LUBLIN STUDIES IN MODERN LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE 41(1), 2017, HTTP://WWW.LSMLL.UMCS.LUBLIN.PL, HTTP://LSMLL.JOURNALS.UMCS.PL

Mustafa Zeki Çıraklı
Department of Western Languages and Literature,
Faculty of Letters,
Karadeniz Technical University,
61080, Trabzon, Turkey

Disabled Vision and Schizophrenia in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*

ABSTRACT
Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* explores how the central character's self-image is determined by the primary Subject, which orients social perception, and how the characters are primarily concerned with their public image since social perception from without (how they are perceived) shapes their self-perception. As the process of self-realization is interrupted by the disorientation of self-perception, the characters cannot construct a true Self of their own. Their vision is disabled by the prevailing primary Subject, and the persona is unable to perceive the world from her perspective reversing the existing binary. As there is no self-perception (a point of reference), identity formation ends in failure, and the persona turns out to be a passive object having a negative image of herself. She, first, suffers from split of personality and schizophrenia, then declines her negative self-image through surrogate images, and finally drives herself to insanity.
Keywords: *The Bluest Eye*; social perception; primary Subject; self-image; self-perception

I am not what I think I am;
I am what you think I am.
C. H. Cooley

DOI: 10.17951/lsmll.2017.41.1.46

Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970) poses ontological problems pertaining to such issues as vision, appearance and seeing, associated with perception. Even though the central issue is seemingly black identity, the novel deals with the construction of Self, self-image and the distraction of perception. The critics like Harold Bloom foreground a recurrent comparison between Ralph Ellison and Toni Morrison that they both explore the "invisibility" of the black person in the United States (Bloom 2010, p. 40). From that point of view, Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* can be regarded as a feminist rewriting of Ellison's *Invisible Man*. So, Morrison can be considered as having "added a dimension of femaleness to the plight" of the black characters (Bloom 2010, p. 40). Yet, as Costello has maintained, "few focus on the characters' struggle (or lack thereof) to create themselves" (Costello 1986, p. 10). Therefore, this paper, with specific references to Foucault and Lacan, explores how the central character's self-image is determined by the "primary Subject,"[1] which orients social perception, and how the characters are concerned with their public image since social perception from without (how they are perceived) shapes their self-perception. So, this paper aims to investigate the issue from an ontological perspective. The dynamic tension between the states of being – and the gap between what is already existing, what is being perceived, what is being constructed – paves the way for an ontological problem as to the possibility of existence without relevant perception and reliable Self. The character's constant denial of the impositions of already existing socio-historical context marks the conflict between one's imagination and self-perception (ignorance), social perception (dilemma) and awareness of the gap (recognition). Entrapped within the destructive and dehumanizing environment, the character is tempted by her own persistent delusions. Still she is infected with a misconception of "beauty," which she thinks is the only way for the acknowledgement in society. This aspiration reverberates in her manifestation: "And

[1] My term (2016).

owning them made her part of the world, and the world a part of her" (Morrison [1970] 1999, p. 36).

Stanford suggests that *The Bluest Eye i*s primarily concerned with "vision," and "seeing," and the role they play "as a fact of black life" (2003, p. 89). This particularity also provides the reader with significant clues of universality since perception and perceiving is a pivotal factor in modern life. Fick describes modern life "as flawless archetypes above and outside the shadowy world of everyday life" (Bloom 2010, p. 20). Pecola, the protagonist of the novel, and her mother, a representative black woman, are the victims of their own fantasy, which in due course is manifested through a fake conception of beauty. That is ostensibly a problem on the plane of existence and in the very ontological realm. In *BE* the characters are obsessed with their appearance. They are traumatized with the lack of so-called beauty and infected with the image in the eyes of the others. The idealized "beauty" is considered to be the only way to love – the act of love and the potential to be loved. What is essential is not the beauty itself, which does not provide us with a reliable concept as such, but the need for love and the desire to be approved. Therefore, Pecola craves for being part of the world. Other characters as well, for instance Sammy, are entrapped within the make-believe world of appearances. The characters are supposed to create or construct themselves referring themselves to the others. Contrary to the fact that we refer to anyone or anything that is not us as "the other," the characters in the narrative treat themselves as other. They do not create an "other" to discover themselves; rather, the other, which is associated with "the bluest eyes", is taken for granted as a standard source of and ultimate reference to "beauty" and "ideal love." Thus, the world of white women with the blue eyes occupies a prevailing realm in the imagination of these characters beyond which they cannot feel they exist. The self then cannot exist, in Lacan's terms, without "the other." The mirror images are reversed in the narrative. They say "the other and I" instead of "I and the others." The miserable characters see themselves through the mirror images of the other and this leads to suffrage and anguish because provides a constant

