

IDENTITY RECONSTRUCTION IN TONI MORRISON'S 'THE  
BLUEST EYE'

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**ABSTRACT:**

*Racial discrimination has been the key factor in American society, affecting the cultural and social traditions of America. Discrimination in American society is based on many factors like race, class, color, and gender. Black Africans, purchased and brought from African countries through slave trades, were purchased not as humans but as animals. They were always treated as slaves and always reminded that they were to be slaves forever. If somebody tried to run away and hide from the white people he/she was caught and whipped so that he/she could never try to change his/her mind to be free. The prominent milestone in the Afro-American literature 'The Bluest Eye' by Toni Morrison is selected for the study in this paper. It includes the depiction of the psycho-social conflicts in the mind of the protagonist, Pecola, who wishes to have blue eyes for being beautiful and for getting somebody to love. In this paper, it is analyzed how and why Pecola wants to be different than she is and why she wants to create her different identity in place of her first achieved or first formed identity. The present research paper explores how the first formed or previously recognized identities of individuals are reconstructed and how with the reconstruction, new or expected identities are formed. It majorly seeks to understand whether the characters are successful in identifying or forming new identities with some identical processes.*

**Keywords:** Reconstruction, Race, Enslavement, Identity.

**Introduction:**

The identification of an object or an individual depends on cultural and traditional norms and values of identification. It also depends on an individual's self-understanding or self-recognition process. One can be identified by others with external and material possessions. One can be judged with many identifying factors like gender, profession, community, region, religion, education, work, position in the family, economic and social status, and behavior. A judged or evaluated identity of anyone can be announced for different purposes by the member of the community or the society in which the identified person lives. Both self formed identity and externally structured identity can be proper as well as improper, suitable or mismatching, and just or unjust. When an individual is disabled and loses his/her self and previously established identity due to social disasters, mental trauma, or any such reasons he/she tries to recover, regain his self, or lost identity.

Some people think of being different than what they are. Some are deliberately made to change. It may be for many reasons and purposes. Identity reconstruction is a process of achieving a new identity with or in place of the first-formed identity for recovering or regaining the lost self or lost identity. It may be for achieving a socially acknowledged identity. Mada Lejzrowicz states, "Identity reconstruction, finding life aims different than current ones is a very difficult and complex process which very often fails"<sup>1</sup> as it can be clearly noticed when Pecola loses her first possessed eyesight.

### **The Bluest Eye: Search for New Identities**

The Bluest Eye is a novel by African American novelist and Nobel Prize winner Toni Morrison. Pecola Breedlove is the protagonist who accompanies Claudia and Frieda from the MacTeer family. MacTeer sisters are always sensitive for Pecola and then for her baby also. Till the last point, they try to save Pecola's baby. Pecola's father, Cholly Breedlove always drinks and quarrels with his wife Mrs. Breedlove. He rapes his daughter Pecola to express his anger for black women. Mrs. Breedlove loves to work for white people at their houses. Henry Washington is a black man who lives with and leaves women for different reasons. China, Poland, Miss Marie are the whores living near the house of the Breedlove family. They are living in self-formed freedom. Mrs. MacTeer and her friends call them bad. Mr. Yacobowski is a white grocer who looks with mean eyes through Pecola. Maureen Peal is a light-skinned girl from a wealthy family and teases and troubles other black girls. Geraldine is a black woman who marries Louis and gives birth to Junior, her son but loves her cat too much and not her son. Junior hates the cat because he hates her mother and transfers his hatred for his mother to the cat. Soaphead Church is a West Indian misanthrope and self-declared interpreter of dreams. Pecola comes to ask him to give her black eyes. He is also attracted to the whiteness. Although he knows that he cannot help her, he tells Pecola to give poisoned milk to the dog. Pecola becomes a victim of her father, Junior, and Soaphead.

