

Beauty standard as a construction of woman objectification in Trisha R. Thomas's *Nappily Ever After*

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Abstract

The study aimed to depict how the beauty standards construct female objectification in *Nappily Ever After* and to analyze how the main character struggled toward beauty standards in the *Nappily Ever After* novel. This study is sought with qualitative methods to reveal the novel's issue. This study applied the theory of beauty myth from Naomi Wolf. The result of the study found that the beauty ideal is a woman who has straightened hair, brightening skin, a tall, slim body, and a pointed nose. Those highlighted Venus's physical appearance which made her seem to be a typical woman and objectified her to conform to beauty standards. The study concluded that Venus internalized the beauty ideal which made her feel restricted by her looks and resulted in body image dissatisfaction. Venus struggled after she cut her hair which made her become an outcast in beauty image, being invisible by men, dismissal, and judged by people.

Keywords:

beauty standard, feminism, woman objectification

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menggambarkan bagaimana standar kecantikan mengkonstruksi objektifikasi perempuan dan menganalisis bagaimana tokoh utama berjuang mematahkan standar kecantikan dalam novel *Nappily Ever After*. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dan konsep mitos kecantikan dari Naomi Wolf (2002). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan terdapat konstruksi standar kecantikan yang berpusat pada tubuh, yaitu wanita yang memiliki rambut lurus, kulit cerah, tinggi, tubuh langsing, dan hidung mancung. Novel ini mengobjektifikasi perempuan melalui standar kecantikan. Selain itu, tokoh utama dalam novel ini tampak menginternalisasi kecantikan ideal yang membuatnya merasa dibatasi oleh penampilan.

Kata kunci:

feminisme, objektifikasi perempuan, standar kecantikan

Introduction

It has been known at a very early age, women are told from the story telling that they should look like a princess nor Barbie doll. They should aim to have those long legs, that perfect skin, beautiful hair, and incredible body to become a real woman (Emeksiz, 2021; Mim & Tabassum, 2022; Padmanugraha, 2015; Sharma & Bumb, 2021). On the other side, Men, from the same early age, are programmed to desire the Barbie Doll woman as well. As Wolf (2002) argues men look at women and women watch themselves being looked at. Here is the starting problem that woman does not exist, anywhere. They are the product of hours in the makeup chair and days of photo retouching, even if they are supermodels. However, every woman has imperfections in their skin since the believe of standard of beauty arose and has sat in society such as their appearances, their body, their behaviour (Khoo, 2019).

In fact, the history has countless records of women and men adorning and grooming their faces and their bodies to fit the ideal of beauty (Featherstone, 2010). The beautification has been done to symbolize social status and culture (Kumar, 2019). For instance, in the era Elizabeth I English women used Sulphur and saffron to dye their hair red in order to imitate the hair color of Elizabeth I. Meanwhile, men especially member of the royal English court, dye their hair auburn to signify their loyal toward their queen. Then, it continuous in Jean Harlow's and Marilyn Monroe's Era in the 1930s and 1950s respectively, the platinum shade had been popularized in that time.

Comparing with today, where one can choose from many shades ranging from auburn to blonde, or dyeing their hair to emulate their favorite celebrity even a model which less similar to the Elizabethan era. Nowadays, people are not just relating to Elizabethan or Monroe's Era but they can express their own ideas to fit the standard of beauty or fit the

today's standard of beauty that is happening in this moment by which it can be created from celebrity, influencer, and designer. In case, this process still can fail in fulfilling this standard beauty by society or even standard of their own ideas. There are people still judging another people that can lead women objectification continuous in this present (Sherrow, 2021).

