THE CONSTRUCTION OF BEAUTY IN TONI MORRISON’S
THE BLUEST EYE

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ABSTRACT: Franks et.al (2008) claims that colonization often results in poor power relation between the colonizer and the colonized, which is likely to lead into negative stereotypes against the colonized. This in turn affects the colonized identity construction. The article discusses about the colonial construction of beauty to analyze the novel written by Toni Morrison, The Bluest Eye (1970). Moreover, this article also supports the analysis of three important concepts of colonial problems, including constructed concept of beauty by colonizer, power of dominance, and also concept of inequality, in order to address the incapability of both main characters in constructing their beauty concept. The colonizer wants to get the Blacks internalize themselves as ugly and cannot be equally compared to the Whites. The conclusion of the analysis shows that both main characters cannot successfully construct and resist their own beauty concept which they hold for a quite long time; however, they are successful to be different from their ex-colonizer. This is because no one could be identically the “same” both physically and psychologically because the nature of adopting the white ethic will be never very far from mockery.

Keywords: Beauty, construction, colonization

Frantz Fanon (1961:168) states that the aim of colonization is not only to take almost all control of the colonized people’s life, but also to try to blank colonized people’s mind from all ‘form and content’ which at last keeps the colonized people down, ‘disfigures’, and ‘destroys’ them. By destroying the history and culture of the colonized people, the white colonizers has successfully made a new set of values for these colonized. Ashcroft (2007: 43) claims 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.

For the most part, postcolonial studies concentrate on writing from the colonized point of view that is subordinated by the white culture. In this case, the postcolonial studies do exist only after the European colonization occurs and the colonized people start to think and write about their loss of cultural identity and subordination. Therefore, the modern African-American writers find the need for and admit a commitment to the restoration of African values. Toni Morrison was one of the Afro-American writers who dared to speak out and challenged the white dominant cultures and the domination of these cultures. In this article, I choose to analyze novel The Bluest Eye to show the position of the ex-colonized and their relation to the ex-colonizer. This novel is Toni Morrison’s first novel and written when she taught in Harvard University.

This novel tells about a black girl, named Pecola Breedlove, who is longing for having blue eyes as well as the standards beauty of the White communities. By using Pecola as one of the main characters, Morrison demonstrates that Pecola's strong desire is not for having more money or a better
house or even for more sensible parents; her request to Soaphead Church is only for having blue eyes; even though she eventually have them, this would not have abated the hardships of her life. Morrison gives the readers clear explanation that Pecola deeply experiences the occurrence of sexual abuse, ethnocentrism, child-abuse, racism, and also sexism. Throughout the story, Morrison presents how Pecola is doubly stigmatized by the dominant society; first is the stigma of ugliness, while the second is the stigma of being an African-American. Thus, by connecting these two negative stigmas, Morrison makes the white readers feel the ‘tragedy’ of racism more thoroughly (Bump, 2010:156). Moreover, through the novel, Morrison clearly highlights the racism issue to show the complexity of black and white identity. Yancy (2005:176) adds that the “black race thus conceptualized, in terms of a necessary connection between color and (quasi-) cognitive deprivation, and being made the antithesis of the white race, was designated ‘inferior’ to the white race and then ascribed a subordinate ontological status to the white”.

From the day Pecola was born, she was told that she was ugly. Pecola's mother, Pauline Breedlove, is more concerned with the appearance of Pecola and she believes that her own daughter is utterly ugly. Then, by the time she grows up, she already knows the difference between becoming white and black, in terms of physical appearance and privilege. She is the only one who deeply feels colonized by the White society that address the concept of beauty through only the eyes of the Whites. Rokotnitz (2007) states that “if dominant white ethics define beauty in terms of light skin, light hair and blue eyes, this does not sufficiently explain why most of the African-Americans in Morrison’s novel not only accept, but reinforce this view.” She says further that “Pecola’s experience of invisibility and her belief in her own ugliness and, thus, her worthlessness, renders her so weak, that even the lowest characters in her society can take advantage of her” (Rokotnitz, 2007).

