at her, and called on her only when everyone was required to respond. She also knew that when one of

the girls at school wanted to be particularly insulting to a boy, or wanted to get an immediate respond from him, she could say. "Bobby loves Pecola Breedlove! Bobby loves Pecola Breedlove!" and never fail to get peals of laughter from those in earshot, and mock anger from the accused (Morrison, 1970: 45-46).

The quotation above shows that the main reason of Pecola's rejection in her school is her ugliness because teacher and Pecola's friends look Pecola as a black and ugly girl. It means that the characteristics of beauty standard are also used in the school environment. Therefore, as the consequence, Pecola is alienated in the class.

At the school, Pecola's friends are uncomfortable with her appearance. As the consequence, Pecola is discriminated, ridiculed and teased too by her boy friends. They always make Pecola cries. They mock her for her black skin and also because her father is naked when sleeping.

A group of boys was circling and holding at bay a victim, Pecola Breedlove. Bay Boy, Woodrow Cain, Buddy Wilson, Junie Bug like a necklace of semiprecious stones they surrounded her. Heady with the smell of their own musk, thrilled by the easy power of a majority, they gaily harassed her. Black e mo. Black e mo. Yadaddsleepsnekked. Black e mo black e mo ya dadd sleeps nekked. Black e mo... (Morrison, 1970: 65).

By the quotation above, it can be seen that Pecola is circled by a group of boys in her school. Here, the circle is a trap for the black because when they are circled by some people who humiliate them, it means that they cannot do anything. In other side, the quotation above also shows that some boys humiliate Pecola's father by saying that her father never wears clothes when he is sleeping and use the word "Black e mo". The "Black e mo" has a meaning that Pecola is even blacker than they are.

Actually, Pecola's friends at the school are also the black. They mock Pecola because they had been influenced by beauty's standard that unconsciously they admire. This humiliation can be one way for Pecola's friends to cover their true identity as the black. This action is a cruel action for committing an affront fellow race.

The entire quotations above are the example of the representation beauty discourse that leads to racism in *The Bluest Eye*. The humiliation and discrimination which is accepted by Pecola, Pauline, Claudia and Frieda is an impact of the construction of beauty discourse. In the white perspective, beauty discourse deals with whiteness concept. Whiteness is associated with virtue, cleanliness and value while being black is associated with immorality, dirtiness and worthlessness. As Winthrop states in *The Simultaneous Invention of Slavery and Racism* (1968) (<http://www.sammustafa.com/Resources/slavery.pdf>) that “White and black connoted purity, virginity and sin, virtue and baseness, beauty and ugliness, beneficence and evil, God and the Devil”. Therefore, the construction of beauty discourse through physical features which is created by the white has a function as a tool of western colonization.

#### **.4.2 Hegemonic Model of White Culture toward Afro-American Women**

A hegemonic process refers to a cycle of actions of a person or dominant group to control, persuade, or influence directed toward minority group (subordinate). Hegemonic process will bear a hegemonic culture; this culture is used to actively support a belief, ideology, religion or value of dominant group into a whole social process, a specific distribution of power and influence into entire segments. The dominant group has a strong power to create and present their definition of reality, their view of the world, in such a way that it is accepted by other minority group as general or natural.

Hegemony works on beliefs, identities, opinions and relations, everything under the influence of a dominant ‘common sense’. Hegemonic process works by offering, presenting, and persuading several particular images, pictures, or figures enormously and persistently. Therefore, hegemony can be called as an inconspicuous process which simply forced or coerced one of parties into accepting inferior positions.

In the novel, to identify the hegemonic model of beauty discourse is through mass media because the black women are constantly bombarded by the ideal beauty standard which is showed in the production of media text. Therefore, in order to make a clear discussion about the hegemonic model on *The Bluest Eye*, this subchapter is divided into two discussions, they are ‘Movie’ and ‘American Beauty Icons and Power’.

## 4.2.1 Movie

Movie is a complete narrative media, to describe ideas or concepts and also becomes a huge apparatus for the distribution of ideology. In *The Bluest Eye*, movie is one tool of hegemonic model of the white dominant culture and also has a big influence to persuade black women characters to understand and imitate the beauty standard that is constructed by media text.

In the novel, Pauline depicted as a black woman whose hobby is watching movie. She gets obsessed by the white culture and impregnates her thought with paradigm of whiteness as the characteristic of beauty standard at that time. Pauline’s hobby is started before Pauline has any children. For Pauline, going to the cinema and watching a film is a comfortable place where she can fulfill her desire about beauty. In the movie, she discovers not only romance but also physical beauty which is showed by the actors and actresses in the film. A movie’s actress that Pauline admires is Jean Harlow. Jean Harlow is a popular star from the 1930s.

