

## Language, Women and Discourse in Toni Morrison's Fiction

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### Abstract

*The present study, grounded in the qualitative research paradigm, is an interpretive and explanatory analysis of Toni Morrison's fiction from the critical perspective of poststructuralist feminist literary theory and fiction. In my reading of Toni Morrison's fiction as the manifestation/materialization of the knowledge in terms of discursive (re)configuration of women and to analyze their works from "feminine sentence" perspective, I have used Feminist poststructuralist theories in the discourse-theoretical/methodological background. As part of the methodology, this project draws extensively upon feminist theories, particularly those propounded by French Feminists Helene Cixous and Julia Kristeva, which I have used in the backdrop of discourse analysis methods proposed by Michel Foucault. This fusion of Feminist theories as a theoretical framework and discourse analysis as a methodology has illuminated systematically the process of the discursive formation, dissemination, and institutionalization of the knowledge about women. For my analysis of the discourse spectrum of the texts-to-be-analyzed, I have used extensively Foucault's notions about discourse and knowledge as discussed comprehensively in his books, articles, and interviews.*

### Key Words:

Language, Women,  
Discourse Analysis, Toni  
Morrison, French  
Feminist.

### The Nexus between French Feminist Theoretical Framework and Foucauldian Discourse Methodology

Keeping in view nature and scope of this study in which I deal with the discursive formations that the postmodern Native and Afro American women writers have used to reconfigure the images of black women and their relationship with nature, the most appropriate methodology and mode of inquiry that would help understand the processes and methods employed by these women writers to construct what Helene Cixous famously calls "écriture feminine", is the Foucauldian version of qualitative methodology. The reason why I decided to choose Foucault's methodological strategies to inform my analysis of Afro American and Native American women writers' fiction is that he is an outstanding and hugely influential philosophical methodologist as well critical thinker whose critical insights into the field of research have been extensively benefitted from by the researchers and scholars in the human and social sciences and who has become reference in diverse fields of research. His focus on the centrality of power of discursiveness in the process of the construction of "myself" is reflected in these words: "my problem is to construct myself and invite others to share an experience of what we are, not only our past, but also our present, an experience of our modernity in such a way that we come out of it transformed" (240).

What he initially states "my problem" in terms of "construct(ing) myself" when seen in the broader postmodern/poststructuralist context of the constructed nature of the subject, no more remains his problem alone and he immediately "invite(s) others to share an experience of what we are" so that reconstructing our past, present and what he calls our "modernity" "We may come out of it transformed". To me the most significant feature of the present research is critically analyzing, in the light of Foucault's critical methodologies concerning the modes of discursive formations, how those "others", in the present case Native American and Afro American women writers reconstruct themselves, their past and present, deconstructing their stereotypical images and dehumanized representations in the white discourses and share their experience of what they were and what they are in the present moment.

Foucault's qualitative methodological procedures as they appear in his book "The Order of Things" published in 1966 in which he accorded supreme importance to ethnology as one of the commanding kind of knowledge of modernity, are singularly important to my analysis of the works of the Native and Afro American écriture feminine, because this analysis deals with the "division of human beings into races and their origin, distribution, relations and characteristics" (Merriam Webster). Ethnology as a branch of anthropology dealing chiefly with the comparative and analytical study of cultures finds privileged mentioning in Foucault's discussion of research method(s) in his interviews. Out of many relevant statements he made, the one I use is central to the methodological and analytical position I have taken regarding discussing the

works of culturally de-privileged people "I could define it [my research] as an analysis of the cultural facts which characterize our culture. In this sense, it would be something like ethnology of the culture to which we belong" (Foucault 605).