reminder of so-called "ugliness." The characters in the novel suffer because they know they are not beautiful in the popular sense, a sort of shortcoming or under-standard deviation from the accepted physical norms (mostly associated with white skin and blue eyes).

> In her moments of racial "misrecognition" or Lacanian "méconnaisance," carefully prepared and staged by the dominant white culture […] As the mirrored imago in Lacan's mirror stage gathers the infants' fragmented body image into an integrated form, providing an illusionary sense of autonomy and power, so do the images of white stars on the silver screen transform Pauline's black body with a deformed foot into a perfect personification of white beauty while she immerses herself in the movies and identifies herself with the image she sees (Hwangbo 2004, p. 43).

That is because whiteness appears as a "norm" outlining the "Western standard of beauty [that] devalues the physical beauty of African Americans because it encourages people to worship whiteness" (Costello 1986, p. 9-10). What is in the narrative is an imaginary world of the characters where society takes over the role of the mirror and provides them with a market of images. Rather than discovering or developing a self-of their own, they are made to demand a mask (image) and wear it. This brings about a process of construction of self out of images.

Various set of ideas, namely images, make up an identity through which individuals define themselves in the eyes of the others and themselves. According to Erikson, identity is constructed in three stages. First, "body identity," which signifies the image of physical self; second, the "ego ideal", which stands for the image of people you admire and you want to be like; and third, the "ego identity", which is what you think of yourself and the roles you play. According to Erikson, identity formation, while beginning in childhood, gains prominence during adolescence. In the adolescence phase, the conflict is between identity and "role confusion" (Erikson 1968, p. 13). Resolving this conflict involves finding a more or less settled role in life, which requires stability. Erikson states that these stable social roles help society with "virtue" formation (Erikson 1968, p. 4) even though these norms of virtue have become void notions. The notions

of loyalty or fidelity are the terms of conformity to the expectations of society and as long as the adolescents conform to these forms of virtue, they are considered to progress towards maturity. The identity crisis the adolescents undergo is a sign of this development and change. Through this process of self-reflection (how you think you are) and self-realisation (understanding how the others think you are), adolescents arrive at an integrated, coherent sense of identity.

Michel Foucault, as to the judgments of the others, introduces the concept of perception as having significant relation to the reception of the external world:

> The judges of normality are present everywhere. We are in the society of the judge[s]… It is on them that the universal reign of the normative is based; and each individual, wherever [s]he may find himself, subjects to it his body, his[her] gestures, his[her] behaviour, his[her] aptitudes, his[her] achievements. The carceral network, in its compact or disseminated forms, with its systems of insertion, distribution, surveillance, observation, has been the greatest support, in modern society, of the normalizing power (Foucault [1934] 1994, p. 304).

He emphasizes the bodily nature of perception which acquaintances the self with the perceived world and explores the relationship between the perceiver agent, the Primary Subject, or the judge/originator of normality and the perceived object. According to him, perception is not only a sensual experience although it relies on our body as a perceived entity. The background of an object perceived, that is, the dimensional plane of imposition that is closely interconnected with the angle of vision, determines the way the entity is perceived. As far as the contextual impositions are considered, it can be suggested that the objects fall short of display. The interaction of these perceptions helps to create the individual's sense of identity, which is a construct combining certain characteristics that extricate an individual person (personal identity) or a group of people (social identity) from others.

