



## THE PORTRAYAL OF BEAUTY MYTH IN MIEKO KAWAKAMI'S NOVEL *BREASTS AND EGGS*

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**ABSTRAK:** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui stereotipe tentang kecantikan, segala konsekuensi kualifikasi kecantikan secara profesional dan kamufase kecantikan vital dari karakter Makiko yang digambarkan di dalam novel *Breasts and Eggs* karya Mieko Kawakami melalui mitos kecantikan. Desain penelitian pada analisis ini adalah metode penelitian kualitatif. Penelitian ini menggunakan teori *beauty myth* dari Naomi Wolf untuk menganalisis mitos kecantikan yang terjadi pada tokoh utama Makiko. Data tersebut berupa ucapan dan tindakan. Dalam penelitian ini data diambil dari kutipan berupa kata, frasa, kalimat, dan dialog. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukan bahwa (1) karakter utama Makiko mengalami mitos kecantikan yang disebabkan oleh penilaian tentang kecantikan yang muncul terdapat tiga penilaian terhadap kecantikan, yaitu: fisik, mental dan keahlian (2) mitos kecantikan yang dialami oleh Makiko menciptakan persyaratan kecantikan profesional yang menyebabkan adanya konsekuensi dari persyaratan kecantikan profesional standar dalam dunia kerja, dari ke 6 konsekuensi yang ada didalam teori terdapat 5 konsekuensi di dalam analisis ini, yaitu: memperkuat standar ganda, membuat wanita miskin materi dan psikologi, melelahkan perempuan, membuat wanita terisolasi, dan menggunakan badan untuk menyampaikan peran ekonomi (3) dari konsekuensi dari persyaratan kecantikan profesional menciptakan kebohongan kecantikan vital.

**Kata Kunci:** *Kecantikan, Mitos, Novel*

**ABSTRACT:** This study aimed to know the stereotype of beauty myth, the consequence of Professional Beauty Qualification and the vital lies of beauty from the character of Makiko depicted in the novel *Breasts and Eggs* by Mieko Kawakami through the beauty myth theory. The research design used qualitative research method. This study used beauty myth theory to analyze the myth of beauty that occurred in the main character Makiko. The data in this study were taken from quotations such as word, phrases, dialogue and sentences. The results of this study indicate that (1) Makiko the main character experienced the beauty myth cause by the stereotype of beauty that emerged the three assessments of beauty, which is: physique, mental, and skill (2) the beauty myth endure by Makiko create the Professional Beauty Qualification (PBQ) standard that cause the consequences of the Professional Beauty Qualification standard in the work, of the six consequences in theory, there are five consequence in this analysis, which is: The PBQ reinforces the double standard, the PBQ reinforces the double standard, the PBQ keep women materially and psychologically poor, it tires women out, it keeps women isolated, and it uses her body to convey her economic role (3) from the consequences of PBQ create the vital lies of beauty.

**Keywords:** *Beauty, Myth, Novel*

## INTRODUCTION





Women and beauty are a unity that cannot be separated since dawn the time. For women, beauty is privilege to have a pretty face and good body. According to Santayan (2010:11; Celkyte 2020:64), beauty is an ideal truth, a symbol of perfection, and a reasonable manifestation of goodness. Beauty in a person represents perfection of someone's appearance. In other words, the truth is that beauty has its own standard. Moreover, the beauty of a woman is considered as valuable asset that must be guarded even more by a man who defines the beauty of a woman. That create a myth of beauty in social society. The notion of beauty promoted various myths both in everyday life and in the work environment.

According to Armstrong (2008:79), myth is something that is not real or false or more about a low way of thinking. The myth is something under mouth to mouth that has no clear root. Myths abound in society, such as those about ancient legends, myth about local story, even myths about women and beauty flourish in society that if women were beautiful then the story would exist, if women were not beautiful then the story would not have come to pass. Even the myth of beauty grew when women were told the tale of a beautiful princess and that create a beauty myth in women.