Ethnographic research, with which Foucault is both figuratively and methodologically associated, and which informs the analytical foundations of this project also, devalues the metanarrativized universalistic knowledge claims to prioritize instead what anthropologists call "local knowledge," the foundation of postmodern theoretical and ethnographical research paradigms. While metanarratives about culture, history, religion, science, etc. have crumbled in the postmodern era and mini-narratives, localized knowledge, subaltern voices, marginalized literature have replaced the claims of universal knowledge. There is hardly any reason to disagree with Clifford Geertz, who denounces universal knowledge as banal and irrelevant while acknowledging the validity of local knowledge because there is in it that "direct and open acknowledgement of limits – thus observer, in this time, at that place is one of the things that most recommends this whole style of doing research" (137) which validates the hitherto unheard voices of all those who were suppressed or/and marginalized. This form of research encourages the notion of situated observer/researcher who, from the place where he stands and the perspective he develops, creates (localized) knowledge, the knowledge which is the result of the production of the detailed data and is deeply entrenched in the time and place of the research. The same is true in the case of the results of the present research, ethnographic in nature.

### **Foucault on Knowledge and Power and its Relevance with Morrison's Fiction**

Though the fragments of reasons for methodological choices appear in different discussions in Foucault's oeuvre, it is in his final research on the subject of desire that Foucault discusses the subject at length. This research project on desire elaborated his theoretical-methodological perspective anchored in the notion of experience constructed by the complex relationship between forces of the knowledge, power, and subjectivities. This methodological stance included plural reference in accordance with the requirements, and the research undertaken in human and social sciences has particularly benefitted from the Foucauldian methodological trend of plurality within the theoretical reference. For Foucault, theoretical work was not something static or finished entity; it was rather understood as something continuously in-process and permanent transfiguration.

Following the tenets of qualitative methodology, informed by Foucauldian theoretical-methodological choices, this research is an attempt to "thinking differently" in terms of the reconstructions of black women's subjectivities in non-white ecriture feminine "instead of legitimizing the already known" knowledge about the Native and Afro American women and their historical relationship with Native as it was constructed and proliferated by the Euro-American, mainstream discourses.

I believe that the construction of relevant and contemporary research problem how the Native Indian and Afro American women writers have deconstructed the oppressive, stereotypically imposed objectification of the indigenous and black slave subjects in their discursively emancipatory ecriture feminist fiction – connected with detailed analysis of the works under consideration and in consonance with appropriate strategies in research- will contribute to deeply understand the historical and contemporary state of the Native and Afro American female subjects in predominantly white society.

### **Exploring the Subversive Use of Language in *Beloved***

Morrison faces a challenge to look for a new language for a story, and she yearns for a story not to pass on rather, she wants to bring those stories onto a surface level, which are still hidden and lost somewhere else. As Handley explains that Morrison, in a bid to fashion a particular narrative style, the one that is embedded in Black women's psycho-physical experiences and differs in stylistics from white modes of narration, contests the Western critical uses of personification and allegory as narratological strategies "by demonstrating the ways in which language-as-loss is not only a culturally a relative concept but produced by history – especially, for African American culture, the history of slavery." (Handley 679)

In order to gain this particular use of language, Morrison does not rest on one or two techniques; rather, she uses a variety of techniques to achieve her goal. Firstly, Morrison makes a non-linear and non-phallogocentric use of the sense of time. In *Beloved*, we find even jumping from present to past and then present. This weaving of past into present goes on throughout the novel, where the characters keep on moving according to this particular weaving of time. Secondly, the technique of repetition is applied by Morrison to strengthen her narrative technique. Thirdly, she calls our attention to the traditional western system of naming and ways, in which characters subvert and reject these systems. Furthermore, Morrison does not rely upon the traditional words; rather, she invents a new vocabulary when she does not find one sufficient word to tell the untold stories. All these devices are formed in the space of ecriture Feminine, which helps abandon the use of the traditional phallogocentric language and enables Morrison to tell the untold stories. Handley asserts that Morrison's response in the form of critical reconstruction of history from Black perspective offers a very appropriate "critique of a Western ideology of writing and reading that itself constructs an allegory of reading that serves that erasure." (Handley 679).