Naturally, it cannot be denied that beauty is the concern of almost every woman, as Wolf (1990) further acknowledges that:

A woman's appearance influences her perceived ability to perform her work well, religion dictates the proper relationship to her own body, the desired body is no longer feminine and sexual, and there is a rash of violence against women as well as by women to their own bodies.

According to Moses, “beauty is a deeply problematic concept in Morrison’s work…, the omniscient of narrator of The Bluest Eye asserts that ‘physical beauty’ and ‘romantic love’ are the most destructive ideas in the history of human thought” (Moses, 1999:633). In this case, the Afro-American descendants often ‘internalize' the meaning of beauty from the dominant culture and find its definition that most closely match the white beauty image so therefore it marginalizes character like Pecola Breedlove (Gillespie, 2008:55). Regarding this issue, this literary article will discuss about how both Pecola and Claudia perceive the construction of beauty by the colonizer. This discussion functions to address the attitude of both characters in perceiving the white beauty construction. Also, this article further inquires whether or not those characters are able to perceive the beauty construction and what happens thereafter as the consequences.
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This article concerns the analysis of two main characters, Pecola and Claudia, in perceiving the white beauty construction. Both of them perceive the construction differently; Pecola quickly follows it, while Claudia does not. However, these two opposing characters represent the same struggle for their existence in order to be accepted in the White society and no longer marginalized. To support the analysis, this article discusses three important concepts of colonial problems, including constructed concept of beauty by colonizer, power of dominance, and also concept of inequality, in order to address the incapability of both main characters in constructing their beauty concept.

It is undeniable that the concept of beauty hold by both the Blacks and Whites is one of the products of colonialism. As Paul C. Taylor argues, “a white dominated culture has racialised beauty, [in] that it has defined beauty per se in terms of white beauty, in terms of the physical features that the people we consider white [people] are more likely to have” (Taylor, 1999, 17). Sincerely, the colonial beauty construction plays a significant role to make Pecola and Claudia, perceive that a black is ugly; and this beauty perception undeniably cannot be separated from the colonialism effects. The Black identity is truly corrupted since the colonialism aims are to uncivilized, destroys, dismembering, and also erasing the previous identity of the colonizer. The effects completely shape the colonized people in different ways. To respond to this topic, Yancy (2005:257) maintains that:

The white colonialist strategy is to get the colonized Black (or native) to undergo a process of epistemic violence, a process whereby the Black begins to internalize all of the colonizer’s myths, to begin to see his/her identity through the paradigm of white supremacy/Eurocentricity. Indeed, the objective of the colonialist is to get the Black (or native) to become blind to the farcicality of the historical “necessity” of being colonized. The idea here is to get the native, and in this case the Black, to conceptualize his/her identity/being as an ignoble savage, bestial, hypersexual, criminal, violent, uncivilized, brutish, dirty, inferior, and as a problem.

What actually the colonizer/white knows about the colonized/black signifies what the colonized/black is. The Black body, for example, is not beautiful, not civilized, not moral, not human, etcetera. The colonialist logic is what the colonizer/white has; the colonized/black has not. As in fact, according to Kehinde (2009) the Blacks tend to be positioned in lower position rather than the Whites in some aspects, such as in educational case, social class, health care, economical stuff, and beauty concept. “White Europeans were the most superior and therefore were able to enslave Africans into the New World; the Caribbean, the United States and South America” (Thomas, 1997). As the consequences, the colonized people must also live among the rules of a colonizer society and they will not be able to avoid the subordination of the colonizer in almost all aspects of their live.