Creation of otherness consists of applying a principle that allows individuals to be classified into two groups: "I" and "the others." As the term suggests, "the other" is a passive category defined by the active prevailing subject who denies certain primary attributes

(suggests hierarchy) for those who are excluded from this realm of dominance which is represented by the pronoun "I" (and "we"). In fact, the other, as an individual person or group, is generated out of the perception of the subject or objectivized by the primary gaze of the "perceiver" who conceives a group as not retaining common virtues or owning their values. In other words, only the dominant "I" is in a position of imposing values. Thus, the process of identity formation, in Lacan's terms, is also a process of "othering;" and from the point of view of the other, a process of estrangement and double consciousness:

> *The Bluest Eye* utilizes double-consciousness to expose the other in the self, contrasting black social immobility with black psychic development. The text reenacts the white constructions of beauty, order, and family to illustrate how the imposition of these standards on blacks prevents the development of a black identity based on African American cultural ritual. As a result, white constructions confine black consciousness. The text reenacts white values, only to deconstruct them and shatter their viability. The balancing of the "normal" (American cultural standards) with the abnormal (negative actions attributed to others) pervades the novel, mirroring the web of double-consciousness inherent in black identity. […] By presenting black consciousness as the gaze of the Other, Morrison's novel illustrates the ever-present threat to subjectivity by objectification (Schreiber 2010, p. 83).

It is not surprising that the other (the objectivised subject) perceives herself from the perspective of the primary Subject and cannot construct an integrated Self-identity as she has no idea how she is. She has a mirror image but has no reality (her Self). Her ill view of herself (her obsession with the idea of ugliness) dismantles her imagination in a way that she is merely occupied with the mirror image of the primary Subject (associated with the bluest eye standing for the ideal beauty and love). The reversal of the mutual reflection does not work out well with the persona since the self and the other should supposedly have been the reflections of each other. Each should be different but somehow be the same as each other and thus connected by their reciprocal reflection. However, Pecola cannot achieve the other reflection as she has lost her selfhood, unable to construct it without having a launching pad for the progression, and

the tension never soothed. The tension between the vague self of the persona and the other is eventually become apparently predominant when Pecola, the other, makes her way to the outside of society.

The individual journey inside can help achieve a self-perception nurtured by the various ideas about the capabilities and qualities of a persona. Throughout the internal journey, the persona beholds and views from without her strength and weakness; abilities and disabilities; dependence and independence. In other words, self-perception is interwoven with self-realization. Yet, social interactions determine how we construct our own identity and how individual perceptions are framed by those interactions. Pecola's pursuit of identity is, therefore, interrupted with her plunging into illusions stimulated by social interactions and social desolation. She perceives her own image through the perception of the "primary Subject", the controlling perception in society; so, her self-perception falls ill as it does not solely depend on her own experience. The filtering eye of the primary Subject shaped by the dominant schema of judgements and prevailing set of ideas determines her view of herself (and her Self). The unconscious drive as to the supremacy of the primary Subject is also completed by the manipulative context. So, the "internal states" of the character, her ideas about herself, are combined with the external factors, which are imposed upon the persona. Thus, Pecola's individual self-attributions are manipulated by the external factors existing in social norms and forms, which present the character with a poor view of herself. Confined to the inferior self-image, the suffering persona is unable to find any positive self-attribution to live on. Her self-perception does not allow her to build up a consistent identity, which first of all depends on a reliable and confident internalized self-attributes. The character is made incapable of standing by her own qualities, instead, she has a deeply implanted inclination to deny them. She becomes the "shadower" of her own self that is doomed to be immature. Even though she attempts to protect her confidence, her attributions about herself – and her Self – prove feeble and pathetic. She cannot internalize these attributes, therefore, she cannot develop an integrated identity of her own: "And Pecola. She hid behind hers.