Morrison applies differential language dynamics to criticize the western ideology of writing. Morrison complicates the notion of time in *Beloved*, which shows that she purposefully and successfully evades a phallogocentric or/and linear tale. The story in *Beloved* does not move in a chronological order where Sethe begins with her mother and Nan, goes to

Sweet Home, marries, elopes, remains with baby, kills her daughter, brings up Denver, experiences the pangs of Baby Suggs' death, and meets Paul D and Beloved rather the story starts with Baby's death and then Paul D is introduced. Morrison weaves an intricate web to narrate the memories and stories of different characters. Sometimes the characters are introduced, but they are explained in the latter part of the novel. Though Morrison is not the first to use this particular use of time in her writings, the remarkable way she has done it definitely promotes anti-phallogocentric narratology and opens space to tell fractured stories infractions.

Morrison has extensively made use of the tool of repetition in *Beloved*, giving it entirely new dimensions, though this tool has been used in literature for centuries, and repetition also predates a written language. In oral tradition, the songs and stories were remembered only by repeating them again and again. In *Beloved*, most of the characters are illiterate, and they tell untold stories only by relying upon their memories. Morrison's way of storytelling is different in the sense that she makes a musical use of repetition. There are so many repetitions in *Beloved*, but most important is when Sethe and Denver begin with who Beloved is to them, and the phrase, "and she is mine," is found repeatedly in this section. In all repetitions, *Beloved* seems to be a song of chorus that is memorized to narrate a story. This also reflects the oral traditions in characters' lives as well as former slaves' lives. It also narrates the story of those people whose tongues are guided by their rulers and who sing-song with certain refrains. According to Cixous, these songs are actually the voices that are refrained and restrained. If Morrison brings these refrains onto the surface, she actually recreates the voices which have become a part of history. *Écriture Feminine* is reflected through the language of naming used by Morrison as naming plays a vital role in so many tales in *Beloved*. The names of the characters reflect the impact of slavery in the minds of the Blacks. The characters yearn to have their own identities, so they use the method of naming one another, and the ceremony of this naming properly, according to West, brings for "the enslaved person a kind of social death." (West 265). So it appears that the people think renaming themselves to be the only way to re-enter social life. On the other hand, Handley believes it to be an African philosophy called "nommo". It is not only a philosophy that comes from outside the Westerns surface; rather, it seems to be such a system that brings language and body together to create a new being that speaks of its own by breaking all the shells of traditional phallogocentrism.

### Enfranchising Language and Community

In *Beloved*, it is crystal clear that naming goes on under the system of slavery. Slaves are not allowed to have their individual identity; rather, their names also are named after their owners. Their identity is their masters only as they are the property of their masters who treat them like a commodity of theirs. As women and children are named after their father in a patriarchal family, the slaves are named after their masters. It is a phallogocentric practice – one that many of the characters will reject. The conversation between Baby Suggs and Mr. Garner is essential in the sense that Mr. Garner, who calls her Jenny, does not know her real name as the same name is printed on her sales – ticket. He lays stress on the name Jenny, not on "Baby Suggs" as he says: "If I were you, I'd stick with Jenny Whitlow; Mrs. Baby Suggs ain't no name for a feed Negro." (Morrison 167).

This is real proof of the power of the system of slavery where no one is allowed to have an individual identity. Even if someone tries to hold his/her native identity, he realizes that the new identity, imposed by the masters, is the real and original identity. So Baby is bound to obey Mr. Garner though she does not like it. Even though Mr. Garner is correct that in the North, in the phallogocentric system, "Baby Suggs" is an odd name, it still describes her to herself better than "Jenny."

Stamp, in the same way, goes through the same process but the change in his name is for different reasons than those of Baby Suggs. The only common thing between Baby Suggs and Stamp is the issue of identity. Stamp comes with non-phallogocentric freedom for which he puts his wife at stake. This is once again the busting and disintegration of slave communities made by the cultural naming and re-naming process of the white masters.