Moreover, it also cannot be denied that society becomes one of the most influential factors to build such an idea, such as what is good and also what is bad in the society. According to Hall (1996), a self cannot avoid developing herself through series of cultural influences because by referring to a culture, an individual can identify herself as a social being belongs to the society that is attributing to her identification. Living in a community which constructs discourse of many living aspects, a self is supposedly trying to fit the form. A self is
undeniably attached to social living and they will always be driven into such identification while they interact with their surrounding community. Considering that there are always groups of majority and minority in the society, it is true that the majority will always remain more powerful rather than the minority. Taylor (1999:17) acknowledges “a white dominated culture has racialised beauty, [in] that it has defined beauty per se in terms of white beauty, in terms of the physical features that the people we consider white [people] are more likely to have”. In terms of beauty construction, the dominant culture of society would play an important role to easily indoctrinate and label the more recessive culture in society in order to follow the concept of beauty they have in their mind. Later, Kohler (2006) adds that “the value structures of the dominant, white society contributes to the problem, making some of the characters disvalue their African-American heritage and encourage them to long for unreachable patriarchal and capitalist values of the whites”. The minority groups are subordinated in terms of power and privilege to the majority, or dominant group. Franks et.al (2008:4) states that “in sociology, minority means the same as subordinate and dominant is used interchangeably with majority”. Colonialism process is one of the factors that create this subordinate group. The minority group is subordinate groups whose members have less control or power over their own lives than the members of a dominant or majority group. Throughout The Bluest Eye, Gillespie (2008:55) states:

the destructive impact of the construct of physical beauty affects the self esteem of almost every character….objective definitions of physical beauty are created by the ideals of the dominant culture in order to reinforce power dynamics. Unfortunately the Afro-American descendants often ‘internalize’ the meaning of beauty from the dominant culture and find its definition that most closely match the white beauty image so therefore it marginalizes character like Pecola Breedlove

Gillespie (2008) also acknowledges that “African Americans traditionally have been excluded even from consideration as attractive and, as such, suffer from the resultant lack of affirmation. In response to the novel, since the power holder of the society surrounds Pecola and Claudia is the White ex-colonizer, then as the consequences, her existence as a black is surely ignored. Due to the ideal beauty of the Whites, Pecola and Claudia are undoubtedly unidentified as beautiful since their skin is black, yet they also poor.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Pecola’s Attitudes in Adopting the White Beauty Construction

The novel implicitly tells a story of the characters, particularly Pecola and Claudia, who want to maintain the idea of beauty in the Whites society. It is important to note that both Pecola and Claudia have some similarities. Both of them have to struggle to be identified as beautiful in the Whites society, though in different ways. In this case, Pecola wants to be accepted in the white society and no longer marginalized; that is why she endeavors to follow the white beauty construction by praying a lot to get the blue eyes. On the other side, Claudia wants to challenge the beauty construction and resist what Pecola has in mind. Undeniably, for American society at that time, beautiful means white-skinned and
blue-eyed. The Bluest Eye concentrates on the black African-Americans’ desire to leave their own value system and start adopting Eurocentric values materialism, capitalist success and beauty and how those all desires remain ‘unrealistic’, ‘destructive’ and ‘un-necessary’ (Kohler, 2006). The black community in the novel is continually devalued by the Eurocentric values, the popular culture presents. The Blacks remain to have the wrong color for success in life, uneducated, poor, and void of emotions; therefore, when they try to adopt the Eurocentric values, it means they do nothing because they are never the same (Kohler, 2006:42). By following the white concept of beauty, Pecola thinks that her parents, schoolmates, and also the teachers will treat her better. As it is stated in the novel, “Why, look at pretty-eyed Pecola. We must not do bad things in front of those pretty eyes” (Morrison, 2001). However, regardless these stuffs, Pecola still is unaware that though (in case) her eyes were changed into blue, she would still be regarded as a black, poor, and ugly. Nothing would change, obviously. “No one else will see her blue eyes. But she will. And she will live happily ever after” (Morrison, 1970:155). It means that she still considered as ugly and black, the blue eyes she already has do not change her identity that she is black and ugly. Again, Pecola still becomes the object of the mockery by the White society, of course because of her all tragic life; including, the sexual abuse done by her own father, her poverty, her blackness, and some other aspects. Morrison presents Pecola with her weaknesses. She accepts her position as a victim in the community around her. She does not defend herself against her abusive schoolmates. She stays quite when Junior lies to his mother that Pecola has injured Geraldine’s precious cat. She remains so weak in the novel (Kohler, 2006: 40).