Concealed, veiled, eclipsed – peeping out from behind the shroud very seldom, and then only to yearn for the return of her mask" (p.29). Pecola does not only envisage an inferior status for her Self, but also internalizes it. She defines her Self through the "absent" qualities and cannot come into being ("presence") as a developed identity. She is stuck and paralysed by the prevailing image of the white society (signposted with the blue eyes). As the actual life and its virtues/norms are already captured/shaped by the primary Subject and society is ordered by the prevailing images of its own, the persona tries to compensate for the so-called incongruity (signposted by the concept of "ugliness" in this case) by assimilating her perception to the social one. This misleads her to delusion and disables her. The crippled self-perception is infected with the dominant social perception and thus the possibility of adopting an internalized perception disappears. The process of identity formation turns out to be a failure and the so-called identity crisis becomes infertile (symbolized with the premature birth of the illegitimate baby). The prevailing images in society associated with beauty, for example, impress the characters through amazement as to how the job of God is attributed to billboards, movies and glances:

> You looked at them and wondered why they were so ugly […] Then you realized that it came from conviction, their conviction. It was as though some mysterious all-knowing master had given each one a cloak of ugliness to wear, and they had each accepted it without question. 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 … (p. 28).

Here, hegemonic ideology is referred to as "mysterious all-knowing master," who claims no virtuous space for the Black, represented by the Breedloves, whose identity, as has been suggested above, is interfered with failure, immature, secondary and bound to primary Subject. Therefore, this inferiorised "secondary identity" falls short of self-reliance that would be attained through the developmental stages, including the crisis, of the persona. The secondary identity is infected

with degrading social paradigms. The Breedloves, for example, reconstruct their identity in accordance this paradigm of the white society. Pecola, particularly, gives in the paradigm and stick to the conviction that she is ugly and unworthy. Thus, her assimilation to the collapsing paradigm becomes "a matter of survival" for her. The authorized image of the ideal beauty, associated with silk skinned white bodies with blue eyes and romantic love, becomes a damaging factor in Pecola's life. The more she attempts to change herself, the more she gets involved in an illusionary array of the images in modern life. Pecola loses her Self; in fact, she cannot construct a self on her own: "an arm, a leg, a name, an eye... all that are "quiet as it's kept" (p. 4).

Regarding self-perception, the developing persona cannot orient herself around her Self. In other words, she is unable to be self-oriented. As the primary Subject (the authority figure of society) orients her self-perception, the character becomes restless and anxious. Her hesitation, terror and anxiety indicate that she adopts a poor self-image. In the case of the Breedloves, something more complicated happens: the author presents the reader with a world of images through which the characters compensate for the distracted, disoriented self-perception. Mrs. Breedlove and Mrs. MacTeer are ironically the characters who are afraid of being "out" of the aforementioned collapsing paradigm. That indicates the "disordered sense of [S]elf" which fails because of the destructive forces in the existing order (Barret 1998, p. 465). The protagonist's "prayer for blue eyes" marks significant moments of "self-loathing" (Hwangbo 2004, p. 31) and disordered sense. In the case of Sammy, the protagonist's brother, "ugliness," as an imposed idea/image and internalized negative perception, appears to be a painful curse upon the Self. As regards Mrs. Breedlove, Pecola's mother, the anguish of "ugliness" can be cured only by self-sacrifice. As for Pecola, the protagonist, this negative image, a false reflection of the ideal beauty, turns out to be a "coverage," a sort of figurative veil to hide herself from people. Her ugliness repels people's gaze. Pecola takes shelter in a constructed world of images that in no way correspond to her true

self-image. For this reason, her passive and distracted/reversed self-perception is observed to be destitute in identity formation. Pecola sees the images of whites as the real objects and identifies herself with imaginary others. On the other hand, Claudia tries to understand her inadequacy and questions the images she is exposed to: "I had only one desire: to dismember it. 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" (p. 14). Indeed, Pecola and many other female characters do not have a normal relationship due to the absence of the essential selves. Pauline spends all her energy in her employer's home and never shows her maternal love to Pecola. On the other hand, Mrs MacTeer is always angry with Claudia and Frieda and she does not make them feel worthy: "Had any adult with the power to fulfil my desires taken me seriously and asked me what I wanted, they would have known that I did not want to have anything to own, or to possess any object. I wanted rather to feel something ..." (pp. 14-15). The eternal question "how do you do that? I mean, how do you get somebody to love you?" suspends in the air. She does not know the sense of loving or being loved, which is closely associated with the self-image: "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" (p. 34). It is not just a new pair of eyes will make Pecola different and become suddenly beautiful; but the images that her eyes hold – the images of her Self – will be replaced as well. She thinks with a new pair of eyes will come a new vision, a new vision of Pecola as beautiful.

