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**An Annotated Bibliography 1974-2017:
Female Subjectivity in Toni Morrison's Novels**

Introduction

Toni Morrison has constantly dealt with the theme of female subjectivity. Here female subjectivity is defined as a resisting power and will of women under any type of oppressive external forces¹. As Lucille Fultz discussed in *Toni Morrison: Playing with Difference*, Morrison has described in all of her novels “black women’s endurance, subversion, and transcendence of pain” (49). Along with Morrison’s continuous publication from *The Bluest Eye* (1970) to *A Mercy* (2008), other critics also began to pay attention to both female characters and oppressive circumstances they are facing such as patriarchy, racism, sexual abuse, slavery, domestic violence, etc. According to this annotated bibliography, in Morrison’s novels, *Beloved* turned out to be the turning point that attracts critical attention to empowered female subjectivity, with support of critical theories of bell hooks mainly, along with other

¹ Michelle Foucault illustrated that resistance necessarily exists “as soon as there is a power relation.” Alison Assiter and Terry Eagleton also defined that subjectivity is formed after a series of struggle.

theorists such as Julia Kristeva, Patricia Hill Collins, etc.

This annotated bibliography can demonstrate a change occurred in criticism of Morrison's novels. Before 1987, the publication year of *Beloved*, female subjectivity in Morrison's novels had a tendency to be embodied as resistance that eventually fails. However, after *Beloved*, supported by the critical theories of hooks, critics began to deal with female characters' subjectivity as having power to deny the oppressive circumstances and have their own identity. Also this change can suggest that the first African-American woman Nobel Laureate in literature shifted her direction toward 'resolvable female subjectivity' and critics acknowledge that the change started when she wrote *Beloved*.

The critical history of female subjectivity in Morrison's novels suggests that, as pointed out in *Black Women, Writing and Identity: Migrations of the Subject*, Morrison seems to respond to various theoretical issues such as female bondage, motherhood, community and individual, history, home, family, etc. Especially, female bondage, or sisterhood, and motherhood have been consistently mentioned from the early criticism on Morrison's novels. Radha Chakravarty insists, in *Feminism and Contemporary Women Writers: Rethinking Subjectivity*, that "traditional values such as love, nurture and mutual caring" (18) are often used when discussing subjectivity and agency issues of black women, however, it needs careful attention in that they possibly reassure gender norms. Marianne Hirsch pointed the polarity among feminists in her *The Mother/Daughter Plot: Narrative, Psychoanalysis, Feminism* that feminists have had fear of losing "control of women's bodies, of their legal status, their salaries, their choices of life and plot" and emphasized the multiplicity of female experiences with the examples of literary tradition of African American women writers.

This research was made possible by using key-words such as ‘Toni Morrison’ and ‘Black woman,’ ‘African-American woman,’ ‘female subjectivity,’ ‘subject,’ ‘sexuality,’ ‘desire,’ ‘self,’ ‘selfhood,’ ‘identity,’ and ‘resistance.’ Only articles and books from 1974 to 2017 which refer to novels of Toni Morrison directly were searched with the terms mentioned above through online databases such as Google Scholar, Jstor, ProQuest, Project Muse, CiNii Articles and CiNii Books, and offline services such as Hokkaido University Library and Inter Library Loan. The total number of materials is 69 at this point in time, among which 2 MA theses, 1 dissertation, 6 books and 63 articles are included.

Before this annotated bibliography project, there were only two annotated bibliographies published and available: David L. Middleton's *Toni Morrison: An annotated Bibliography* (Garland Publishing, 1987) and Harriet S. Alexander's "Toni Morrison: An annotated Bibliography of Critical Articles and Essays, 1975-84" (*CLA Journal*, vol. 33, no. 1, September 1989). They both cover *The Bluest Eye*, *Sula*, *Song of Solomon* and *Tar Baby* comprehensively. These two annotated bibliographies were referred to only for the criticisms published before 1985. After *Beloved* was published in 1987, a book review was written by Margaret Atwood in *The New York Times*, “Jaunted by Their Nightmares,” in the same year. In 1989, Deborah Horvitz confirmed that there was no other criticism and supplemented several substantial readings in her “*Nameless Ghosts: Possession and Dispossession in Beloved.*” However, in 1988, Christina Davis published “Beloved: a Question of Identity” in *Présence Africaine*.

According to David L. Middleton, among 171 critical essays, only 9 articles discuss female subjectivity that does not fail, and their main ideas are such as ‘resistance against imposed definitions of black women,’ ‘female struggle to find one's

identity,' 'motherhood and sisterhood as women's power,' 'lesbian disavowal of patriarchal values,' and 'liberating wanderings that lead to female self-discovery'. Other than the 9 materials from before 1984, other criticisms do not mainly discuss female subjectivity and even the critical essays that deal with female subjectivity are, if summarized, about 'female scapegoat of community', 'female struggle that eventually fails', 'isolation of female character', 'tragic reality of black female' and 'archetypal female figures of Morrison.' It seems like the tendency of criticism before *Beloved* was to find the tragic situation and ending of African-American women rather than finding elements of female subjectivity in Morrison's characters.

Especially, regarding criticism of *Song of Solomon*, in 6 articles Pilate has been interpreted as a spiritual guide that leads Milkman to black male subjectivity through selfless sacrifice of herself. This aspect of Pilate is not included as female subjectivity, because even though the oppressive representations of black women who are dominated under black men are found in *Song of Solomon*. Rather than interpreting the elements of female subjectivity in female characters of *Song of Solomon*, critics focused on Milkman's male subjectivity and his mental growth mainly, explaining Pilate as a supplementary role to guide him. As Carole Boyce Davies says in *Black Women, Writing and Identity: Migrations of the Subject*, the subjectivity of Pilate seemed to be based on "the notion that woman is constructed as living the gift or donation of herself to the fulfillment of all others' desires and needs" (28).