“I’member one time I went to see Clark Gable and Jean Harlow. I fixed my hair up like I’d seen hers on a magazine. A part on the side, with one little curl on my forehead. It looked just like her. Well, almost just like” (Morrison, 1970:123).

The quotation portrays that movie educates Pauline in all the ideals of whiteness that she can never lives up to. Jean Harlow teaches Pauline a good style to modify her hair. Then, Pauline tries to make herself look like Jean Harlow by doing her hair in the same style as Harlow. Pauline’s imitation for Jean Harlow style shows that she

can accept the white's hegemony unconsciously and gradually loses her black identity under the influence of the mass media.

Movie does not only make Pauline find what she admires but also establish a standard of physical beauty and virtue in her mind. Therefore, when she goes to the cinema and watch a movie, it will be a reference place for Pauline to entertain herself and eliminate her loneliness. It can be seen in the quotation below,

Along with the idea of romantic love, she was introduced to another-physical beauty. Probably the most destructive ideas in the history of human thought. Both originated in envy, thrived in insecurity, and ended in disillusion. In equating physical beauty with virtue, she stripped her mind, bound it, and collected self-contempt by the heap. She forgot lust and simple caring for. She regarded love as possessive mating, and romance as the goal of the spirit. It would be for her a well-spring from which she would draw the most destructive emotions, deceiving the lover and seeking to imprison the beloved, curtailing freedom in everyday...The onliest time I be happy seem like was in the picture show. Every time I got, I went. I'd go early, before the show started. They'd cut off the lights, and everything be black. Then, the screen would light up, and I'd move right on in them pictures. White men taking such good care of they women, and they all dressed up in big clean houses with the bathtubs right in the same room with the toilet. Them pictures gave me a lot of pleasure, but it made coming home hard, and looking at Cholly hard (Morrison, 1970:122-123).

Through the quotation above, it can be seen that Pauline let herself get caught up in a world of illusions movie that shows a figure of the ideal body and life portrayed by actors and actresses in the film that Pauline watch continuously in the cinema. She sees the ideal life estimated in front of the movie, a life that is impossible for her to reach because she is a black. Like Andrew states that "Pauline's first-person portrayal of movie's effect on the viewer serves as an illuminating depiction of film as 'a magnificent machine of ideology' "(Andrew, 1984:112). It means that, movie in this context can be categorized as ideological tool or can be said as a producer of ideology.

## 4.2.2 American Beauty Icon and Power

*The Bluest Eye* describes Shirley Temple, Mary Janes, Greta Garbo, Ginger Rogers, Jean Harlow and Clark Gable as popular actresses and actors in the 1940s. By their popularity at that time, they are used as reference and as a tool of the beauty discourse to support this discourse. In the construction of beauty discourse, they are represented as beauty icons that have good performance and also ideal life. They are really attractive icons in the distribution of the media text within discourse. Their existence can help the process of the getting message of the discourse. They also become a measuring rod in the process of meaning construction for the society especially for the black in decoding moment of the beauty discourse. In addition, in the novel, the existences of actors and actresses are not only used to cover up the discourse of beauty but also they are as an apparatus to influence the black's mind about ideal beauty in America.

In the novel, Shirley Temple is a popular actress in America. She is booming in the 1940s. She is described as an actress that has white skin, blonde hair and blue eyes. By her performance, Shirley Temple can be categorized as an actress that has strong power to influence the black women characters through her appearance. In other side, Shirley Temple becomes beauty's reference for Pecola. When Pecola stays in the MacTeer's house, Frieda gives her a cup of milk in a Shirley Temple's cup. Pecola look at a cup and she admires her unconsciously in the first time.

She was a long time with the milk, and gazed fondly at the silhouette of Shirley Temple's dimpled face... We knew she was fond of the Shirley Temple cup and took every opportunity to drink milk out of it just to handle and see sweet Shirley's face (Morrison, 1970:19-23).

The quotation above shows that Pecola's expression when drink the milk is a part of her desire to internalize the values of the white culture. The color of milk also symbolizes the change from being black to being white, from being ugly to being beautiful.

Besides Shirley Temple, another actress that becomes Pecola's reference is Mary Jane. Mary Jane is one of the actresses that successful to shape Pecola's perception of beauty.

Each pale yellow wrapper has a picture on it. A picture of little Mary Jane, for whom the candy is named. Smiling white face. Blond hair in gentle disarray, blue eyes looking at her out of a world of clean comfort. The eyes are petulant, mischievous... To eat the candy is somehow to eat the eyes, eat Mary Jane, eat Mary Jane, Love Mary. Love Mary Jane. Be Mary Jane “ (Morrison, 1970:50).