The novel is a depiction of black female characters' anguish to endure in the African community living in America. It is also a depiction of how white and black male's attitude towards black females torments the lives of black females. The novel is a journey of black females to achieve their recognized identity. The recognized identity is an identity that suits the cultural and traditional norms of white society and white ideology. For achieving the recognized identity they are in search of new identities. They are denied for the recognized identity that is black and whatever they have also does not get the status of recognition. So they are in search of such an identity that can be recognized as an identity of humans in society. Nadia Tanveen states, "racist attitude towards blacks is shown as a lack of recognition, a perspective in which the idea of blackness removes human identity"<sup>2</sup>

Self-hatred, racism, color discrimination, identity formation, identity reconstruction, ugliness, white rules or ideologies, curiosity towards sexual awareness, male domination are the major ideas in the novel the author deals with. Due to existing norms of identity black characters are always in trouble so that they cannot live a peaceful life. They are discriminated against for their race, color, gender, etc. Their family life is disturbed due to self-hatred; hatred for themselves and their community also. Mrs. Breedlove also gets a new name in a white house. The white little girl calls her 'Polly' (Morrison, 2016, p.106) which is not used by anyone in her family. She is fond of working for white people so in return for that she gets the name. It is in some way a reconstruction of her identity in terms of a name.

**Basic Factors Causing Identity Reconstruction Found in the Selected Novel:****White Ideology:**

All the black characters in the novel are moved by the white ideology. The cultural hierarchy of freedom and slavery, beauty and ugliness, superior and inferior was established in American society. It was established by creating such norms in the minds of both the white and the black races. Blacks were made to consider whites as superior, respectful, and beautiful. They were also made to think of themselves as inferior, and ugly. So due to the experiences of many hardships and difficulties first generations of African Blacks living in America always kept on thinking of their situation in society and also telling the same to the next society. Whoever tries to break the rules and norms of white people was punished or put to death. With this fear, some black people would kill their children as well as themselves to be free from slavery. Some would try to be like white people but would ultimately reach the loss of everything they had.

Characters who are in search of a new identity do not wish to reconstruct themselves with an identity that lower-class people possess but with one which upper-class people possess due to its recognition in the American society. As Pecola is in search of the bluest eyes which are possessed by white people and is a symbol of beauty, Claudia and Frieda also want to get an identity of being good in the eye of society. After Mr. Henry touches Frieda's boobs her neighbors' gossip that her mother should take her to the doctor. When Frieda knows that she would be called as ruined like the fat whores are known she replies and says, "I don't want to be ruined" (Morisson, 2016, p.99). Try to be 'good' in the eye of society, is an attempt to be true to the values and norms created by the society they live in.

Pecola's Curiosity and affection for the bluest eyes, is also described through the incident when she keeps looking at the blue eyes of the black cat at Junior's home. "The blue eyes in the black face held her" (Morisson, 2016, p.88). Cat is described in a symbolic way that resembles Pecola. Only the difference is in their sex. Pecola wants to get blue eyes not only to be seen as beautiful but to be able to see the outer world with those eyes. Although not real but an imaginary world can be seen through those bluest eyes.

**Racism:**

The term Race is described as a group of people having the same origin or ancestry or the same behavioral traits. Racism is the process of discrimination or separation of a group based on race or ethnicity. Race and color are interrelated factors.

Africans living in America were discriminated against both their color as black and their race as Negro. Negro being black was supposed to be ugly by white people. It was then socially accepted by whites and blacks. "A mysterious all-knowing-master.....has given each black one a cloak of ugliness to wear and they had accepted it without question" (Morisson, 2016, p.37). The master is a white rule or the white ideology of treating African Blacks in America. The white people had created the white ideology together. Ugliness was accepted by blacks as a mantle and they wore it over them without any contradiction. Even they used it as per their situation and their perception of the mantle. Mrs. Breedlove accepted it and thought it to be supporting her for being a martyr in a Negro family. Sammy, son of Mrs. Breedlove and a brother of Pecola, uses his mantle of ugliness for troubling others. He chooses his friends of the same manners. But Pecola is nervous about the mantle she has got from the 'all-knowing-

master'. She is always reminded about her ugliness by her family members, grocer, Junior, and Maureen Peal. She does not want to live with the mantle of ugliness. She hides herself behind that mantle and wants to change herself by having blue eyes. The ugliness was imposed over them because they were considered to be one and from the same race.