In addition, women have been imprisoned from the confines of the patriarchal power structure, where women's rights and interests in politics, economy, social, culture and technology are ruled out. Instead of gaining equality in this increasingly modern world, women are increasingly being found that the beauty ideal is that woman who have straightened hair, brightening skin, tall, slim body, and a pointed nose. Those highlighted Venus's physical appearance which made her seem to be a typical woman and objectified her to conform to beauty standards (Putri, 2020; Sorokowski, 2010). The study concluded that Venus internalized the beauty ideal which made her feel restricted by her looks and resulted in body image dissatisfaction. Venus struggled after she cut her hair which made her become an outcast from beauty image, being invisible by men, dismissal, and being judged by people. As Dworkin (1974) has pointed out beauty is a cultural practice that was wasting time, fancy, and also painful to one's self-esteem. To fit the ideal of beauty women are required to create make up, hairstyles, or even creation by surgery. From the early age, no one defined beauty such as someone with skin deep, perfect body, tall and so on. The definition of beauty itself has been a big question for people. In case, by believing standard beauty in society, people began to categorize others. Thus, which categorized us, based on how we were born, our height, our physical attributes, or our ages to define us.

Throughout the age, people have to adapt the

same standard to define what beauty for them. Although from the east to west, no written literature has ever declared that beauty is only seen by skin deep. Beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder. That should define of beauty. Hence, beauty should not be differentiated based on country or religion nor should it be ranked based on a fix standard. If people do not fall into the ideal of beauty, it does not mean that they are not beautiful at all. The beauty practice has been oppressed women since women attempted to cultivate her appearance (Halprin, 1995).

However, females have been trying to change everything they have to meet the perfect version of them. From this concern, the writer wants to deliver what people have to see through women. We cannot see only by the appearance but also the beauty inside as a real human being. Realizing this issue, the title of this thesis is refereeing to female objectification.

In this study, the objectification of woman inspired the writer to put into literature. Some of the literature are adopted into novel. The novel is one kind of literary works that explaining many phenomena and issues that occur in our real life. Novel is also divided into two kinds such as fiction and non-fiction (MacKay, 2011). In a fiction, character is a representative of a human being. As stated by Chatman (1980), character is something that is in a paradigmatic relationship with the plot, which is syntagmatic. Character is not something that is easily drawn like a physical object, it has implications that are near human behavior or human-like traits. Combined with the setting and the plot, the characters shape and deliver the story (Ribó, 2020). The characters' dialogues are one of the elements that will be discussed in this study by examining the meaning behind the sentences and analyzing it using theories in the literature. Analysing character is essential to uncover issues in a novel. One issue that is always interesting to be discussed is about feminism. Feminism is

grounded in the belief that women are oppressed by comparison with men and that their expression is in some way illegitimate or unjustified. In feminism, women are constructed as number two classes under male supremacy. Women are objects of a male subject. The objectivity of women is a form of proof of the identity of men as the highest being.

Nappily Ever After was a finalist for the NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Literary work and won the Literary Lion Award by the King Public Library Foundation. It has been adopted as Netflix Film as well. *Nappily Ever After* is a kind of fiction novel where telling the woman image that they have to be perfect, the woman belief about beauty myth perspective. The writer chose *Nappily Ever After* to be studied because this novel has a strong belief that woman have to be perfect in their life so they will be getting someone who can adore and love them. In this study, the writer refers to other studies that is deal with feminism in literature.

There are some related studies discussing beauty myth in literary works. First related study was a journal article conducted by Febry Furtuna that was published in 2016, her thesis entitled "The Society's Oppression in Constructing the Beauty Standard: A Feminist Reading of Scott Westerfeld 's Novel *Ugliness*". This study aimed to reveal the issue about female objectification, female oppression, male dominance, inter-religious violence, polygamy and patriarchal constraints. This study applied theory from Naomi Wolf in order to reveal the issue. This study also used qualitative method in analyzing the issue of female oppression in constructing beauty standard in society. The result of this study show the rejection and isolation faced by women if they cannot fit the standard of beauty (Furtuna, 2016).

The second related study was a journal article written by Devi Anggita Vela which is published in 2014. She is student of Airlangga University. Her journal article entitled "The Portrayal of Beauty

Myth in Me Vs. High Heels Film by Pinkan Utari: Feminism Analysis". The objectives of the study were described and interpreted the portrayal of standard of beauty myth in society especially a patriarchal society in which women are shapeless objects that society forms them in accordance with men's desires. This study was used Naomi Wolf theory to reveal the issue in the film. This study was also analyzed the struggle of women against the beauty concept. The result of this study found the true meaning of beauty and create the definition of it. Then, the study also found that the film promotes and provokes women to release themselves to confirm the ideas of beauty by objectify themselves (Vela, 2015).