The quotation above shows that Pecola believed that the candy have the power to change and improve Pecola's appearance being the white because Pecola sees that Mary Jane's eyes are pretty and blue and she yearns to have the same blue eyes as her idol. Then, after she purchases and eat the candy, she thinks that she can be like her. This condition can be a symbolic internalization of white beauty. She wanted to be loved like Shirley Temple and Mary Jane as much as she loved them.

However, the existence of the actress and actors in the novel contains power, dominance in order to deceive customers that having beautiful face, white skin and blue eyes is a must. The presence of actresses and actors as attractive icons are really needed for the construction of beauty discourse that constructed in the novel. In other side, their presence is used as one of the elements to fix the message/meaning in the beauty discourse. They can be a commodity of cultural industry in America to propagate the beauty discourse in the society.

Therefore, by the hegemonic model that is constructed through movie and American beauty icon (actress and actor in the mass media), it will lead discussion toward respond of the construction of beauty discourse by media based on the Hall's concept of decoding. This following subchapter will be discussed further.

## 4.3 Media Construction in the United States

This subchapter discusses about the influence of hegemonic model of beauty discourse by media text in the novel toward black women's responds based on the Hall's models of decoder. Hall explains that decoding is a process of understanding and interpreting the message which is done by a reader/viewer. In this process, the black women characters in the novel can be called as "decoder". Decoder is the reader/viewer who view or read the text. Text that is constructed in the novel is a text which is created by media. In the novel, media have important role to construct the representation of beauty discourse because media become tools in spreading beauty discourse. Moreover, through Hall's models of encoding/decoding, it can be seen that a meaning/message that produced by media cannot be accepted completely because every person has different perspective in understanding the meaning/message. Therefore, by those models, Hall proposed that the reader/viewer will interpret the message within media text in the three models of decoder, they are; dominant-hegemonic, negotiated and oppositional position. Those models will frame the black women's responds toward beauty discourse by media text.

### 4.3.1 Dominant-Hegemonic Position

In a dominant hegemonic position, Hall states that, "the viewer takes the connoted meaning full and straight and decodes the message in terms of the references code in which it has been encoded" (2005: 124). It means that the viewer accepts and identifies a message from media text directly without question. This position works through professional codes in the text. "The professional code is 'relatively independent' of the dominant code...The professional code, however, operates within the 'hegemony' of the dominant code" (2005: 126).

In *The Bluest Eye*, dominant-hegemonic position is impact of the construction of dominant discourse offered in *The Bluest Eye*. This position dominates people's perspective to understand and imitate the discourse. In the decoding process, people

absolutely think that this discourse is true because people in this position agree with the discourse.

In the novel, Geraldine is black woman characters who belong to the dominant hegemonic position. She agrees and accepts the characteristics of beauty standard as the normal characteristics. She has a perspective that beauty is linked to the white. Therefore, she imitates the beauty standard without question and also learns how to become superior like the white and make herself nearly like the white. It can be seen in the quotation below;

They wash themselves with orange-colored Lifebuoy soap, dust themselves with Cashmere Bouquet talc, clean their teeth with salt on a piece of rag, soften their skin with Jergens Lotion. They smell like wood, newspapers, and vanilla. They straighten their hair with Dixie Peach, and part it on the side. At night they curl it in paper from brown bags, tie a print scarf around their heads, and sleep with hands folded across their stomachs (Morrison, 1970:82).

The quotation above shows the Geraldine using products that can make her to be beautiful like the white and it can be seen that when she uses those products, she wants to cover her true identity as a black.

In addition, Geraldine also teaches her son to make his body perfectly like the white's performance. It can be seen in the quotation below;

“He wore white shirts and blue trousers; his hair was cut as close to his scalp as possible to avoid any suggestion of wool, the part was etched into his hair by the barber. In winter his mother put Jergens Lotion on his face to keep the skin from becoming ashen (Morrison, 1970:87).

White shirt is used as a symbol of cleanliness. Junior's new hair style is also to cover his kinky hair and Jergen Lotion as way to distinguish him from other black children.

By the explanation above, Geraldine is the perfect example of conforming to the standard beauty. In the dominant-hegemonic position, the meaning/message is constructed in order to provide the description of the real situation for the society.

Then, as the consequence of this position, the meaning/message has been standardization in the environment to persuade society easily.

Furthermore, for the result of this position, the meaning/message that is constructed in the beauty discourse in *The Bluest Eye* is successfully decoded because the black women characters in the novel has the same understanding with the construction of beauty discourse by media text. In simplest word, it can be said that the discourse is accepted by the black women characters as commonly discourse.

### 4.3.2 Negotiated Position

Negotiated position is a result of the negotiating point of view to understand the message offered by the text. Meaning/message constructed in the text is partially accepted and rejected. This position allows the modification to interpret the meaning/message of the text due to the social condition of the society toward some codes offered by the text.