### **Color Discrimination:**

Color is the major factor of discrimination in American society. Black people are called ugly only because of the color of their skin. Not only white people but black people also accepted that blacks are ugly and it is their ultimate fate that cannot be changed. They can remove the stamp of ugliness only by adopting the white ideologies of living. Self-hatred of oneself and their race and color was raised among the blacks. It was expressed in different ways. The Black boys' self-hatred raised from the sense of being seen as ugly is expressed while teasing Pecola. Black boys call her "Black e mo. Black e mo." (Morisson, 2016, p.63) Maureen, a light-skinned black girl, also call her "I am cute! And you ugly! Black and ugly black e mos. I am cute" (Morisson, 2016, p.71).

Geraldine, a black woman herself, does not like her son to play with lower-class "niggers" (Morisson, 2016, p.85) rather than upper-class "colored" (Morisson, 2016, p.85). She also expels Pecola from her house after she knows wrongly from her son that Pecola has killed her cat and says "you nasty little black bitch. Get out of my house" (Morisson, 2016, p.90). Lake Shore Park, near to the white house was also restricted only for black people.

As compared to other children Claudia seems to be self-conscious because she knows that nobody asks her what she wants for Christmas. Although she says, "I did not know why I destroyed those dolls but I did not know that nobody ever asked me what I wanted for Christmas." (Morisson, 2016, p.19) And gradually she is also getting a sense of color and beauty as she knows that everyone loves to have white dolls.

### **Gender Discrimination:**

Being black and a woman black woman was exploited and oppressed everywhere in American society. When Cholly's aunt Jimmy is sick the black women around her reflect on how they have had to take orders from nearly everyone in their lives. Even white children had the power to order them around simply based on their race. But "The only people they need not take orders from were black children and each other" (Morisson, 2016, p.136). It shows that it was based on gender who should respect all, even the white children also. And the black children are also shown as the weaker group of the community.

After her marriage to Cholly, Mrs. Breedlove begins to behave like upper-class white women. She goes for shopping. She purchases many things. Even she wants to be free and independent. Cholly begins to dominate her. "He was not pleased with her purchases and began to tell her so" (Morisson, 2016, p.116). And Mrs. Breedlove is affectionate for the upper-class white identity. She does not want it instead of her own but "She merely wanted other women to cast favorable glances her way" (Morisson, 2016, p.116).

When Junior takes Pecola to his home for playing and shows his cat to her, due to his hatred of that cat he kills the cat. Pecola becomes nervous and sensitive for the cat but he laughs. When she wants to leave he leaps towards her and says "You can't get out. You're my prisoner" (Morisson, 2016, p.88).

**Male-Female Dominance and Perception of Each-Other:**

Not only white people and their ideology were dominating the blacks but black people were also dominating each other. Children were also aware of the fact. When Pecola comes to stay with MacTeers, Claudia and Frieda first “discovered that she clearly did not want to dominate” (Morisson, 2016, p.17) then only they accepted her.

From a black man’s perception, black woman does not smell like a woman. So there is a different kind of smell of a woman that black men know which makes her a woman. When Mrs. MacTeer talks to her friends about Mr. Henry and his wife Della, they talk about the reason why Della leaves Mr. Henry and also the reasons why Mr. Henry wanted to have another woman. Not only black males have misleading perceptions of black females but also it is vice versa. Mr. Henry is called as a nigger who they think to be helpless. For them, he is “old crazy nigger she married up with didn’t help her head none”(Morisson, 2016, p.11). Della is a church woman but Mr. Henry leaves her because “he wanted a woman to smell like a woman”(Morisson, 2016, p.11). Pecola is seen as ugly and she sees the world outside from the established point of view. She wants to get different eyes for different sight and personal sense of herself.

