

- Peer-Reviewed, Open Access Journal
- Indexed in NepJOL; Star-Ranked in JPPS
- Permanently Archived in Portico



---

Research Article/ DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3126/sjah.v8i1.90846>

## African Memory and Covert Attachments: Black Vernacular in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*

Rishiram Ghimire 

Tribhuvan University

**Article History:** Submitted: 1 Nov. 2025; Reviewed: 10 Jan. 2026; Revised: 6 Feb. 2026

**Email:** [rishi14ghimire@gmail.com](mailto:rishi14ghimire@gmail.com)

Copyright 2026 © The Author(s). The publisher may reuse published articles with prior permission of the concerned author(s). The work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0). [www.cdetu.edu.np](http://www.cdetu.edu.np)



---

### Abstract

This article explores black vernacular, which is part and parcel of the black community, rooted in African expressive culture, in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. Black vernacular consists of rituals, blues, spirituals, secular songs and rhymes, jazz, prayers, sermons, and stories of various kinds. These vernacular genres are allied with the everyday life of the black community in the form of practices and performances, and manifest black life in the New World. These genres have played dual role in black community by simultaneously giving life to African heritage and sharing their pains and the moments of pleasure in the New World. Black people are communal in nature, and their togetherness reveals their pain and pleasure in communal activities, be it a birthday celebration or mourning rituals. The character, Baby Suggs, performs healing ritual in order to relieve her people from the worries of slavery. While exploring black vernacular with a special focus on their socio-cultural values in the New World in Morrison's *Beloved*, the researcher uses insights of black aesthetic as defined by Hoyt W. Fuller that fosters black life-world in artistic expressions. This article concentrates on how Morrison sustains black vernacular in *Beloved* and maintains African heritage in the New World. And this work urges further researchers in exploring native expressive cultures in literary texts.

**Keywords:** African heritage, black aesthetic, the Middle Passage, spiritual, vernacular

### Introduction

This study analyzes Tony Morrison's *Beloved* (1987) from the perspective of black aesthetic, which subverts traditional aesthetics with its spelling and purpose, in order to manifest how this text manifests cultural memory and enlivens African cultural expressions in black literature in the New World. Black people have lived away from their root, myth, legend, history and culture, getting mixed with alien practices in the New World. This situation has raised a question whether black people in the New World have embraced foreign practices and forgotten their culture. This research aims at exploring how this text exploits black vernacular that connects black community with African culture and practices in the New World. Black vernacular indicates the language used by black people in the

United States of America be it in literature or everyday communication. Black vernacular should necessarily not be limited in written or spoken language, it has spread its wings out to the activities of the black people that express art and culture in any form they perform.

This article primarily moves around the ghost of *Beloved* in Morrison's *Beloved*, a documentary novel that recounts a story of mother who kills her daughter to save her from suffering as a poor black female slave in American society. The story of the novel begins with its setting in 124 Bluestone Road near Cincinnati, Ohio after the end of the Civil War (1861-65). Sethe, the main character of the novel, kills her daughter thinking that death of her child is a better fate than forcing her back into slavery. The ghost of the murdered daughter visits and occupies Sethe's house and creates havoc and horror in Sethe, Paul D and her sister. This story alludes a true story of Margaret Garner, a fugitive slave from Kentucky to Ohio with her family, who murders her daughter and intends to kill herself and other three children in 1856 than letting them enslaved. Since black writers' inspiration of their writing adheres to the past from the Middle Passage to the present, *Beloved* replicates the historical event having African cultural ingredients that took place in black community. Sethe corresponds Margaret Garner, who holds the position of a role model in black community in challenging the atrocity of slavery and establishing justice in society though she seems to be brutal on the surface. Morrison employs ghost story, song, dance, ritual functions, dialogues in the novel that correspond African cultural elements.

### Literature Review

Many critics have studied *Beloved* from different angles as it bears multiple messages such as slavery, racism, documentary realism, retrospection of the Middle Passage, re/memory, collective history, African rituals, grotesque, and merger of past and future. Barbara Schapiro's study on *Beloved* exploits the psychological effect of slavery on black community. She points out on the condition of enslavement that "Toni Morrison's *Beloved* penetrates, perhaps more deeply than any historical or psychological study could, the unconscious emotional and psychic consequences of slavery. The novel reveals how the condition of enslavement in the external world, particularly the denial of one's status as a human subject has deep repercussion in the individual's internal world" (194). Likewise, another critic R. Clifton Spargo sees the novel as a text of trauma caused by injustice upon black community. He argues that "According to liberal social theory and the rules of empirical investigation, in order for trauma to be the product of injustice, we would first require proof that it occurred as a violation of a prior and ordering of human relations in society" (124). Regardless of the above readings of the novel, the concern of this work is to see and say this text from African expressive culture, black vernacular that gives life of black literature connecting black life with their root articulations and practices. These practices are withering due to the length of time and the distance of place from the mother country and Morrison invigorates such practices realizing the decaying and alienating identity of blacks in the New World.