Hall states that “Decoding within the *negotiated version* contains a mixture of adaptive and oppositional elements: it acknowledges the legitimacy of the hegemonic definitions to make the grand significations (abstract), while, at a more restricted, situational (situated) level, it makes its own ground rules—it operates with exceptions to the rule” (2005: 127). It means that in one side, the reader/viewer follow and accept dominant codes in the media but in a local condition, the reader/viewer will makes negotiation through their applications/perspectives based on the their condition. In addition, “negotiated codes operate through what we might call particular or situated logics: and these logics are sustained by their differential and unequal relation to the discourses and logics of power” (2005: 127).

In the novel, negotiated position is illustrated through Pauline and Pecola; they are black characters who try to adopt and accept the beauty standard. Both, Pecola and Pauline have similar understanding about beauty, for them, beauty is linked to the white’s characteristics. They also have same obsession for being beauty,

they follow the characteristics of beauty standard. As explained before that hegemonic model that offered in *The Bluest Eye* has been successful in influencing Pecola and Pauline's perspective about beauty. They accept the beauty standard as a normal standard and they are trying to follow and imitate the standards in their lives. But in reality, they fail to reach their obsession. Therefore, they make negotiation to cover their failure. They have different way to make their negotiation. Pecola describes her negotiated position through her imagination world that will lead her to madness and then for Pauline, become as a servant/house keeper in the white house is her choice.

In the end of the novel describes that Pecola is going to be mad. Madness is a form of Pecola's despair and frustrations to imitate the beauty standard. In her madness, she can feel free and happy without someone that can disturb her. It can be seen in the quotation below

The damage done was total. She spent her days, her tendrils, sap-green days, walking up and down, up and down, her head jerking to the beat of a drummer so distant only she could hear. Elbows bent, hands on shoulders, she flailed her arms like a bird in an eternal, grotesquely futile effort to fly. Beating the air, a winged but grounded bird, intent on the blue void it could not reach—could not even see—but which filled the valleys of the mind...“Grown people looked away; children, those who were not frightened by her, laughed outright (Morrison, 1970: 204).

The quotation above is a description of Pecola's imaginary world where she thinks that her dream comes true. In this world, Pecola can be seen as a girl who can do anything that she wants. This world is also shows a complete alienation from the normal world to the imaginary world.

In her new world, Pecola has an imaginary friend. She always talks with her imaginary friend. In the beginning of her conversation with her imaginary friend, she is quite happy and convinced that everyone is jealous of her blue eyes.

You're just jealous.  
*I am not.*  
You are. You wish you had them.

*Ha. What would I look like with blue eyes?*

Nothing much.

Are they really nice?

*Yes. Very nice.*

Just “very nice”?

*Really, truly, very nice.*

Really, truly, bluely nice?

Please. If there is somebody with bluer eyes than mine, then maybe there is somebody with the bluest eyes. The bluest eyes in the whole world.

*That’s just too bad, isn’t it?*

Please help me look.

*No.*

But suppose my eyes aren’t blue enough?

*Blue enough for what?*

Blue enough for . . . I don’t know. Blue enough for something.

Blue enough . . . for you! (Morrison, 1970: 194-203).

The conversation above shows that in her madness, Pecola has really seen herself and her own beauty although it is only illusion. In her madness, Pecola starts to worry that her eyes might not be blue enough to make her lovable and admired. Therefore, she wants her imaginary friend to tell her if there is someone who has blue eyes than Pecola. However, in her new world, Pecola feels safe and she is finally free of society’s ridicule and judgment. In her new world, Pecola’s blue eyes are granted and a companion consoles her and protects her from life’s hardship.

Pecola’s negotiation is different Pauline’s negotiation. For Pauline, to be an ideal servant is a negotiation to fulfill her desire about beauty. Being a servant is a Pauline’s choice after her traumatic event with her teeth. It happens after Pauline biting into a piece of candy, her front tooth falls out. This event reminding her that she is not a beautiful woman and making her hate herself even more. “I taken a big of that candy, and pulled a tooth right out of my mouth...Everything went then. Look like I just didn’t care no more after that. I let my hair go back, plaited it up, and settled down to just being ugly. I still went to the pictures, though, but the meanness got worse” (Morrison,1970: 123). The quotation shows that losing her tooth as a

symbol of Pauline's failure to reach her dream of beauty and this event can make Pauline realize that she cannot be like the white, therefore, Pauline just stopped trying to imitate the beauty standard. Then, as another choice to fulfill her obsession about beauty, Pauline becomes the perfect servant for the white.

Pauline works at the Mr. Fisher's family. For Pauline, Mr. Fisher's house has become a haven. In there, Pauline feels surrounded by order, beauty, cleanliness, calmness, like in the movies that ever seen.