Images shape the characters' interactions, thus influence the development of the self. They shape the types of interactions, which indicates a process that never ends. Mayberry argues that "seeing has always been our most powerful metaphor for knowing [and] influences subject-object, gender, and power relations" (Mayberry 2010, p. 102). Pecola is therefore made to learn to despise "her physical appearance," her self-knowledge, throughout her social interactions. Her self-image, "black ugly girl" is not originally

generated by her self-perception. This image is a product of the perception of the other (from Pecola's perspective), that is, the perception of the primary Subject. As a passive receiver of this distracted image, the object commences to imitate or duplicate the imposed idea, a negative image, ugliness. Even the word concept of "ugliness" is a product of the primary Subject, whose perception orients the perspective of the passive object. Primary Subject's imposed monitority (Çıraklı 2010, p. 27) is apparent here: Pecola perceives herself the way the primary Subject perceives her. So, unable to grip her Self, Pecola perceives her image in the eyes of the primary Subject. Pecola's self-image, a negative image indeed, is an ill reflection of the image generated by the perception of the reciprocal other. So, Pecola cannot reflect upon her own image, rather envisions a false image as to how she appears. She, then, suffers because it is implied that her appearance does not meet the standards imposed and enforced by the primary Subject. She is increasingly focused on how she is revealed in the eyes and words of the others. "Thrown, in this way, into the binding conviction that only a miracle could relieve her, she would never know her beauty. She would see only what there was to see: the eyes of other people" (p. 35). Thus, her identity formation is interrupted with the collapsing paradigm and such infected false self-image and distracted self-perception. Therefore, she cannot accomplish self-realization and her identity formation ends in failure. The characters can realize themselves through the absence of certain virtues of the primary Subject. Their emotive symptoms of passivity such as hatred, hostility, misery, are all reflected back to her every time she looks into the mirror. Pecola's false self-image of herself as an ugly and despised child legitimize indirectly the image of other female characters and their culminated negative sense of selfworth. Hence, the social perceptions represented in the narrative do not only *inferiorise* the perceived object but also generate monstrous attributions for the perceived. The image, therefore, does not correspond to a reliable image of the persona. The distorted image suggestive of monstrous attributions reduces the perceived individuals

to mere caricatures and preposterous entities (Fick 2007, p. 21) even though they feel "comfortable" in their own being:

> Guileless and without vanity, we were still in love with ourselves then. We felt comfortable in our skins, enjoyed the news that our senses released to us, admired our dirt, cultivated our scars, and could not comprehend this unworthiness. Jealousy we understood and thought natural – a desire to have what somebody else had; but envy was a strange, new feeling for us. And all the time we knew that Maureen Peal was not the enemy and not worthy of such intense hatred. The thing to fear was the thing that made her beautiful, and not us (pp.57-58).

As can be seen, the destruction of the desperate characters is due to the substitutive act of the primary Subject whose perception orients the socially constructed image of the other. Here, the other, Pecola, cannot reverse the binary relationship to impose her centrality to the process. From her perspective, the primary Subject is the Other; still, it remains as subject objectivizing the inferiorised entity, namely, our Pecola. Since she cannot posit herself as an active subject, she cannot make out a reference point from which she can adopt a self-perception, thereby adopting a self-image and constructing a Self of her own. This is essential to develop an identity. The character's self-perception is determined by social-perception that is oriented by the primary Subject. As the character cannot have a self-perception on her own, she cannot have a self-image because she cannot realize herself without having self-perception. Then, the self-image the persona has is an ill idea about herself, a negative image of her Self. So, the persona cannot construct her Self, as a result of which she cannot develop an identity. The distorted image of the inferiorised persona can be just a mimicry or fake imitation of the prevailing social perception. So the efforts to reconcile the self and the society fail. Terror and anxiety are obvious due to the suppressing gaze of the social perception: "Outdoors, we knew, was the real terror of life. The threat of being outdoors surfaced frequently in those days" (p. 11). This fear of "outdoors" is a source of consuming anxiety for Pecola, who is unable to integrate herself to society. This complex relationship between the individual and the society in the novel reveals itself with a striking metaphor, a "coal stove" that follows:

> The only living thing in the Breedloves' house was the coal stove, which lived independently of everything and everyone, its fire being "out," "banked," or "up" at its own discretion, in spite of the fact that the family fed it and knew all the details of its regimen: sprinkle, do not dump, not too much... The fire seemed to live, go down, or die according to its own schemata. In the morning, however, it always saw fit to die (p. 27).