Based on Wolf (2015:14), beauty myth is always actually prescribing behavior and not appearance. Myths create attitudes that defy beauty and disregard for appearance. The definition of beauty should have a pretty face, straight hair and ideal body. If women do not have these categories, it would be ostracized; considered odd or unattractive. The beauty myth is expressed in a novel, since it is part of a literary work. In beauty myth have three main topic they are: Stereotype of beauty, The consequence of professional beauty qualification. Stereotype of beauty myth that emerged the three assessments of beauty, which is: physique, mental, and skill. The consequence of professional beauty qualification has six consequence, but in this analysis the writer found five consequence, they are: The PBQ reinforces the double standard, the PBQ reinforces the double standard, the PBQ keep women materially and psychologically poor, it tires women out, it keeps women isolated, and it uses her body to convey her economic role. and the last is vital lies of beauty, which is: beauty as legal qualification in women power, beauty woman through work hard and effort, women's life as primary rule of the beauty myth.

In this analysis, the researcher is interested to analyze novel. One of the terms is *Breasts & Eggs*. The novel was published by Bungeishunju in February 2008. It was awarded the 138<sup>th</sup> Akutagawa Prize. The original work has not been translated into English. The novel translated from Japanese into English by Sam Bett and David Boyd. That novels are in English was published in 2020 by Europe Editions, New York. Novel with the genre love, loss, work, and time, it talks about the main character. Makiko, a mother of one child, feels insecure because her figure is not as good as that of her workmate. Makiko feels she should be able to change her figure so she can keep her job as a hostess. The social community's views and demands on work made Makiko even more determined to change her breasts, and then she stunk the city in search of a place to operate, in order to change her figure. Makiko's myth of beauty was that she felt that her body was no longer attractive after bearing children at the breast, which made her feel that she was no longer attractive and could cause her to lose her job because visitors were bored of looking at her that was no longer beautiful.

Based on the previous-stated explanation, the main problem, namely: 1. what are the stereotype of beauty myth found in the novel? 2. what are the consequences of professional beauty qualification happened by the main character?. 3. What are the vital lies found in the novel? Derived directly from the stated problems above, this



analysis is expected to: 1. to analysis the stereotype of beauty found in the novel. 2. to describe the consequences of professional beauty qualification happened by the main character. 3. to know the vital lies of beauty in the novel.

## METHODS

The writer presents the research methods used in obtaining and analyzing the data. The research methods consist of research design, source of data, data collection, and data analysis. The data research design is use a descriptive qualitative research to analyze this study. Descriptive qualitative research meant to eliminate the number or some scale in gathering data rather than analyze the object to be research. Qualitative research is carry out with the understand about topics, include everything in everyday terms, which is indicated by the challenge of conducting original research by focusing on three goals, namely transparency, methodical and adherence to evidence.

## ANALYSIS

### The Stereotype of Beauty Myth

Women obsession with beauty makes women willing to do things like the above just to get the public recognition without tolerating themselves who are intimidated by their thoughts. Public recognition makes women to do everything they can and accept all processes and this one of stereotype that develops in society.

In this study, the researcher analyzes the data of stereotype of beauty from the object based on Naomi Wolf's theory (2015:46), stereotype in this analysis, it divided into three parts, According to this theory, there are three parts of the stereotype of beauty myth: physique, mental and skill.

### Physique

In this analysis, found some data in the novel. Below is one example of the data found by the writer.

The physique by Makiko was very concern about the shape of the body to stay young. As an elderly women, Makiko should definitely take care of her figure is the data find in this analysis. It creates stereotypes of beauty. The stereotypes of beauty can create a lack of confidence, which enable women to do various ways to get recognition from beauty myth out of them. Here are some examples of the stereotype of beauty myth that happen to Makiko.