“Here she could arrange things, clean things, line things up in neat rows. Here her foot flopped around on deep pile carpets, and there was no uneven sound. Here she found beauty, order, cleanliness, and praise...Power, praise, and luxury were hers in this household” (Morrison, 1970: 127-128).

The quotation above shows that Pauline feels comfortable with the Fisher's luxurious tools. In this house, Pauline finds can satisfy her desire about beauty. Only to work in the white's house and clean house, she achieves what she wants. She is obsessed by the life of the white people.

In other side, Mr. Fisher gives her a nickname, “Polly”. ”Power, praise, and luxury were hers in this household. They even gave her what she had never had, -a nickname-Polly. It was her pleasure to stand in her kitchen at the end of a day and survey her handiwork (Morrison, 1970: 128). By the new name, Pauline feels proud with herself. She feels that she can be accepted in the white's family. “All the meaningfulness of her life was in her work. For her virtues were intact” (Morrison, 1970:128).

By the Pauline's negotiation, it can be seen that Pauline takes the meaning/message of beauty in common, because she realize that the characteristic of beauty is only belongs to the white and on the contrary, she still believe that to be accepted is more precious than beauty.

However, through the explanation above, negotiated position allows the diversity of the interpretation of the meaning/message, because the meaning/message is constructed using personal knowledge and conditions or it can be called as

cognitive experiences. In other word, beauty standard as a dominant discourse in *The Bluest Eye* has unconsciously dominated the understanding of the beauty for the black women characters. Although, there is a different modification in the understanding the meaning/message of beauty as the result of the negotiated position, the dominant discourse still exist and popular as the real condition of American society in 1960s.

### 4.3.3 Oppositional Position

This position is the opposite of the dominant hegemonic position. In the novel, not all the black women character accepts the white culture, there is one black woman character that has effort to resist the western standard beauty; she is Claudia. She does not have obsession to follow western beauty standard. Absolutely, this condition is very different with other black women characters that adopts and imitates the characteristics of beauty standard. Looking at her environment, honestly in her personality, Claudia has hard effort to change the perception of ideal beauty's concept which is constructed by the whites which often acknowledges that beautiful means always have a pairs of the blue eyes, blonde-haired, and white-skinned.

Claudia's resistance toward beauty standard can be seen in her act in the novel. One of her acts is when she is looking at the cup of Shirley Temple. Her hatred to the Shirley Temple is strong. It can be seen in the quotation below;

I couldn't join them in their adoration because I hated Shirley. Not because she was cute, but because she danced with Bojangles, who was *my* friend, *my* uncle, *my* daddy, and who ought to have been soft-shoeing it and chuckling with me (Morrison, 1970:19).

Another Claudia's rejection toward beauty standard is showed when Claudia receives a gift in the Christmas day.

"It had begun with Christmas and the gift of dolls. The big, the special, the loving gift was always a big, blue eyed Baby Doll...I fingered the face, wondering at the single-stroke eyebrows; picked at the pearly teeth stuck like two piano keys between red bowline lips. Traced the turned-up nose, poked the glassy blue eyeballs, twisted the yellow hair. I could not love it...Break off the tiny fingers, bend

the flat feet, loosen the hair, twist the head around, and the thing made one sound—a sound they said was the sweet and plaintive cry “Mama,” but which sounded to me like the bleat of a dying lamb, or, more precisely, our icebox door opening on rusty hinges in July. I did not know why I destroyed those dolls. But I did know that nobody ever asked me what I wanted for Christmas...., they would have known that I did not want to have anything to own, or to possess any object. I wanted rather to feel something on Christmas day.... The lowness of the stool made for my body, the security and warmth of Big Mama's kitchen, the smell of the lilacs, the sound of the music, and, since it would be good to have all of my senses engaged, the taste of a peach, perhaps, afterward (Morrison, 1970: 20-22).

This act is a symbol of Claudia's rejection of the beauty standard that imposed on her by society. She dissects the white doll to describe her refusal to accept the construction of beauty ideal of blond hair and blue eyes.

Another Claudia's resistance can be seen from her statement toward Maureen Peal (the lighter girl), “We felt comfortable in our skins, enjoyed the news that our senses released to us, admired our dirt, cultivated our scars, and could not comprehend this unworthiness” (Morrison, 1970: 74). Claudia's statement shows that she is proud in her cultural heritage, and she does not has obsession to imitate the American beauty and also through the statement shows a confidence in where she comes from that is not matched by any alteration of beauty in the United States, merely because it embraces the women's natural skin color.

In detail, through Claudia's rejection of beauty standard, it means that Claudia makes up her own mind on what is beautiful. By not just falling into popular belief, she allows herself to recognize different characteristics as beautiful and also allows herself to question whether beauty is an extremely important concern.

