

**THE OPPRESSIONS FACED BY BLACK WOMEN CHARACTERS IN
TONI MORRISON'S *THE BLUEST EYE***

THESIS

**By
Rochmawati
NIM. 02320021**



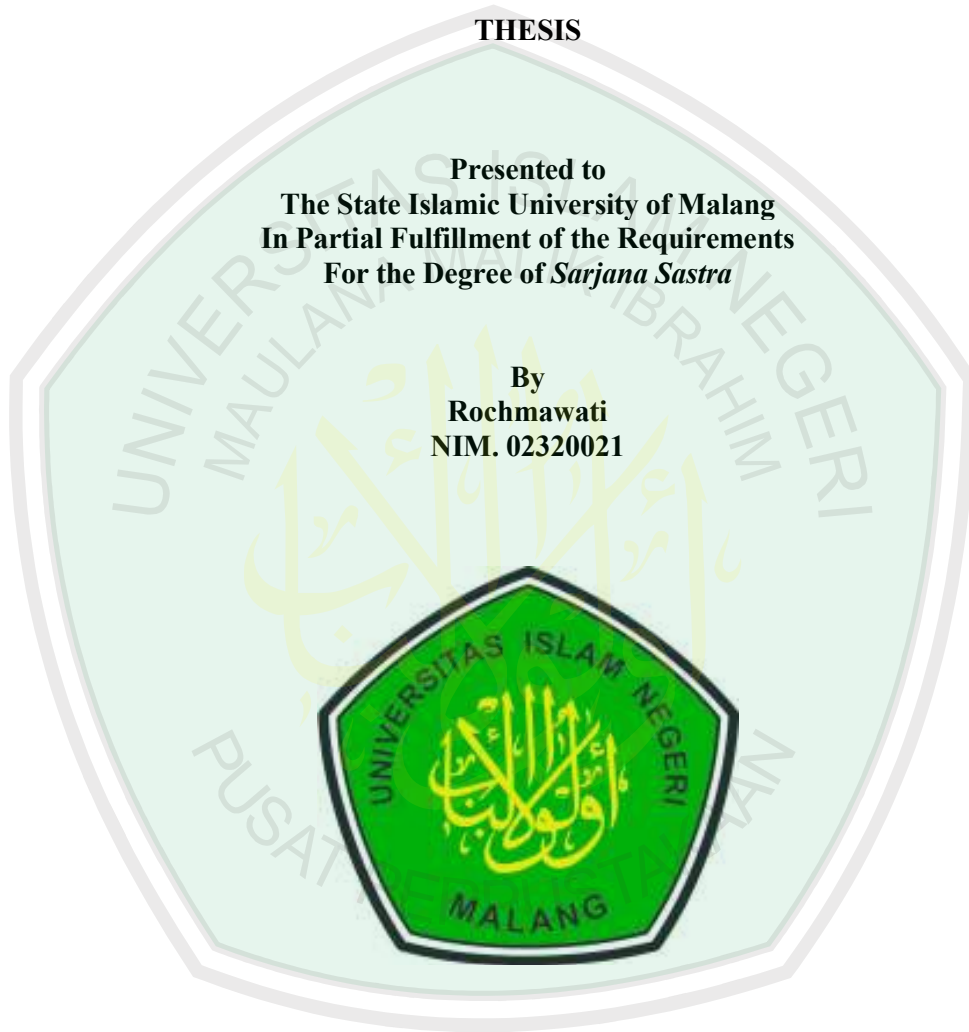
**ENGLISH LETTERS AND LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND CULTURE
THE STATE ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY OF MALANG
2007**

**THE OPPRESSIONS FACED BY BLACK WOMEN CHARACTERS IN
TONI MORRISON'S *THE BLUEST EYE***

THESIS

**Presented to
The State Islamic University of Malang
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of *Sarjana Sastra***

**By
Rochmawati
NIM. 02320021**



**ENGLISH LETTERS AND LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND CULTURE
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2007**

APPROVAL SHEET

This is to certify that the Sarjana's Thesis of Rochmawati entitled *The Oppressions Faced by Black Women Characters in Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye* has been approved by the advisor for further approval by the board of examiners as the requirements for the degree of "Sarjana Sastra" (SS) in English Letters and Language Department, Faculty of Humanities and Culture, The State Islamic University of Malang.

Malang, June 2007

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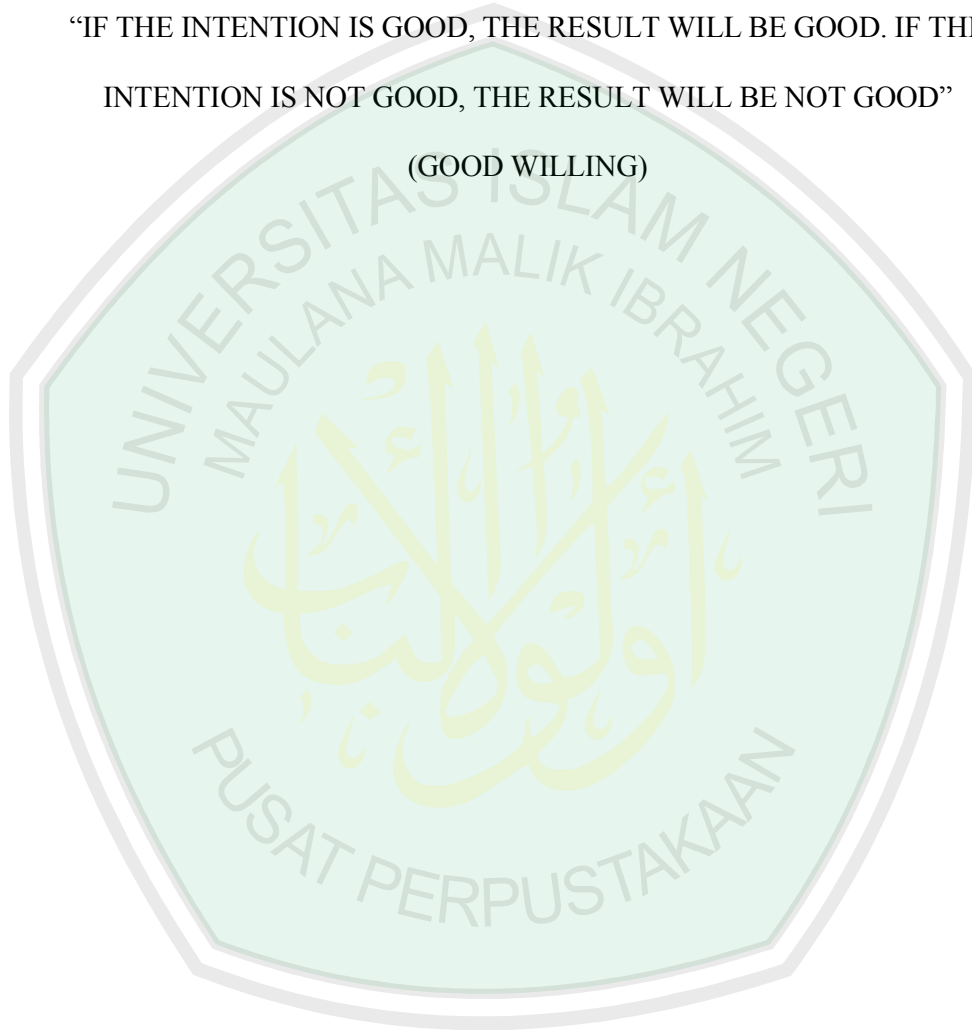
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MOTTO

EVERYTHING IS BASED ON THE INTENTION.

“IF THE INTENTION IS GOOD, THE RESULT WILL BE GOOD. IF THE
INTENTION IS NOT GOOD, THE RESULT WILL BE NOT GOOD”

(GOOD WILLING)



DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated for people who want to study about women's oppressions



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Nurmala Sari, Ai'Mulyani Az-Zahra, Evi Yusnia, Titin Amalia, Siti Khodijah,
Afiifah Al Rosyidah, Miftahul Huda, Mr. Fathullah & Aa' Acep Awaludin.

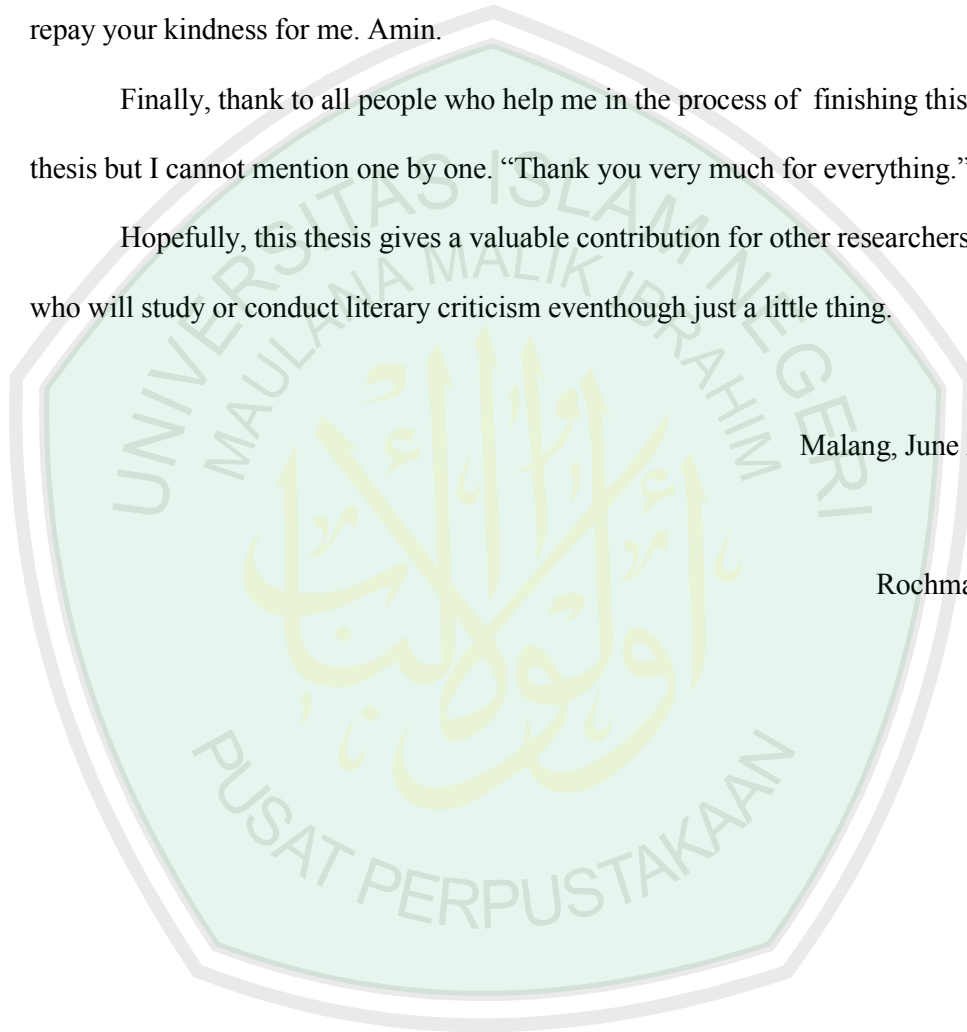
“Thanks for your motivations, suggestions, supports, love and pray.” May Allah
repay your kindness for me. Amin.

Finally, thank to all people who help me in the process of finishing this
thesis but I cannot mention one by one. “Thank you very much for everything.”

Hopefully, this thesis gives a valuable contribution for other researchers
who will study or conduct literary criticism eventhough just a little thing.

Malang, June 2007

Rochmawati



ABSTRACT

Rochmawati. 2007. **The Oppressions Faced by Black Women Characters in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye***. Thesis. English Letters and Language Department, Faculty of Humanities and Culture. The State Islamic University of Malang. Advisor: Dra. Siti Masithoh, M. Hum.

Keywords: oppressions, black female.

Woman with oppressions are the social phenomena and problem that are linked together whose existences are often heard and seen both in the real life and literary work. Nowadays, women oppressions become the important issue discussed by most of women because it is acknowledged that in our society there is the structure of oppression whereas women become the object of oppression. Women are oppressed because men and most women too consider that women are as weak creatures. In other words, men become the powerful creatures who have more privilege than women. Men can control women, that is known as patriarchy system.

Basically, both White and Black women receive the same oppression because of the image given to them, women are weak creature. Meanwhile, Black women have a slight different between them. Black women receive double oppression. Black women are not only receiving unequal privileged or disadvantages experiences caused by their gender but also by their race and class. As portrayed in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, Black women are oppressed which is not only caused by their natural as a women but also by their differential color of skin and their class. Thus, the researcher is interested in studying women oppression which is focused on Black women in *The Bluest Eye*. Meanwhile, this study is aimed at finding the kinds of oppressions and the response of Black women from those oppressions.