The third study was written by Fitria (2020) and published by Pamulang University. Her journal article entitled "Konstruksi Standar Kecantikan Dalam Cerpen *Fenghuang* Karya Wendoko". This study aimed to disassemble the construction of standard beauty in Wendoko's *Fenghuang* short story. It also discovered how the beauty standard put women as an object in a limit movement. Fitria used theory by Naomi Wolf in order to reveal the issue. She used qualitative methods to analysis the issue. The result of this study found that women were inferior and men were superior. Women as victims from the beauty construction set by the society (Fitria, 2020).

The study deal with feminism, Wolf (2002) argues that women are victims of feminist abuses by men and the media. The areas in which she believes that women are being objectified are; work, religion, violence, sex, and hunger. Beauty was thought to be a respected value for women. In case, women are put under pressure to look perfect and images of women who are seen as perfect are used to put down other women, physically and psychologically because they do not look the same. This way makes women oppressed through beauty. Women feel

imperfect if they do not cover the beautiful criteria set by society. There are factors contributing to the beauty myth, such as eating disorders, according to Wolf, there are 33.000 American women who told researchers that they would rather lose 10 to 15 pounds than have any other goal (Wolf, 2002).

Moreover, in her book *The Beauty Myth*, she states "women must embody (the beauty standards) and men must want to possess women who embody it" (Wolf, 2002, p. 12). The function is to make women feel less. This is men's way to oppress women through beauty myths. On the other hand, women are always fed with beauty advertisements that display the ideal female figure depicted with a tall body, slim and thin, thick buttocks and chest filled, white, pointed nose, thin cheeks, and others. Not only through advertising, technological developments and information increasingly rapidly cause the image of the ideal woman.

Beauty Standard

While beauty is idealized by media and society, beauty practice is applied by women. The Standard of beauty can be seen differently based on the country or culture. Throughout history, beauty ideals have been projected by the dominant communication forms of time, for instance, visual art. Beauty standard develops from time to time. When a beauty trend arose, it created a stereotype of femininity, for instance waxing to create a hairless feminine body but also to be idealized of beauty. Thus, women would practice this to fill the standard of beauty.

Beauty standards can also be seen in media and culture. When the standard beauty is set by the media such as film, magazines, and advertisements, women's bodies have fallen short of the ideal body that has been printed and filmed by the media. When women fail to imitate the images of the ideal of beauty, it can lead them to feel ashamed and guilty about their appearance. In short, women will

fall into self-objectification in which they become objectified themselves and it will increase the risk of psychological problems such as eating disorders and depression (Wolf, 2002).

In addition, beauty standards as a social construct toward women to create appearance and also determine how they define the standard of beauty itself. Blood (2005) states that beauty standards have undermined women's self-worth and also pressure them to conform to the beauty practice to attempt and emulate the ideal of beauty. On the other hand, when women fail and ignore conforming to the beauty standard, they are not only becoming an outcast from normality but also becoming desirable, and women are blamed for resisting society by accepting their bodies instead of changing them to fit the beauty standard that has been set. Moreover, beauty standard includes the modern era from the patriarchal system. By existing beauty standards, Wolf (2002) states that women who are should be able to become productive individuals on the contrary making themselves beautiful. The purpose of being beautiful is also only to be looked at by men. Ironically, this practice of beauty only focuses on the body and it does not help women to sharpen their thinking.

Woman Objectification

Objectification is the act of treating a person or someone based on people's perspectives. It is also an unjust use of authority, law, or physical force to prevent others from being free and equal. Objectification is a type of injustice. The verb objectification can mean judging someone in a social sense, as might be done by society. It can also mean to burden someone mentally, as with the psychological burden of an objectified idea. There are kinds of objectification such as sexual abuse, violence, and sex. Then, women suffer from that objectification. Zarrinjooee and Kalantarian

(2017) states that women objectification refers to exploitation all functions of women. It includes the exploitation of woman body. In this case, beauty is the idea to objectify women.