At this stage, Pecola wishes for the blue eyes so that she can be accepted and approved. She would be part of society and eventually achieve love and affection. Yet, she is to be ruined and to fail to survive. Her eventual insanity and ultimate isolation shows that the images of luxurious houses and compact cars play no role in existence and cannot provide any bond with her actual Self. This is the stage that the persona addresses herself the questions "who I am," "what I do," "how I look" and "how I like to perceive the others." The dissatisfactory expectations have the individuals attempt surrogate objects and proxy images, in Pecola's words, "masks and shadows," organized around the production and consumption of images, masks and shadows:

> Adults, older girls, shops, magazines, newspapers, window signs all the world had agreed that a blue-eyed, yellow-haired, pink skinned doll was what every girl child treasured. "Here," they said, "this is beautiful, and if you are on this day 'worthy' you may have it." . . . I could not love it. But I could examine it to see what it was that all the world said was lovable (p. 14).

Images of beauty are injected as the surrogate products and gain essential status in *The Bluest Eye*. Masks are internalized in their soul whether they be adult or children. Such naturalized process of masking the reality enables the person to have a new wardrobe loaded with trendy images. The persona opens the wardrobe, for example, choose the "appropriate" image for the day, wear it, look into the mirror and smile. Synder et al. (1977) argue that "not only do the perceivers fashion their images […] on the basis of their stereotyped intuitions about beauty and goodness of characters, but these impressions initiated a chain of events that result in the behavioural confirmation of erroneous inferences" (p. 662). Since the persona bears an inferiorised identity and tries to compensate for it with

surrogate masks, she becomes vulnerable to external manipulations. Thus, she suffers from terror and anxiety. She does not a reliable Self of her own, as her Self has been constructed upon the negative image of herself. The persona's self-perception is therefore infected with the imposed perception of the primary Subject, who also produce artificial proxies and surrogate images. The triple agony of the characters through this collapsing paradigm is three-fold then: first, considering modern era, they live in modern consumer society and they are getting alienated from themselves via artificial images; second, they are socio-economically outcast in society and struggle hard to survive miserable living conditions. They are focused on how to make end with. And, thirdly, as has been discussed above, they are inferiorised objects of the perception of the primary Subject. As they cannot realize themselves, they cannot construct a Self.

The poor negative image themselves causes terror and anxiety. Their need for love, affection, security and protection remains unsatisfied. Self-loathing rules over the individual psyche. For example, Claudia is observed to tell us about Rosemary Villanucci: "We stare at her, wanting her bread, but more than that wanting to poke the arrogance out of her eyes and smash the pride of ownership that curls her chewing mouth" (p. 5). As she implies they hate themselves, not because of what she has or how she looks, but because she has a face associated with goodness. "Face" as a sign of morality and virtue/norm. According to the primary Subject, such a face should bear the certain qualities, mainly "white skin," and "blue eyes." The black women are surprised why white women do so much make up. They think they need that camouflage, not the ones with blue eyes. Pauline is another female character who is bombarded with those images when she looks around:

> Along with the idea of romantic love, she was introduced to another – physical beauty. Probably the most destructive ideas in the history of human thought. Both originated in envy, thrived in insecurity, and ended in disillusion. In equating physical beauty with virtue, she stripped her mind, bound it, and collected self-contempt by the heap. She forgot lust and simple caring for. She regarded love as possessive mating, and romance as the goal of the spirit. It would be for her a well-spring from which she would draw the most destructive emotions, deceiving

> the lover and seeking to imprison the beloved, curtailing freedom in every way (p. 95).