To achieve the above objectives of the study, the researcher applies a feminist literary criticism which insists on linking the novel with the women oppression. So that, this study is involved in literary criticism because of its emphasis on the analysis of a literary work. The primary data of this study are collected from Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*. About the theory of feminism and its elements, researcher herself becomes the research instrument in the process of data collection and data analysis. Based on the researcher's analysis, the oppression faced by Black women portrayed in the novel shows four kinds of oppressions, namely social deprivation, physical, cultural, and psychological oppression. Then, there are three responses of women while facing the oppressions. Those are receiving, imitating, and rejecting the oppressions.

So that, from this study, the researcher hopes there will be other researchers who concern to this study about women whereas mostly women become the victim of oppression not only in the real life but also in literary work. Moreover, the researcher also expects, through this study, she could awaken the readers to defend the equality of women's rights by showing the women's oppressions. Hopefully, women will realize that women need to defend the equality with men in order not be an oppression object by patriarchy system.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

COVER	i
APPROVAL SHEET	ii
LEGITIMATION SHEET	iii
MOTTO	iv
DEDICATION	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	vi
ABSTRACT	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	ix
CHAPTER I	1
1.1 Background of the Study.....	1
1.2 Problems of the Study	5
1.3 Objectives of the Study	5
1.4 Scope and Limitation of the Study.....	6
1.5 Significant of the Study	6
1.6 Definition of the Study.....	7
CHAPTER II	9
2.1 Feminist Literary Criticism.....	9
2.2 Women Oppression.....	12
2.3 Kinds of Oppression	19
2.3.1 Social Deprivation	19
2.3.2 Psychological Oppression	20
2.3.3 Cultural Oppression.....	25
2.3.4 Psychological Oppression	27
2.4 Response of Oppression.	28
1. Acceptance Response	28
2. Imitation Response.....	29
3. Rejection Response.....	30
2.5 Previous Study.....	31

CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHOD	34
3.1 Research Design	34
3.2 Data Sources.....	35
3.3 Research Instrument.....	35
3.4 Data Collection.....	35
3.5 Data Analysis	36
CHAPTER IV ANALYSIS	37
4.1 The Oppressions of Black Women Characters	37
4.1.1 Pauline's Oppression.....	37
4.1.2 Pecola's Oppression	45
4.1.3 Claudia's Oppression.....	49
4.1.4 Frieda's Oppression.....	49
4.2 The Response of Black Women's Upon Oppression They Experience	50
4.2.1 Pauline's Response	51
4.2.2 Pecola's Response	56
4.2.3 Claudia's Response	58
4.2.4 Frieda's Response	59
CHAPTER V CONCLUSION AND SUGESTION	
5.1 Conclusion	61
5.2 Suggestion	64
BIBLIOGRAPHY	66
APPENDIXES	
CURICULUM VITAE	

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Criticism is a common act of criticizing in academic communities in order to understand what they study. There are a lot of students in universities, especially for the students of letters conducting an act of criticizing as their academic requirement and trains their thinking and sensitivity in understanding the phenomenon and development on literary study, as it is cited by Lodge in his *Modern Criticism and Theory* (2000:xi). In understanding the literary works, the students will know the meaning, the worthiness, the values and the sense of the literary works itself.

Further, criticizing the literary work is also one way how to appreciate the literary text, as Lodge (2000: xi) adds his explanation about the aims of criticizing literary work. By criticizing, the student will reveal the meaning and aesthetic values of literary work and admit that literary works are the product of human's thought that most of the ideas have to be appreciated. Besides, literary works are taken from the people's experiences and imaginations that the students can take the lesson from the author's works which is implicitly and explicitly applies a message through their works. So that, by doing criticism the students will know how the aesthetics values are important to be appreciated.

Moreover, conducting criticism in literary is aimed at increasing the theory or approach in literary criticism itself in order to answer the developing question about literature in our era. Here, the increase of theories and approaches that are offered in

literary criticism help the students be able to answer the recent questions in literary which are intertwined with social condition at the time the author wrote the literary work. So that, in line with this study, the aims are not merely to understand and appreciate the literary works but also to increase the theory itself, as Lodge states in his *Modern Criticism and Theory* (2002: xi), by analyzing, interpreting, and evaluating literary work.

Related to this study, the researcher tries to use feminist criticism approach and theory in order to reveal the oppressions received by Black women in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*. Feminist literary criticism is used because it is an appropriate approach and theory to understand the relation between literary work and women's oppression in literary work. As it is cited by Peck & Coyle (1986:151-153) that feminist criticism admits the relation which is applied sex discrimination and suppression on women in literary work.

Meanwhile, feminist literary criticism has many genre that appears in literary work, such as liberal feminism, marxist feminism, psychoanalysis feminism, existentialist feminist, black feminism and many else. Eventhough there are many genre of feminism, there is the same aim. The aim is to struggle women right and their equality with women.

Discussing about Black women oppression, basically, Black and White women receive the same oppressions that are done by man socially, physiologically, culturally, and psychologically. As it is cited by Bell Hooks that Black women as well as other groups of women are in oppressive situation that acquire an awareness of patriarchal politics from their life experience (<http://hsph.harvard.edu/organizations/heathnet/>

WoC/ feminisms /hooks.html).

Meanwhile, Black and White women have slight difference oppression between them. Here, Black women not merely receive oppression by men because of their gender but also their race and class, as cited by Andersen (2003:14-16). Moreover, Collins asserts that African-American women have been victimized by race, gender, and class oppression (<http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/45a/252.html>). So that, it is clear enough to show that Black women have double oppressions that are not only caused by their gender but also their race and class, which is worthy to note.

When the researcher considers novel to be the object of the research, she considers Toni Morrison as one of the best representatives of women writers who deserves to get honors because of her valuable writing. It can be proved by Mickay in Warhol & Herndl's *Feminist; an Anthology of Literary Theory and Criticism* (1991:285) who mentions that as a new writer, Morrison is included as one of the Black women writers who produces an astonishing writing in the last three decades. Moreover, she is also awarded the 1993 Nobel Prize Pulitzer for literature that makes African American to be so honored by her artistry of African American fiction and the validity of the Black women's voice.

Furthermore, Morrison is included as a women's heroine who struggles the women's freedom from the oppression. In her fictions, most of her writings concern about women who are oppressed and discriminated by their gender class and race different. In her writing, she emphasizes on the Black female experience in her own fiction, struggling to find mirror of her worth in her Black society and emerging her writing from the universe of her mind which has been shaped by the African American

culture of her childhood and forged by her experiences as an African American woman (Taylor & Guthrie, 1994: vii). Here, Morrison's struggle can be proved by her novels such as *The Bluest eye* (1970), *Sula* (1973), *Beloved* (1987) and many else.

In this research, the researcher considers *The Bluest Eye* (1970), the first Toni Morrison's novel becomes an interesting novel to discuss. The reason is because the main conflict that appears in this novel is about Black women which become the central object that are oppressed. In this novel, the oppression of Black women characters becomes the main conflict, because Black women characters in the novel are depicted as the victim of different sex or gender and also the victim of class and race that are predicated on them.

Moreover, *The Bluest Eye* invites the reader to be part of the resolution from the main conflict that is the Black female characters' oppression. Further, the readers are invited to think about how to face the oppressions without disadvantages or causing a negative impact on the women. From those resolutions it is expected to reduce or even stop the oppression of women, especially the oppression of the Black women.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher is interested in studying feminist literary criticism of the novel *The Bluest Eye* written by Toni Morrison which focuses on the oppression of the Black female characters particularly Pauline, Pecola, Claudia, and Frieda. These women characters are considered by the researcher as the important characters because they receive hard oppression than other Black female characters in the novel. Further, this study is given a title, "***The oppressions Faced by Black Women Characters in Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye***". Meanwhile, for the problems of the study, the researcher would like to reveal the oppressions faced by the

Black women characters and to describe the Black women characters' response towards the oppression they face as reflected in *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison.

Furthermore, this research is expected to give contribution and information even though just a little about the theory and the application of the criticism in feminist literary criticism. Further, by using feminist literary criticism on *The Bluest Eye*, this research is expected to give contribution and information about the feminist literary criticism which discusses about the Black women and their oppressions caused by their gender, race, and class on the Morrison's *The Blues Eye*. From the result of this study, the researcher also expects that this research can awaken the readers to defend the equality of women's rights

1.2 Statements of the Problems

Based on the above background of the study, the problems of this study will be focused on two problems. These problems further are formulated as follows:

1. What kinds of oppression are faced by Pauline, Pecola, Claudia, and Frieda?
2. How do they respond the oppressions?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

In line with the previous problems, the objectives of this study are as follows:

1. to reveal the oppressions faced by Pauline, Pecola, Claudia, and Frieda
2. to describe their respond toward the oppression

1.4 Scope and Limitation

This study is focused on the Black female characters in *The Bluest Eye*. The scope of this study is about the female oppression especially dealing with the oppression of Black female in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*. Furthermore, this study is only focused on the oppression that is faced by Pauline, Pecola, Claudia, and Frieda as the major characters.

Further, this study is limited only on answering the problems of the study, they are the kinds of oppression and the respond of the oppression which include in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study has significance in two aspects: theoretical and practical aspect. Theoretically, the research is expected to give contributions in the theoretical based of literary criticism, particularly in feminist literary criticism in order to comprehend the feminist theory that has more than one theory. Practically, this study tries to apply a feminist literary criticism by considering an appropriate feminist theory, which is connected with text or with literary work.

Moreover, as a women study, the result of this study, although merely a few, is expected to contribute and enrich information for other readers or researchers who are interested in understanding and implementing the feminist literary criticism on literary work in the future.

1.6 Definition of the Key Terms

Some terms hold the key of this study. In order to give clear meaning of them, the definition of key terms are given to help readers to understand the whole study and to avoid misconception of the terms used. Even though almost of these terms have no conventional definitions, the researcher applies the closest definition related to this study, and they are:

1. Oppression: The experience of repeated widespread, and systemic injustice (Norton Deutsch, http://www.beyondintracalibility.org/essay/nature_origin_suppression).

2. Feminist Literary criticism

There is still no convention about feminist literary criticism. Meanwhile according Patrick to feminist literary criticism is the term for criticizing literary works through the examination of female points of view, concerns, and values. Feminist literary criticism encompasses not only female literary works but also male literary works, leaving men to be held accountable for their portrayal of women as well as men in their literary works (http://classiclit.about.com/od/literaryterms/g/aa_feminist.htm? terms+feminist+literary+criticism). Meanwhile, Feminist criticism is a type of literary criticism, which may study and advocate the rights of women. As Judith Fetterley says, "feminist criticism is a political act whose aim is not simply to interpret the world but to change it by changing the consciousness of those who read and their relation to what they read." Using feminist criticism to analyze fiction may involve studying the repression of women in fiction. How men and women differ, what difference is about female heroes and why these characters are

important in literary history. In addition to many of the questions raised by a study of women in literature, feminist criticism may study stereotypes, creativity, ideology, racial issues, marginality, and many more.



CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Feminist Literary Criticism

Feminist literary criticism is a theoretical issue that appears in the early 1960s by the initiation of women's movement. Here, feminist literary criticism has played an important role in order to break the logo centric tradition by challenging the superior of privileged concept and values in patriarchal system, which is men handle power to control women in culture and literature.

Meanwhile, there are various theories in feminist literary criticism in which until now there is no conventional definition. This is because there is no theory that dominates feminist criticism, and few theorists agree on unifying feminist approach to textual analysis. So that, the condition of physical geography of the countries plays a great part in determining the major issues in aspirating the women's voice that is oppressed (Bressler, 1999:185).

Furthermore, Annete Kolodny argues that feminist literary criticism is more like a set of interchangeable strategies than united or shared goal orientation. Since then, the expression of feminist goals have not been specific unified. Such as Black feminist, which is concerning the women's oppression in both racial and sexual politics; Marxist feminist, which is focused on the women's oppression on class along with gender oppression; Freudian and Lacanian critics focused on women's relationship to language and signification (Showalter in Lodge & Wood, 2000:308).

In line with that, Warhol & Herndl write in their *Feminism, an Antology of Literary Theory and Criticism* (1991: xvi):

The organization of *Feminism* is ultimately arbitrary-in that way, the volume most stingingly resembles a quilt. We have cut out and stitched together pieces of criticism, and we have laid them out in a pattern that imposes a sense of coherence the pieces themselves might not have fallen into of their own accord. But, like the components of a quilt, those pieces all maintain their own integrity. Pulled together into the fabric of feminist criticism, the pieces acquire a new form and new function in *Feminism*. We hope our readers will be critical, actively considering the value not just of individual pieces, the governing design. We hope, too, that readers who become newly acquainted with these pieces will be moved to go back to the bolts from which they have been cut, to acquire a comfortable familiarity with all the material of criticism and theory.

