“Through the Mirror of Beauty Culture”

Author Note

*Key words*: Beauty Culture, Sexism, Racism, Commercial Culture

# Introduction

The article “Through the mirror of beauty culture” is written by Carla Rice in reference to “Feminist Issues: Race, Class and Sexuality”. The paper will provide the reader with the summary of the article, annotation, Critical evaluation, self-reflection and conclusions. The annotation for the given article will describe, how society perceive a woman’s body as an impression of cultural and social essence of beauty and morality. The critical evaluation of the article will reflect whether the author’s views on feminism is clearly persuaded what he thinks about the solutions to racism and sexism if a woman do not attain the levels of acceptable beauty.

The self-reflection on the article will then present my vision that there is no discrimination on the basis of color weight and hairs but only on the basis of knowledge and hard work. Women of every race are equally reputable and should not be discriminated just because of their skin color and the imperfect body structure.

# Annotation

The article is written about various standards of beauty culture set up by the society for a woman in order to avoid sexism (gender biasness), sexuality and racism. It provides the reader with an in-depth analysis of people’s considerations about of women of different race, regarding her color, height, hairs and breast (Hobbs and Rice 2018).

Author’s focus point is that if a woman of any race is not meeting the desired standards of beauty, she will automatically be hassled to attain that level of beauty. This is because women’s freedom, social mobility and status in society depends upon her beauty and physical appearance. There are different stereotypes and notions towards women in the society e.g. if a woman seems attractive to the men, it will improve her image in society, the white skin will help her to attain an admirable social status. Hence the only option for a woman to consider a life worth living is to maintain the socially decided canons of desirable look and a perfect appearance.

Throughout her research she focused on the views of women that why they always need to modify their bodies and why they have always been judged by their natural undesirable body structure and the skin color. For writing this paper author has reviewed the literature and other researches, as well as conducted original interviews with participants of feminist movements, and then discussed their views on beauty culture comprehensively. She provides several evidences on how women of different races changed their physical appearance just to avoid sexism and racism, and to beatified themselves to be chased by men. The participants told her that they have been through different types of cosmetic surgeries, and put their best efforts for maintaining their weight, figure, skin color and hairs, so as to avoid the isolation from those who are naturally desirable by the men.

Carle Rice states that, there are two idiosyncratic concepts in the society, i.e. “racial Stereotypes and Material Culture of “Beauty”. She argued that racial stereotypes are dominant because in most of the countries Black women are isolated from Whites because their physical appearance never matched with the outlined beauty cannons of the culture and society. These women are always targeted for racism and sexism and are convinced to chase the customs of beauty.

The concept of “Material culture of beauty” describes, an attractive physical appearance is immensely needed for the women of this materialistic society. They are always expected to chase the beauty standards through cosmetic surgeries, and beauty products. Women usually think that by consuming these products they can change them living standards and status in the society.

Furthermore, the author discussed that, beauty and ugliness is also highlighted by the cosmetic companies who takes benefit of beauty culture. Promote their products by differentiating the women in terms of beauty, and suggest them various products and surgeries to achieve desirable appearance.

# Critical Evaluation

Carle Rice has well presented the issue of beauty culture in a persuasive manner. She is very clear in her thoughts on whether enhancing the beauty anyway is the only available solution for women to achieve higher status and respect in the society. Carle argued that skin color, hairstyles weights and breast are considered as the problematic sites woman’s body and they always try to improve them according to the set standards of beauty culture. She quoted a response from a presenter that she as a Black female attorney is not allowed to wear “political” hair styles.

 Carle also gives an evidence from an ad of a bleach cream which claims to change the skin color from Black to five shades lighter. This shows how the commercial culture affects the choice of women to look attractive, and how the cosmetic companies are prioritizing white skin color over Black as a symbol of beauty. These companies just aimed at their profit maximization by selling their product without bothering the negative impacts on societies.

Furthermore, Rice also presented the evidence on beauty from a presentation called “The Dos and Don’ts of Corporate Fashion” which depicts the views of women that, they need body modifications for prejudgment by the group of people in the society and their emotions and feelings instead of just an attractive physical appearance. All the evidences presented by the author are knowledgeable and convincing to the reader.

Some of the points which I think are not so convincing includes, his arguments on social media, effecting the choice of women on beautification and body modification. I think there is no point in combining capitalism with accessibility of online pornography to influence the choice of women from where and how to depilate for body-baring fashions. I also find an error in one of his arguments that the custom of hairlessness is an example how commercial culture is of negatively depicting the values of beauty-culture. I think that the author does not supported the arguments with any evidence.

In my opinion, Carle Rice has made conclusions very early without bothering what actually endorses the beauty culture in society. For example, in the above-mentioned arguments she said that commercial culture is responsible for racism in society, but later she argued that physical appearance plays vital role in mental satisfaction by upgrading the social status, inspiring personality. There is a question that how a commercial of skin bleach can set a standard for a woman’s self-respect and womanly spirit.

Along with the above unpersuasive arguments he also said that if women try to improve their living environment, their physical appearance will also be improved. I am unable to understand that how a changed living environment gives you an attractive look just according to the standards of prevailed beauty culture. The argument is not validated by any supporting evidence.

Moreover, he claims that early entrepreneurs brought to advertise that women can improve their worth in the society through body modifications and personal transformation. However, the evidence she provided advocate that entrepreneurs are just trying inspire the customers by telling successful stories. What I found from the evidence is, the entrepreneurs want to promote hard work instead of body transformation for improving the status.

Over-all, the arguments he presented to reflect the beauty culture, are strong and clear. Reader can easily get into what message he is trying to convey. However, to improve the unpersuasive arguments she should try to communicate with more women of different race to persuade the argument that women in west are facing more racial stereotypes in improving their status in the society.

# Self-Reflation

After reading this article I comprehended that Beauty Culture has ruined the confidence of women of our societies. I feel bad to state that women in our society is considered a show piece, who keeps on embellishing herself to be admirable achieve the set standards of a desirable appearance. Many talented and hard-working women unable show their competency in job market just because of Racial stereotypes.

However, for the question that the cosmetic companies are endorsing the norm of body modification, I would say that it’s a bitter reality. I have personally experienced that how cosmetic companies advertise their products to make women conscious about their skin color, weight, and breast. This means that the only choice for a woman to be acceptable is to transform their bodies or remain isolates as “Others”.

At last I would say that everyone living in this society is more or less influenced by some evil norms of the society such as obsession with white skin. Women should realize that they are misled by the society. I believe that these products may improve their appearance but cannot upgrade their status in the society until they work hard for a better future.

# Conclusion

As a whole, the article describes the Beauty Culture and the norm of body modification to look perfect, as a standard for achieving an admirable status. The only option for woman to avoid sex discrimination and racism is to maintain their body structure according to the standards of the society. Along with the discriminating behaviors of Whites in the society, this culture is also promoted by the cosmetic companies. I would like to conclude by catching the eye of the reader towards an immense need to aware the women about the side-effects of cosmetic products and surgeries. Women should stand for themselves to wiped out this culture from society.

References

Hobbs, M., & Rice, C. (2018). *Gender and Women’s Studies, Second Edition: Critical Terrain*. Canadian Scholars.