**Conclusion:**

With the above description and analysis, I would conclude that not only Pecola is in search of eyes and wants to reconstruct her own identity but also other characters like Soaphead Church, Mrs. Breedlove, Frieda and Claudia are also in search of their new identities for reconstruction. Due to self-hatred, racism, color, and gender discrimination, male-female dominance blacks don’t want to have the skin color which had the meaning of ugliness. They know that they cannot get rid of the skin color. So they wanted to be like whites in ways of manners, dressings, and behaviors. Pecola is trying to achieve it with an imaginary possession for which she has to lose sight she has. It depends on the wish and psychology of an individual or social institution to recover or regain the lost self or identity and also to achieve the new identity which can be accepted by the social ideology with the process of identity reconstruction. But I conclude by saying that it is possible but disastrous and harmful to follow the process of identity reconstruction based on the lost self as well as based on the cultural, social, and traditional values, ideologies, and norms.

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11. Providing good internet facility so that most people can work from home and safe transport facility so that people can travel without fear.

**1.5. Conclusion**

After analysing the data collected through primary source, it can be said that Indians are now ready to face the challenges which are due to Covid-19 in various industries which is speedily leading our country towards the condition of acute unemployment which may be very deep. If we do not act quickly to current situation more people will die due to starvation. People will suffer from mental issues, health issues which will lead to poor manpower and will further stringent this condition of Unemployment.

On 26<sup>th</sup> May, CRISIL had announced that year 2020 perhaps be India's worst recession since Independence. But Indians have a strong tendency of bouncing back even in the most critical conditions. We are able to convert threats into opportunities. In this pandemic where most of the industries are going through bad phase but at the same time there are some industries who are flourishing such as, Health & Insurance, Information Technology, Artificial Intelligence etc. To take the advantage of this condition Government and citizens both have to work unitedly and fight this problem of employment.

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**Study in the Change in Demand for Online Food Delivery Services During the Pandemic with Respect to Mumbai**

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**Abstract:**

The online food delivery services have proven to be vital to citizens during the lockdown of cities in the wake of the COVID – 19 pandemic. While there exist several literatures on the growth of online purchase, consumer buying behavior with respect to online purchase, as well as the impact that e-Commerce has on the economy, this study focuses more on the change in demand specific to online food delivery services during the COVID – 19 pandemic. The study will emphasize how the pandemic has impacted the buying behavior of the consumer, which in turn has created a change in demand. It will also bring to light the evolution of the food categories that are now being purchased by consumers, and hence the evolution of the services being provided by online food delivery services. The study aims to highlight concerns that consumers have, while ordering food online. This research will aid in the formulation of a consumer centric service marketing strategy, while addressing the concerns of the consumers.

**Keywords:** Online. Online Food Delivery, COVID, Pandemic, Demand, Mumbai

**Objectives of the Study:**

1. To understand the change in demand of online food delivery services during the pandemic
2. To highlight purchase frequency with respect to different food categories
3. To explore consumer concerns of food delivery services

#### Scope of the Study:

1. The research study will identify the impact of situational demand on services and the change in service strategy by online services. This in turn will highlight consumer behavior and help retailers formulate consumer centric service strategy.
2. The COVID – 19 pandemic considered in this study, would generate a scope for new entrants in the market, under this service category. Along with this, existing retailers, who had to close down their shops, have had an opportunity to diversify their business models. The findings of this research will create a scope for such new entrants and retailers.
3. The paper will also highlight the change in demand based on demographic factors, which in turn would help design online promotional strategies based on target audiences.

#### Introduction

We as an economy have evolved through the years from commerce to e – Commerce. With business models catering from B2B and B2C, we have also made O2O a component of business models. O2Q (Online to Offline) is the form of business model, that finds consumers online, however the purchases occur in real time, at a physical store. This now includes online payment with the product being picked up at a physical location.

A quick growing area of the O2O business model is the online food delivery platform. Online food delivery services have existed in India since the beginning of 2014.