72 materials were amassed under the theme of female subjectivity, among them the number of materials that deal with *Beloved*, including those that deal with other novels and *Beloved* at the same time, is 40, which implies that *Beloved* takes the most important part of criticism regarding female subjectivity of Morrison. The

publication year ranges from 1974 to 2017 and 62 materials were written after 1987, which makes it possible to say that *Beloved* became the turning point to attract critical attention of critics to female subjectivity and shows the growing awareness of both criticism and Morrison on the theme of female subjectivity.

List of Abbreviation

TM	Toni Morrison (1931~)
BE	<i>The Bluest Eye</i> (1970)
SL	<i>Sula</i> (1973)
SS	<i>Song of Solomon</i> (1977)
TB	<i>Tar Baby</i> (1981)
BL	<i>Beloved</i> (1987)
JZ	<i>Jazz</i> (1892)
PR	<i>Paradise</i> (1997)
LV	<i>Love</i> (2003)
AM	<i>A Mercy</i> (2008)

Bibliography

-1974-

- [1 SL] Jefferson, Margo. "Toni Morrison: Passionate and Precise." *MS 3*, vol. 3, December 1974, pp. 34-38.

Approaches TM's language from sexuality and musical sense which is embodied in SL. Friendship of Sula and Nel is interpreted as a distinct one which endows a special power to Sula. The story and experience of Sula are "microcosmic" in

a way that she represents not only black women but also all minority colored women in America.

~~-1975-~~

None

~~-1976-~~

None

~~-1977-~~

None

~~-1978-~~

[2 SS] Fisher, Jerilyn. "From Under the Yoke of Race and Sex: Black and Chicano Women's Fiction of the Seventies." *Minority Voices: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Literature and the Arts* 2, fall 1978, pp. 1-12.

Discusses generally the inhibiting conditions of minority women and analyzes Pilate as a character who asserts her power against patriarchal subordination. Fisher also mentions black women's maternal power. Pilate, Reba, and Hagar build a special kinship and solidarity, which is one of the ways to resist male

dominance.

-1979-

- [3 SL] Smith, Barbara. "Toward a Feminist Criticism." *The Memory and Spirit of Frances, Zora, and Lorraine: Essays and Interviews on Black Women and Writing*, edited by Juliette Bowles, Howard University, 1979, pp. 32-40.

Points out the reality of black women having to fight against not only racial oppression but also sexual oppression. Smith illustrates SL is an "exceedingly lesbian novel" and "lesbian disavowal of patriarchal values" such as marriage and family. SL demonstrates that black women are suppressed under discrimination of race and class, thus they can only enjoy their sexual privileges.

-1980-

- [4 SL] Pullin, Faith. "Landscapes of Reality: The Fiction of Contemporary Afro-American Women." *Black Fiction: New Studies in the Afro-American Novel Since 1945*, edited by A. Robert Lee, Barnes and Noble, 1980, pp. 173-203.

Asserts that the quest of contemporary Afro-American writers is to defy "imposed definitions" on black people, and to provide new representations and experiences of black women. Sula Peace in SL is interpreted as an autonomous and resisting figure who defies norms and roles that black women had to perform in the black community.

-1981-

[5 SL] Abel, Elizabeth. "(E)Merging Identities: the Dynamics of Female Friendship in Contemporary Fiction by Women." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, vol. 6, no. 3, 1981, pp. 413-35.

Acknowledges first the critical tendency of the 19th century American feminist critics, who focused on female bondage and mother-daughter relationships. Abel examines SL in terms of the female friendship of Sula and Nel. They validate each other and mature through their ideal friendship, which TM suggests as "both the vehicle and product of self-knowledge".

-1982-

[6 SL] Ordonez, Elizabeth J. "Narrative Texts by Ethnic Women: Rereading the Past, Reshaping the Future." *Melus*, vol. 9, winter 1982, pp. 19-28.

Analyzes female characters in SL as those who can assert their power with selfhood against patriarchal texts. Eva and Hannah are described as strong and independent mothers and Sula as "the Amazon." Nel realizes later that her past is a kind of text which is composed of female friendship and bondage of black women.

[7 SL] Shannon, Anna. "We Was Girls Together": A Study of Toni Morrison's *Sula*." *Midwestern Miscellany*, vol. 10, 1982, pp. 9-22.

Interprets SL as an attack on patriarchal values and the conventional notion of romantic love. Sula and Nel achieve self-discovery through their female friendship even though Sula is isolated emotionally in their community. It is the patriarchal society which makes betrayal occur between the two female characters.

[8 BE, SL, SS] Willis, Susan. "Eruptions of Funk: Historicizing Toni Morrison." *Black American Literature Forum*, vol. 16, 1982, pp. 34-42.

The female characters are alienated in society and lost their abilities, however, they resist the alienation by their own marginality. Pecola in BE, Sula in SL, and Hagar in SS feel their social differences through the "metaphor of lack," and reach "the moment of self-recognition which is not racial."

-1983-

None

-1984-

[9 SS, TB] Butler, Robert James. "Open Moment and Selfhood in Toni Morrison's

Song of Solomon." *The Centennial Review*, vol. 28/29, fall 1984/winter 1985, pp. 58-75.

TM intends to describe "open moment" through her two novels, for Pilate and Jadine in SS and in TB respectively, but mainly in SS. Pilate experiences wanderings and she is empowered by singing, which liberates her and leads her to self-discovery. Experiences of Pilate described by TM signify liberating moments that are available to women in this patriarchal society.

- 1985-

[10 BE, SL, SS, TB] Christian, Barbara. "Trajectories of Self-Definition: Placing Contemporary Afro-American Women's Fiction." *Conjuring: Black Women, Fiction, and Literary Tradition*, Indiana University Press, 1985, pp. 233-48.