**Makiko looked old.** Everyone looks older as the year go by, but that's not I mean, she wasn't even forty. She literally looked old. (*Breasts and Eggs*, 2020:23).

From the above quote, the phrase "**Makiko looked old**" is the stereotype of the surrounding community says that Makiko looks old and not like a woman in her thirties but like a woman in forties. A woman in her 30s based on the myth of beauty should not yet have a frown and still have a bright, contained skin but that does not apply to Makiko's, stereotype to creating a sense of self-confidence in Makiko.

### Mental

In this analysis, found some data in the novel. Below is one example of the data found by the writer.

The quotations of the mental of Makiko. Makiko works as a hostess, is required to maintain her looks to be fresh, healthy, beautiful and to keep her figure in order to look good and attractive, but to get it, Makiko tries to



make a variety of ways to stay beautiful is the data found in this analysis. It damages Makiko both physically and mentally.

Statements about Makiko felt mental distress can be seen in the following statements:

Now and then, we'd wind up at a kind of chorus, where Makiko became her own motivational speaker. "I can do it. I'm really gonno do it". Most of the time, she sounded like she was reading herself a list of all the information she'd gleaned over the course of the day. (*Breast and Eggs*, 2020:37).

The myth of beauty works on women think they don't look good and set their own standards about beauty. To overcome the myth of beauty, many women are willing to do anything that can hurt themselves. From the foregoing, it explains that Makiko try to convince herself that could have a breast implant operation by tries to collect information about it.

### **Skill**

In this analysis, found some data in the novel. Below is one example of the data found by the writer.

The quotations about skill of Makiko Makiko did not have a personality, got an assessment by the people around her is the data found in thid analysis. Makiko's work as a hostess that requires each one to look cute. Makiko's work was consideres to be a great job because of working in an area that was not fancy and in moderate tavern conditions. Makiko's unskill self was forced to work as a hostess in order to get. Makiko work as a hostess, get the stereotype of his work. This can be seen in the following statements:

Makiko was a hostess, but that can mean all kinds of different things. Some are good, some are not so good. She work d in Shobasi, the neighborhood the three of us worked in for years after we ran off that night, said Natsu. (*Breasts and Eggs*, 2020:25).

The myth of beauty not only works on the body or the appearance of women but also on the professions or expertise engage by women, when it comes to myth beauty work, it also has its own standards. The above states that, in Osaka there are various kinds of hostesses from the cheapest to the most expensive. The ones who get paid the most are the good-looking ones and still have it young, whereas the underpaid is the opposite. Makiko was one of the cheapest paid groups of customers, since Makiko was unattractive in appearance and lack the ability to sing to entertain guests.

### **The Consequence Of The Professional Beauty Qualification**

There are five consequence of the professional beauty qualification, namely: the PBQ reinforces the double standar, the PBQ keeps women materially and psychologically poor, it tires women out, it keeps women isolated, and it uses her body to convey her economic rule. Then the writer analyze the quatactions in the *Breast & Eggs* Novel related to the five consequences of professional beauty qualifications.

### **The PBQ reinforces the double standard**

Professional Beauty Qualification is the term of beauty that exists in working environment. The term is used to show that professional lob ha company qualifications that must have pretty face, while standard beauty is defined by the company (Wolf, 2015:27). Professional Beauty Qualifications indulgence has affected women's motivations and attitudes toward beauty.



In this analysis, found some data in the novel. Below is one example of the data found by the writer.

The quotation about the PBQ reinforces the double standards of Makiko Makiko was a clerk at one of the bars in Osaka is the data found in this analysis. Makiko as a hostess certainly has a double standard of his job. As a hostess, Makiko experience a standard double because of her job.

Makiko was a hostess, but that can mean all kinds of different things. Some are good, some are not so good. Osaka is rife with drinking spots, but address is enough to tell you what you should expect, in terms of clientele and atmosphere and hostesses. (Breasts and Eggs, 2020:24).