Claudia, the narrator here, is an active participant as well. She does not only represent her own anxiety, but also sympathizes with the other characters. The first person object pronoun "me" represents the black community, especially females and their struggle with how they are perceived by others and how they (mis)perceive themselves. Most of the female characters in the novel have been cast to this destroying gaze of the primary Subject, that is concealed violence. This gaze manipulates, controls and damages the individual perceptions, reducing minorities or any kind of marginal groups, to inferiorised "others" and filling them with self-hatred.

Schizophrenia occurs as a result of the conflict between Self and the external world controlled by the primary Subject. With the erosion of boundaries between social perception and self-perception, schizophrenia occurs. But, in the case of Pecola, schizophrenia is a belated response to the discrepancy between perceptions and marks just a transitional period to insanity, that is, ultimate denial of reality. She actually hallucinates that she has blue eyes, the sign of ideal beauty and capability of love.

> The birdlike gestures are worn away to a mere picking and plucking her way between the tire rims and the sunflowers, between Coke bottles and milkweed, among all the waste and beauty of the world-which is what she herself was. All of our waste which we dumped on her and which she absorbed. And all of our beauty, which was hers first and which she gave to us (p. 162).

It is seen that, in Barret's terms, "repressed traumatic memories resurface" (Barret 1998, p. 467). For the schizophreniac persona, as Fick asserts, "the shadows are still shadows." The actual world is being reflected as an imitation and the shadowy world as perfect (2007, p. 24).

> We tried to see her without looking at her, and never, never went near. Not because she was absurd, or repulsive, or because we were frightened, but because we bad failed her. Our flowers never grew … we avoided Pecola Breedlove – forever (p. 162).

Morrison states in the afterword that Pecola is not "seen by herself until she hallucinates a self." Thus, the language of schizophreniac persona "is driven along by the look or the sound of words rather than by their conventional meanings" (Barret 1998, p. 471). The failure of identity formation now results in the ultimate failure of the psyche which has lost all its essential ties with reality and primitive logic. Pecola's self-perception has been devoured by the prevailing social perception first, and then it is spit out now in the form of insanity, which is a means of self-protection. She does not have to protect herself anymore from the outside gaze. She no longer has to ignore irritating nonverbal responses directed against her, towards her, at her. She has stopped the bombardment of gaze. She has usually noticed that people gawk at her and then instantly avert their gaze from her face. She has put all that happen somewhere deep inside. Across the realm of actuality, she cares no longer about the people turning their eyes away from her. She can freely make eye contact as she is under the coverage of her fantasy. She walks around making eye contact and no longer has to be worried about the gestures of the people. Even though this is not a true compensation for the Self, Pauline, however, does not think that beauty and love is achievable. She accepts that there is no place for them in the world of ideal images or in the realm of virtues (manifested through a set of norms and forms). She seems to give in, she constructs a submissive Self then:

> She was never able, after her education in the movies, to look at a face and not assign it some category in the scale of absolute beauty, and the scale was one she absorbed in full from the silver screen. There at last were the darkened woods, the lonely roads, the river banks, the gentle knowing eyes. There the flawed became whole, the blind sighted, and the lame and halt threw away their crutches. There death was dead, and people made every gesture in a cloud of music. There the black-and-white images came together, making a magnificent whole – all projected through the ray of light from above and behind. It was really a simple pleasure, but she learned all there was to love and all there was to hate. […] The idealized picture of white women's homes and their romantic relationships increases her unhappiness at home. When her tooth falls out, she realizes that she will never be beautiful, like Jean Harlow. She gives up not only her efforts to look like Harlow but also any possibility of being beautiful. (p. 94-5)

The characters therefore collect images (any attribution pertaining to themselves or the ones that which they think are interesting) and construct a make-believe Self upon the movie screens. Pecola eventually gives in the illusions to keep on in a world of images and then gives up sticking herself to it. Her self-delusion at least prevents her from attempted split of personality and hypocrisy for some time. Pecola is haunted and intimidated not by mere reality, but by those images – signposted with the blue eyes – which she thinks are the essentials of love and affection. The beauty and image are amalgamated in their manipulated vision. This is represented even in their "prayers," and they are convinced to be entrapped within the distorted image of themselves:

> The human is a representation of its Creator. The thing about this is that the image is nothing in itself. When we stand in front of the mirror in the morning, what are we looking at? Nothing more than a representation of ourselves. That image in the mirror only exists because of the real that it reflects. The moment you walk away from the mirror the representation disappears. It is the same when we turn away from God – we turn from the one whom we image (p. 7).