Though with a tumultuous start, the sector soon gained momentum as the country inched closer into the digital era. Startups like Foodora, Food panda, TinyOwl, and Ola Café, found the market merciless in terms of acceptance and logistics. With the existence of home delivery service provided by the selected restaurant/food outlet, a third – party delivery application made no sense. However, with Swiggy entering the arena, the founders were able to utilize the logistic format of Myntra (an online apparel shopping platform), and have a more successful run at the delivery service.

By now, with improved advertising strategies, the consumers understood the purpose of online food delivery services as well as the range of choice it provided when it came to ordering food. Several companies started sprouting over the years, with different formats of food delivery services, including packaged food items, vegetables, fish and meat. The online delivery service also helped in the improvement of employment, as there was now a requirement of delivery boys and customer representatives to handle a large number of consumers. With the development of mobile technology, and improvements in bandwidth as well as online payment security, online food delivery services have been seeing a considerable growth through the years, with an increase in reliability and customer loyalty.

#### COVID – 19 Pandemic

The Corona virus effectively shut down the world for a few months beginning from January, 2020. With the rise in paranoia, and the number of infected and death, countries around the world started going into lockdown mode from as early as 9 March, 2020. The lockdown meant that most, if not all, employees were expected to work from home. Since the virus is novel, and not much was known about it at the beginning, precautions were taken to ensure least to no contact, which meant social

distancing and restricted to no movement outside residences.

These precautions hit the marketplace as there were no more consumers to "walk-in". Places of work were asked to shut down until further notice was given. Consumers now literally feared for their lives and preferred the safety of their homes and home cooked meals, rather than risk "take – a ways". However, with the rise in home cooked meals and the fact that employees now worked from home, came the inevitable decline of groceries, which in turn led to increased frustration among people.

#### **Impact on Online Food Delivery Services**

Consumers were worried about getting infected by unknown hands handling their food and its packaging, ordering food online was out of the question. The media coverage of a case where 72 families in South Delhi were quarantined because an infected delivery boy delivered pizzas from a well-known pizza outlet, to them in the span of 20 days, did not help their cause either. Due to the decline in food orders as well as the shutting down of restaurants, the revenue of food delivery services in India, like Zomato and Swiggy was impacted, which led to the laying off of employees.

#### **Resurgence and Adapting**

As June rolled in, the Indian Government allowed the re-opening of restaurants with stipulations in favor of the safety of the consumers. This move brought about the advent of what is now being called the "New Normal". Several restaurants and food outlets began to advertise the sanitization and the safety procedures being followed by them, in order to attract loyal customers. Though appreciated, this did not encourage customers to order food from these restaurants as home delivery wasn't available in most of these places. Also adding to the chagrin of the restaurant owners was the low number of staff that were to be kept at during the working hours of the restaurant, and the fact

that they weren't technologically equipped to handle digital payments.

However, online food delivery services found a ray of hope in this dark situation in the form of the contactless delivery, online payment options, and the wide array of restaurants they were already empaneled with. To take things to the next level, Online Food Delivery Services like Swiggy and Zomato, along with other online delivery services like JioMart, Amazon Prime and DMart etc. now included the delivery of groceries, vegetables, seafood and meat. This addition brought about the resurgence of online food delivery and the increased dependence of consumers on the online food delivery service.

#### **Literature Review**

There are several literatures pertaining to the attitude and buying behavior of consumers, with respect to online purchase, also including research on the security concerns during online shopping and online payment. These literatures are researches done during what we would henceforth refer to as "Pre-COVID" time, and not limited to the Mumbai region. However, this research study focuses particularly on the evolution of the demand of online food delivery platforms in Mumbai, specifically during the COVID – 19.

(Sreekanth C. , 2016) mentions in his Thesis that "main reasons behind shifting the consumer from traditional to online buying includes convenience, better prices, gifts, saving of time and energy, customized and new product capabilities". His findings (Sreekanth C. , 2016) further highlight that, "the use of technology has opened new doors and opportunities that enable a more convenient lifestyle in the present day context" (p. 282).