The racial stratification is also presented clearly throughout the novel. Pecola’s and some other black characters’ humanity are rejected by the society. It is in accordance with Yancy (2005) who states that the society is divided along two racial lines or two societies, one Black and one white. Black children cannot escape the pervasive presence of the dominant society’s cultural icons of female beauty, for instance Shirley Temple. The inculcation of blackness as a “negative signifier” in the minds of the black community causes the destruction and madness of Pecola (Tally, 2007:14). More importantly, Pecola is positioned in the space between the black and white humiliating communities which whom she is unaccepted and alienated from both. Sincerely, the Whites beauty standard plays a significant role to make Pecola and Claudia, perceive that a black is ugly; and this beauty perception undeniably cannot be separated from the colonialism effects. In perceiving the idea of beauty, Pecola and Claudia have different perceptions. Pecola is the young black character who concerns more about her physical beauty, especially her eyes; while Claudia is not too concern on.

As long as [Pecola] looked the way she did, as long as she was ugly, she would have to stay with these people. Somehow she belonged to them. 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 (Morrison, pg.38)
Therefore, Pecola believes that if she successfully has the blue eyes, their classmates and teachers will treat her better. However, she believes that “to have something as wonderful as that happen would take a long, long time….only a miracle could relieve her, she would never know her beauty. She would see only what there was to see: the eyes of other people” (Morrison, pg.39).

Claudia’s Resistance against White Beauty Construction

In vice versa to Pecola, Morrison would like to show that there is an action to challenge the white beauty construction through the character of Claudia. She struggles to change the perception of ideal beauty of the Whites which often acknowledges that beautiful means those who are blue-eyed, blonde-haired, and white-skinned, into the perception that the Blacks also deserve to be identified as beautiful. To convey her message, then she tries to adore her blackness and poverty, but still, all the things she have done does not contributes significantly to change the White beauty construction in that era. The power holder of the society is still the Whites; which make it impossible for Claudia to challenge the power of dominance in her surround. As for the consequences, Claudia’s resistance toward the White subordination and also her struggle to redefine the beauty concept cannot be accomplished. In the novel, Claudia wants to confront the ideal beauty of Whites society by struggling to show the beauty of the Black by adoring her own blackness. She tries hard to challenge the ideal beauty of the Whites by starting to adopt the way the Whites adore their skin. The Whites adore their whiteness so much; thus, by adopting the way those Whites adore their skin, then Claudia starts to adore her blackness to show that the Blacks also deserve to be called as beautiful.

As the narrator, Claudia MacTeer survives while Pecola Breedlove does not. Pecola is disrupted by the cultural values she adopts while Claudia MacTeer refuses those values (Tirrell, 2000). As children, Claudia and her sister Frieda are happy with their difference, their blackness: “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, 1970:57). This suggests that Claudia resists the pressure to maintain to a white vision of beauty.

Sugiharti (2004) explains that “in the novel, Morrison challenges Western standards of beauty and demonstrates that the concept of beauty is socially constructed. Morrison also recognizes … whiteness is used as a standard of beauty or anything else, then the value of blackness is diminished.” Claudia becomes one of the important characters who plays such an important role throughout the story since her, in this case, is rather different from Pecola in the way she successfully perceives her own identity as a black, while Pecola is not. Claudia hates the white dolls given in Christmas and dismembered all the Christmas dolls since they commonly becomes the truly representative of what to be beautiful means.

Frieda and [Pecola] had a loving conversation about how cute Shirley Temple was. Younger than both Frieda and Pecola, I had not yet arrived at the turning point in the development of my psyche which would allow me to love [Shirley Temple]. What I felt at that time was unsullied hatred. But before that I had felt a stranger, more frightening thing than hatred for all the Shirley Temples of the
world. 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. (Morrison, pg.16)

Claudia argues that the blue-eyed Baby Dolls are the most uncomfortable sleeping companion. And also to hold them means there was no more rewarding, useless. In this stuff, Claudia is totally different from Pecola who loves everything related to the White figures that commonly represents the beauty concept very much. She hates all the images of beauty in Whites society, like Shirley Temple, Mary Jane, and also the white baby dolls she is given for Christmas because they become the embodiment of the white logos that play a role in the story, and also the “templates which society holds up for Pecola to judge herself against. These figures of white mythology to which she compares herself are the catalysts which precipitate Pecola’s physic disintegration, leaving her alienated from any sense of an authentic black self” (Powell, 1990).