Here, they suggest the readers particularly those who newly acquaint with the pieces of feminism not to pattern on individual pieces of feminism but more become critical and active in considering the value of each piece.

Meanwhile, Warhol & Herndl, (1991: x) add their assertion that feminist critics generally agree that the oppression of women is a fact of life that gender oppression applies on literary text and literary history. So that, feminist literary criticism plays a worthwhile part in the struggle to end women oppression in the world outside of text. Here, when they turn their attention to social history, most feminists agree that the oppression of ethnic and racial minorities, gay men and lesbians, and working class people are closely tied to the oppression of women.

It is acknowledged that there is no conventional definition of feminist literary criticism. Bressler (1999:180) writes that the feminist's goal is to change the degrading view of women and to make women realize that they are not a non-significant other, but each of them is a valuable person who possesses the same privileges

and right as every men. Further, by personally committing on them to keep a better changing, feminist hope to be able to create a society where male and female voices are equally valued.

Nevertheless, Lombardi argues that feminist criticism is a type of literary criticism which may study and advocate the rights of women. As Judith Fetterley says, “Feminist criticism is a political act whose aim is not simply to interpret the world but to change it by changing the consciousness of those who read and their relation to what they read”. Further, she also explains that by using feminist criticism to analyze fiction, it may involve studying the repression of women in fiction. Such as: how men differ to women, what are the differences about female heroines, and why these characters are important in literary history. There are many questions raised by a study of women in literature. For addition, feminist criticism also may study stereotypes, creativity, ideology, racial issues, marginality, and many more (http://classiclit.about.com/od/literaryterms/g/aa_feminist.htm?terms+feminist+literary+criticism).

From the explanation above, it is admitted that there are different opinions about feminist literary criticism. Then, there is no one can judge that his opinion is the right way, theory and approach in conducting feminist literary criticism. In avoiding bias activities in feminist literary criticism, Barry (2002:224) mentions what the feminist critics do, namely: (1) Rethinking the canon, aiming at the rediscovery of texts written by women, (2) Revalue women’s experience, (3) Examine representations of women in literature by men and women, (4) Challenge representations of women as ‘Other’, as ‘Lack’, as part of ‘nature,’ (5) Examine power relations of which obtain in texts and in life, with a view to breaking them

down, seeing reading as a political act, and showing the extent of patriarchy, (6) Recognize the role of language in making what is social and constructed seem transparent and 'natural,' (7) Raise the question of whether men and women are 'essentially' different because of biology, or socially constructed as different, (8) Explore the question of whether there is a female language, an 'écriture feminine', and whether this is also available to men, (9) 'Re-read' psychoanalysis to further exploration of the female's issue and male identity, (10) Question the popular notion of the death of the author, asking whether there are only subject position constructed in discourse, or whether, on the contrary, the experience (e.g. of a black or lesbian writer) is central, (11) Make clear the ideological base of supposedly 'neutral' or 'mainstream' literary interpretations.

In line with the points of what feminist critics do, the researcher tends to the second point as the activity in this research which is revaluing women's experience in order to reveal the oppression of women.

2.2 Women Oppression

Norton Deutsch mentions that the oppression is the experience of repeated, widespread, and systemic injustice. But, it is not extreme and involves in the legal system for example as in slavery, apartheid, or the lack of right to vote. Further, it is also no violence as in tyrannical societies ([http://www .beyondintracalbility.org/essay/nature_origins_oppression](http://www.beyondintracalbility.org/essay/nature_origins_oppression)).

Meanwhile, Harvey has used the term "civilized oppression" to characterize the everyday process of oppression in normal life. Firstly, civilized oppression is caused by norms, habits, and symbols that are embedded in society which cannot be

questioned the reasons. On the other hand, those can impact to some groups that deviate with those unquestioned assumptions and reaction of well people in common interaction which are supported by the media and cultural stereotypes as well as by structural features of hierarchies and market system (http://www.beyondintracalbility.org/essay/nature_origins_oppression).

Secondly, civilized oppression is systematically reproduced by the major economic, political, and cultural institution. In this case, the superior groups are the beneficiaries of the continuation of the status quo that becomes the agents of the oppression (http://www.beyondintracalbility.org/essay/nature_origins_oppression).

Basically, the origins of oppression are pioneered while in the development of agriculture such as hunting, gathering, and fishing societies were imaged as egalitarian and cooperative societies because they can produce food. Meanwhile, in the early nomadic societies, all people who physically can participate in gathering food in order to fulfill the necessity of life can join those members. Here, the divisions occur within these group are mainly based on sex, age and individual physical and social abilities. Further, the distribution of food, work production and societies tend to be egalitarian. So that, the group that can give the necessity of life becomes the egalitarian group. Then, the group of aged and weak will often have low priority (http://www.beyondintracalbility.org/essay/nature_origins_oppression).

Thirdly, the oppression is caused by one's skill or lucky. The development of the surplus of food leads to the important of new occupation such as traders, merchants, administrators, artisans, soldiers, and rulers. Here, one can speculate the social hierarchy which is imaged as the successful one based on his skill or lucky. So

that, the successful fanner depends on the successful ones. The successful ones can increase wealth, godliness, and then have support from the priest and soldiers to control the weaker. Then, the superior will increase the power of the winners to exploit the weaker who alliances among the more powerful (http://www.beyondintracalability.org/essay/nature_origins_oppression/).

Meanwhile, oppression becomes an important issue discussed by mostly women, because it is acknowledged that in our society there is the structure of oppressions that women become the objects that oppressed as well, as it is cited by Robbins in Wolfrey (1999:50). Here, women receive the injustice or unequal privileges with and by men. The view that women are oppressed simply happens because men, and most women too, have the wrong opinions about women (http://www.anu.edu.au/polsci/marx/contemp/pamsetc/women/ws_3.htm). That women are believed as a weak. Then, men are believed intrinsically better than women who can repeatedly lead to discrimination and prejudice to women (<http://samvak.tripod.com/sexgender.html>).

Furthermore, Simone de Beauvoir asserts that women's subordination is preceded by men's assumption that views women as basically different from themselves. Here, women's status is reduced as the second sex. In addition, Kate Millet, Shulamith Firestone, and others also argue that these views, women's differences from men, are the chief mechanism of their oppression. Further, these differences are admitted as the result of patriarchy which is designed in order to exclude women from activities outside the home (Eisenstein, 1988:3).

Further, discussing about Black women's oppressions issues, basically, they receive the same oppression with the other women, White or other women color, that

are regarded as the inferior in male view. Here, Bell Hooks asserts that Black women, as well as other groups of women who live daily in oppressive situations, often acquire an awareness of patriarchal politics from their life experience (<http://hsph.harvard.edu/Organizations/healthnet/WoC/feminisms/hooks.html>). Meanwhile, there are slight differences between them. Here, Black women not only receive unequal privileged or disadvantages experiences caused by their gender but also by their race and class (Andersen, 2003:14-16).

Gender and relationships between men and women are the central themes in feminist literary criticism (Coyle & Peck, 1986:152). Feminist criticism concerns in exploring that literature is sexist in the portrayal of women, or by showing how texts reveal the injustices of a male society where women are regarded as inferior.

Since years ago, literature becomes culture regime and has strong attractive power on gender problems. Here, women are described as soft, jewelry, and flower. Then, men are described as intellectual persons, smart, active, etc. Moreover, men are figured as the authority than women that are assumed as the dream and always become the second sex who subordinates (Endraswara, 2004:143).

Moreover, Millet demonstrates her evidence from the work of social psychologist that for female normally meant passive, while for male normally meant active. Further, in characters traits of men, they are imaged as tenacious, aggressive, curious, ambitious, plan full, responsible, original, and competitive. Meanwhile, women have expressive traits they are affectionate, obedient, responsive to sympathy and approval, cheerful, kind, and friendly (Eisenstein, 1988:8).

Gender is used to explain the differences between woman and man, and then it is regarded to be able to explain the difference between them. Meanwhile, it is admitted that the gender difference is not the result from biological sex alone, rather it from the interaction of social, psychological, and physiological factors (Kimmel, 1974:197-198). Further, Grimshaw (1986:85) asserts that gender is absolutely the inflection of one's experience, such as young or old; sick or healthy; married or unmarried; a parent or not parent; employed or unemployed, middle class or working class, rich or poor, Black or White, and so forth. Here, he adds that gender absolutely the inflection of someone experiences of these things. So that, the experiences that happen on them may more be radically different based on whether one is man or woman.

Meanwhile, gender symbols are used to denote a male or female organism. In common usage, the word gender often refers to the sexual distinction between male and female. According to Wahrol & Herndl (1991: x), "gender" is a debatable term. Some writers use it to mean biological sex, male or female, whereas others insist upon making a distinction between biology and culture. The latter theorists argue that masculinity and femininity are not predetermined by the body itself, but are constructed within culture.

On the other hand, Grimshaw (1986: 113) mentions that one of the common distinctions made in feminist writing is that between sex and gender. As Oakley gives clearest statements in her book *Sex, Gender and Society* (1972), she says:

On the whole, Western society is organized around the assumption that the differences between the sexes are more important than any qualities they have in common. When people try to justify this assumption in terms of 'natural' differences, two separate processes become confused; the tendency to differentiate by sex, and the tendency to differentiate in a particular way by sex. The first is genuinely a constant feature of human

society, but the second is not, and its inconstancy marks, the division between 'sex' and 'gender': sex differences may be 'natural' but gender differences have their source in culture, not nature

Here, Oakley in Grimshaw (1986: 113) produces a great deal of evidence from anthropology, studies different socialization patterns and the like, to show the huge variability of gender distinctions. She argues that the supposition that any particular version of these gender differences is 'natural' (that is dictated by biological sex) often used to oppress women, to put them in positions of dependence and inequality.

So that, Grimshaw (1986:114) notes Oakley's argument above that sex and gender are the fact that it is premised on sharp distinctions between 'nature' and 'culture', between what is 'biological' and what is 'cultural'. Then, 'Sex' is seen as 'biological' and 'gender' as 'cultural.'

Meanwhile, Millet's analysis is relied on the work of Robert Stoller, John Money, and others on "*core gender identity*" convincingly demonstrate that biological sex and social gender are separable concepts (Eisenstein, 1988:7). Conceptually, it is possible to make distinction between sex and gender. Sex means the biological sex, male or female. Gender is culturally and socially shaped cluster of expectations, attributes, and behaviors assigned to that category of human being by the society.

Meanwhile, Black women's oppression based on their race could be traced historically which Black men also receive their race. Here, historically factors have great and importance influence in this connection. From viewpoint of Whites, the facts of slavery and colonization must at least have reinforced the nation of racial hierarchy with Blacks in an inferior position (International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, 1968:442). Meanwhile, the idea that Black people are inferior, for example,

belongs to societies that exploit Black people, either as slaves or as cheap labor (http://www.anu.edu.au/polsci/marx/contemp/pamsetc/women/ws_3.html).

Huda in his thesis (2006:38) cites that genetically, White European is the most superior race, yellow Asian is the moderate, and Black African is the most inferior. In more general term, all Whites are everywhere superior and, thus, deserve rights to oppress Black who are inferior. So that, Black becomes the most prominent victim of racism throughout the world.

Nevertheless, in a heterogeneous society, minority (the inferior race) groups, or simply minorities, are defined contrast to the dominant ones or majorities (the superior race). The choice of terms is unfortunate because they have numerical connotation. Despite their literal meaning, minorities and majorities are not statistical categories but social status. According to Hess et.al. (1985:223), majority refers to the power to control over central sectors of life, including the power to define standards of beauty and worth.

Moreover, physically, in line with the standard of beauty, Black women are deprived by those, White people, as the superior, rolled the standard of beauty. Here, the women who are regarded as beauty have white skin, clean, blond hair and not curly etc. Unfortunately, these images are supported by media that appears the ideal image of women which are dominated by the dominant group and men (http://www.d.umn.edu/_bmork/2306/2111/collinpatricia.htm). So that, black women are easily influenced and deprived by the standard of beauty that imaged through media which are physically different.

Meanwhile, in the case of the poor Black women, these women are oppressed

in the class hierarchy system. Robinson mentions that firstly these women's positions are in White male power, followed by White female, and then Black male and lastly the Black female ([http://scriptorium.lib.duke/wm/poor/# reply](http://scriptorium.lib.duke/wm/poor/#reply)). So that, Black women, moreover poor Black women receive double oppression by their gender, race and class.