Within the context of the importance of speech of bodies, it is important to note that body is not simply the matter of individuals but the community, which is also a body. It is the body of people, but if this communal body becomes jealous of one of its parts or rejects the other, it becomes dysfunctional. As in *Beloved*, we see that the community leaves Sethe and becomes jealous of Baby Suggs. But when it becomes effective as the community, it saves Sethe from Beloved. The Western ideal of the patriarchal nuclear family gives a phallogocentric view of society as bell hooks explain that it is the lethal combination of patriarchy and capitalism that, as a dominating structure, has "worked overtime to undermine and destroy [a] larger unit of extended kin...". She further says as a result of the the segregation of nuclear families from the whole family, women eventually became increasingly dependent on an individual man, and children became more reliant on an individual woman. It is this "dependency that becomes, and is, the breeding ground for abuses of power" (hooks 130).

Now, looking at this statement of hooks, we find that in western society, it is believed that patriarchal hierarchy is justified, and one may set rules for the others who are dependents. It so shows that those who are ruled by or owned by others are less powerful than those who own them. But Morrison gives another possibility. Though the families she writes about are broken and separated from their nuclear families, they are forced to look to a larger source for their structure: the community body that is a real opposition of the family unit. A clear example is seen when Beloved pushes Paul D out of the house. This act of pushing Paul D is actually the breaking of the nuclear family. Paul D and Sethe imagine for a family, but Beloved shuns it. So this will never be a typical family with a particular head. The community ultimately steps in.

However, the characters in the novel can't fully understand the importance of community. Sethe bears jealousy from the community, which becomes clear when Baby Suggs becomes a victim of downfall. Similarly, Baby Suggs' relationship with Halle also evokes the jealousy and anger of the community. The community always wants its members to obey it. It only sees its losses without considering its worth. This hatred of community is not hatred against a single one; rather, Baby is a part of the community body. They have wounded their own part. Under the hierarchal system of phallogocentrism, they have encouraged jealousy only where nothing is shared, nothing is given, and nothing is loved. Perhaps, it is the most poisonous aspect in the entire novel. However, a good end of Paul D and Sethe's story shows the redemption of a community that succeeds in conquering evil and saves one of its integral parts. The people from the community gather at 124 slowly but happily. They bring with them the Christian faith and forget for a while the breach between Sethe and the community. As Morrison writes, "There they were, young and happy, playing in Baby Suggs' yard, not feeling the envy that surfaced the next days" ([Morrison 303-04](#)).

Women want to get rid of all those feelings of hatred for Sethe, which they have been nourishing in their hearts for past so many years. Sethe, who had been facing the evils of slavery for so many years, had to bear the condemning words of women of her community also. But now, all has changed, and women who repressed the community are no more in hostile relations with Sethe. They don't want to "rememory" what they have done in the past. So the community decides to repair all the fractures, tries to "disremember" all the evils related to Sethe and the atrocities committed against her. Women of the community have learned to shape themselves to see their own truths and past. They step forward to stop Sethe from a terrible fate. By compelling Beloved to disappear, they succeed in demolishing the slave memories that Beloved represents: "Whatever Sethe had done, Ella didn't like the idea of past errors taking possession of the present" ([Morrison 302](#)).

As the community steps forward and makes a collective effort to redeem its past action that caused pain for Sethe and other characters, the language also becomes a collective "they" for Sethe and Paul D, who come together and allow Sethe to make a new beginning. Now the "they" become those individuals who have told the story till now. Morrison writes: "They forgot her like a bad dream . . . so, in the end, they forgot her too. Remembering seemed unwise" ([Morrison 323-24](#)).

Morrison makes it a plural reality by the use of the word "they" by the community that overcomes struggle. The family of 124 is also included in this plural reality that is allowed not to repress others or judge them hypocritically. It is also not allowed to be hunted by the past. The idea of the body as a spirit is the most rooted and embedded idea in *Beloved*. Though the idea is among the oldest spiritual traditions, yet it has been neglected by the major patriarchal religions. But Morrison does not give us this kind of paranormal and metaphysical spirituality rather she focuses on physical and bodily alternatives.