For the Christmas gifts, actually Claudia wants something else rather than the white dolls; she hates them, indeed. The thing she wishes only for the attention of her parents when asking her about her liking for Christmas of which her parents have never done.

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.

As Claudia says in the novel, “all the world had agree that a blue-eyed, yellow-haired, pink-skinned doll was what every girl child treasured. ‘Here,’ they said, ‘this is beautiful, and if you are on this day “worthy” you may have it’” (Morrison, 20). Furthermore, Powell states also that “But whereas Claudia rebels against the dictates of white mythology, destroying and dismembering the dolls she is given for Christmas, Pecola allows herself to be wooed (finally into insanity) by the dream of the bluest eye, a panacea for all of her earthly woes” (Powell, 1990:752).

However, Claudia is not aware that her struggle to change the way the Whites think about the Blacks is very hard to achieve. She is aware that “being a minority in both caste and class, we moved about anyway on the hem of life, struggling to consolidate our weaknesses and hang on, or to creep singly up into the major folds of the garment” (Morrison, pg. 13). In the novel, the ideals of minority culture are ignored and not presented in the realms of mass media or at schools so thus force the minority to assimilate with the population at large and ‘devalue’ its own value system (Kubitschek, 1998). “Moreover, those members of a minority group share physical or cultural characteristics such as skin color or language that distinguish them from the dominant group” (Franks et.al, 2008:6-7). This means that each society has its standard in determining which characteristics are most important to define dominant and minority groups. Therefore, it is hard for Claudia to challenge the white beauty construction because as a member of minority group, it is simply not easy to endeavor to be equally compared with the dominant group.

Moreover, another thing that makes Claudia cannot successfully maintain her resistance toward the white beauty construction is the concept of human inequality. In response to the concept of human inequality, Bennet (Ed.) (1998:63) asserts that for many years, “liberals believe in equality of opportunity – that
everyone is entitled to the so-called primary spiritual and material goods essential for their free individual self-development, which is to say, for carving their own unique path to happiness”. Everyone, on this theory should have an equal chance to become uniquely unequal. In relation to Claudia’s stuff, those observations clearly prove that everything Claudia rebels and struggles for equality does not work much to changes the way white people think about the Blacks whom they underestimated for so many years. Bennet (1998:64) then supports the idea in the book he edited *Multicultural States/Rethinking Difference and Identity*:

> What does it mean to treat two individuals equally? It cannot, surely, mean treating them the same, since if individuals have different needs and capacities this is bound to issue in injustice. It was in this sense that Marx, in his Critique of the Gotha Programme and elsewhere, regarded equality as a typically bourgeois abstraction, one which overrode the sensuous particularity of individual men and women

To be black in the Black society does not simply remains the same easiness with being the black in the Whites majority society; the majority society would always place on the higher level rather than the minority. For those the Blacks who do not have enough self-receptiveness as the black would be very difficult to cope with the ethnocentrism of the White society that often play a role in the daily lives. Therefore, throughout the story, to achieve what we called as “equal”, in beauty construction as my point, is so hard effort, yet little possibility to achieve. Further, Bennet (1998: 64) states:

> To treat two individuals equally must surely mean not giving them the same sort of treatment, but paying equal attention to the specific needs and desires of each. It is not that they are equal individuals, but that they are equally individuals

Therefore, when Claudia searches for equality as a black who deserves to be identified as beautiful, it will not result too much. Her self-receptiveness on her blackness to prove that the Blacks also deserve that label actually does not really work on that way. It cannot be simply denied that the cultures of the Blacks are actually corrupted by the effects of the Whites colonialism. Therefore, Claudia’s struggle to purify her own culture as a black by adoring her black skin does not contribute much to change the Whites’ perception toward the Blacks. In this case, actually Claudia indirectly/unaware also adopts the Whites’ culture by adoring her skin and poorness. It is mix sense when the Whites adore their white skin since the white skin simply shows the cleanliness and pureness; while, when Claudia as black try this risky thing at that time, this kind of actions is simply impossible to be accomplished.