To conclude, Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* represents the obsessed involvement of the characters in the world of appearances. Pecola's self-image is determined by the primary Subject, which is the imaginary collective mind of society. It is the Primary Subject that orients social perception and prevents the characters adopting a reliable self-perception. The characters are primarily concerned with their public image since social perception from without (how they are perceived) shapes their self-perception. As the process of self-realization is interrupted by the disorientation of self-perception, the persona cannot construct a true Self of their own. Pecola and Breedlove family's vision is disabled by the prevailing primary Subject, and the inferiorised characters are unable to perceive the world from their own perspective. Since there is no self-perception as reference, identity formation ends in failure, and the persona turns out to be a passive object having a negative image of her Self. Having initially suffered from split of personality and schizophrenia, she

denies her negative self-image through surrogate images, and finally drives herself to insanity.

References

Barret, R. J. (1998). The schizophrenic and the liminal persona in modern society. *Culture Medicine and Psychiatry*, 22, 465-494.

Bloom, Harold (Ed.). (2007). *Modern Critical Interpretations*. New York: Infobase Publishing.

Bloom, Harold (Ed.). (2010). *The Bluest Eye, Bloom's Guides Series*, New York: Infobase Publishing.

Costello, Virginia. (1986). *The Creation of Self and Personalism in Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye and Beloved*. M.A. Dissertation, Ripon College, pp. 10-56.

Çıraklı, M. Zeki. (2010) *Narrative Strategies and Meaning: A Narratological Approach to William Golding's Fiction*. Saarbrucken: VDM Publishing.

Davis, Cynthia A. (1982). Self, society, and myth in Toni Morrison's fiction. *Contemporary Literature*, 23(3), 323-342.

Downing, David B. (1991). *Image and Ideology*. New York: State University of New York Press.

Erikson, Erik H. (1968). *Identity: Youth and Crisis*. New York: Norton Company.

Fick, Thomas H. (2007). Toni Morrison's allegory of the cave: Movies, concumption and platonic realism in *The Bluest Eye*. In: *Modern Critical Interpretations*. Ed. H. Bloom. New York: Infobase Publishing, pp. 19-34.

Foucault, Michel. ([1934] 1995). *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Trans. Alan Sheridan, 2nd ed. New York: Vintage Books.

Hwangbo, Kyeong. (2004). *Trauma, Narrative, and The Marginal Self in Selected Contemporary American Novels*. Ph.D. dissertation. University of Florida.

Lacan, Jacques. (1977). The mirror state as formative of the function of the I as revealed in psychoanalytic experience. *Ecrits: A Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Norton, 1-7.

Lacan, Jacques. (1981). *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*. Ed. Alan Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan, New York: Norton.

Mayberry, Susan Neal. (2010). The ideal of physical beauty. In: *The Bluest Eye, Bloom's Guides Series*, Ed. H. Bloom, New York: Infobase Publishing, pp. 101-104.

Morrison, Toni. ([1970] 1999). *The Bluest Eye*. London: Vintage Random House.

Morrison, Toni. (1999). Afterword. In: *The Bluest Eye*. London: Vintage Random House, pp. 167-172.

Nichols, Bill. (1981). *Ideology and the Image*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Ross, L., Mark R., Lepper, M. H. (1975). Perseverance in self perception and social perception: Biased attributional process in the debriefing paradigm. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 32(5), 880-892.

Schreiber, E. J. (2010). Double consciousness. In: *The Bluest Eye, Bloom's Guides Series*, Ed. H. Bloom, New York: Infobase Publishing, pp. 82-86.

Stanford, A. F. (2003). *Bodies in a Broken World: Women Novelists of Color & the Politics of Medicine*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Synder, M., Berscheid, E., Tanke, E. D. (1977). Social perception and interpersonal behaviour: On the self-fulfilling nature of social stereotypes. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 35(9), 656-666.