### **The Dynamics of Language and Power Relations in *Paradise***

The most significant aspect of Morrison's fiction that underscores her representation of Black female characters and their subjectivity, particularly in *Paradise*, is her discursive reconfiguring of the Black bodies in order to bring them from periphery to center. In this regard, the connection between body and subjectivity is well defined by Grosz as she compellingly writes that the body is not merely a readable sign, a (de)codable symptom "but also a force to be reckoned with" (1994:120). In this connection, Morrison's depiction of the Black female body in both historical and contemporary perspective signifies the traumatic, disoriented, and scarred psyche of the Black people in general and female in particular. Morrison's fictional world comprises victims of slavery, racial and gender discrimination, for instance, characters in *Beloved*, and in the same way domestic and communal violence is evident in the case of the group of women in *Paradise*. When Black people suffer from the atrocities of slavery, race, and gender, the maternal body (both literal and symbolic since the convent symbolizes the maternal body to its inhabitants and offers a safe haven from the violence of the gendered society) becomes a site for them to strengthen their lost and mortified relation with their cultural past in search of their Black subjectivity. In this context, Seth's scarred Black body with figures on its back, for example, when discovered by Paul D, not only signifies healing for them from the traumatic effects of slavery, but also reconnects the Black people with their cultural roots. The textual analysis of *Paradise* offers deconstructive examples galore of the Western dichotomous concepts categorizing the bodies based on the polarization of the mind and the body in which, as [Elizabeth Grosz \(1994\)](#) observes, "the primary term defines itself by expelling its other" and by doing so establishes its own discursive parameters to construct an identity for itself (p. 3).

The central conflict in the novel is between all-Black fanatical men of Ruby and the all-female fugitives of the Covent. Morgan twins, with their inflexible vision of the Black history, dominate the all-Black Ruby, while Consolata, the only inhabitant of the Covent, receives the other fugitive women and emerge as a powerful resistance against patriarchy. Because of their diametrically opposed outlooks to life, religion, community, morality, and gender freedom, the two groups engage in a kind of war against each other. Whereas the novel does explicitly criticize the patriarchal and phallogocentric structures of the society, which demand unconditional obedience and silence from women, it doesn't preach any matriarchal alternative. Far from seeing the all-women inhabited convent an ideal paradise of freedom and peace, it presents Mavis and Gigi grappling violently, almost coming to a "murder" (259) but then averting it for only Connie's sake. Seemingly a safe haven for the fugitive women, the Covent becomes home to scuffles, bickering, factions, and arguments among these women, and "the safety available in the house" (261) starts shattering especially after the arrival

of Pallas. Almost every woman in the convent has a share of human weakness, so they create "disorder, deception...and instead of plans, they had wishes, foolish baby girl wishes" (222). While responding to the question of having criticized patriarchy in favour of matriarchy, Morrison, in an interview charted the role of the artist: "I can't take positions that are closed...I don't subscribe to patriarchy, and I don't think it should be substituted with matriarchy. I think it's a question of equitable access, and opening doors to all sorts of things" (Salon Feb. 2, 1998). So, in the light of this interview, the structure and the themes in *Paradise* reveal that far from subscribing to any totalizing notions of feminine and masculine structures of society, Morrison deliberately falls short of creating any paradise which is a panacea for all material and spiritual problems. Rather, offering a critique of such an unrealistic and unrealizable idea, she is all for a place where people could hope to live together, to accommodate 'others' and drop their racial, gendered, and religious prejudices. This is exactly what the Convent women have learned ultimately: to love oneself and love one another. Cixous' *écriture Feminine* also preached the women the same thing-to love oneself and write about oneself. Reverend Misner's words better sum up Morrison's vision: "God loved the way humans loved one another; loved the way humans loved themselves" (146). *Paradise*, therefore, in view of its deconstructive agenda of the binaries/dichotomies of race, ethnicity, gender, and religion, presents the lived reality of the Black experience.