2.3 Kinds of Oppression

From the explanation of women oppression above, it can be traced that women's oppression itself basically has wide range such as what has been mentioned by Robbins in Wolfrey (1999:50):

...feminism suggest that women are troubled by other structures of oppression as well. Among those structures, feminist theories identify social deprivations specific to women (poor access to education and well-paid work); physiological oppression or the oppression of the body by the virtue of its femaleness (the fact that bearing children and rearing of them is largely women's work, or the fact that women are physically less powerful than men, and can be subjected to violence and rape); cultural oppression (in which women are devalued into cultural objects, rather than valued as subjects); and psychological oppression (where women are denied masculine status, and often believe in their own inferiority, because they lack masculine bodies and minds)....

From here, we can mention the kinds of women's oppressions that are social deprivation, physiological oppression, cultural oppression, and psychological oppression. So that, the following section will discuss largely on it.

2.3.1 Social Deprivations

The first kind of women oppression is social deprivation. In this kind of oppression, women are deprived their specific social rights, such as in education system

and work who do not receive well paid work (Robbins in Wolfrey (1999:50).

Collins in her “*The Politic of Critical Social Theory*” asserts that both education system and curriculum are the fundamental transmission to hierarchal power relation by the elite group that has power to handle (<http://www.stumptuous.com/comps/collins.html>). Meanwhile, Bell Hooks and Donna Geines both feel that class (hierarchal system) becomes a major issue that can affect the students in receiving the education (<http://www.exampleessays.com/viewpaper/934.html>). So that, it can be known that in education system there is hierarchal system which is affecting the student in receiving the education.

In the case of women work, mostly women, Black or White, are discriminated by their gender in their work. It can be proved by the salary they receive. They do not receive the same salary as men. Meanwhile, in line with Black women oppression, Black women do not have enough braveness to face with others, they are being exploited economically as a worker, being used as a source of cheap labor because she is a female, and being treated even worse because she is Black. (<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/wlm/blkmanifMdouble>, accessed on February 19,2007).

2.3.2 Physiological Oppression

The second kind of women oppression is physiological oppression. This oppression regards the fact of physiological body of women or based on the virtue of femaleness that naturally bear children and rear them considered as largely women’s work. Further, women are oppressed physiologically by looking from the fact that women are physically less power than men, then they are subjected to violence and

rape (Robbins in Wolfrey, 1999:50).

Women, Black and White, generally, receive the same oppression. Here, in psychological oppression, firstly, Black women are oppressed by their Black physical, as Black men experience. Blacks are oppressed by their physic that is different from White people who have different color of hair, eyes, and skin that are mostly are black. Here, Black women are oppressed with their physics by self fighting the beautiful standard of White western society that has white skin (<http://SCRIPTORIUM.LIB.DUKE.EDU/wlm/blkmanif/#double>).

Same with other women oppression, Black women are oppressed caused by their biological virtues function that is bearing the child. Shulamith Firestone argued that women's childbearing function was the basic cause of women's oppression because while women bear children, they cannot be free or equal to men because they have to rearing the children (Grimshaw, 1988:118).

Furthermore, biological determinist arguments often assume that hormonal differences between women and men are the presumption of the differences between the aggressive and passive behavior. Many researchers, however, shows that boys are more aggressive at an early age that contradicts with the girls that are biologically determined more passive (Andersen, 2003:27).

While men are regarded physically more powerful than women, rape become a traditional concept of male and female sexuality. Here male are sexually aggressive and female are sexually passive (Herman in Freeman, 1984:20).

Meanwhile, Brownmiller's argues that rape, the fact of forcing a woman to have sexual intercourse without her will, is the secret of patriarchy. In this case, patriarchy is the possibility and actuality of rape that serves as the main agent of the eternity of male domination over women by force (Eisenstein, 1988:27). Further, if healthy heterosexuality is characterized by loving, warm and response by satisfying action, rape can be defined as a sex without consent, but it is involving either in domination or violence and affected by force and intimidation. So that, Griffin argues that rape is a kind of terrorism which severely limits the freedom of women and makes women dependent on men to protect them (Herman in Freeman, 1984:20-21).

The domination by male over women can be traced from the history of myth of the nature between male and female that confess male is more aggressive than female. Such as Herman in Freeman (1984:20) asserts that rape is a traditional concept of male and female sexuality. Here, males are sexually aggressive and female are sexually passive.

Meanwhile, Herman in Freeman (1984:27) cites that according to Amir's study, it is understood that rape occurs quite commonly between people who are acquainted, and other finding is found out that this crime is started by making a sense between them before raping. And, most of the study reports that half of all rapes occur in the victim's or rapist's home.

In addition, based on Amir's study the rapist and the victim are generally of the same race and age. But most victim tends to be very young and the category with highest frequency of victim is the rape between thirteen and sixteen years old (Herman in Freeman, 1984:27-28).

The myth also survives that most rapes are spontaneous, however, statistics compiled from reported show that overwhelming majority of the rape action are planned. Here, a majority of rapes do some manipulations or tricks to place his victim in a vulnerable situation that he can exploit her (Herman in Freeman, 1984:28).

Facing the reality, the victims of rape do blame themselves of the violation that is received, when they are raped, they feel that they have failed and that they are fault. Further, much of the psychological discomfort and suffered that are experienced by women who have been raped are believed that they are part of their own sexual violation. Then, for many women, the effect of rape is worse than the physical pain of the actual rape. They are destroyed by feelings of guilty, shame, loss of self-esteem, and humiliation (Herman in Freeman, 1984:33-34).

Herman in Freeman (1984:34) adds that as long as sex in our society is constructed as a dirty, low, and violent act involving domination of male over female, rape will remain a common occurrence. Meanwhile, it is acknowledged that rape is not the only way in which women are sexually victimized and the form of sexual exploitation of women, but sexual harassment and incest too become a sexual violence in our society that is patriarchal society.

Sexual harassment is a central to keep women's subordinate in social, economic, and sexual statuses which are closely related with feminist issues. Same with rape, wife beating, prostitution, and pornography, sexual harassment is one of the ways in which male controls women's sexuality (Herman in Freeman, 1984:54).

Meanwhile, Herman in Freeman (1984:55) cites the various definitions of sexual harassment that have been proposed. Such as Safran (1976:149) defines it as

“sex that is one-sided, unwelcome, or comes with strings attached”, Farley (1978:14-15) calls it by “unsolicited, nonreciprocal male behavior that asserts a woman’s sex role over her functioning as a worker”, from a survey by responses, Inc. (1979:2) defines it as behavior that makes an individual feel that her employment situation will in some way suffer if low sexual are not met. The definition of sexual harassment throughout the federal civil service is “deliberate or repeated unsolicited verbal comments, gestures, or physical contact of a sexual nature which are unwelcome” (U.S. House of Representatives 1980:80)

Nevertheless, from the definition of sexual harassment above commonly can be defined as (1) physical or verbal behavior that is sexual insulting in nature (i.e., it makes the victim’s sex silent over the occupational or other statuses), (2) is unwanted, and (3) implicitly or explicitly is experienced as a threat to the woman’s job or ability to perform her work or educational activities.

Here, the harassing behavior itself often rarely desires a sexual activity directly but it wishes sexual behavior such as touching, teasing, and comments about a woman’s appearance or sexuality. Meanwhile, Loy and Stewart identify the harassment along two dimensions that are the form of harassments (whether it is verbal or physical) and the level of coerciveness involved and the response required (whether it requires only tolerance by the woman or evokes reciprocation or resistance). The four types are (a) verbal commentary, which includes sexual messages delivered through teasing, off-color jokes, and animal sounds, (b) verbal negotiation, which includes explicit sexual propositions and negotiation, (c) manhandling, which includes unwanted touching, such as patting, brushing against, or pinching, and (d) sexual

assault, which involves the use of physical force (Herman in Freeman, 1984:56).

2.3.3 Cultural Oppression

The third women oppression is caused by culture. Here, women are devalued into cultural object rather than valued object (Robbins in Wolfrey, 1999:50). Culturally, women are oppressed by the images by men. Culture is a pattern of expectations about what the appropriate behaviors and beliefs for the members of the society. Further, culture includes the norms that shape in everyday life, which are the expectations about how to act in any situation. Moreover, culture tells us what we ought to expect of others (Andersen, 1997:28-29).

Here, women are shaped as the ideal women by the culture since early childhood. Women are trained to accept a system divided by society into female spheres which is placed in the home (Eisenstein, 1988:7). Here, sex role stereotyping keeps women subject to the rules of patriarchy in which men have power to control women (Eisenstein, 1988:7).

The word patriarchy literally means “rule by men” and it is applied to the social or political situations where men have all or most of the power and women have little or no power. Then, it is considered characteristic of a patriarchal system that women experience consistent and systematic discrimination (http://atheism.about.com/library/glossaiy/general/bldf_patriarcy.htm).

Meanwhile, the meaning of patriarchy from Greek is “pater” which genitively comes from the word “patris” to show the root “part-” meaning father and arche meaning rule. Here, the anthropological term used to define the sociological condition where fathers have supreme authority within families and male members of a society

tend to predominate in positions of power; with the more powerful position, the more likely it is that a male will hold that position (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patriarchy>). Further, Eisenstein (1988:5) argues that the fundamental fact of male domination over women can be shown in all societies. Then, the term patriarchy is justified by this fact, the universal oppression of women by men. As Andrienne Rich in Eisenstein (1988:5) writes,

Patriarchy is the power of the fathers: a familial-social, ideological, political system in which men-by force, direct pressure, or through ritual, tradition, law and language, customs, etiquette, education, and the division of labor, determine what part women shall or shall not play, and in which the female is everywhere subsumed under the male... Under patriarchy, I may live in Purdah or drive a truck; ... I may serve my husband his early-morning coffee within the clay walls of a Berber village or march in an academic procession; whartt ever my status or situation, my derived economic, class, or my sexual only to much of privilege or influence as the patriarchy is willing to accede to me, and only for so long as I will pay the price for male approval.

Meanwhile, Millet notes that women are subordinate to men first of all in the home. Here, Male becomes the head of the family, therefore, females tend to devote their energies to the family (Jones in Tallack, 1987:68). In this case, Levine also asserts when woman have been marriage, their position become under her husband who becomes the leader of the family. Here, Women have to obey what their husband says. Then, she has to stay home, looks after her house, raises the children and looks after her husband's need when he comes home. Meanwhile, the husband has a job outside home in order to provide money for his wife (Levine in Fairchaild, 1952:109).

Moreover the existence of women oppression still exists and continues because it is supported by media that handles significant role to keep the existence of patriarchy system. According to Eisenstein (1988.11), the ideology of sex role is exposed by

social scientists, then popularized in the media. Here, media becomes the major element in the continuation of women's subordination.

Meanwhile, Janeway argued that the strength of sex role differentiation becomes the part of male propaganda. Here, ideas about women's place that is under men's authority become an ideology that is served by men through scientific journal to the popular media including women's magazines (Eisenstein, 1988:10).

When media enters our environment, we are accustomed with the presence of advertising, then influenced by imageries offering us wherever we turn. Further, famous people become the fascinator for us in order to inform us both our sense of individual identity and our relations with others about how we should behave in daily life (<http://www.exampleessays.com/viewpaper/84003.html>).

Furthermore, the media, in all forms, also disturbs the minds of women by displaying a seemingly perfect body image that, mostly, is completely unattainable by the majority that cannot reach physically. Here, the media constantly pressures women to be beautiful which is marked cultural norms and ideas of society (<http://www.exampleessays.com/viewpaper/84003.html>).

2.3.4 Psychological Oppression

The fourth women oppression is caused by psychological oppression. Here, women are believed as the inferior because they are lack of masculine bodies and mind (Robbins in Wolfrey, 1999:50).

Millet demonstrates her evidence from the work of social psychologist that images female as a normally meant passive, while for male normally meant active. Further, in characters traits of men, they are imaged as tenacious, aggressive, curious,

ambitious, plan full, responsible, original, and competitive. Meanwhile, women have expressive traits they are affectionate, obedient, responsive to sympathy and approval, cheerful, kind, and friendly (Eisenstein, 1988:8). So that, we can say that women are oppressed psychologically by the images that given by society.

2.4 Response of Oppression

In feminist literary criticism, Endraswara (2004:7) asserts that analysis on feminist criticism is regarded to be able to reveal the aspects of women oppression by men. In this case, the critics are invited to search the reasons why women are politically receiving the impact of patriarchy, which is placed women in inferior position.