Christian points out the importance of self-expression for self-empowerment and analyzes intentions and representations of African-American people themselves by black women writers from the late 19th century to the 1980s. In BE, Claudia is explained as capable of reconstructing self-definition of herself and her community. In SL, the trial to destruct the negative image of black mother is witnessed. In SS and TB, the existence of Pilate and the authentic African women in yellow dress are interpreted to be empowered representations of black women.

~~-1986-~~

None

~~-1987-~~

[11 SS] Smith, Valerie. "Toni Morrison's Narratives of Community." *Self-Discovery and Authority in Afro-American Narrative*, Harvard University Press, 1987, pp. 122-53.

Suggests TM has portrayed narrative strategies by which characters in her novels can trace their history and earn self-knowledge. Pilate is the most appropriate character for the main thesis above. According to Smith, she is an independent woman who can create herself without anybody's help. Also she has the capacity and flexibility to cherish black heritage and history and to bring them to her present identity.

~~-1988-~~

[12 BL] Davis, Christina. "Beloved: a Question of Identity." *Présence Africaine*, no. 145, 1988, pp. 151-56.

Sethe discards the images of black characters, which has been expressed and declared by white owners and writers. She establishes her subjectivity by creating her own images and symbols, and succeeds in separating herself from

the objectification of slavery.

-1989-

- [13 BL] Hirsch, Marianne. "Feminist Discourse/ Maternal Discourse." *The Mother/Daughter Plot: Narrative, Psychoanalysis, Feminism*, Bloomington, Indiana UP, 1989.

Hirsch introduces discussions on "Matrophobia" and emphasizes the various experiences of maternal subjectivity, referring to Julia Kristeva. Though in *Sula*, the mother/daughter relationships of Hannah, Eva and Sula enter the phases of confrontation regarding maternal love, Eva represents a challenge to phallogentrism by her act of self-mutilation. Sula follows Eva's strategy for self-empowerment and recognizes her interconnectedness with her maternal ancestors.

-1990-

- [14 BE] Alwes, Karla. "'The Evil of Fulfillment': Women and Violence in *The Bluest Eye*." *Women and Violence in Literature: an Essay Collection*, edited by Katherine Ackley Anne, Garland Pub, 1990, pp. 89-104.

Contrasts Claudia with Pecola and Pauline in terms of resisting society, which forces African-American people to embrace the white perspective and value of

beauty. Contrary to Pecola and Pauline, who navigate their rage toward themselves not to be alienated from society, Claudia succeeds in turning her rage toward society and rejects the white norms of beauty by dissecting the white doll.

- [15 SL] Gillespie, Diane, and Missy Dehn Kubitschek. "Who Cares? Women-Centered Psychology in *Sula*." *Black American Literature Forum*, vol. 24, no. 1, spring 1990, pp. 21-48.

To sustain one's personal identity and community identity in case of African-American women, "women-centered psychology and moral development" are needed to survive under the devaluation of female identity in a male dominant society. Reciprocal care between women is emphasized, and Eva Peace is analyzed as one who has "the most capacity for authenticity in caretaking." The bondage of Nel and Sula is also authentic, which moves Nel forward to self-actualization.

- [16 SL] Henderson, Mae Gwendolyn. "Speaking in Tongues: Dialogic, Dialectics, and the Black Woman Writer's Literary Tradition." *Reading Black, Reading Feminist: A Critical Anthology*, edited by Henry Louis Gates, Meridian Book, 1990, pp. 116-42.

Demonstrates one of the characteristics of black female writers' text, "its

interlocutory, or dialectic, character,” and asserts that it can reveal various relationships “others” have with others. Thus Henderson insists that Black female subjectivity can be described through the character’s distinct way of speaking. Sula functions as “the Signifier” who conveys multiple meanings, which can be a counter-discourse to dominance.

[17 SL, TB, BL] Hirsch, Marianne. “Maternal Narratives: “Cruel Enough to Stop the Blood”.” *Reading Black, Reading Feminist: A Critical Anthology*, edited by Henry Louis Gates, Meridian Book, 1990, pp. 415-30.

Illustrates the theme of maternity, which has been discussed and related to black female subjectivity from the 1960s to the 1980s. Eva’s strong will to survive is ironically described through her ‘lacks,’ and Sula also learns to assert her power from her mother. However, Sula and Jadine, invented by TM on purpose, reject identity as a mother, through which TM tries to open a discourse beyond motherhood. Sethe in BL shows her identification of her selfhood with motherhood, and she reaches that status with the help of communal bondage.

[18 BL] Mathieson, Barbara Offutt. "Memory and Mother Love in Morrison's *Beloved*." *American Imago*, vol. 47, no. 1, Spring 1990, pp. 1-21.

Morrison recreates the traditional slave narrative through the perspectives of

female characters. Motherhood works in *Beloved* to diversify the history of female slaves and relationships among them. The relationships between Sethe and Paul D, and the community, generates future power, and Sethe affirms the possibility of retrieving her own self from obsessive maternal possession, however, at the same time, of questioning her existence.

[19 BE, SL, SS] Powel, Timothy B. "Toni Morrison: The Struggle to Depict the Black Figure on the White Page." *Black American Literature Forum*, vol. 24, no. 4, winter 1990, pp. 747-60.

Demonstrates the struggles of African-American writers to defy white logos that have defined black representations. TM also has struggled to describe black logos through her first three novels. In BE and SL, the main characters eventually experience frustration in society. However, their struggle to find their identity can be still validated. In SS, Pilate is interpreted as a figure who rejects white logos with her magical powers.

-1991-

[20 BL] Schapiro, Barbara. "The Bond of Love and the Boundaries of Self in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*." *Contemporary Literature*, vol. 32, no. 2, summer 1991, pp. 194-210.

The theme of infantile rage and hunger for love are prevailing in BL and here

Schapiro emphasizes the importance of loving relationship and mutual recognition to gain the wholeness of self. In BL, Baby Suggs gives her sermon on self-love and Denver experiences her own self by self-love which is founded on social relationships. Beloved's struggle to know herself can be said to be the struggle of all black people in a white supremacist society.

