

The the novel, when
she enters
yacobowski's fresh



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The most poignant illustration of Pecola's failure to act occurs in central scene in the novel, when she enters Yacobowski's fresh vegetable, meat and sundries store to purchase the Mary Jane candy. She sees: " Mr. Yacobowski urges his eyes out of his thoughts to encounter her...his eyes draw back, hesitate and hover... he senses that he need not waste the effort of a glance. He does not see her, because for him there is nothing to see" Embarrassed and engulfed by shame, Pecola purchases the candy and leaves. Outside, she equates herself with dandelion weeds she passes. Like her, she thinks, they are ugly and unwanted.

Although she allows her anger to surface for a brief moment, she is overpowered by a tremendous sense of shame. She takes solace in eating candy, but, more important, in symbolically digesting the smiling picture of the blue-eyed, blond haired little girl that adorns its wrapper: " To eat the candy is somehow to eat the eyes, eat Mary Jane. Love Mary Jane. Be Mary Jane"(TBE 50). Milk cup Pecola drinks three quarts of milk out of a Shirley Temple not that she loves to drink milk but she relishes looking at the Shirley Temple's white face on the cup. She thinks that she can achieve the white beauty by gulping the milk along with Temple's white face as well.

The movie Screen images of Jean Harlow and Greta Garbo Pecola is not the only victim of the beauty but Pauline Breedlove too, she differs from her daughter Pecola only in the sense that the image she believes in comes from the movie screen rather than milk cup. Pauline's only pleasure concerns from her identification with the movie screen images of Jean Harlow and Greta Garbo. Pauline finally gives up identity vicariously with these images when she bites into a candy bar and loses her front tooth.

Dirtiness versus cleanliness Once the front tooth has gone, Pauline did not care to beautify herself, she settled down to just being ugly. Here ugliness causes her to discredit the value of her own life. She cleans for a white family but leaves her house in disarray. She feels, whiteness is goodness, and feels more at home in the white kitchen where she works than in the run down house she shares with her family. She tries to compensate for her lameness and putative ugliness by creating order whenever possible.