Hence, feminist criticism questions the response of women while facing the politic acts by men. Whether women just receive (accept) the oppression or angry (reject) in facing the unequal gender (Endraswara, 2004:7). Meanwhile, Robinson argues that the oppressions begin when the oppressed believe their inferiority, then it will be end in their lifetime by two general choices, which are: identifying the oppressors (imitate him) or rebelling against him (<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/wm/poor/#reply>).

This section will discuss the women's responses when facing the oppressions. Those responses can be in form of acceptance, imitation, and rejection. Further it will be explained commonly as follows.

1. Acceptance Response

It has been described above that the oppression began since the oppressed

believes their inferiority. It means that women *accept* their inferiority. Here, the rebellion does not take place as long as the women as the oppressed are to be in love with their chain (oppressions) (<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/wm/poor/#reply>).

Besides, the woman who except their inferiority is because of she has been shaping by the realities in which they live. At this piont, she is restricted to their activities inside and outside her family. Moreover, Its hardly to be stated that the group of this woman does not has meaning in any representative of women in the world who struggle the women right, nor of women in their own country, class, age, and not even of their family (<http://www.globenet.org/horizon-local/>).

Furthermore, in narratives, women are described herself as the victim even under conditions of physical abuse and fear for the life and existance of their communities. Evenmore, they write herself without denying the presence of oppressive power structures. The women in the stories often combine a feeling of not being fullfilled or stimulated to their own human potential. They accept their role as a woman, that is caring for others, their family (<http://www.globenet.org/horizon-local/>).

2. Imitation Response

The second response of the oppressions is *imitation*. Here, the oppressed tries to imitate the oppressor's way of life or other attitudes that he likes to get admission. In other way, the oppressed can firstly identifies the male's attitude that is acknowledged as a superior group. Furthermore, to get confession from the oppressor, the oppressed can let the oppressor's power and giving him a chance to exploits her body even the child in order to make him satisfy (<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/wm/poor/#reply>).

This response is made to make the women please the male. Women will do anything to make him receive the condition on her even change herself to be somebody else. Hence, the woman's body has long been seen as a marvelous part for men. Further, the female form is regarded and always has been considered an object of beauty (<http://www.globenet.org/horizon-local/>). From that, a woman who is not beautiful does not love by man.

3. Rejection Response

The third response of oppressions is *rejection*. This response is declaring the rebellion against the oppressors. Here, women can rebel and remove the children from exploitative and oppressive male authority. Then, the women have begun to question aggressive male domination and class society which enforce them (<http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/wm/poor/#reply>).

The reaction of rejection response can be acted by strated to speak out, publicly and privately, wanting to be heard openly and to be listened to on their own, perhaps differing, terms. Although women's feeling about being a woman within their own societies were perhaps voiced most eloquently through feminists movements, less formally organized and less articulate, women also had their own perceptions of themselves and their societies (<http://www.globenet.org/horizon-local/>).

Furthermore, the outspoken way is may have created to impress the rejection of universal problem particularly patriarchal models of society and global working that formed to empower women. From those reality, many of women impression while facing the oppressions are against them by focus on gender equality and equal access to decision making, or on the male and female role (<http://www.globenet.org/horizon->

[local/](#)).

2.5 Previous Study

Generally, women with their oppression by men are the main topic which are discussed in this study. So that the researcher uses feminist literary criticism in order to answer the problems of this study. Here, the researcher finds some previous study that can be consideration and support while doing this study.

The first literary study was done by Halili in 2004, entitled *Feminist Literary Criticism on Saman by Ayu Utami*. This is an unpublished thesis of State Islamic University of Malang. In this study, Halili described the description about feminist perspective reflected by female characters on the novel, such as sexuality, women in love and myth of virginity, religion, marriage. And also, he finds out women's rights reflected by female characters on the novel such as women's rights in social affairs and women's rights in making decisions. Meanwhile, Halili's study on feminist literary criticism in the novel uses three feminist theory in supporting his study, they are liberal feminism, Marxist-socialist, and radical feminism

The second study was made by Sari in 2002, entitled *Black feminism in Alice Walker's The Color Purple*. This is an unpublished thesis of Universitas Malang. In this study, Sari conducted to analyze the views and ideas of Black feminism as reflected through the female characters in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*. Sari reveals the views and ideas of black feminism that are reflected through the female characters in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*. Secondly, she also reveals the female characters act to carry out the views and ideas of black feminism in the novel. And thirdly, she reveals the goals of the female characters who want an equals with men by

acting out their views and ideas on black feminism. In supporting to answer the problems here, Sari uses Black feminist theory.

The third study was done by Safitri in 2005, entitled *Feminist Perspective Found in Sense and Sensibility* by Jane Austin. It is an unpublished thesis of State Islamic University of Malang. In this study, she uses feminist literary criticism in discussing the women's rights, the women's position in the society and the effect of Author's cultural background that influence her attitude toward her literary work as reflected in the novel *Sense and Sensibility*. Through the novel we find women's position in the society and three women's rights i.e. women's right in social affairs, women's right in getting education, and also women's right in making decision.

The fourth study was made by Murtini, 2002, entitled *Study of the Novel, "Perempuan Jogja" (Feminist Perspective)*. This is an unpublished thesis of State Islamic University of Malang, which is aimed to describe the values of emancipation and the author's concept of feminism as reflected in his novel *"Perempuan Jogja."* In her study, she tells about how the three women use their own way in solving their problem from different social background. In line with this study, she uses the many varieties feminist theories.

The fifth study was done by Hikayatin in 2005, entitled *The Hidden Feminist of "Cleopatra" in William Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra*. This is unpublished thesis of State Islamic University of Malang. In this study, Hikayatin's purposes of the study is analyzing drama as one of branch of literature by using feminist literary criticism. The researcher describes the oppression of patriarchal Rome to Cleopatra, the struggles of Cleopatra to face the patriarchal Rome, and the Victories

of Cleopatra in facing the patriarchal Rome. Meanwhile, in her review of related literature, she involves the varieties of feminism thinking, such as liberal feminism, psychoanalysis feminism, and existentialist feminism

Based on the above previous studies, generally the researcher uses the same approach and theory that is feminist literary criticism. However, this study cannot be considered the same with the result of the research done before, because we have different problems of the study. Moreover, the researcher only uses the theories which are related with this study without separating the feminist theory from school of feminist theory or just considers some varieties theories of feminism because the researcher believes that all of them have the one same goal that is to get equality with men then break the men's oppression over.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 Research Design

This study, under the title *The Oppressions Faced by Black Women Characters in Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye* is a literary criticism which are analyzing, interpreting, and evaluating a literary work as Peck & Coyle's assertion in their book *Literary Terms and Criticism* (1986:149). Further, Peck & Coyle's add that literary criticism does not mean finding fault in literary, but this criticism is regarded as an academic activity to express the reader's sense of what is happening in a text.

Meanwhile, this study is not focused on criticizing the intrinsic aspect of the novel, rather criticizing the extrinsic aspect which becomes the main research problem. Further, to answer the problems of the study in this study, the researcher uses feminist literary criticism in order to reveal the oppression of women that is reflected on the novel. Feminist literary criticism is an appropriate approach and theory to cover the problems of the study which relates to the literary work with the condition of females that is oppressed and discriminated by their gender and race. Coyle & Peck (1986:152) cite that feminist criticism is seen negatively that literature is sexist in portraying women. Then, they see the injustice of male society where women are regarded as inferior. Further, Peck & Coyle (1986:152) add they assertion that it would be wrong to give the impression that feminist criticism is only concerned with gender and sexuality or that there is single standard feminist approach to literature.

3.2 Data Source

The main data source of this research is the text of the novel *The Bluest Eye* written by Toni Morrison. The researcher takes the novel which is published by Plum book 1993, a book Oprah's club. All the data are in the form of written words, sentences, and phrases which described the oppressions and the response by Pauline, Pecola, Claudia, and Frieda.

3.3 Research Instrument

The key instrument in this research is the researcher herself. Here, the researcher is actively observing and criticizing the literary work, the novel, in finding answer to the research problems. Then, the researcher analyzes the data dealing with the research problem. In the process of observation, the researcher uses the personal notes to support the validity of the data. As cited by Moelong (2001:121) that the researcher takes a role as the designer, data collector, analyst, data interpreter, and result reports of the research.

3.4 Data Collection

The procedures utilized in collecting the data of the research include: firstly, reading the whole sources deeply and critically using the researcher's knowledge and sensitiveness based on feminist approach. This is aimed at comprehending and obtaining the data sources. Secondly, selecting the data from the texts of Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, considered as appropriate data that are related to the research problems in order to reveal the objective of the research while reading. Thirdly, the researcher is taking notes of the marked data to observe them after

reading. Finally, the researcher arranges the data systematically that accordance with the problems of the study by classifying the data into the kinds of problems and the repsonses of black women that oppressed.

3.5 Data Analysis

After selecting and classifying the data from the novel *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison which are related to the problem of the study, there are steps to present and categorize the data according to the research problems. Firstly, categorizing the data based on the finding the oppressions feced by black women and the responses of the oppressions that faced by black women that potrayed in the novel. Later on, the researcher interpreted the data above by referring to the feminist literary criticism. Then the researcher was drawing the conclusion based on analyzed data.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS

In this chapter, the data are analyzed in order to answer the research problems. The researcher only focuses on four Black women characters in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*. They are Pauline, Pecola, Claudia, and Frieda. The researcher divides this chapter into two parts. In the first part, the researcher analyzes and discusses the kinds of the oppressions experienced by each of those women, i.e. whether or not they become the victim of social, physiological, cultural, or psychological oppression. Then, in the second part, the researcher analyzes and describes the response of those women in facing the oppressions.

4.1 The Oppressions of Black Women Characters

The Bluest Eye is a novel about Black women oppressions in the North, Ohio, America. Most of Black women in the novel are oppressed socially, physiologically, culturally, and psychologically. Besides, these women are oppressed not only caused by their gender but also by their race and class. In this part, the researcher analyzes and discusses the oppressions faced by each of Black women characters in Toni Morrison *The Bluest Eye* (1994). They are Pauline, Pecola, Claudia, and Frieda.

4.1.1 Pauline's Oppression

In *The Bluest Eye*, the Black woman who faces straight double oppressions is Pauline. She is a Black woman who is oppressed due to her race and gender. Pauline faces all types of women's oppressions such as social deprivation, physiological

oppression, cultural oppression, and psychological oppression.

Basically, Pauline and her family, i.e. Cholly Breedlove (her husband), Sammy Breedlove (her son), and Pecola Breedlove (her daughter) are oppressed psychologically by the master. The master here is the White man. He treats each of them (the Breedlove family) as the ugly people who are expected to wear that image (the ugly people). She and her family are considered ugly because physically they have black skin, curly hair, heavy eyebrows which are nearly met, crooked nose, etc. and it is contrary to the physical of White people who have white skin, straight hair, sharp well formed nose, etc.

The eyes, the small eyes set closely together under narrow foreheads. The low irregular hairlines, which seemed even more irregular in contrast to the straight, heavy eyebrows which nearly met. Keen but crooked noses, with insolent nostrils. They had high cheekbones, and their ears turned forward. Shapely lips which called attention not to themselves but to the rest of the face... It was as though some mysterious all knowing master had given each one a cloak of ugliness to wear,... the master had said, "You are ugly people" (*The Bluest Eye*; 38-39).

Pauline in the ninth of eleven years old lives on a ridge of red Alabama clay seven miles from the nearest road. When Pauline was a child, she was oppressed psychologically because she was treated differently from others since she was two years when Pauline's foot was injured by a nail at the road. Since then, her foot was lame. Moreover, in her childhood, Pauline did not have a nick name like others. There was no one told her funny things. No one teased her well that could make her feel at home or had a family.

Although she was the ninth of eleven children and lived on a ridge of-red Alabama clay seven miles from the nearest road, the complete difference with which a rusty nail was meet when it punched clear through her foot during her second year of life saved Pauline Williams

from total anonymity. The wound left her with a crooked, archless foot that flopped when she walked-not a limp that would have eventually twisted her spine, but a way of lifting the bad foot as though she were extracting it from little whirlpools that treated to pull it under. Slight as it was, this deformity explained for her many things that would have been otherwise incomprehensible: why she alone of all the children had no nick name; why there were no funny jokes and anecdotes about funny things she had done; why no one ever remarked on her food preferences-no saving of the wing or neck for her-no cooking of the peas in a separate pot without rice because she did not like rice; why no body teased her; why she never felt at home anywhere, or she belonged anyplace (*The Bluest Eye*; 110-111).

The lame of foot that happening to Pauline makes her culturally oppressed at home. Culturally she is oppressed by her mother, Mrs. William, who ask her taking over the house and her twins, Chicken and Pow, when she gets a job at the White minister as house worker. Pauline, as the oldest daughter, stays at home with pleasure taking over the house and her twins, Chicken and Pie who are still in school. Here, it can be simply said that she is oppressed culturally by the women roles that are regarded to handle the house even though it is not recognized by her.