As a result of this position, the representation of beauty discourse in *The Bluest Eye* never fully succeeded in influencing people's mind although discourse that is constructed in the novel has shared the beauty's codes/characteristics. Therefore, by Claudia's resistance toward beauty standard, it can be concluded that in

understanding of the meaning/message, absolutely, there is a possibility that people reject this discourse. They do not want to interpret the message/meaning because they have different perspective to interpret the message.

#### **4.4 Beyond the Representation of Beauty Discourse by Media Text**

In the United States, the representation of beauty discourse by media text is one form of Afro-American women's oppression. In this discourse, women are expected to be beautiful in an artificial way based on the beauty standard in American culture. Actually, American beauty culture has emerged since the era of Civil Right Movement in 1960s. This is an era of great struggle in the American history and this era also times of extreme hardship of Afro-American society in America because this is the time of racial mistrust, segregation, slavery and oppression.

Actually, the Civil Rights movement is frequently framed as a time of great positive change to end discrimination toward the black, but the fact is black's discrimination that still exist in this era. The quotation below shows the black's discrimination which is related to the situation in the civil right movement.

“The Civil Rights movement had produced historical advances in the freedom and dignity granted to African-American [Afro-American] citizens, but African-Americans [Afro-American] still found themselves discriminated against economic, religious, educational, political, and legal aspects. American began to notice also that the culture industry produced a single standard image of beauty, and that standard insistently excluded African-American [Afro-American] citizen. It was the image of white womanhood and also of white girlhood, blonde, blue-eyed, and economically privileged.  
[http://thebestnotes.com/booknotes/BluestEyeMorrison/The Blust Eye Study Guide05.html](http://thebestnotes.com/booknotes/BluestEyeMorrison/The_Blust_Eye_Study_Guide05.html)).

The quotation above explains that civil right movement does not give influence on black's life; the black are still not free from discrimination. In fact, this situation is compounded by the existence of the standard of beauty for a woman who favors the physical characteristics of the white. This standard tends to adore the white as a

reference to be beautiful. As Trepagnier states about the relation between beauty and the white,

“Whiteness and beauty are tighly intertwined in western culture ... The beauty myth, nonetheless, permeates almost every facet of western culture, most certainly the hegemonic discourse on all women which says that white is (more) beautiful ...” (Trepagnier, 1994: 201, 202).

Meanwhile, to complete Trepagnier’s statement, Abu-Laban and McDaniel states that beauty is a social construction that tends to favor the white or Caucasian;

For the female child, to be assessed as “pretty” or “beautiful” is the highest accolade ... To be pretty is to be approved, liked, and rewarded ... Beauty norms are both prescriptive and proscriptive ... However, there can be little doubt that standards of beauty are social and historical construct that are linked to time and place, economics, ethnicity, and power ... The image of beauty that society presents to women is embodied in a female who is not only young and slim but also White (or “whitish”), heterosexual, and class advantaged. This is a monolithic image of appearance ... (1995: 107-108, 114).

The quotation above shows that beauty is social and historical construction, it means that beauty is something that is created through cultural institution and society and will be a normalize view or way of thinking for society.

In the United States, beauty’s concept is not only about white’s skin but also straight hair and body slim. As stated in an article *Black Hair Care And Culture, A story*, “the standard beauty that black women encountered were the privilege of fair skin, straight hair, and thin features” ([http://www.aaregistry.org/historic\\_events/view/black-hair-care-and-culture-story](http://www.aaregistry.org/historic_events/view/black-hair-care-and-culture-story)).

This statement is also supported by Walker’s quotation in her book *Style & Status Selling Beauty to African American Women, 1920-1975*,

In order to be beautiful, black women needed at the very least to straighten their hair. At the same time, technological innovations in beauty culture gave black women new choices in hair-straightening methods and products (2007: 143).

The quotation above shows that straight hair had been trademark of femininity within beauty characteristics because straight hair has been seen as more socially acceptable than kinky hair. As stated in the quotation above, it can be proven by the many products and methods that are used and offered in hair straightening. Besides straight hair, body slim is also can be categorized as beauty standard in the United States. As quoted in this article; “This was the first time in history that an underweight woman became the standard for the ideal body image” (<http://www.feministezine.com/feminist/anorexia/Anorexic003-EatingDisorders.html>). Slim body still becomes popular body in 1960s. It can be seen from the introduction of the model Twiggy that became more popular and standard among in the modeling’s world in the United State. Therefore, woman who has a slim body can be categorized as an attractive woman at that time.