-1992-

- [21 BL] Demetrakopoulos, Stephanie A. "Maternal Bonds as Devourers of Women's Individuation in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*." *African American Review*, vol. 26, no. 1, 1992, pp. 51-59.

Associates BL with the frame of Demeter/Persephone or Kore archetype. Demetrakopoulos argues for "the deadliness" or the cruel nature of 'death' in Sethe's motherhood which 'death' might lead her to gain her subjectivity. Denver is a character who finally gains her own identity, reaching sexual development with the help of Beloved as a threshold.

- [22 SL] Lee, Kyung Soon. "Black Feminism: *Sula* and *Meridian*." *Journal of English Language and Literature*, vol. 38, no. 3, fall 1992, pp. 585-99.

Explores the meaning of 'the new-woman' Sula's actions, which are considered as evil or wicked by her community, comparing them to the traditional representations of black women that Nel represents. Lee argues that any

concept of identity without a racial and cultural notion is void. Thus, Nel realizes the importance of searching for selfhood long after Sula dies.

-1993-

- [23 BL] FitzGerald, Jennifer. "Selfhood and Community: Psychoanalysis and Discourse in *Beloved*." *Modern Friction Studies*, vol. 39, no. 3&4, Fall/Winter 1993, pp. 669-87.

Associates communal self-love of Baby Suggs with the concept of selfhood which can be gained through "mothering" relationships with others. Denver, who has interacted little with society, eventually achieves adult responsibilities and moves forward to achieve her selfhood in the bigger society by skipping the Pre-Oedipal phase where dependence disrupts acknowledgment of selfhood.

- [24 JZ] Mbalia, Doreatha Drummond. "Women who Run with Wild: the Need for Sisterhoods in *Jazz*." *Modern Fiction Studies*, vol. 39, no. 3/4, fall/winter 1993, pp. 623-46.

Highlights the role of wild African-American women as "the cultivators and nurturers" at home in the beginning. Mbalia relates the strong traits of Wild with Violet and develops the connection between them to the main idea that all women are "all Wild, or capable of being Wild." The need for solidarity among African-American people, people who share history and culture, and especially

among “the Wild women,” is emphasized.

[25 BL] Wyatt, Jean. “Giving Body to the World: the Maternal Symbolic in Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*.” *PMLA*, vol. 108, no. 3, May 1993, pp. 474-88.

Introduces the term “maternal symbolic,” employing Lacan’s idea on the symbolic order for a child to enter into the language phase. Sethe first moves out from the unspeakable past, and the maternal care of community enables both Sethe and Denver to move into a symbolic world. Also, passing through the mirror stage, Sethe’s body and spirit regain their power.

-1994-

[26 SL, SS, TB, BL] Boyce-Davies, Carole. *Black Women, Writing and Identity*. Routledge, 1994, pp. 135-49.

Refers to BL as one of the recent Black women’s writings which denies the stereotypical “mammy” figure. Boyce-Davies points out that black women’s identity has been connected with motherhood, and BL is a work that suggests what “black women have to do between the imperatives of nurture/love for its own sake and the desire to be a complete individual.” In SL, SS, and TB, the notion of “migratory subjectivity,” which enables black women to reclaim their subjectivity, is represented.

-1995-

[27 BL] Boudreau, Kristin. "Pain and the Unmasking of Self in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*." *Contemporary Literature*, vol. 36, no. 3, autumn 1995, pp. 447-65.

Challenges the notion that pain and suffering of African-American people empower them, a notion formed by Christianity and blues. Rather, Boudreau points out the "fictionality of subjectivities," and asserts that identity is spectral and shifting. In this context, the selfhood of *Beloved* is the closest to the meaning of "being human."

-1996-

[28 BL] Hirsch, Marianne. "Maternity and Rememory: Toni Morrison's *Beloved*." *Representations of Motherhood*, edited by Donna Bassin, Margaret Honey, and Meryle Mahrer Kaplan, Yale University Press, September 1996, pp. 92-110.

Speculates on the theme of motherhood in terms of female subjectivity. Hirsch argues that maternity becomes an object to the subjectivity of a child, thus, in "peculiar institution," Sethe is interpreted as a "maternal self," who has power to resist, not a subject. She becomes the true subject at the end of the novel, when she recognizes *Beloved* and herself respectively. Also Hirsch points out that BL is a story of a hopeful sisterhood among the female characters in BL.

[29 JZ] O'Reilly, Andrea. "In Search of My Mother's Garden, I Found My Own: Mother-Love, Healing, and Identity in Toni Morrison's *Jazz*." *African American Review*, vol. 31, no. 3, 1996, pp. 367-79.

Focuses on the healing function of mothering, which is born by recognizing and reconnecting with "the lost mothers," and makes it possible for Violet and Joe to reconcile. Violet recovers her own self by recognizing "her mother as mother, woman, and daughter," and she performs a daughter role to Alice. O'Reilly explores the ironical relationship between language and the maternal, and from that perspective, she identifies Wild with Dorcas.

[30 BL] Smit, Johannes A. "Black Women, Writing and Identity." *Alternation*, vol. 3, no. 2, 1996, pp. 195-207.

Reviews mainly *Black Women, Writing and Identity: Migrations of the Subject* by Carole Boyce Davies. Smit discusses the theme of "Homelessness" and "Migrancy" of black women, especially, who are still strangers in hegemonic society. The migratory experiences support black women to construct their own identities through the writings of black women, such as BL of TM.

-1997-

[31 JZ] Cannon, Elizabeth M. "Following the Traces of Female Desire in Toni Morrison's *Jazz*". *African American Review*, vol. 31, no. 2, summer 1997, pp.

235-47.