The concept of ideal beauty still puts the Whites on the higher rank rather than the Blacks. It is acknowledged by Franks (2008:10) who states that “the darker races are today the least advanced in culture according to European standards”. Furthermore, when Claudia strongly struggles for equality in perceiving beauty concept, she unfortunately fails to do so because the power of white supremacy is still undefeatable. The White remains far above the Blacks; that is the fact. Bennet (1998: 64) asserts that, “authentic concept of equality already implicates the notion of difference. Equality, on this view, is a question of the subject rather than the object – a matter of how we conduct ourselves towards others, not a question of some equally shared property or condition of being inherent in them. Furthermore, when Claudia starts to adore her blackness and
dismember everything which is related to the Whites figures which representing the ideal beauty, she unconsciously supports the idea of what the Whites have. As one example, she still celebrates the Christmas, the culture of the Whites. So, it gives the meaning that she is unconsciously subordinated to follow the culture of the Whites and do not simply rejected all the dictations of the Whites society. In this case, Claudia’s effort to challenge the idea of “white is beautiful” and change into “black is beautiful” does not work very well since she personally still follow the Whites culture. Furthermore, the failure of Claudia in defending her adoration as the black by dismembering all of those which are related to the white figures can be proven through her receptiveness of the white dolls of which she have ever rejected before. In the book titled *Tony Morrison’s Critical Companion*, Gillespie (2008) states that “Claudia learns that it is not alright to destroy a gift even if, fundamentally, the gift is distasteful to her”. Then, it means that Claudia is indirectly starts acknowledging that whiteness and cleanliness is interesting to look. “It was a small step to Shirley Temple. I learned much later to worship [Shirley Temple], just as I learned to delight in cleanliness” (Morrison, pg.19). She at first hates everything related to the Whites, the icon of Shirley Temple, even the dolls she is given for Christmas. But, at last she then willing to accept that beauty ideal and learns to like the white dolls image. This clearly shows that Claudia is unfortunately inconsistent with her principal of which she stands for long time. Claudia in the novel acknowledges that “dolls we could destroy, but we could not destroy the honey voices of parents and aunts, the obedience in the eyes of our peers, the slippery light in the eyes of our teachers when they encountered the Maureen Peals of the world” (Morrison, pg. 61). This means that they at last feel so difficult to change the white perspective toward the image of beauty constructed by the Whites. Claudia also asserts that she understands jealousy as “a desire to have what somebody else had; but envy was a strange, new feeling for us” (Morrison, pg. 62).

In the American society, the African Americans who have the lighter skin resemble characteristics to European physical features would undoubtedly get more privileges and acceptance among the white-dominated majority. However, African Americans who have the darker skin are those who least successful and accepted by the majority American society. This idea is imposed to the White colonizers who want to degrade the colonized people. Since colonialism held its dominant power to “control” the colonized people’s live, this kind of beauty construction is then well-constructed throughout the society. This construction makes the colonized start perceiving that whiteness is beautiful, blackness is ugly. Whiteness is pure, blackness is impure (Yancy, 2005). So, Claudia will never be able to change that paradigm. It is hard for Claudia to change the Whites perspective and treatment toward her community, the Blacks, in order to have same “positive” recognition and labeling as the way the Whites easily to get. Also, Pecola unfortunately does not get what she wants though she, at last, has those two blue eyes. Pecola and Claudia are not able to compete with their superior community, the Whites. They unfortunately still follow the Whites culture which means they fail to maintain their previous identity as the Blacks.