The myth of beauty within the workplace creates a professional beauty qualification that is the standard existing in the workplace for female workers to follow. Makiko works at a small bar in a run-down part of town. Makiko without skills and less attractive looks, is grateful that she was able to work at the site. Makiko get the myth of beauty because Makiko didn't have abilities and looks that weren't attractive.

### **The PBQ keeps women materially and psychologically poor**

In this analysis, found some data in the novel. Below is one example of the data found by the writer.

The quotation of the PBQ keeps women materially and psychologically poor of Makiko is the data found in this analysis. Makiko, a hostess, feels that. As a hostess accompanying guests, of course they would have to pay for their own per meal when they sat with the guests. That makes it possible for hostess to include Makiko to experience material poverty because of that standard.

No one says it, but everyone knows that guest cover whatever their hostess orders, to pad their nightly sales. (Breasts and Eggs, 2020:25)

The myth of beauty in the workforce creates a PBQ that creates a standard for work. Women at work not only think of work but also maintain beauty. The above makes it clear that every guest, Makiko and other hostess will have to express personal money in order to pay for the food or the drink they drink or eat while keeping customers company. The standard set by the bar that Makiko work at.

### **It tires women out**

In this analysis, found some data in the novel. Below is one example of the data found by the writer.

The quotation of it tires women out of Makiko is the data find in tis analysis. In order to survive as a hostess, Makiko would have to observe and maintain her appearance would like to have the breast implant surgery. But that was not well received by Midoriko was the child of Makiko. Midoriko inched her mother from performing the breast implant.

She was used to her dynamic with Midoriko and talked to her like everything was okay, one side as it was. She gabbed away, so upbeat that it almost got to me. (Breasts and Eggs, 2020:24).

The statement above proves that Makiko and Midoriko is not in good shape. Midoriko on the strike spoke and Makiko felt indifferent because Makiko have tries many ways but Midoriko has not transform and remain in Makiko's home. Makiko was disappoint and tired of Midoriko's letting it go. Makiko was just think about her was





going to get a breast implant soon. The myth of beauty make Makiko feel less confident and get Makiko and Midoriko into conflict.

#### **It keeps women isolated**

In this analysis, found some data in the novel. Below is one example of the data found by the writer.

The quotation of it keeps women isolated of Makiko felt a change in her after giving birth to Midoriko is the data find in this analysis. Makiko defines the thing because she feels that childbirth has brought a change to her.

"Well, mine weren't always like this," "not until I had a kid. Maybe they haven't changed that much. I don't know. But seriously, they were nowhere near this bad. I mean, what the hell are these a couple of breasts? Not even. More like black cherries. Black mixed with too much red. But this color is worse than black cherry. More like the color of a flat screen after you turn it off. (*Breasts and Eggs*, 2020:58)

The beautiful breasts definition of a myth of beauty is brightly color, dense and of a size that is not too large but not too small. Makiko get her myth of beauty because her breasts weren't beautiful. The above statement is a definitive one given by Makiko to her own breast. After getting a response from her sister, Makiko felt that the response was less accurate about the color of her breast and that Makiko define herself as to the color of her breast.

#### **It uses her body to convey her economic role**

In this analysis, found some data in the novel. Below is one example of the data found by the writer.

The quotation of it uses her body to convey her economic role of Makiko didn't have the expertise to get a job as a hostess is the data find in this analysis. Makiko had to do so in order to make a living for herself and for her child.

Makiko was a hostess, but that can mean all kinds of different things. Some are good, some are not so good. (*Breasts and Eggs*, 2020:24).

The standards determine by the myth of beauty make women do anything to be recognized by the myth of beauty. The statement above states that Makiko works as a hostess at one bar in Osaka. Makiko work from a young age, and Makiko work to support her younger sister until his sister became independent and Makiko work to support her child.