In addition, objectification is an idea central to feminist theory. It also can be roughly defined as treating someone as an object and usually a woman. Thus, men get to benefit from this practice rather than women. Men objectify women to fulfill their standard of beauty, or they treat a woman as a tool to be used for purposes. There are many treatments toward women that define women's objectification. One of them is the reduction of appearance which means that someone treats a person in terms of how they look, how they appear, and how they shape their body. Instead, Wolf states in her book "Women must embody and men must want to possess women who embody it" (Wolf, 2002, p. 12). It means that a woman can be an object for men. Men can treat women as an object to change their appearance and their body to fill men's desires. Women change their appearance to look beautiful. To look beautiful, women are suffering from hunger and illness.

Moreover, there is so much pressure on women to feel beautiful. Women start to objectify themselves with the concept of beauty in general. Women always think to be beautiful, otherwise, not everyone is physically beautiful according to society's definition. In this case, the beauty ideal is something that makes oppression toward women. Women always want to look pretty they do anything to be categorized in beauty. In fact, there is commodification of women, whose bodies become sites for men's competition for respect and territory (Grosu-Rădulescu, 2016).

Thus, to fulfill the ideas of beauty women are suffering from that concept as Wolf (2002) states that women are in pain. They are suffering, hungry, and ill. Wolf also gives critics of low in favor of PBQ. There are several cases of termination of employment experienced by women, the most are

caused by unfulfilling the standards of beauty that have been determined by the company. Resistance is also carried out by bringing these cases to court, but defeat always befalls women because is women who are guilty of violating the rules set by the company where they work. The court has ignored the rights of women workers in the name of bodily beauty.

Method

The approach used in this study is qualitative research because this study analyses the social issues in the novel which reflects the social life. The approach is served in form of sentences. It means that the data are collected by illustrations and utterances from *Nappily Ever After* novel. Then, after read the book for several times, the result is served in essay form. Citing from Patton (2002) indicates there are three things occur during analysis: data are organized, data are reduced through summarization and categorization, and pattern and themes in the data are identified and linked.

Hence, by using of content analysis method within the qualitative study is a process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting, in which found in the literary work as the data source of the study. In the design, the research is inductive in its nature, which collects and finds meaningful subjects to answer the research question, tailoring it to the theory used.

Meanwhile, there are some steps in collecting the data. the writer read whole book from the beginning to the end. the writer read again several times the book more carefully, but this time while read the book writer also analyze and imagine the dialog and relating with the text. the writer identified women objectification meaning that is implied from the book. The writer explained women objectification in society according to writer's understanding

and defined in sentences form. In analyzing data, the writer made a list of data analysis to select necessary data that can be analyzed in this research. The writer used theory from Naomi Wolf. In this step, the writer applied the theory that is connected to the problem of the research to described and to analyzed the data with the theory.

Result and Discussion

Construction of Beauty Standard

The beauty standard in society herding people especially women because the characteristics of beauty are impressive which means women are forced to be looked beautiful all the time. In this novel, there some characteristics of beauty concepts to defined its beauty such as women must have straight hair, slim body, white skin, and also smart or intelligence.

Long Straighten Hair

Having a long straighten hair is a must for women to fulfil the ideal of beauty. With this idea, women have been objectified themselves to conform the idea of beauty. In this novel, the protagonist is a black woman and she has a curly hair as her identity of African-American. To be looked beautiful she was willing to spend a long time in the salon just to make sure that her hair was straighten, as seen in the quotation below:

“Over the many years I'd been Tina's customer. She squeezed the last drop of water she could out of my hair, pulling my skin back until my eyes hurt. She wrapped the towel neatly around my head, making me wonder how Erykah Badu could carry around such weight on her trim little body. This was my ritual I, getting in the know right here in her chair every other Saturday morning.” (Thomas, 2001, p.6-7)

The quotation above shows that the standard of beauty objectifies the main character, Venus in order

to look beautiful. To be considered as a beautiful woman by the public society, Venus was willing to spend hours just to straighten her hair. She did it in order to meet the standards of beauty that exist in the society. It also meant that beauty is imperative for women and they are required to be beautiful or to be looked beautiful. Therefore, Venus objectified herself to always look beautiful. The words "Over the many years I'd been Tina's customer" reveals that Venus has been straightening her hair for years to meet existing beauty standards.