It begins explosively in the year 1976 when nine murderous men from neighboring Ruby embark upon the horrific undertaking of killing a group of peacefully, though, independently living Convent women not because they have harmed them physically but because they have challenged their masculinity and Black patriarchal authority. The story dramatizes the conflict between these fiercely independent women who run the convent and domineering men who, first try to dominate and later, upon their revolt and resistance, fear these women. The attackers are influential men of Ruby, a Black historical town founded on the Black ideals of life with a small population of 360 only-all Black. The assailants include, among others, the twins Steward and Deacon or Deek Morgan, who is also the *de facto* leader of the town. Along with narrating the story of Black men and women, Morrison poignantly relates the histories of the genesis of Ruby from Haven, the causes for Ruby's hierarchical social structures, and its rigid xenophobia to the extent that its apprehensive leaders resolve to decimate the town and lynching women who had troubled histories of past relations with men and even women. Women living in the convent are named Mavis, Grace, Consolata, Seneca, and Pallas, whereas women living in the town are Paricia, Lone, and Save-Marie. Ruby has emerged from Haven which was founded in 1890 in Oklahoma by a group of nine closely-knit families: The Blackhorse, Catos, Dupres Families, Pooles, Floods, and Fleetwoods. It was the racial segregation and xenophobic intolerance of the White society that excluded these dark-skinned Black men from public life, denied them job opportunities, and fundamental rights that forced the founding fathers, under the aegis of Zecharian Morgan, to found an exclusively dark-skinned Black community.

Though Morrison clearly demonstrates here the xenophobic and racially intolerant nature of the American society where Black is perpetually othered, excluded, denigrated, and deemed uncivilized and hence exploitable but ironically, the Black men when they built exclusively Black town fall prey to the same vices of the white hierarchical and phallogocentric society. They perpetuate violence upon those who fail to conform to their exploitative and oppressive patriarchal values. On reaching the place of building a new town, first of all, they build a big Oven made of brick and iron. The big Oven symbolizes, among other things, two prominent features of human life: the nourishment they need to keep alive and the collective achievements they have made. After flourishing for several decades, Haven falls during the post-second world war period.

Morrison has a firm belief in giving a political shape to the work of art. She finds it to be a strong tool when she exposes the power relations of her society. Through her Black narratives, evocative and rhythmic language, she vehemently resists the dominant Euro-American power and instigates a new spirit among Afro-Americans to speak through their bodies even if their tongues have been captured. She converts the virtuous American myths into the untold violent stories of suppression woven out of the lived experiences of the Blacks of her society. In this regard, she portrays Black women who abhor sexist and racist oppression, who yearn to practice their womanhood in their own particular way, the one that should not be directed by any patriarchal and phallogocentric society. Observing Black Feminism's ethnic and cultural thrust, [Denard \(2008\)](#) postulates that because Black Feminism is more group-centered than self-centred, the Black women show concern more with female cultural values of their ethnic group than commitment with changing the fate of women in general, so "they advocate what may be called ethnic-cultural Feminism" (171).

In *Paradise*, Ruby, the main town in the story, is fully under the dominating rule of patriarchy's culture. The lives of the people, especially women, are determined, regulated, and directed by typical patriarchal cultural norms, and no one is allowed to transgress the set principles of the town. So, following the phallogocentric traditions, the town does not allow any freedom to women, and they are bound only to serve their husbands. The foundation of the town is based on racism and patriarchal ideologies; the whole town consists of pure Black people, where even the light Black people are considered impure ones. Both women and the light Black people are excluded from the pure Black ones; therefore, it may not be called the true *Paradise* of God. Since patriarchy needed the ideological support of religion to justify its domination over women, Kate Millet's theory of sexual Politics speaks in this regard: "According to the classical tale of Pandora's Box and the Biblical story of the fall, a woman was the cause of all chaos in this world" ([Millet, 318-319](#)). It becomes obvious thus that the ideology of the people of Ruby is also the part of their religion. Since ideology in patriarchy is characterized by "Aggression, intelligence, force and efficacy in the male; passivity, ignorance, docility ... and ineffectuality in the female" ([Millet 292](#)), this particular ideology in Ruby society strengthens the idea of phallogocentrism that males are always better