Through TM's text, which employs jazz, she describes female desire with violence and creativity, which jazz solos embody. Thus, Violet kills her parts, looking at them as objects, and creates herself again. Cannon employs the theory of inter-subjectivity by bell hooks and Jessica Benjamin, that women first need to see each other as subjects and then subject-making becomes possible. Violet kills her violent part, and her new subjectivity opens the subjectivity of Alice and Felice through their interactions.

[32 JZ] Jones, Carolyn M. "Traces and Cracks: Identity and Narrative in Toni Morrison's *Jazz*." *African American Review*, vol. 31, no. 3, 1997, pp. 481-95.

Explains that slavery experiences of African-Americans are composed of cracks and traces, through which African-American history can be reconstructed and recovered, making it possible for them to regain their "identity and wholeness." The cracks in Violet bear two parts, one of which is *That* Violet, who is violent. Jones asserts that she must realize the other part of herself; then she becomes the true Violet.

-1998-

[33 BE, SL, BL, JZ] Grewal, Gurleen. *Circles of Sorrow, Lines of Struggle: the Novels of Toni Morrison*. LSU Press, 1998.

Analyzes TM's 6 novels from BE to JZ as struggles to recover from the past and focuses on sorrows and resistance of the female characters. Claudia and three whores, and Sula, in BE and SL respectively, have potentials to exert their subjectivity. According to Grewal, BL is a story of resistance by slave women and JZ is TM's trial to heal the collective bodies and history of African-American people.

[34 BL] Holden-Kirwan, Jennifer L. "Looking Into the Self that Is No Self: An Examination of Subjectivity in *Beloved*." *African American Review*, vol. 32, no. 3, 1998, pp. 415-26.

Deploys the concept of *meconnaissance* and suggests the possibility that *Beloved* can be interpreted not only as the dead child of Sethe, but also as the African girl on the slave ship and as Sethe's slave mother. The difficulty of finding subjectivity for African-American people in the period of Reconstruction is demonstrated here, and at the same time Denver is the only figure who can assert her subjectivity with the support of "voices of the past."

-1999-

[35 BL] Jesser, Nancy. "Violence, Home, and Community in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*." *African American Review*, vol. 33, no. 2, 1999, pp. 325-45.

Defines “home” as a place where “both the dystopian and utopian properties” are embedded as a result of tragic slavery and resistance of slaves. In BL, 4 places appear where horror and “the fantasies of utopian escape” coexist. The stories about the escape and healing of the female characters, Baby Suggs, Sethe, and Denver, eventually return to their humanistic selves.

[36 BL] Keizer, Arlene R. “*Beloved*: Ideologies in Conflict, Improvised Subjects.” *African American Review*, vol. 33, no. 1, 1999, pp. 105-23.

Refers to the theory of “Ideology and Interpellation” and “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus” of Louis Althusser who asserts that resistance is created by not only interpellation but also “the conflict between interpellating systems.” Concerned with black subjectivity, Keizer insists that individual subjectivity must be revised continuously to resist the dominant ideologies and so must the female characters in BL.

[37 SS, BL] Mori, Aoi. *Toni Morrison and Womanist Discourse*, Peter Lang, 1999.

In SS, Pilate transcends the racist and sexist oppressions of the past and flies in a new hero narrative which includes women who were forgotten in history. In BL, the three female characters are away from male influence and they try to recover their mother language, which empowers the oppressed to resist the dominance of patriarchy.

-2000-

[38 BL] Elliott, Mary Jane Suero. "Postcolonial Experience in a Domestic Context: Commodified Subjectivity in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*". *Melus*, vol. 25, no. 3/4, autumn-winter 2000, pp. 181-202.

Discusses the internalized identity as a commodified being in African-Americans leading to the development of empowered sense of self. Emphasizing the role of community, Elliott argues that though Sethe is denied by a community which is ruled by white ideology, she finally realizes her internal colonial subject-hood and then enters into the phase of truly free subjectivity through the ability of Sethe to re-enter the community and with the help of communal support.

[39 BE, BL] Reid, E. Shelley. "Beyond Morrison and Walker: Looking Good and Looking Forward in Contemporary Black Women's Stories." *African American Review*, vol. 34, no. 2, 2000, pp. 313-28.

Demonstrates that the novels in the 1990s written by black female writers were influenced by the earlier writers, for example, TM and Alice Walker. Also, at the same time, they formed their new perspectives which are different from TM and Walker's. Reid mentions that the novels of the 1970s and 1980s aimed to search for selfhood, thus Pecola in BE and Sethe in BL both struggle to create

their selves and affirm their identities.

-2001-

None

-2002-

[40 BL] Fuston-White, Jeanna. "'From the Seen to the Told': The Construction of Subjectivity in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*". *African American Review*, vol. 36, no. 3, autumn 2002, pp. 461-73.

TM uses her creative way to 'tell' the slavery rather than to be 'seen,' by which her tale is undermined by dominant culture's norms. *Beloved* is a horrific but also reasonable story, with sanity and madness at the same time. Sethe's wildness is her power and her marginal location becomes the site of resistance. In the same context, Baby Suggs discovers her identity through her history of struggle. TM is describing female subjectivity by empowering the slave mother and fragmenting the narrative with plural experiences.

[41 SS] Huang, Hsin-ya. "Three Women's Texts and the Healing Power of the Other Women". *Concentric: Studies in English Literature and Linguistics*, vol. 28, no. 1, January 2002, pp. 153-180.

Asserts that Pilate is empowered by her healing power to "re-memory" the history of Afro-Americans through singing their stories, even without absent fathers. She is one of the women of color whose history and myth enables them to reform the "hurt" to "hope," and she also changes Milkman into the same healer like her.

[42 JZ] Soto, Christina I. Sanchez. "Between the Self and the Others: Subjective and Social Consciousness in Toni Morrison's *Jazz* and Dionne Brand's *In Another Place, Not Here*," *Estudios Ingleses de la Universidad Complutense*, vol. 10, 2002, pp. 237- 59.