Brightening Skin

The habit of straightening hair at the salon became a life sentence for her. Despite all of it, going to the salon and straightening her hair is a necessity in her life. That must be fulfilled in order to support her appearance. It also implied that if her hair was not straight, then she would not go out of the house and meet people. Beauty standards in society were forced her to always fit into it. Not only straight hair, black women are also required to have brighter skin, cleaner skin, and neat appearance as seen as in the quotation below:

"Like most African-American mothers, I knew, mine was consumed by the presentation of her children. Black children had to be cleaner, neater, and sit up straighter at all times. It was an ever-present source of anxiety for my mother to prove that my brother and I were just as good, just as smart, just as well-groomed as any white child." (Thomas, 2001, p.8)

The quotation above depicts that almost all African-American mothers in America are objectifying their daughters to be fit into beauty standards. Black girls are required to have lighter, tidier skin, and they must have straight hair. Standards of beauty like this make African-American mothers objectify their children to fit into beauty standards which are unrealistic. Black women have

been born with black skin but forced to have brighter skin tone which makes it difficult for them to tone up their skin tone become cleaner and lighter. Then, black women were also forced to be neater as this existence stigma against black people is bad. Black people seem untidy, rude, or even dirty. Therefore, black people are required to be more presentable in appearance, both clothes and their bodies just like well-groomed as any white child.

Tall and Slim

The beauty concepts seem that women are considered beautiful if they tall and have slim body. Being skinny is one of the beauty qualifications that every woman must follow as depicted in novel that tall and slim are representing beauty. which seen in the quotation

"Wendy's long shapely frame and notice the approving glances that a group of businessmen were throwing her way. I could not help but I wish I was being admired as well". (Thomas, 2001, p.48).

It depicts that being tall is also one of the beauty qualifications of the beauty concept that appears in society. Women that were born with and grew up with a short body will never be considered and admitted as beautiful, it means that they are a failure in fulfilling the beauty standard as seen as the protagonist, Venus is not tall enough to be admired by men. It means that Venus is less attractive than Wendy. Because Wendy is tall, she has her own privileges in the eyes of men. Therefore, women gather to objectify themselves in order to have a place in the eyes of men and society to cover up their imperfections.

Pointed Nose

Having pointed nose is also one of the characteristic of beauty ideal. It gives much pressure on Venus which she began maintaining her

appearance. She did not want to be an outcast in the eyes of men. She wanted to go back to be the same as last time before she cut her hair. It can be seen in the quotation below.

I could see myself in the reflection of the chrome doors. Yes, it was me. I was the same person I was Friday when I'd left here. I'd taken a little more care in my makeup application since I had an extra twenty minutes to spare not fighting with my hair. My eyes seemed a little wider, more intense, almost like an infant who searches for understanding in everything she sees. My nose seemed suddenly too broad, but I knew that was just an institutionalized flaw of my thinking. (Thomas, 2001, p.34)

From the quotation above, it shows that Venus wanted to be her previous Venus, where when men see her they will glance, flirt, smile, or ask how she is doing. Yet, after she cut her hair, everything changed which no one saw her like before. She thought that it was me, the same person but the changed she made, make her unattractive. It proves that beauty standards are very important for women. Then, she started to struggle to objectify herself to make her look more attractive. After being free with her hair, she was more concerned about making up on her face. In the last line, she began to be over thinking with her face from his eyes and nose. It indicates that Venus is not confident with her body so she applied make-up to discover flaws, especially in her eyes and nose. She felt that her eyes and nose do not meet the proportion of ideal beauty standards that exist in the society. Then she used make-up to cover up the flaws on her face.