However, all the characteristics of ideal women in the United States can never be separated from the role of media because media are a vehicle to widespread the beauty’s message. Althusser states that “mass media are part of ideological state apparatuses” (1970:143). In order statement, Chapman states in an article *Women in American Media: A Culture of Misperception*, “Mass media is a potent tool used to influence its audience in many ways, although most people would like to believe that they are not affected by advertising. This is because “advertising’s influence is quick, it’s cumulative, and for the most part, it’s subconscious”(*Killing Us Softly*)” (<http://www.studentpulse.com/articles/548/women-in-american-media-a-culture-of-misperception>).

Related to the production of beauty concept, media have shaped society’s perceptions of beauty and what people should look like. Media help to shape beauty standard by showing actress and actors that has good performance and good looking that only represented by the white. It means that media have constructed racist ideology for society because media only show the white’s actress and actors. Media did not show and use the black as their object. Therefore, media that people see everyday are out there, displaying the American standards of beauty, in directly

pressuring women, especially black women, to strive for those ideals that consider an American woman beautiful. Afro-American women have constantly been subjected to the pressures that come along with living in American society, especially the challenge to look “white” and blend into the American/Caucasian conceived ideas of beauty.

Furthermore, the presence of racist ideology that has been constructed by media text, automatically women will change or adjust their body based on the beauty standard. As Wolf states that “Unfortunately, the beauty backlash is spread and reinforced by the cycles of self-hatred provoked in women by the advertisements, photo features, and beauty copy in the glossies” (Wolf, 1991: 73). By influencing the minds of women through pictures of the beautiful body that is promoted through the media, women will assess her body is not beautiful, worthless, not satisfying, will not open the door of happiness and therefore deserves to be hated if it cannot be reconstructed according to the tastes of the society.

The representation of beauty discourse in America in 1960s is also reflected in *The Bluest Eye*. The novel describes that the beauty standard is socially constructed and also recognizes that if whiteness, blonde hair and also blue eyes are used as standard of beauty at that time. By this standard, black women in the novel will change their perspective about beauty that to be beautiful means to be white and to be white means to be accepted in society. In simplest term, it can be said that blackness is linked to ugliness and inferiority, while beauty is seen as a trait found only among the white. Therefore, beauty standard have motivated black women characters in the novel to be white and hates their own skin color and feels shame for their culture.

In the novel, the representation of beauty discourse in 1960s is also supported by the influence of mass media, such as advertisement, movie stars and also doll. It can be seen from the quotation, “The master had said, “You are ugly people.” They had looked about themselves and saw nothing to contradict the statement; saw, in fact, support for it leaning at them from every billboard, every movie, every glance. “Yes,” they had said. “You are right.” (Morrison, 1970: 39). Those media contain

racist ideology because movies, advertisements and doll represent an ideal beauty and performance which conforms to the white. Therefore, in *The Bluest Eye*, the media greatly impacts the black women characters' view of beauty.

Furthermore, the construction of beauty standard is also supported by the real condition of Afro-American women in the 1960s as the object of the white's domination. As stated in an article,

“*The Bluest Eye*'s background is the real background of racial discrimination and sufferings of the African-Americans of those periods. The white dominated society suppressed the minority blacks and made them deprived of even human rights. In that era, Blacks were found subordinate to whites as the segregation was mainly based on the body color. In that era, the white color was the main beauty criteria” (<http://dhannyya.hubpages.com/hub/The-bluest-eye-by-Tonni-Morrison>).

Meanwhile, *The Bluest Eye* is a real story that happens in the era of Great Depression where during this era; the black lived in poverty, that caused by the limitation of job for the black. It is proven by the statement below;

“African Americans are impossible to find jobs of any kind in agriculture or industry... In southern cities, white workers rallied around such slogans as, "No Jobs for Niggers Until Every White Man Has a Job" and "Niggers, back to the cotton fields—city jobs are for white folks” (<http://ic.galegroup.com/ic/uhic/ReferenceDetailsPage/DocumentToolsPortletWindow?displayGroupName=Reference&jsid=7812016b5ea4d6684ea4837e2c6ef921&action=2&catId=&documentId=GALE|CX3404500017&u=sand55832&zid=b57acc008e359910d5c24de390bb447b>).

By the quotation above, it can be seen that Great Depression era is a complicated era for the black where there is a discrimination to take their jobs. Then, through the slogan “No Jobs for Niggers Until Every White Man Has a Job”. It means that if the white man has not yet a job, automatically, the black man will never have a job, and how about the black women's opportunity to get a job. As stated in a statement that, “the black woman likewise was manipulated by the system, economically exploited

and physically assaulted. She could often find work in the white man's kitchen, however, and sometimes became the sole breadwinner of the family”(<https://www.uic.edu/orgs/cwluherstory/CWLUArchive/blackandfemale.html>)

In *The Bluest Eye*, the statements above can be fact which is related to the condition at that time. It can be seen from Pauline’s job as a servant, “When Sammy and Pecola were still young Pauline had to go back to work. She took on the full responsibility of breadwinner...She find a permanent job in the home of a well-to-do family as ideal servant” (Morrison, 1970: 126-127). In another side, there is a black woman who also works as a servant; she is Mrs. William, Pauline’s mother. “Mrs. Williams got a job cleaning and cooking for a white minister on the other side of town” (Morrison, 1970: 112). Those characters are the black women characters that represented as the impact of Great Depression era in the novel.