Mrs. Williams got a job cleaning and cooking for a white minister on the other side of town, and Pauline, know the oldest girl at home, took over the care of the house. She kept the fence in repair, pulling the pointed stakes erect, securing them with bits of wire, collected eggs, swept, cooked, washed, and minded the two younger children-a pair, a pair of twins called Chicken and Pie, who were still in school (*The Bluest Eye*: 112).

The cultural oppression happens to Pauline since teeneger. At fifteen years old, Pauline still does house work in her home but she does not like with the house job anymore. Meanwhile, in her teenage, Pauline starts to be interested in the other sex, a man. She starts to fantasize about a man who would love her and touch her lovely. She fantasizes a simple man who has tenderness with strength and a promise of rest, a

presence who becomes her shelter. Pauline imagines a man as the strength, gentle, and peaceful. Besides, the society surrounds her believed that, man is the meaningful and important creature for the women. So that, when Pauline is beside a man, she will feel comfortable. In this case, unconsciously, Pauline is oppressed psychologically by the images of a man who is regarded as an important creature and believed that he could make women's feeling comfort.

When the war ended and the twins were ten years old, they too left school to work. Pauline was fifteen, still-keeping house, but with less enthusiasm. Fantasies about men and love and touching were drawing her mind and hands away from her work...In nine of her fantasies was she ever aggressive; she was usually idling by the river bank, or gathering berries in a field when a someone appeared, with gentle and penetrating eyes,... the someone had no face, no form, no voice, no odor. He was a simple presence, an all-embracing tenderness with strength and promise of rest... (*The Bluest Eye*; 113).

While Pauline fantasizes a man, she meets Cholly who is believed that he could make her comfortable and peaceful. Since then, she receives Cholly's purposes to marry with him. Later, he becomes her husband. After marriage, Pauline and Cholly decide to go to the North, Ohio town, looking for a better job. Nevertheless, when they have a place and job at there, Pauline is begin culturally oppressed by sex role between husband and wife. Pauline has to keep the house while Cholly works out side.

"Me and Cholly was getting along then. We come up north; supposed to be more jobs and all. We moved into two rooms up over a furniture store, and I set about housekeeping. Cholly was working at the steel plant, and everything was looking good (The Bluest Eye; 117).

In Pauline's new society, directly, she faces other cultural oppression which makes her desperate. She is oppressed by the White folks that look strange for her. She faces discrimination between Black and White people that can be seen clearly. She is

shocked by White culture that dominates her new community. Everything that is different with White culture would receive different attitude from other people, both White and Black, surrounds. White culture is convicted become the highest and acceptant culture than others.

... 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. I mean, we didn't have too much truck with them. Just now and then in the fields, or at the commissary. But they want all over us. Up north they was everywhere-next door, downstairs, all over the streets-and colored folks few and far between. Northen colored folk was different too. Dicty-like. No better than whites for meanness. They could make you feel just as no-count, 'cept I didn't expect it from them. That was the lonest time of my life... (The Bluest Eye; 117).

Moreover, few Black women there also make Pauline feels uncomfortable. She is amused by other Black women because she does not straighten her hair, has different way of talking and dressing. From here, we can see that Pauline is oppressed physically and psychologically. Physically, Pauline is oppressed because of her natural hair and way of talking that are different from other Black women. Psychologically, Pauline is oppressed because of her different way of life style such as dressing and hair arrangement even though they are all black.

Pauline felt uncomfortable with the few black women she met. They were amused by her because she did not straighten her hair... Their goading glances and private snickers at her way of talking (saying "chil'en") and dressing... (*The Bluest Eye*; 118).

When Pauline faces much oppression, Cholly oppress her culturally too. He does not care of her. Moreover, he refuses to give her money to buy new clothes and to straighten her hair. Since that, Pauline decides to get a job in order to fulfill her needs. Here, Cholly does not like Pauline's decision to get a job. Since that, money

becomes the main thing to discuss, money for Pauline's clothes, and Cholly's drink. In letter, their marriage becomes shredded and Cholly shows his rough behavior in front of her wife, Pauline. In this case, cultural oppression happen which men control women like what is done by Cholly. It could be said as Patriarchal oppression that husband controls his wife and has to obey him.

When Cholly began to quarrel about the money she wanted, she decided to go work. Taking jobs as a day worker helped with clothes, and even a few things for the apartment, but it did not help with Cholly. He was not with her purchases and began to tell her so. Their marriage was shredded with quarrels (*The Bluest Eye*: 118).

"Cholly commenced to getting meaner and meaner wanted to fight me all of the time (The Bluest Eye: 118).

Cholly's behave makes Pauline does not pleasure to her and makes her deciding to work. But unfortunately, in Pauline's work place in the house of a White rich family, she faces social oppression as a house worker. It caused by her mistress who does not like Cholly, who often comes to her house with drunk wanting some money to Puline. Knowing Cholly's attitudes, Pauline is forced by the mistress' choices between leaving her husband, Cholly, or getting her salary. If she leaves her husband, the mistress will let her stay. In contrary, if she does not leave her husband, she will not be allowed to stay even longer to get her salary.

...He come there drunk wanting some money. When that white women see him, she turned red. She tried to act strong-Ike, but she was scared bad. Anyway, she told Cholly to get out or she would call the police. He cussed her and started on me. I would of gone upside his head, but I don't want no deals with the police. So I taken my things and left. I tried to get back, but she didn 't want me anymore if I was going to get back with Cholly. She said she would let me stay if I left him. I thought about that. But letter on it didn't seem none too bright for a black woman to leave a black man for a white women. She didn't never give me the eleven dollars she owned me, neither. That to bad (The Bluest Eye; 120).

Nevertheless, Pauline rejects the mistress' force to leave Cholly. Then, she turns back to her house as a house wife. Immediately, Pauline discovers that she is pregnant. Since back home, Pauline and Cholly relation is getting better, and then Cholly becomes more attentive to her than before. Meanwhile, in her home, Pauline faces psychological, cultural, and biological oppression again. Psychologically, Pauline is oppressed by her choice to be an affectionate wife who stays at home lonely in her two rooms. Culturally, she is oppressed by returning to her own housekeeping. Then, physically, she is oppressed by her duty to take care of her pregnancy.

One winter Pauline discovered she was pregnant. When she told Cholly, she suppressed her by being pleased. He began to drink less and come home more often. They eased back into a relationship more like the early days of their marriage, when he asked if she were tired or wanted him to bring her something from the store, hi this state of ease, Pauline stopped doing day work and returned to her own housekeeping. But the loneliness in those two rooms had not gone away... (*The Bluest Eye*; 121).

While Pauline is oppressed at home, she tries to make herself comfortable by watching movies. But there, she faces physical and cultural oppression. Physically, Pauline is oppressed by the physical beauty of White woman from the movies she watches. Further, she is disturbed by the beauty image of the White, because, in fact, she is a Black woman who has black skin. Then, Culturally, Pauline is oppressed by the tenderness behavior of a White man to beautiful White women. Here, she is culturally oppressed because she compares with her man, Cholly who does not like him.

...She went to the movies instead. There in the dark her memory was refreshed, and she succumbed to her earlier dreams. 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 (*The Bluest Eye*; 122).

*"The onliest time I be happy seem like was when I was in the picture show. Every time I got, I went. I'd go early, before the show started. They 'dcut off the lights, and everything be black. Then the screen would like 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 the big clean houses with the bathtubs right in the same room with the toile (*The Bluest Eye*; 123).*

After several months, Pauline bears a boy baby at home. There is no special feeling on her baby. But, in her second pregnancy, she looks happy with it because she really wants it and she really has strong struggle to bear the baby. But the sadness happen when Pauline would bear her second child in the hospital. While she gets bearing there, she faces two physiological oppressions. Firstly, Pauline is oppressed by her physical nature, as a Black woman. In the hospital, there is different treatment between White and Black patient. This oppression can be seen when the doctors, who are men, do not care of Pauline much. Rather, they give more attention nicely and friendly to the White women beside her who also will bear. Secondly, Pauline is physically oppressed when she is pained while she is bearing the baby naturally.

*...I went to the hospital when my time come. So I could be easeful. I didn't want to have it at home like I done with the boy. They put me in a big room with a whole mess of women. The pain was coming, but not too bad. A little old doctor come to examine me. He had all sorts of stuff. He gloves 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 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 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...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 friendlytalk... (*The Bluest Eye*; 124-125).*

Meanwhile, when Pauline's children, Sammy and Pecola, are young, Cholly becomes fierce again. He does not give her much of life even giving money for their children. It makes Pauline turn back to have a job in order to fulfill her needs and her children for life. Furthermore, Cholly turns to drink so much many times. Moreover, he begins fierce his family and tries to burn their house. In this case, Pauline is oppressed psychologically by Cholly's behaviors.

...Once, after he tried to set the house on the fire, I was all set in my mine to go. I can't even member now what held me. He sure ain't give me much of life (The Bluest Eye; 129).

4.1.2 Pecola's Oppression

In *The Bluest Eye*, Pecola is the second child of Pauline and Cholly. She is the second woman who faces straight double oppressions after Pauline. But, she faces three kinds of women oppressions, that are physiological, cultural, and psychological oppression.

Basically, Pecola faces the same psychological oppression like her family, such as Pauline or Mrs. Breedlove (her mother), Cholly Breedlove (her father), and Sammy Breedlove (her brother). All of them are oppressed psychologically by the master, the White people. Here, the master has given an image for each of them (the Breedlove family) as ugly people who are expected to wear that image (the ugly people). Further, Pecola and her family are considered ugly because of their physical nature. Their skin is black, their hair is curly, they have heavy eye brows which are nearly met, crooked nose, etc. All of those physical natures contradict the physical characteristics of the

White people who have white skin, straight hair like Black people, a sharp well formed nose, et cetera

The eyes, the small eyes set closely together under narrow foreheads. The low irregular hairlines, which seemed even more irregular in contrast to the straight, heavy eyebrows which nearly met. Keen but crooked noses, with insolent nostrils. They had high cheekbones, and their ears turned forward. Shapely lips which called attention not to themselves but to the rest of the face...It was as though some mysterious all knowing master had given each one a cloak of ugliness to wear...the master had said, "You are ugly people" (*The Bluest Eye*; 38-39).

Moreover, Pecola is oppressed culturally and physiologically by the image of White people's beauty which is supported by the media, such as a candy wrapper, cup of milk, magazine, etc. Culturally, Pecola is oppressed by the standard of beauty which is dominated by the White beauty as the real beauty and accepted. In fact, Pecola is not a White person but Black. From that, we can also see that Pecola faces physical oppression.

Each pale yellow wrapper has a picture on it, a picture of little Marry Jane, for whom the candy is named. Smiling white face. Blond hair in gentle disarray, blue eye are petulant, mischievous. To Pecola they are simple pretty... (*The Bluest Eye*: 50).

Meanwhile, Pecola is included into a low class because she comes from a poor family and Black. In school, Pecola faces cultural oppression. There, she faces discrimination from other students and also the teachers who settle her in the back double desk. Further, the teacher tries not to see her. Moreover, she becomes a mockery by other girls who want to insult the boy at school.

She was the only member of class who sat alone at a double desk. The first letter of her last name forced her to sit in the front of the room always... The teachers had always treated her this way. They tried never to glance at her, and called on her only when everyone was required to respond. She also knew that when one girls at school

wanted to be particularly insulting to a boy, or wanted to get an immediate response for 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 (*The Bluest Eye*; 45-46).

When Pecola goes home, she is oppressed physically because of her gender. She is threatened and disturbed by a group of boys. The boys feel that they have power to harass her. And then, Pecola becomes their victim.

Bay Boy, Woodrow Chain, 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 (*The Bluest Eye*; 65).

Other physical oppression faced by Pecola because of her gender happens in another day. It happens when she goes home from school. She is trapped by a black boy namely Junior. He persuades Pecola to come to his house by telling her that there is a kitten. Actually, Junior hates the cat in his home which is always intentioned by his mother. So that, he wants the cat died. In that occasion, he traps Pecola to become his prisoner and suspicion of the cat death in front of his mother. Then, he succeeds.

He pulled gently at her dress. Pecola began to move toward his house. When he knew she had agreed, Junior ran ahead excitedly, stopping only to yell back at her to come on... (*The Bluest Eye*; 89).

Junior was laughing and running around the room clutching his stomach delightedly... Junior leaped in front of her. "You can't get out. You my prisoner," he said (*The Bluest Eye*; 90).

Geraldine opened the door. "What is this?" Her voice was mild, as though asking a perfectly reasonable question. "Who is this girl?"