Focuses on the role of space as both the site of rejection and the site of subjects for self-development. Here, female bodies are interpreted as an individual space, and Alice and Violet finally become able to celebrate their bodies, overcoming the pain inflicted upon them. Also the problematized notion of home is discussed. Here the migrant subjects in JZ move away from their original home and seek another place where they can assert their subjectivity.

-2003-

[43 BE, SL, BL] De Rosa, Deborah. "Approaches to Morrison's Work: Womanist." *The Toni Morrison Encyclopedia*, edited by Elizabeth Ann Beaulieu, Greenwood Press, 2003, pp. 39-49.

Explains that from the womanist point of view, Pecola, Sula, and Denver in BE, SL, and BL respectively, experience the process of “self-re-creation” in hostile society. Pecola’s failed quest challenges the womanist heroines and Sula experiences an empowering journey, giving an influence to Nel on her self-creation. TM surrounds Denver with the air of conflict and hope at the same time, and Denver is analyzed to gain her identity and self-love through the lessons of Baby Suggs.

[44 BE, SL, SS, TB, BL, PR] Fultz, Lucille P. *Toni Morrison: Playing with Difference*, University of Illinois Press, 2003.

Points out the position as a double-minority of black women and argues that TM’s novels have “thematized black women’s endurance, subversion, and transcendence of pain.” Focusing on the differences working as a frame in TM’s novels from BE to PR, Fultz discusses liberations of female characters who move forward to search for their identities.

[45 SL, BL] Ivory, James M. “Approaches to Morrison’s Work: Postcolonial.” *The Toni Morrison Encyclopedia*, edited by Elizabeth Ann Beaulieu, Greenwood Press, 2003, pp. 29-33.

Discusses the instability of “home” regarding African-Americans and Native Americans from the postcolonial perspective. The question about home and

origin is related directly to the history of slavery. Nel and Sula in SL struggle to define themselves in America. In BL, the body of Sethe functions as a site of resistance through her struggle to reclaim her womb. Also Sethe and Denver regain their selves by Beloved's ability to open the discourse on "identity and historical experience."

[46 BE, SL, SS, TB, BL, JZ, PR] Stover, Johnnie M. "Approaches to Morrison's Work: Feminist/Black Feminist." *The Toni Morrison Encyclopedia*, edited by Elizabeth Ann Beaulieu, Greenwood Press, 2003, pp. 12-20.

Highlights the representations of resistance of black women in male-centered society from BL to JZ. Stover explains the resisting figure of female characters, such as Claudia, the "rememberer," Sula and Nel, who are empowered with sisterhood, Pilate and Eva Peace as "creators," Amy Denver and Baby Suggs as healers, and Convent women who try to find themselves with growing power. Also explains about the black women in JZ who try to consummate their subjectivity, overcoming the hostile historical circumstances.

-2004-

[47 BL] Hayes, Elizabeth T. "The Named and the Nameless: Morrison's 124 and Naylor's "the Other Place" as Semiotic *Chorae*." *African American Review*, vol. 38, no. 4, 2004, pp. 669-81.

Emphasizes the role of individual place in both physical and metaphorical meanings in that it supports the identity formation for African-American women. In BL, 124 Bluestone functions for Sethe and daughters as a place where the maternal logos overwhelm the patriarchal logos so the female characters can affirm their subjectivity.

[48 BE, SL, SS, TB, BL, PR] O'Reilly, Andrea. *Toni Morrison and Motherhood*. *Suny Press, 2004*.

Motherhood is defined as a power of black women that empowers their children and functions as a main theme in TM's novels. Female characters in her novels have mother love and self-love at the same time, and also they are able to raise their children who have a strong selfhood. O'Reilly employs the theory of hooks to make a comment on female subjectivity, of which maternal power is described through Mrs. MacTeer, Eva, Therese, Pilate, Sethe and Consolata, in BE, SL, SS, TB, BL, and PR respectively.

-2005-

[49 BL] Washington, Teresa N. "The Mother-Daughter Àjé Relationship in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*." *African American Review*, vol. 39, no. 1-2, 2005, pp. 171-88.

Associates the concept of Àjé, "a spiritual force that is thought to be inherent

in African women” in Yoruba, mainly with female characters of BL. Baby Suggs works as a “Great Mother” and she uses her spiritual forces to heal the community. Washington asserts that BL is a story that aims for the unity of mother and daughter, and the isolation of Sethe’s home, 124, leads to Àjé unification between them.

-2006-

[50 BL] Henderson, Carole E. “Refiguring the Flesh: the word, the Body, and the Rituals of Being in *Beloved* and *Go Tell it on the Mountain*”, *James Baldwin and Toni Morrison: Comparative Critical and Theoretical Essays*, Palgrave Mcmillan, 2006, pp. 149-65.

Baby Suggs finds her complete self by remembering her body which was dismembered by the experiences of slavery. Memory leads her to her past directly and helps her to consummate healing the whole part of herself. Her empowered ‘speak’ makes possible seeing the black people as subjects with shared experience and also leads her believers to overcome their circumstances.

[51 BL, JZ, PR] Jessee, Sharon. “The “Female Revealer” in *Beloved*, *Jazz* and *Paradise*: Syncretic Spirituality in Toni Morrison’s Trilogy.” *Toni Morrison and the Bible: Contested Intertextualities*, edited by Shirley A. Steve, Peter Lang, 2006, pp. 129-158.

Examines mainly the religious visions and ideas of TM embodied in her three novels, BL, JZ and PR. Jessee mentions the theory of bell hooks that religious faiths of African-Americans use as a means to resist oppressive circumstances. “Womanist Christology” interprets female characters in three novels to have “the insight and spiritual sustenance to make something new out of the disasters of their lives *on their own* (italics original).”