Furthermore, another thing that makes Claudia, or even Pecola, hardly challenge the white beauty construction is the undefeatable power of dominance. Both of them are completely subordinated by the white society around them. It is
difficult for them to show their existence and goodness of becoming the blacks. Their classmates, teachers, or even the renting people in her house are mostly the Whites. Even the three whores who live next to her house are also the whites. Franks (2008) asserts that being subordinate or minority groups means they have unequal treatment and also have less power rather than the members of the dominant. It means they are so vulnerable with the problems of ‘segregation’, ‘prejudice’, ‘discrimination’, and even ‘extermination’ create this social ‘inequality’. In response to these all life misfortunes, it is clearer that both Pecola and Claudia become the objects of mockery because of their position as the members of minority group. They have less power to control their own lives and also to response to the matters of the white beauty construction.

Actually from the first page of the novel, Morrison clearly states the words that really represent how the power of dominance of the Whites really plays a central role throughout the story. Sarcastically, Morrison quest for the black existence by using the white text- the Dick-and-Jane reader. It is an extremely important beginning word because it identifies the reality that all Afro-American writers have, willingly or not, been forced to start their story with the Master’s language. The Dick-and-Jane reader is used to represent the institutionalized ethnocentrism of the white-logos, of white values and standards are woven into the texture of the reality of American life. “And for the protagonist of Toni Morrison’s first novel, Pecola Breedlove, it is precisely these standards which would lead to her tragic decline” (Powell, 1990). The story starts with the classic tale of “Dick and Jane” which creates irony. Dick and Jane are part of a perfect, happy, playful, white family. Jane wears a pretty red dress, has a dog, and a beautiful white house. The author then runs the sentences together, and the gap between the two worlds is emphasized. The world of Pecola, Cholly, Claudia, and Frieda is nothing like Dick and Jane’s. Both Dick and Jane are white, blonde and blue-eyed children. In the Dick and Jane reader, their happiness can be seen as linked to their whiteness. Immediately, the conflict rises between Dick and Jane, who are worth mentioning in a school; however Pecola, Claudia and Frieda are poor black children who do not live in a static allusion of happiness. Undoubtedly, the preface gives an indication of the rise confusion the characters in the novel will be experiencing as they are faced with racial oppression. Dick and Jane are creations of the white society that determines the ‘material values’ and ‘desirable appearance’ for everyone. So, the Dick and Jane reader represents the institutionalized ethnocentrism of the white logos, of how white and standards are woven into the very texture of the fabric of American life. Furthermore, “the all-too-familiar lines of the Dick and Jane primer also serves as an important contrast, pointing out an essential difference between the cold, clear logic of the white text and the often irrational pain of the black text which is to follow” (Powell, 1990: 749).

Last of all, there are three important points of colonial problems; particularly the power of dominance, concept of equality, and also constructed concept of beauty by the colonizer, that make both Pecola and Claudia become different from their ex-colonizer. Bhabha (1994) acknowledges that colonial form a colonized group in order to be similar to the occupiers but still distinguishable from the colonizers. Both Pecola and Claudia cannot maintain their own beauty concept because those three points are indeed strongly accepted and internalized
by the majority society they are engaged in. Therefore, it would be difficult for the member of minority groups, especially Claudia, to change or even “reconstruct” the beauty construction which the majority groups believe for a long time. Unfortunately, both Pecola and Claudia fail to construct their own beauty concept; however, they are successful to be different from their colonizers. When somebody fails to be similar, it means he is successful to be different. When somebody fails to be equal, it means that he is successful to be unequal. This is what concept of inequality wants; that is to make everybody gets aware that he deserves to be incomparable with other people. Everybody is created differently from other people in the world, and he is created with his own excesses which cannot be compared with other people. So, when Claudia wants to be identified “as beautiful as” the Whites, it will result nothing. In order to be identified as beautiful, it means that she has to show the beauty of the black in her own way. Her self-receptiveness as a black is her excess and this receptiveness, at least, helps her to survive in her community. In response to this topic, Pecola becomes the object of mockery because she has not this self-receptiveness; that is why she is easily indoctrinated by the white beauty construction.