than women because each sex is attached with those attributes. At one hand, this tradition of patriarchy seems to be an attractive one as it burdens all the men with a responsibility of protecting women of Ruby town from the white people, and the freedom and sexuality of women is protected by the people of Ruby who have already named their town Ruby to immortalize Ruby Morgan who died because of the uncivilized behavior of the white doctors. But on the other hand, this name of protection is actually a sort of restriction and binding for Black women. In the name of protection, their freedom has been snatched away from them. They always think of themselves to be the slaves of their own men who do not let them breathe according to their own sweet will. An example of an Oven in *Paradise* explains the matter. Oven is a statue in the center of Ruby, but it is not simply a statue rather, it signifies a strong traditional belief of the people: it is rather a part of their traditions and is a sign of unity and landmark of the town. "They are respecting it. It's because they do know the Oven's value that they want to give it new life" (86).

The women from Ruby are not suffering from racial prejudice as much as the suppression perpetrated upon them by their own Black community. Within families, the object or subject relation is dominant. Masculinity is always subjective, whereas femininity is defined as an object- women are objects and inferior. Morrison shows that it is not the men at fault; rather, women themselves are the guilty ones. Power is exercised only when the weak ones refuse to resist power. In any society, if power holds its dominant position, it is only because the people accept the reality principles determined and set by the authorities. The same is the case here in Ruby: women, since their childhood, have surrendered themselves to a phallogocentric society. They have in their minds the concept of male superiority. They have never thought in any other way. It is only women who are ready to be suppressed. They love to live in a passive condition and are not ready to revolt. In ecriture feminine tradition, Morrison wants them to speak, if not through their tongues, at least through their bodies. Women in Ruby are ignorant of their fundamental rights. They accept everything that comes from their husband or their fathers passively, whether they like it or not. Mavis's life is controlled by her husband, who always prevents her from having friends. In her moments of intense pain, "she realized she had no idea of what to do next. She drove toward Peg's; she didn't know the woman all that well, but her tears at the funeral impressed Mavis. She had always wanted to know her better, but Frank found ways to prevent acquaintance from becoming friendship" (27).

## Conclusion

The study of *Beloved* and *Paradise* from a discursive perspective has revealed that the woman and her sex are the property of the men, and the sexual emotions of a woman are not valued; they are alienated from their pleasures as if only male sexuality matters and female pleasure is of no importance. They are treated just as the sex-dolls. Morrison gives a terrible account of every aspect of a Black woman's life in *Paradise*; emotions are exploited, hearts are broken, bodies are assaulted, and tongues are made silent. This is what happens in a phallogocentric society. Morrison believes that the female body and sexuality must be printed in written form. *A paradise* is actually a form of her subversive black fiction. The stories of all these women in *Beloved* and *Paradise* are actually the stories of all black women who have been exploited by both white and black men in a phallogocentric society. Morrison breaks the bonds and brings all the untold stories of Black women in a representable form. In her signature Black fiction, she uses the technique of repetition in *Paradise* too, as she does in *Beloved*, to create a plurality of meanings through multiple versions of stories. By so doing, she reconstructs the dominant history and offers alternate truths from Black perspective. It is through the employment of such discursive techniques as recapitulation of murder scenes, doubling of scenes and characters, and point of views in *Paradise* and *Beloved* that she creates the characteristic narration of repetition. When the convent in *Paradise* is attacked by men, they fondle their weapons to demonstrate how they conflate women and an object: "Fondling their weapon, feeling suddenly so young and good they are reminded that guns are more than decoration, intimidation, or comfort. They are meant" (285). Now the word "Fondling" evokes feelings of sexual intimacy, but the men treat both their tools and women in the same way, demonstrating that women are no more a living object rather a tool for men; both women and tools are interchangeable. She gives the alternative of hierarchy and patriarchy in the form of community. She invents language to counter the traditional phallogocentrism and also denies the spiritual and religious explanation of male-centric body. It has been demonstrated in the light of the discourse analytical method proposed by Foucault that how, by deconstructing the gendered and phallogocentric misrepresentations of the black women in mainstream fiction, Morrison has validated the personal experiences of the black women in order to reconfigure their identities/subjectivities.

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