(Poorna, 2009) states that, "the customers have no time to visit stores, select products and purchase them. Hence, they prefer companies that allow them to place order from home and get the products delivered at home." (p.169). (Poorna, 2009) further states that,



"Customers are looking for solutions that enable them to serve themselves rather than depending on intermediaries" (p.169). (Kaur, 2017) states in her thesis that online grocery stores "spares the customers from the hassle of carrying their bags, prevents them to face parking and traffic problems, as well as the queues in their local markets or supermarkets" (p.151). In the research thesis of (Urvashi, 2018) it is shown that, "trust between consumer and the e-retailer is very important and that can lead to increase in the consumer volume visiting a particular site." (p.185). This literature affirms the benefits of and possibility of growth of the Online Food Delivery Services. It does not, however, outline the change in demand of the service during the COVID – 19 crises.

#### Research Methodology

The research study was done on the basis of Quantitative technique. Primary as well as secondary data were collected. The study has been conducted on 116 respondents from the different areas of Mumbai city through online mode by using an online questionnaire using convenience sampling technique. After data collection it is analyzed using google forms and graphs.

#### Data Analysis

1. A sample size of 116 in the Mumbai region were surveyed, of which 71.6% (83 respondents) ordered food using online delivery services and are hence eligible respondents for the research.
2. The vast majority (30.1%) stated that they order food online for the sake of safety during the pandemic, while 1.2% stated that being senior citizens they're restricted to their respective residences.
3. A majority (63.9%) responded that the availability of contactless delivery attracted them to use the online food delivery service, while 21.7% responded that reviews and images of the products attracted them to the service.

4. A majority of 67.6% of the respondents, order food online once a week, while 7.2% order food more than thrice a week.
5. Considering that 66.3% of the respondents ordered cooked food online prior to the lockdown, a majority of the respondents ranked the category of "Grocery" to be the highest ordered food category during the pandemic.
6. It must be noted that 61.4% of the eligible respondents responded in the affirmative when asked if they would continue ordering food online at the same frequency even after the pandemic.

#### Conclusion

With the collected data, it can be said that a vast majority of the eligible respondents have taken up to online food delivery services for their food needs. It must also be noted that the grocery being a category that is now being ordered more frequently, goes to show that the strategy of the online food delivery services to include grocery items, is a success among this sample size and has in turn shown that the demand for the online food delivery services has in fact, increased. The nature of the pandemic being as viral as it is, has reshaped the consumer buying behaviour and the attitude towards online shopping. Such that, they would prefer to order their food and groceries from the comfort and safety of their homes.

It can be concluded from the study that, destructive though it may be, the COVID – 19 pandemic has forced the Indian market to evolve and become the futuristic version of itself that still has room to improve and develop. Considering that the primary concern of the consumer is the contaminant – free food and packaging, along with the security of online payment, Online food delivery companies could use this research to improve and address these concerns of the consumers. This would eventually lead to a productive, efficient, and

lucrative consumer centric, service marketing strategy.

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## E-Learning is Possible

Dr. Sonali Gopal Kale

**Abstract:**

In today's pandemic period E-learning concept has emerged. E-Learning is learning with the help of electronic technologies or to obtain learning outside of classroom in form of online. It can be also defined to a teaching delivered completely through online. E-learning also can be popular as online learning or learning with use of internet, or learning through electronic media like computers. Due to this pandemic period E-learning adopted by many institutions and they started using many software's Like Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meets, and Google Classroom etc. for providing e-learning for their students. E-learning is basically learning through online mode other than attending anymore attending physical classroom.

**Key words: E-learning**

**Introduction:**

E-Learning is defined as teaching which is exclusively delivered via internet other than the classroom where the teachers are teaching. In e-learning students can also able to log in from anywhere in the world to obtain their notes, assignments, or any class materials and also interact with teacher and to obtain e-learning. In today's pandemic period many institutions are using many software's Like Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meets, Google Classroom etc. for e-learning for their students. E-learning is basically learning through online mode. It is interactive sessions of e-learning communicate of teacher-students becomes possible due to technology. There are also options like raise your