However, by the limitation of job for the black in the agriculture and industry as stated in the quotation before, as the consequence, the black especially for the black women is only appropriate to become the white’s servant, and automatically, they cannot change their life, they are still poor. It can be proven by the quotation below that describes Breedlove’s family in the novel as the example of the black’s poverty;

The large “store” area was partitioned into two rooms by beaverboard planks that did not reach to the ceiling... The Breedloves did not live in a storefront because they were having temporary difficulty adjusting to the cutbacks at the plant. They lived there because they were poor and black, and they stayed there because they believed they were ugly (Morrison, 1970: 34-38).

Although, the first problem of Great Depression is especially economic, it also influences social system and culture in USA. In the Great Depression era consider that there will be no racialism because of Lincoln’ policy about equality, in fact, it is still maintaining the prejudice about Black, even grow rapidly. “African Americans, freed from bondage but subject to segregation, discrimination, and violence”

(Greenberg, 2009:1). Therefore, related in the previous statement that states “the black women likewise was manipulated by physically assaulted”.

As explained before that in the United States, in the 1960s, there is a construction of beauty standard by media text that describes about white skin, blonde hair and also blue eyes as the beauty’s characteristics. In the *Research Journal of English Language and Literature* states that, “American concept of beauty- blue eyes, blonde hair and milk white skin become the destructive force of blacks” (<http://www.rjelal.com>). Those characteristics are also described in the novel, “all the world had agreed that a blue-eyed, yellow-haired, pink-skinned was what every girl child treasured” (Morrison, 1970: 20). The quotation shows that the white’s characteristics are assumed to be a sign of beauty at that time and those characteristics are also tends to adore the white’s characteristics. Then, as the consequence, the black women who do not have those characteristics will be excluded from the society such as Pecola. As explained before that in the novel, Pecola is excluded by her society because she cannot fulfill her desire about blue eyes and she is going to mad.

Therefore, through the statements above, it can be concluded that black does not have a good right because the white’s domination can never be ended. They have a big power to control the black in various aspects of life, economic, political and also ideological.

**CHAPTER 5**  
**CONCLUSION**

Morrison in *The Bluest Eye* shows that there is a meaning production that produced by media text. In the novel, meaning is produced through a text about representation of beauty discourse in the United States in 1960s. This discourse has affected the family, schoolmates and also neighborhood because in the representation of beauty discourse, the black women do not see blacks on the billboards, movies or advertisement. Therefore, in this thesis found that beauty discourse beauty leads to oppress the black women because beauty is linked to the white while the black is identified with ugliness. As the consequence of the representation of beauty discourse by media text, Afro-American women have been denied and oppressed by the white and also the black community because of their race and they do not beauty's characteristics, like blue eyes, blonde and straight hair and also white skin.

In order to show the meaning of the beauty discourse, this research uses Hall's conception about decoding, they are; dominant-hegemonic, negotiated and oppositional position. In the dominant-hegemonic position, the black women characters are under controlled the message of beauty discourse. In this position, it can be seen that the black women characters are the passive consumer of the discourse because they imitate and consume the message without question.

For negotiated position, the viewers/readers partly share the dominant codes in text and broadly accept the preferred reading, but sometimes resist and modify it in a way which reflects their own experiences and interest. In the novel, Pauline and Pecola as the black women in this position accept and imitate the characteristics of beauty but they have their own perspective to interpret the beauty discourse.

For oppositional position, the viewers/readers understand the meaning that is produced within a discourse but they do not share the text's codes and rejects it and also decode the message in a contrary way. This position is opposite of the dominant-hegemonic position. In this position, the message in the beauty discourse cannot be

accepted by the black women characters, even though the message is controlled by the real situation as proper discourse.

However, by the construction of beauty discourse through media text, almost all the black women characters in the novel have been influenced by beauty standard mentally and physically. They have effort to imitate the beauty standard but in reality, they fail. Therefore, as the result of their failure in the imitation of the beauty standard, the existence of black women is ignored by the society. Therefore, the presences of media have big impact to represent beauty discourse that leads to black women's oppression because media that is constructed in *The Bluest Eye* constructed racist ideology. Then, as the consequence of racist ideology in the beauty discourse, the black women's oppression will become structured oppression and never be ended.

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