#### **Vital lies of beauty**

Beauty is generally one of the few things that society pays attention to when women are working or not. Beauty becomes an object for all women but which actually brings the myth of beauty within a certain standard of

society. Beauty is generally the one thing that every woman in the part of the world cares about, especially in the social society. Beauty seemed to be the sole object of all women (Wolf, 2015:28)

In this analysis, discuss the three vital lies of beauty that the main characters in the novel experience.

#### **Beauty as legal qualification in woman's power.**

In this analysis, found some data in the novel. Below is one example of the data found by the writer.

The quotation of beauty as legal qualifications in woman's power of Makiko works as a hostess that requires her to be attractive is the data find in this analysis. Makiko went some way to make herself look good and get recognition by the social community.



"I've been think about getting breasts implants". "I'm gonna do it, I'm gonna get big boobs."  
(*Breasts and Eggs*, 2020:36).

The beauty myth creates its own standards for women. Beautiful women are their attractive looks and have nice bodies. The above statement was the act of Makiko is a hostess to perform a breast implant operation. Makiko is no longer young wanted a confession that she was attractive by trying to perform a breast implant operation. Makiko feels that she's changed after giving birth, wants a change to get her confession.

#### **Beauty woman through hard work and effort.**

In this analysis, found some data in the novel. Below is one example of the data found by the writer.

The quotation of the standard of employment for each company will, of course, be different, as will Makiko is the data find in this analysis. Makiko works as a hostess that is required to look good in order to attract customers. To keep up with an interesting performance, it certainly takes more effort and effort. Like Makiko would do to change the shape of her breasts.

"I've been think about getting breasts implants". "I'm gonna do it, I'm gonna get big boobs."  
(*Breasts and Eggs*, 2020:36).

The myth of beauty arose because of a lack of confidence in a woman who saw the beauty of others and created the beauty myth of herself. The myth of beauty works her causes compares to others. The above states state that Makiko want a change in her to be attractive and able to continue works. The standard established by the bar her work make him do that and also because many young women came to work at his workplace. Makiko was no longer easy, feeling replaced if she wasn't attractive anymore.

#### **Woman's life as a primary rule of the beauty myth.**

In this analysis, found some data in the novel. Below is one example of the data found by the writer.

The quotation of Makiko, a hostess, is require to have an interesting performance is the data find in this analysis. To make a good appearance, Makiko did many things like makeup and surgery to make herself look attractive.

"In that stupid purple dress she wears for work, the one with the gold fringe."  
(*Breasts and Eggs*, 2020:75).

The above states that, when working hostesses must use brightly color, low-color clothing to attract attention. This rule has been set in every bar in the Shobhasi of Osaka high. Hostesses dress like that to attract customers. The myth of beauty causes PBQ to create standards for work. A woman who looks beautiful is a woman who has a beautiful figure and has an attractive appearance

#### **CONCLUSION**

Based on the result of the analysis in the discussion in the previous chapter, there are three main conclusions that are summarized in this study related to the analysis of the portrayal of beauty myth in Mieko as the main character. These three points, respectively stereotype of beauty myth, the consequence of professional beauty qualification (PBQ), and vital lies of beauty was happened to Makiko as a main character.

In *Breasts and Eggs* novel, the writer finds that there is the involvement of the character Makiko who plays the role of a single mother who takes care of her child and work as a hostess in Shobashi. In *Breasts and Eggs* novel, the first is the physique, mental and skill from Makiko who was gets the stereotype of beauty causes



of beauty myth. Secondly, there is the PBQ reinforces the double standard, the PBQ keeps women materially and psychologically poor, it tires women out, it keeps women isolated and it uses her body to convey her economic role that Makiko was do the standard when she was work as a hostess. The third is beauty as legal qualifications in women's power, beauty women through hard and effort, and women's life as a primary rule of the beauty myth that Makiko willing to do when she was work to gets the standard of beauty myth. Finally, the writer hopes that this writing can be useful for the learning process and hopefully this research can be a motivation for readers in studying literary works, including novel.

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