"She killed our cat," said junior. "Look." He pointed to the radiator, where the cat lay, its blue eyes closed, leaving only an empty, black, and helpless face.

Geraldine went to the radiator and picking up the cat. He was limp

in her arms, she rubbed her face in his fur. She looked at Pecola.. (*The Bluest Eye*; 91).

“Get out,” she said, her voice quite. “You nasty little black bitch. Get out of my house!” (*The Bluest Eye*; 92).

Physical and psychological oppression becomes the last of Pecola’s oppression in the novel. Pecola is raped by her father. Physically, Pecola is pained by the sexual intercourse that causes her pregnant a baby of her father. Moreover, the effect of rape is worse than the physical pain of the actual rape itself (Herman in Freeman, 1984:20). It makes Pecola psychologically discomfort and suffered. Further, she is destroyed by the feelings of guilty, shame, lose of self esteem and humiliation. Pecola blames herself by blaming her ugliness as the cause of the rape which makes her insane in the end.

“Did you hear about that girl?”

“What? Pregnant?”

“Yes. But guess who?”

“That’s just it. Ain’t no little old boy. They say it’s Cholly.”

“Cholly? Her Daddy”

“Uh-uh.” (*The Bluest Eye*; 188-189).

... If she looked different, beautiful, maybe Cholly would be different... (*The Bluest Eye*; 46).

The damage done was total. She spent her days, her tendrils, sap-green days, walking up and down, up and down, her jerking to beat of a drummer so distant only she could hear. Elbows bent, hands on shoulders, she flailed her arms like bird in an eternal, grotesquely futile effort to fly. Beating the air, a winged but grounded bird, intend on the blue void it could not reach-could not even see-but which filled the valleys of the mind (*The Bluest Eye*; 204).

4.1.3 Claudia's Oppression

The third Black woman character who faces oppression is Claudia. In this novel, Claudia faces psychological and cultural oppressions. Firstly, she faces psychological oppression on Christmas day. On that day she receives a doll from her family that they think it is the fondest thing she wants. Here, she is psychologically oppressed because she has to pretend to be a mother although actually she is not interested in babies or the figure of motherhood.

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. From the clucking sounds of adults I knew that the doll represented what they thought was my fondest wish. I was bemused with the thing itself, and the way it looked. What was I supposed to do with it? Pretend I was its mother? I had no interest in babies or the concept of motherhood (*The Bluest Eye*; 19-20).

Furthermore, Claudia is oppressed culturally. She is oppressed by the image of beauty dominated by White culture which is supported by the media, such as magazines, newspapers, window signs in which most people agree that the blue eyed, yellow haired, pink skinned doll is wanted by every girl.

To see of what it was made, to discover the dearness, to find the beauty, the desirability that had escaped me, but apparently only me. Adults, older girls, shops, magazines, newspapers, window signs- all the world had agreed that a blue-eyed, yellow-haireed, pink-skinned doll was what every girl child treasured. "Here," they said, "this is beautiful, and if you are on tin's day 'worthy' you may have it." (*The Bluest Eye* ; 20-21).

4.1.4 Frieda's Oppression

The fourth Black women characters that are analyzed is Frieda. In this novel, Frieda faces physical and psychological oppression. The first physical Frieda's

oppression is the standard of beauty that is supported by mostly media. Most of people in her community and also herself are acknowledged that White beauty is the well image of beauty which is blue eyed, yellow haired, pink skinned which are the things that make women look beautiful.

Frieda brought her four graham crackers on a saucer and some milk in a blue-and white Shirly Temple cup . she was a long time with the milk, and gazed foedly at the shirely temple's dimpled face. Frieda and she had a lovig conversation about how cu-ute Shirley Temple was... (*The Bluest Eye*; 19).

When Frieda meets Mr. Henry, a roomer in her house, she faces Physical and psychological oppressions. While her parents and sister are not in home, she is sexually harassed by Mr. Henry. Mr. Henry does physical touching to Frieda such as patting, brushing, or pinching her. It makes Frieda psychologically depressed. She feels not happy and uncomfortable with Mr. Henry's way in treating her which makes Frieda cry. She is harassed by Mr. Henry

She sighed, "First he said how pretty I was. Then he grabbed my arm and touched me."

"Did you get a whipping?"

She shook her head no.

"Then why you crying?"

"Because."

"Because what?"

"Mr. Henry." (*The Bluest Eye*; 99).

4.2 The Response of Black Women's upon Oppression They Experience

In this part, the researcher analyzes and describes the response of oppressions that are faced by each of Black women characters in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*. They are Pauline, Pecola, Claudia, and Frieda.

4.2.1 Pauline's Response

When Pauline and her family are judged as ugly people, she with all of her family *accepts* what the master says. They believe in their ugliness, which is straightened by the media around them. Then they convict the master's statement about their ugliness by looking at themselves. No one could convince them that they are not relentlessly and aggressively ugly.

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." And they took the ugliness in their hands, threw it as a mantle over them, and went about the world with it (*The Bluest Eye*; 39).

When Pauline is psychologically oppressed since her foot is lame, she is blamed what has been done to her foot. Further, when she was a child, she was restricted in her family, and then she built quiet and private pleasure on housework. It makes Pauline please herself by arranging things, and her family just let what she does. From Pauline's decision pleases herself to spend her time by doing house works, we can state that Pauline *accepts* this oppression.

Her general feeling of separateness and unworthiness she blamed on her foot. Restricted, as a child, to this cocoon of her family's spinning, she cultivated quite and private pleasures. She liked most of all, to arrange things. To line things up in rows-jars on shelves at canning, peach pits on the step, sticks, stones, leaves-and the members of her family let these arrangements be (*The Bluest Eye*; 111).

Meanwhile, Pauline *accepts* the cultural oppression in her home. While her mother gets a job, she does housework to replace her mother's duty at home by arranging the household and keeping the house clean. Moreover, she is fond of the

house keeping. She said that she was not only good at housekeeping but also enjoying it (*The Bluest Eye*; 112).

In fifteen years old, Pauline is oppressed psychologically with the figure of men's strength, tenderness, gentle, and peaceful. But in this case, Pauline *accepts* this oppression by fantasizing the man's figure that she can lay on him. It can be urged that Pauline (as a women) will be happy when she is beside a man who is believed that he can be her shelter.

It did not matter that she had no idea of what to do or say to the presence-after the worldless knowing and the soundless touching, her dreams disintegrated. But the presence would know what to do. She had only to lay her head on his chest and he would lead her away to the sea, to the city, to the woods... forever (*The Bluest Eye*; 113).

When Pauline receives cultural oppression by keeping on fanaticizing a man, she meets Cholly who is believed that he can make her comfortable. Then, she decides to marry with him and go to the North with Cholly. Meanwhile, after marriage, she also *accepts* the cultural oppression which tends her to do the sex roles between husband and wife. Her husband works outside and Pauline stays at home by doing housework and waiting for her husband to come home even though she is lonely with her housework. Then, Pauline becomes dependent on his husband in order to comfort herself from her new situation.

“Me and Cholly was getting along then. We come up north; supposed to be more jobs and all. We moved into two rooms up over a furniture store, and I set about housekeeping. Cholly was working at the steel plant, and everything was looking good that was the lonesomeness time of my life...just waiting for Cholly to come home at three o'clock. I didn't even have a cat talk to” (*The Bluest Eye*; 117).

In her loneliness, she turned to her husband for reassurance, entertainment, for things to fill the vacant places. Housework was not enough; there were only two rooms, and no yard to keep or move about in. the women in the town wore high-heeled shoes, and when Pauline

tried to wear them, they aggravated her shuffle into a pronounced limp. Cholly was kindness still, but began to resist her total dependence on him (*The Bluest Eye*; 118).

Having the physical and psychological oppression by few Black women in her new town, Pauline responds those oppressions by *imitating* the way of other Black people who amuse her. So that, it makes those black women less amuse her. She tries to make up her face as those Black women and desires to have new clothes by asking Cholly to give her money. Meanwhile, Cholly refuses her demand to buy new clothes. So that, she decides to work, she takes a job as a day worker, in order to buy new clothes and even a few things for the apartment.

...when she tried to make up her face as they did, it came off rather badly...and dressing developed in her a desire for new clothes. When Cholly began to quarrel about the money she wanted, she decided to go to work. Taking jobs as a day worker helped with the clothes, and even a few things for the apartment, but it did not help with Cholly... (*The Bluest Eye*; 118).

When Pauline decides to get a job because Cholly does not give what she wants, Cholly is not pleased with her decision to work outside, moreover he begins to show his manner and wants to fight her. But here, Pauline *rejects* the cultural oppression by fighting Cholly and keeping on his decision to work to get money.

Cholly commenced to getting meaner and meaner and wanted to fight me all of the time. I give as good as I got. Had to. Look like working for that women and fighting Cholly was all I did (*The Bluest Eye*; 118-119).

Pauline takes a steady job at home of a White rich family. But there, she faces social deprivation by her mistress who makes her desperate. She faces two choices between leaving her husband or staying at her work and getting her money. In this oppression, she *rejects* the oppression by choosing not to leave her husband,

because according to her it is not good for women to leave her husband. Moreover, Pauline thinks that leaving a husband for White women is an illogical decision.

...So I said, 'No good, ma'am. He ain't no good tome. But just the same, I think I'd best stay on.' She got up, and I left... (*The Bluest Eye*; 121).

When Pauline rejects the White mistress by coming back to her house, again, she is oppressed psychologically, culturally, and physically. Facing the oppression in the house, Pauline receives it by returning to be a housewife who keeps the house and does her biological duty that since then, she is known to be pregnant.

... When the winter sun hit the peeling green paint of the kitchen chairs, when the smooked hocks were boiling in the pot, when all she could hear was the truck delivering furniture downstairs, she thought about back home, about how she had been all alone most of the time then too, but that this loneliness was different. Then she stopped staring at the green chairs, at the delivery truck; she went to the movies instead... (*The Bluest Eye*; 121-122).

In Pauline's acceptance response in facing the oppressions above, she tries to make herself not to feel loneliness by watching movies even though she is pregnant. Pauline watches the movies to avoid her loneliness. But there, she faces physical and cultural oppression where White becomes the standard of well image. In those oppressions, Pauline *accepts* and *imitates* the oppressions. In the physical oppression, she accepts and imitates the standard of physical beauty. She tries to imitate the White artist, their way of arranging hair. Further, in cultural oppression, Pauline *accepts* the oppression by comparing the way of White men in treating their women with Cholly, her man.

Them pictures give me a lot of pleasure, but it made coming home hard, and looking at Cholly hard. I don't know. I 'member one time I went to see Clark Gable and Jean Harlow. I fixed my hair up like I'd seen hers on magazine. A part on the side, with one little curl on my

forehead. It looked just like her... (*The Bluest Eye*; 123).

When Pauline would bear her second child, she faces two physical oppressions in the hospital. There, she is oppressed by the doctors who have given little attention to her because she is Black. Meanwhile, she *rejects* the oppression by moaning something awful to show the doctors that she is also in pain and needs help.

... I moaned something awful. The pains wasn't as bad as I let on, but I had to let them people know having a baby was more than a bowel movement... (*The Bluest Eye*; 125).

When her children are young, Pauline is oppressed psychologically by Cholly who does not give her much love. Moreover, he begins to be fierce, in this case, Pauline *rejects* the oppression by going back to work. Then, she becomes stiffer in facing people and oppressions surround her. Furthermore, Pauline becomes more morally in facing the women who ever despise her.

In her new work, Pauline feels comfortable. She works in a good White family, as a house worker, in this house, Pauline finds many things that make her comfortable, and then she enjoys her work. Pauline becomes an ideal servant. Since that, Pauline stops taking care of her own house, her children, and her husband.

When Sammy and Pecola were still young Pauline had to go back to work. She was older now, with no time for dreams and movies. It was time to put all of the pieces together, make coherence where before there had been none. The children gave her this need; she herself was no longer a child. So she became, and her process of becoming was like a sort of curse: she developed a hatred for things that mystified or obstructed her; acquired virtues that were easy to maintain; assigned herself a role in the scheme of things; and harked back to simpler times for gratification, (*The Bluest Eye*; 126)

She took on the full responsibility and recognition of breadwinner and returned to church. First, however, she moved out of the two rooms

into a spacious first floor of a building that had been as a store. She came into her own with the women who had despised her, by being more moral than they; She joined a church..., and become a member of Ladies Circle No. I... (*The Bluest Eye*; 126).

It was her good fortune to find a permanent job in the home of a well-to-do family whose members were affectionate, appreciative, and generous... She became what is known as an ideal servant, for such a role filled practically all of her needs... Soon she stopped trying to keep her house... More and more she neglected her house, her children, her man... 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... (*The Bluest Eye*; 127).