Struggle to Break Beauty Standards

After the long struggle with her hair, Venus finally decided to cut her hair. She knew the idea of beauty standard of black women is having a long hair. However, she still wanted to cut her hair because

she was tired of it. It can be seen in the quotation below:

"Just cut it off," I repeat. I want it all gone. Not even long enough to curl [...] "this one is fine." "girl, that's only a quarter of an inch. You are going to look like some little boy. It'll grown in. I want to start as low as possible, so I don't have to cut it again for a while. You have lost your mind" (Thomas, 2001, p.11-13)

The quotation above shows that Venus was no longer considered like a full woman when she decided to cut her hair short. She even wanted her hair to be as short as possible so she did not have to go to the salon for a while. This shows that Venus no longer wanted to objectify herself or she did not want to be objectified by the beauty ideal. The words "Just cut it off," I repeat. I want it all gone" proves that she has done to be dealt with her hair. She was talking to Tina her hairdresser. In this case, Tina seemed to disagree with Venus' decision to cut her hair completely as seen in the sentence "You are going to look like some little boy". She judged Venus by cutting her hair short as she will be looked more like some boys, and not girls. It indicates that Venus has no longer in the category of beautiful. Tina thought that Venus will not be suitable with the appearance in which Venus will look like a boy and she will lose her female side. Tina even expressed her disapproval by saying "You have lost your mind". This means that Tina felt that Venus was not feeling well and seemed to have a problem so she did it. The sentence also shows that Tina was responding to disappointment about it.

Additionally, women who do not meet beauty standards or women who intentionally do not follow the existing beauty standards in society will be outcasts. In this case, Venus intentionally cut her hair because she was already tired of it. All her life she has been just struggled with straighten her hair, wherever she would go. She even preferred to not go

if her hair is difficult to manage. Then, she bravely cut her hair that makes her become an outcast as seen in the quotation "It felt good to know I was no longer in a category that could be so easily marked, or could I? Maybe I had become the most simple to define" (Thomas, 2001, p.11-14). The quotation reveals that she has become an outcast after she cut her hair. At first, she felt good for herself that she was no longer in the category that could be easily marked. That means she is no longer in the beautiful category. The good feeling was actually there because she did not have to bother with straightening her hair any longer and she also felt good because she would be easy to recognize with her new look. She thought that she had become the simplest version of her because her new look is not like the average girl as she looked a bit more masculine.

Women who do not meet beauty standards in general, most of them are being invisible from men's eyes. It happened to Venus after cutting her hair. She became invisible from men. That means she was no longer attractive and it can be seen in the quotation below:

As I rounded the corner I faced a group of young black men coming toward me. I braced myself for the usual rumblings and accompanying remarks. But when they walked past me, without a sign, no grunting or teeth sucking, or "how ya doin'," I was suddenly deflated. I had become invisible (Thomas, 2001, p.14)

The quotation above reveals that Venus becomes invisible after she cut her hair. In the first line sentence tells when Venus was in the corner and some young black men came up to her, there was no reaction at all. It is like a contract as usually they would be rumbling because of her present. Yet, it has gone after her hair also gone. She just passed them without getting signs, no grunting, teeth sucking, or just greeting "how ya doin". This indicates that she

became invisible and she suddenly felt so small and nothing. She felt she was no longer attractive in the eyes of men as the men were passed without noticing that she was there. It also implies that before she cuts her hair, there were many black men flirting her or just asking how she is doing. Yet, after the hair is gone, she became invisible. It proves that when Venus did not meet the beauty standards, apart from being an outcast, she also became invisible in the eyes of men. Venus became unattractive. Then, she ended up struggling for not conforming to the beauty stand.

After becoming an outcast from the ideal of beauty and invisible to men, Venus also struggled from the male requests. As seen in the quote "I admit I hate being dismissed and ignored by the opposite sex now that my hair has fallen out", it reveals that Venus was uncomfortable with her current state. She felt that she was no longer attractive in the eyes of men. Being ignored by the opposite sex was the most unpleasant thing to begin with, especially since her relationship was not good because of she cut her hair. Short hair was becoming her weakness as men seem to prefer black women with long and straight hair. This means that the ideal of beauty that exist in the society has really built people up to believe it. In the end, men are benefit from it while women still have to struggle to be accepted and loved by men. Not only got rejection from men, Venus was also judged unsuitable by her female friends after Venus shaved off her hair. Wendy thought she would not get a guy with her current appearance as seen in the following quotation.