[52 BL] Phillips, Michelle H. “Revising Revision: Methodologies of Love, Desire, and Resistance in *Beloved* and *If Beale Street Could Talk*.” *James Baldwin and Toni Morrison: Comparative Critical and Theoretical Essays*, Palgrave Mcmillan, 2006, pp. 63-81.

Brings back the two degraded images of “otherness” of black women, the “mammy” and the “loose woman,” and interprets Sethe as a woman who has both traits. Sethe can use her maternal power and her sexuality for her subjectivity to survive. Also, she is empowered by balancing her past and present through re-memory, and by true and productive romantic relationship with Paul D.

-2007-

[53 BE, SL, SS, TB, BL, PR, LV] Carlacio, Jami L. *The Fiction of Toni Morrison: Reading and Writing on Race, Culture and Identity*, National Council of Teachers of English, 2007.

Mainly discusses how to use TM's seven novels from BE to LV in terms of various themes represented, such as the relationships between identity and intimacy, black heritage, history, race, community, culture, etc. By suggesting how to use her novels for education, rather than analyzing, *The Fiction of Toni Morrison* helps readers and students to interpret novels of TM autonomously.

[54 BL] Kreyling, Michael. "'Slave Life; Freed Life—Everyday was a Test and Trial': Identity and Memory in *Beloved*." *Arizona Quarterly*, vol. 63, no. 1, spring 2007, pp. 109-36.

Discusses the influence of traumatic events on destruction of identity and body, and here body functions as an archive of slavery experiences of black people. In Sethe's body, all kinds of sufferings inflicted on the bodies of female slaves are saved, which makes her a woman of past, contrary to Denver who is a woman of present. Kreyling also asserts that the bondage of mother and daughter survives under slavery, and analyzes Ella and Denver as an alternative pair of mother-daughter relationship.

-2008-

[55 SS] Ahmad, Soophia. "Women Who Make a Man: Female Protagonists in Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon*." *Atenea*, vol. 28, no. 2, December 2008, p. 59-73.

Analyzes Pilate as a woman who can reject materialist and white-supremacist values and who cherishes her ancestral heritage, which makes her different from other female characters in *SS*. Pilate has her sense of empowered identity by looking at past and present, and she can use her power to protect other female characters. Milkman's self-discovery was made possible by the independent women around him.

[56 LV] Bouson, J. Brooks. "Uncovering "the Beloved" in the Warring and Lawless Women in Toni Morrison's *Love*." *The Midwest Quarterly*, vol. 49, no. 4, summer 2008, pp. 358-73.

With the maternal force of L and the narrative strategy of TM, which construct and reconstruct the personal histories of characters, the hatred between Heed and Christine, who are separated by the hierarchy of society, is replaced by the healing power of love and hope, and they eventually find "the beloved" part which exists in their selves. The future of the young lovers, Junior and Romen, is also interpreted as hopeful here.

[57 SL, LV] Sy, Kadidia. *Women Relationships: Female Friendship in Toni Morrison's Sula and Love, Mariama Ba's So Long a Letter and Sefi Atta's Everything Good Will Come*, Georgia State University, Dissertation, 2008.

Interprets the representations of female friendship of Sula and Nel in *Sula*,

and of Christine and Heed in *Love*. Sy argues that self-love leads to healthy relationships in sisterhood for everyone, and women must find their way to communicate with other women. Also Sy points out that the patriarchal system interrupts the healing power of female bonding. Black women who first acknowledge their vulnerability as double minority must rely on “sisterhood,” which leads to the shared strength of black women.

[58 BL] Yu, Su-Lin. “The Return of the Sister: Sisterhood and Black Female Subjectivity in Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*.” *CLA Journal*, vol. 51, no. 4, June 2008, pp. 407-23.

Focuses on the sisterhood of Denver and Beloved, explaining the psychological development of women through their relationships with sisters. Beloved is interpreted as a “double,” “alter self,” and “hated ego” for Denver, and helps her to be sustained as a subject. Denver also functions as a surrogate mother of Beloved. The black sisterhood expands to communal sisterhood, by which Denver also expands her selfhood from the boundary of nuclear family to community.

-2009-

[59 LV] Fulton, Katharine Lynn. *Female Sexual Identity in Toni Morrison’s Love*. Iowa State University, MA Thesis, 2009.

Heed and Christine share the experience of abandonment, and by embracing patriarchal values that interrupt homosexuality, they eventually abandon their friendship. However, in the final moment, they again share the experience of betrayal by Junior, and their friendship could be recovered. It is only through their friendship, not through individual development, that they could reach self-actualization.

[60 SL] Rodriguez, Adriana Jimenez. "Toni Morrison's *Sula*: Formation of the Self in Terms of Love-Death Relationships with Others and with Oneself." *Revista de Lenguas Modernas*, no. 11, 2009.

<https://revistas.ucr.ac.cr/index.php/rlm/article/viewFile/9427/8877>

Analyzes *Sula* in terms of two opposing forces, such as love/yearning and death/hatred. Similarly, Sula's relationships with Nel and with the community are based on love and hatred. Sula loves herself and at the same time, she does not hesitate to destroy herself, and she repeats the same action in her sex. During and after sex, she earns self-understanding through the experience of love and death.

-2010-

None

-2011-

[61 BE, SL, BL, AM] Putnam, Amanda. "Mothering Violence: Ferocious Female Resistance in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, *Sula*, *Beloved*, and *A Mercy*". *Black Women, Gender + Families*, vol. 5, no.2, fall 2011, pp. 25-43.

Defines "homeplace," which is created by black women and functions as a site of identity construction for their children. Black women resist as subjects with their ability of making home, making themselves strong in racist society. Thus, daughters in TM's 4 novels are taught to survive by their mothers. Still, even though the lack of explanation of mothers often creates frustration for daughters, mothers' violent actions aimed at saving their children, which is also true for 4 novels.

-2012-

[62 BL] Lobodziec, Agnieszka. "Toni Morrison's Discredited Magic—Magical Realism in *Beloved* Revisited". *Brno Studies in English*, vol. 38, no. 1, January 2012, pp. 103-21.