The presence of Claudia in the novel is more important rather than Pecola. Claudia positively constructs her beauty concept by challenging the white beauty construction; while Pecola negatively constructs it by easily following that beauty construction. Claudia deserves to receive better identification as a black because she does not merely follow what the Whites have in mind, particularly in the case of beauty construction. She does struggle for challenging this racialised beauty construction. Although at last Claudia cannot maintain her resistance against the beauty construction, but at least she has tried to challenge it; while Pecola does not. With her self-receptiveness as a black, Claudia’s struggle for the blacks in order to be identified as beautiful in their own way is completely delivered to the readers of *The Bluest Eye*.

**CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

From the article, it can be concluded there is no need to change our physical look in order to be the same with other people because the result will impossibly show that way. Everybody is different from each other, particularly in physical appearances, and has his/her own uniqueness compared to each other. Moreover, this article suggests that the idea of becoming black and white is not the same. As acknowledged by Bhabha (1994), colonial form a colonized group in order to be similar to the occupiers but still distinguishable from the colonizers. As asserted by Bennet (Ed.) (1998:63), everyone must have an equal chance of becoming unequal. Thus, everything that Claudia has done to rebel and struggle for equality does not work much to change the way Whites think about the Blacks, for whom they underestimated for so many years. Yancy (2005:278) then emphasizes that “blackness and whiteness are not equivalent because the situations of black and white people are not equivalent. The situation of the blacks is not that of a dominant people within our racialized society, nor is blackness the bad faith identity of the dominant”. Throughout the story, Morrison has successfully presented the spirit of post-colonial through the character of Claudia. Claudia’s resistance toward the white beauty construction is the message that Morrison wants to deliver to the readers; that a black deserves to show the
resistance toward the power of dominance to create the new identity, as independent from the ex-colonizer. On the other hand, the presence of Pecola is only functioned only as the comparison of Claudia. The way Pecola’s desire to be identified as beautiful by following the white beauty construction is Morrison’s way to advice the readers not to do this risky thing. Self-receptiveness as someone who is different from another is important to be applied in everyone’s mind and soul, absolutely.

Furthermore, the issue of becoming white does not simply mean having blue eyes only. Blue eyes is only one of the White beauty identities; it signifies that though Pecola has the blue eyes, the idea what is so called beautiful is not simply established only by having them. In the novel, Pecola finds herself successfully has the blue eyes, but still the society cannot deny her ugliness because of her black skin. Fanon (2008:14) asserts that whiteness has become a symbol of purity, of Justice, Truth, and Virginity. It defines what it means to be civilized, modern and human; while black means dirty, prohibited and funereal. Black body is coded as a form of pathology; it is coded as evil, dirty, and promiscuous, as something to be avoided. Further, Flanagan (Ed.) (2007: 23) states that “skin, as many cultural studies scholars have pointed out, has been frequently understood to represent the soul or characteristics (intellectual, psychological, and social aspects) of a particular individual or race”. Not only based on the skin color, but being white is also derived from historical agency, the European ancestry/descent. Flanagan (Ed.) (2007: 23) adds that “nonwhite became a matter of phenotypic differences between Africans and those of European descent”. But still, skin color is the most obvious difference, undeniably. To conclude, Pecola will not easily become a White only by having blue eyes since her skin and ancestry is the Black.

As for suggestion, regarding with the finding of the analysis in novel The Bluest Eye, it is highly recommended for literary students who is interested to study The Bluest Eye in order to explore whether or not the concept of beauty is still held only by the White skin up until now. Considering the recent interesting topic about the Black skin of Leila Lopez who won Miss Universe 2011, then the following researcher may start exploring whether the perception of becoming identified as beautiful is nowadays in the process of changing or not. The next researcher may compare the concept of beauty between the era of The Bluest Eye was published and nowadays; whether the white supremacy still controls the beauty construction or not. Comparing the construction of beauty in these two different eras would be worth exploring.

REFERENCES


Taylor, P. C. (1999), “Malcolm’s Conk and Danto’s Color; or Four Logical