"What are you saying? 'Cause honey, I can get a man."

"I doubt it, V."

"Don't doubt it and don't dare me. Because I am very capable of getting someone, anyone. What . . . you think 'cause I cut off all my hair men won't find me attractive?" (Thomas, 2001, p. 89)

The quotation above indicates that Wendy also has the same views as men even Wendy doubted if Venus could find a man who wanted to be with her after her loss of her hair. Yet, Venus did not accept Wendy's words because she felt she was still able to conquer men even without her hair. She was sure that she was still attractive for men too.

Stigma and judgements appear on women who are not conforming to beauty standards. The beauty concept constructs the beauty myth in the society. People believe that what are been appeared in the media and beauty industries are the ideals of the beauty. It leads to the limited point of view towards beauty in which men began to look women from the appearance and making judgment about it. It is seen when the protagonist is going to enter the beauty pageant as seen as in the following quotation.

The truth was, I'd never really be free until I stopped worrying about what other people were thinking. I could cut my hair bald, get tattoos and a nose ring, but it wouldn't mean anything as long as I was looking for acceptance. (Thomas, 2001, p. 35)

The quotation above shows women who do not meet beauty standards or fail to conform their beauty ideal also experience struggles toward the judgements. After failing and deciding not to objectify herself, Venus became struggled about what people will think about her appearance after she cut off her hair. She became less confident and anxious wondering what people thinking about her. She decides cut her hair to be free but it put her into other situation. She thought that she would be free after cutting her hair. However, the truth was different. she would never really be free from objectifying herself until she stopped thinking what people were thinking about her. It is also implied that the feeling of insecurity Venus felt was dominated by feeling of anxiety about people who judged her appearance. Despite all of it, she seemed unable to accept rejection and judgment from people after she

cut her hair.

In the novel, the protagonist Venus finally accepts her imperfections about her body and her hair by cutting all of her hair. Venus decides to give it all up toward beauty standard that appears in the society. She trades in her long hair into short hair to deal with her imperfections. It also a bold declaration of independence-one that has effects she never could have imagined. Instead, it proves that she accepts and loves her body and she thinks that if she can accept her imperfections then people who truly love her will accept her too as it is seen in the quotation below.

With my eyes closed I took in a long deep breath. The blue sky, soft wind, and the expansive sea were all a part of me. I was in love. This was what love was supposed to feel like. No worries, no fears. This was sincere and true love. (Thomas, 2001, p.214)

In this quote, Venus realizes that true love will not have worries and fears. She knows that all of her worries and fears regarding her beauty were misplaced but beauty standard lies in the eyes of people. Even though Venus was thinking that beauty is not about physical appearance, people are still believing the standards of beauty that have rooted long time ago. The quotation also reveals that she knows know that true beauty comes from within. Instead, the standards of beauty still occur in the society but she against it by cutting her hair even she knew that hair is everything for a black woman. She deals with it and begins to realize that all the time her boyfriend, Clint was with her, he would not leave her, so that she would always have to concern herself with her beauty but in the end, it was wrong.

Conclusions

From the data analysis, several points can be concluded and lead to the beauty standards that construct women's objectification. The representation of women objectification is seen on

the character in the novel *Nappily Ever After* (2001) by Trisha R. Thomas. It also represents the struggling of the main character towards the beauty standards. In the analysis, it is found that the protagonist Venus has been objectified by the beauty standards such as long straighten hair, brightening skin, tall, slim, have pointed nose.

Then, from the data analysis is also found the protagonist has been struggled towards the beauty standards. After cutting her hair, it is clearly distinct between women who are conformed the beauty standards and women who are not. In this case, after

she cut her hair, Venus has become struggled from being an outcast, invisible by men, dismissal, and being judged by people. It means that women who are not conforming the beauty ideal are considered as a failure.

In the end, Venus finally accepts the flaws in her body and hair by cutting off all her hair. Venus decides to give it all up to meet society's beauty standards. It is a bold declaration of independence of her. She starts accepting and loving herself, and she believes that if she can accept her flaws, people who truly love her will also accept her.

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