Insists that the faith of Baby Suggs empowers her to be a "spiritual counselor" in her community. Religious faith empowers African-Americans in racist society rather than weakens them. The Christian experiences are deeply related with the otherworldly, and this unreal and magical element becomes the real thing in *Beloved*. The magical realism of *Beloved* is realistic in the resistant Christian tradition of Black people.

[63 BE, AM] Roye, Susmita. "Toni Morrison's Disrupted Girls and Their Disrupted Girlhoods *The Bluest Eye* and *A Mercy*." *Callaloo*, vol. 35, no. 1, 2012, pp. 212-227.

Focuses on the black girls who are physically and psychologically abused in a racist society in TM's two novels. Expressing anger or rage is helpful to create selfhood and female characters of TM, as Claudia and the whores in BE and Lina and Sorrow in AM, respectively, show their resistive attitude toward racist and sexist society, creating their "oppositional space."

-2013-

[64 LV] Harack, Katrina. "'Not Even in the Language They Had Invented for Secrets": Trauma, Memory, and Re-witnessing in Toni Morrison's *Love*." *The Mississippi Quarterly*, vol. 66, no. 2, pp. 255-78.

Memories of Christine and Heed are fragmented and also their memories of betrayal are repeated constantly, which eventually seizes them only in their past. However, as TM intended to reintegrate the fragmented memories with an "addressable other," here L, the relationship between Heed and Christine is healed and becomes hopeful due to their deeper understanding of the self.

[65 SL, PR, LV] Thorsson, Courtney. "James Baldwin and Black Women's Fiction." *African American Review*, vol. 46, no. 4, winter 2013, p. 615-631.

Examines literary heritages of James Baldwin, which influenced TM in terms of Baldwin's "uses of music, silence, complex sexual identity and a resistance to terms of identity." Thorsson asserts that the theme of women's bonds that often appear in TM's novels can be traced back to "Baldwin's male interracial relationships" and TM changed it to interracial female bondage which has power and possibilities.

-2014-

None

-2015-

[66 BL] Stone, Rebecca. "Can the Breast Feed the Mother Too? Tracing Maternal Subjectivity in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*." *British Journal of Psychotherapy*, vol. 31, no. 3, 2015, pp. 298-310.

Argues, as the title suggests, the act of breast feeding empowers not only children but also Sethe, making a space for her to find the self. BL is interpreted as a journey of Sethe, through which she becomes a subject by experiencing breast feeding and moving away from her maternal body. Milk is one of her body parts, and she expands her bodily relationship to a shared

understanding of herself.

[67 SL, SS, BL, PR] Chakravarty, Radha. "Toni Morrison: Imagined Grace." *Feminism and Contemporary Women Writers: Rethinking Subjectivity*, Routledge, 2015, pp. 164-88.

In terms of "female self-empowerment," in SL, conflicts between values are suggested as a product of subjectivity of Sula and Nel. Baby Suggs in BL is one of the empowered matriarchal figures in TM's novels, such as Eva Peace in SL and Pilate in SS. Convent women led by Consolata in PR struggle to liberate themselves against "the men's obvious hostility" that is signified by Ruby.

-2016-

[68 SL, BL, JZ] Banaj, Arlinda. *Female Identity Formation: Relationships in Toni Morrison's novels*. University of Northern British Columbia, MA Thesis, 2016.

Examines female friendship that appears in *Sula*, *Beloved*, and *Jazz*, focusing on the relationship of Sula and Nel, Violet and Alice, and Sethe, Amy and community women. Race, class and gender play a crucial role in female friendship and women first have to achieve self-actualization to enter successful romantic relationships and healthy relationships with ancestors, overcoming inflicted emotional pain.

[69 BL] Gardner, Renee Lee. "Subverting Patriarchy with vulnerability: Dismantling the Motherhood Mandate in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*." *Women's Studies*, vol. 45, 2016, pp. 203-14.

Focuses on the contradiction of Sethe as a maternal body which has both "resistance and submission" at the same time. Sethe's vulnerability is generated when she sets out to struggle, however, her vulnerability works in an opposite way that makes her "unbecoming," a term of Diana Gustafson's, and again, Sethe "becomes on post-maternal, post-patriarchal terms."

[70 PR] Tabone, Mark A. "Rethinking Paradise: Toni Morrison and Utopia at the Millennium". *African American Review*, vol. 49, no. 2, summer 2016, pp. 129-44.

Analyzes Ruby as a modern narrative and Convent as a postmodern narrative which blurs the boundary of modern concepts such as flesh/spirit, self/other, and reality/dream. As the ending of the novel shows, though their representation is impossible in the real world, Convent's postmodern utopia breaks Ruby's modern one and TM achieves her vision of the future, rendering the Convent women as empowered female subjectivity.

-2017-

[71 BL] Nedae, Naeem. "Nomadic Subjectivity and Becoming-Other in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*: a Deleuze-Guattarian Reading. *The Midwest Quarterly*, October 2017, pp. 39-58."

Employs concepts of nomadic subjectivity of Deleuze and Guattari, which is predicated on "fluidity, heterogeneity and interconnectivity" and that nomadic spaces embrace a huge possibility for resistance against any form of fascism. Nedae sees BL as a war or conflict between two opposing worldviews, and Sethe, by becoming 'other' with "nomadic mother love," could experience bondage of mother and daughter and resistance to the discourses of racism and slavery.

[72 JZ] Marotta, Melanie A. "The Bondage and Subsequent Agency of Violet in Toni Morrison's *Jazz*." *Pivot*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2017, pp. 141-65.

Analyzes three phases of Violet's life where in the first phase she lost her sense of self, and in the next stage, she falls into self-doubt and loneliness. However, in her third life, she regains her identity with the emotional and physical help of Alice and Felice and by adapting to her circumstances.

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