4.2.2 Pecola's Response

The response of Pecola when she is physically oppressed by the master is the same with her mother, Pauline. She *accepts* the oppression. And then, she wears the images as ugly because of she admits her blackness.

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." And they took the ugliness in their hands, threw it as a mantle over them, and went about the world with it (*The Bluest Eye*; 39).

Moreover, Pecola also *accepts* the cultural and physical oppressions which many media support the standard of beauty, such as the picture of candy wrapper, a picture of a cup, a magazine that all of them show the picture of White people. Particularly, Pecola is fond with the blue eye that belongs to the White.

... 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. My mother knew that Frieda and I hated milk and assumed Pecola drank it out of greediness... (*The Bluest Eye*: 23).

... The eyes are petulant, mischievous. To Pecola they are simply pretty. She eats the candy, and its sweetness is good. To eat the candy is some how to eat the eyes, eat Mary Jane, love Mary Jane. Be Mary Jane (*The Bluest Eye*: 50).

In the school, Pecola faces cultural oppression when she is placed into low class. In this oppression, she can do nothing but pray for the blue eye. Pecola argues that if she gets blue eye perhaps all people around her would love her. It means that she *receives* the oppression.

It had occurred to Pecola some time ago that if her eyes, those eyes that held the pictures, and knew the sights-if those eyes of hers were different, that is to say, beautiful, she herself would be different. Her teeth were good, and at least her nose was not big and flat like some of those who were thought so cute. If she looked different, beautiful maybe Cholly would be different, and Mrs. Breedlove too. Maybe they'd say, "Why, look at pretty-eyed Pecola. We mustn't do bad things in front of those pretty eyes."

Each night, without fail, she prayed for blue eyes. Fervently, for a year she had prayed. Although something as wonderful as that happen wonderful as that happen would take a long, long time (*The Bluest Eye*; 46).

Furthermore, Pecola *receives* the physical oppression by a group of boys while going home. The boys feel that they have power to disturb because they are boys. In this oppression, Pecola cannot do anything but crying. Pecola edged around the circle crying. She had dropped her notebook, and covered her eyes with her hands (*The Bluest Eye*; 66).

Meanwhile, *Pecola* rejects the other physical oppressions that are caused by her gender. She is oppressed by her boy friend, Junior. When Pecola is oppressed physically by Junior, who tries to trap her to become his prisoner and the accuser, she tries to *reject* it even though just by saying words and screaming that could express her anger, such as; "You let me go" (*The Bluest Eye*; 90) and "Stop that!" (*The Bluest Eye*; 91).

Meanwhile, Pecola *receives* terrible physical and psychological oppressions by her father. In this case, she blames herself. She blames her self because she does not

have blue eyes. Moreover, she becomes insane.

...If she looked different, beautiful, maybe Cholly would be different... (*The Bluest Eye* ; 46).

The damage done was total. She spent her days, her tendrils, sap-green days, walking up and down, up and down, her jerking to beat of a drummer so distant only she could hear. Elbows bent, hands on shoulders, she flailed her arms like bird in an eternal, grotesquely futile effort to fly. Beating the air, a winged but grounded bird, intend on the blue void it could not reach-could not even see-but which filled the valleys of the mind (*The Bluest Eye*; 204).

4.2.3 Claudia's Response

Claudia's response to her psychological and cultural oppressions on Christmas day is *acceptance* even though it is contrary with her wish which makes her feel uncomfortable. She accepts the oppressions because most of the people surrounding force her to accept it. She has to pretend that white doll with blue eyes is the fondest thing that she wants.

The other dolls, which were supposed to bring me great pleasure, succeeded in doing quite the opposite. When I took it to bed, its hard unyielding limbs resisted my flesh-the tapered fingertips on those dimpled hands scratched. If, in sleep, I turned, the bone-cold head collided with my own. It was a most uncomfortable, patently aggressive sleeping companion, (*The Bluest Eye*; 20).

The second response of Claudia's oppression is *rejection*. Claudia breaks off the doll until the doll is not figured like before to respond the beauty image that is supported by the media. Then, she disturbs and makes the sound of the doll roundness.

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. But I could examine it to see what it was that all the world said loveable. 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. Remove the cold and stupid eyeball, it would bleat still, "Ahhhhhh," take off the head, shake out the sawdust, crack the back against the brass bed rail, it would bleat still. The gauze back would split, and I could see the disk with six holes, the secrete of the sound. A mere metal roundness (*The Bluest Eye*; 21).

4.2.4 Frieda's Response

Frieda's response to her first physical and psychological oppressions who confesses the White as the standard of beauty is *acceptance*. She and almost people surrounding acknowledge the White is the standard of beauty, which has blue eyes, blond hair, and white skin.

Frieda brought her four graham crackers on a saucer and some milk in a blue-and white Shirly Temple cup. She was a long time with the milk, and gazed fondly at the silhouette of Shirley Temple's dimpled face. Frieda and she had a loving conversation about how cu-ute Shirley Temple was... (*The Bluest Eye*; 19).

The second response to other physical and psychological oppressions faced by Frieda is *rejection*. Frieda is oppressed physically and psychologically by Mr. Henry, a roomer in her house, hi this case, Mr. Henry harasses Frieda while her parents are not at home. After Frieda faces the oppression done by Mr. Henry, she tells her mother what happens to her (it means that she *rejects* the oppression). Then, her mother tells her father. While her parents hear the harassment that happens on their daughter, they would like to revenge to take what Mr. Henry has done to their daughter.

"I told mama, and she told Daddy, and we all come home, and he was gone, so we waited for him, and when Daddy saw him come up on the porch, he threw our old tricycle at his head and knocked him off the porch."

"Did he die?"

"Naw, he got up and started singing 'Nearer My God to Thee.' Then Mama with a broom and told him to keep the Lord's name out of his mouth, but he wouldn't stoop, and daddy was cussing, and everybody was screaming."

"Oh, shoot, I always miss stuff."

“And Mr. Buford came running out with his gun, and Daddy said no, give him the gun, and Mr. Buford did, and Mama screamed, and Mr. Henry jumped out of his shoes and kept on running in his sock. Then Rosemary came out and said that Daddy was going to jail, and I hit her.” (*The Bluest Eye*; 100).

From the explanation above, we see the oppressions and the responds of Pauline, Pecola, Claudia, and Frieda, the Black women, in *the Bluest Eye*. The oppressions happen to them because of the patriarchal system in society which is the position of women are under the men. Many of them in this novel are oppressed by the men rules; women have to obey and serve men, women are depicted as a weak creature whereas easy to oppress, women is settled as the second sex under the men.

Facing those oppression, there are women that receive, imitate, and reject the oppressions. Pauline, Pecola, Claudia, and Frieda have difference respond while facing the oppressions. Pauline as a woman, a mother, and worker sometimes changes her respond. She, sometimes, receives the oppression, imitate the oppression, and reject the oppressions. Pecola who obsessed of the bluest eye receives the cultural and physical oppressions. She wants to have not only the blue eyes but also the bluest eye. The bluest eyes, according to her, make her beautiful. Frieda who also interested in the blue eye also receives the physical and cultural oppression which is the white as the standard of beauty. Frieda, even though receive that oppression, braves to reject the men oppression with her sister, Claudia who want to fight them.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

5.1 CONCLUSION

Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* is a novel about the oppression of Black women facing double oppressions. The main story takes place in the North America, Ohio in the 1941. The novel tells about the oppressions of Black women who face double oppression. Basically, Black women have to face the same oppression with White or other color women who are oppressed by their gender. Meanwhile, there is slight difference between them. Here, Black women do not only face gender oppression but also race and class oppressions.

In this study, the researcher reveals Black women characters, particularly Pauline, Pecola, Frieda, and Claudia, are oppressed by their gender. They are oppressed because of the different image between women and men physically and culturally or socially. Culturally, women are oppressed by the stereotypes between women and men that many of them are controlled by men. Physically, these women are oppressed by the image between men and women. Women are considered less power and passive than men who are considered to have full of power and aggressive which is these stereotypes are also supported by the media to strengthen that stereotypes.

Pauline, Pecola, Frieda, and Claudia in this novel face double oppressions. Further, they are considered as the inferior race that can be controlled or dominated by the superior race. In this case, the White race becomes the superior race. Moreover, they are considered in the lower level than the man, Black and White people, and also

White women. It means that they are considered in a lower class than the White. From here, we can see much oppression faced by Black women, who are considered in a lower class. Meanwhile, there are classes in the community of black women. They are separated between the poor and the rich Black women. In this case, mostly, poor Black women are oppressed by the rich Black women. It can be seen when Pauline and Claudia are oppressed by the other black women who more rich or welfare in their economic family condition.

Meanwhile, the type of oppressions faced by black women in *The Bluest Eye* can be seen clearly. There are four types of oppressions faced by them, such as social deprivation, physical oppression, cultural oppression, and psychological oppression.

Pauline in this novel faces social deprivation in her work. When she decides to work in a White rich family as a servant, she is oppressed. The mistress in the white family acquires Pauline as the black woman and a lower social class. Moreover, the mistress thinks that she can do anything to Pauline even ignores Paulines's right to get salary if she does not take the choices that given by the mistress.

In *The Bluest Eye*, physically Pauline, Pecola, Frieda, and Claudia are oppressed by their gender and their natural different physic between Black and White people. In gender case, most of them are oppressed by men who feel that they have more power than women. Further, they use their power to control even oppress women physically. Meanwhile, the physical oppression that is faced by those Black women makes them more oppressed than other kinds of oppressions when the White physics are considered as the beautiful image, such as; white skin, blond hair, blue eyed etc. In fact, those Black women are different with them. They have Black skin, black and curly hair, black eyes etc.

Culturally, Pauline, Pecola, Frieda, and Claudia are oppressed by the sex roles between men and women. Commonly, women are considered at home to do house work and men are considered work outside the home. Further, these images are supported by the media around them.

Psychologically, Pauline, Pecola, Frieda, and Claudia, are oppressed by the different images between women and men. They are considered as a passive, affectionate, obedient, responsive, approval etc. Men are considered as an active, powerful, aggressive etc. It can be seen when Pauline has to obey her husband even though he has hurt her. It means that Pauline as a female who has marriage has to obey her husband and affection to him. Pecola, Frieda and Claudia who psychologically oppressed with the culture standard of beauty in her community. It means that they have to respond to the standard of beauty that is made by the man.

The oppressions faced by Pauline, Pecola, Frieda, and Claudia in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* that explained before appears different responses. There are three kinds of Black women's responses that can be shown. They are acceptance, imitation, and rejection.

Pauline, in response to the oppressions that she faced ever accept, reject, and imitate the oppressions. She responds to the oppressions by considering it before. She considers it before because of the cultural and patriarchy system influences her. In accepting response, she ever receives the cultural oppression when she has to do female activities in her home. She also receives the oppression when she becomes a housewife. Meanwhile, Pauline ever rejects the oppression. She rejects the oppression by her husband who does not agree with her to work. She also ever against the physical oppression that done by her husband who feel that he is more powerful than

her. Meanwhile, in physically oppression when the standard of beauty recognizes the White beauty, she tries to imitate it. She become ambitious to change her as other women who recognized the standard of beauty.

Pecola, the sadness black women character in *The Bluest Eye* often receives the oppressions. It can be seen when she receives the gender oppressions that done by her boy friends who physically abuse her and grumbled her. She also receives the physical and cultural oppressions when recognizes the beauty standard which is in the end makes her insane while wanting the blue eyes, even the bluest.

In this novel, Claudia as the one who reject the oppression. She rejects the physical and cultural oppression that recognizes the standard of beauty. She also rejects the women role that always done by many women in family, such as have to do housekeeping and rearing the children. Further, in physical oppressions, while her boy friends want to fight her, she brave to against them. She is a strong woman.

Frieda's response the oppressions are receives and rejects the oppressions. She receives the culture oppression and physical oppression while facing the culture oppression that recognizes the standard of beauty. Besides, she also ever rejects the oppression eventhough not brave enough.

5.2 SUGGESTION

From the analysis of the Black women oppression in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, the researcher invites the other readers to acknowledge the oppressions faced by Black women, particularly in this novel. Furthermore, she also invites to reveal the Black women's response to the oppressions, whether they accept the oppression, imitate, or reject it. From this analysis, *The Oppression of Black Women*

in Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye, the researcher hopes that this can encourage the other readers or researchers to criticize the oppressions over women. Particularly, the researcher suggests the reader to analyze Black women oppression which is up to now are less analyzed by using feminist theory and approach. Furthermore, the researcher also suggests to analyze the response of that women oppression



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