Vernacular generally signifies language or dialect usually spoken or written by the ordinary people of particular region or country for everyday use and it is different from official or literary language. However, vernacular as an adjectival form suggests literary works written or expressed in the native language of a particular region or country. Vernacular functions as the foundation of the identity of native people of any kind.

Black vernacular, beyond the pages of books in written form, exists in black community through performances of cultural expressions, be it in the homeland or abroad. It stands its ubiquitous position in the black community, literate or illiterate, so its scope is seminal in the New World where there is a big population of the blacks. On the scope of black vernacular, *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature* explains that "In African American Literature, the *vernacular* refers to the church songs, blues, ballads, sermons, stories, and, in our own era, hip-hop songs that are part of the oral, not primarily the literate (or written-down) tradition of black expression" (3). Vernacular tradition of dance, folktales, work songs, spirituals, blues, jazz, rhythm has provided with the foundation of written tradition and these genres have proved their presence in written, spoken or in

performance as well. These vernacular elements do not regard African root only; they defy racist beliefs that black people are sterile to art and culture. Belinda Edmondson, quoting bell hooks, reiterates how African cultural expressions resist racist belief: "According to bell hooks, whatever African Americans created in music, dance, poetry, painting, and so forth, challenged racist beliefs that blacks were uncivilized and that they were collectively incapable of creating 'great' art" (78). Black literary and artistic creations defy and challenge the assumed values made by racists and the contents of the black vernacular include double function of maintaining African culture and protesting racial ideology. Furthermore, black writers have made their work original in form and content by turning to their own vernacular tradition. On support of black vernacular, these writers' narrative techniques have got strength in their writing from the black expressive cultures rooted in Africa.

The narrative techniques used in the novels of black writers employ vernacular elements derived from their homeland Africa. The writings of black are equipped with ghost stories, spirituals, blues, works songs, dance, rhythms, feast and festivals and these elements have enriched black literature. On the magnitude of the stories in the New World, *Norton Anthology* discusses that "What is clearer than ever now is that the Africans also brought with them a vast storehouse of stories—along with other such expressive form as songs, dances, styles of worship, games, patterns of adornment, and the like that helped them maintain on the new continent at least the broad outlines of their original world-view" (55). The stories brought from Africa connect black community with Africa and African heritage having the pristine view of African people. They make the present generation cognizant on their history and heritage. Consequently, black vernacular and its affinity with black community have sustained the original communal values of Africans though they are away from the land of their ancestors. Regarding the significance of black vernacular in the New World, Peter Labrie argues that these "Rhythm and blues, gospels and spirituals, and . . . jazz comprise some of the most significant components of black culture in America. Within their sounds and lyrics, are contained all the hurt, pain, and good times which black people share through their daily experiences" (64). Black vernacular, though beaten with the Western individualism, has been supportive in sharing the moments of pleasure and the pains and maintaining communal properties of African heritage.

*Beloved* includes various issues of black community. Many scholars have worked on it and analyzed this text from different perspectives. Lyndia Magras argues, "We read Morrison's *Beloved* as a political act, to extend Ismael Reed's "writing is fighting" metaphor" (37). *Beloved* dissimulates an idea that writing a text on social reality of injustice is to fight against the oppressors. Likewise, Florian Bast studies the use of color in the text and connects color with the message of the novel. Bast notes, ". . . throughout *Beloved*, red symbolizes slavery and the concepts associated with it, such as, racist violence after the Civil War. This is evident in the fact that the color appears when characters face their memories of slavery and the horrific wounds it has caused them" (1071). *Beloved* entails events and characters in association of slavery and its woes etched in the heart of black community. Similarly, it rests on a lingering trauma given by slavery to black community as Pamela E. Barnett points out, "In the novel, free African American men and women have survived rape and slavery, but they are not free of the recurrent experience of trauma. They can neither contain nor repress the memories, and hence survival is, as Caruth says, a kind of crisis" (425). Black people are living a life with the scars of slavery that they can neither forget nor bear.

The above reviews of the scholars discuss *Beloved* as a novel of slavery, racism, exploitation, oppression, brutality that have kept black community in crisis in the modern time. Though they are free in social and political domain now, they are not free from the wounds of slavery and so they are still writing on it to fight against the perpetrators. Different from these reviews, this work focuses on the black vernacular how black writers have maintained African cultural expressions in the New World and made them lively in their writings. The reviewers have primarily focused on the events and circumstances of slavery in the text but the part of cultural expressions, the guiding forces of pain and celebration of the black people, has been evaded and ignored. Since black aesthetic counts black people in relation to their life and practices, black vernacular has been twinned with black aesthetic—

a pillar of the study of black life-world. All in all, this study keeps *Beloved* in the center of analysis of the black life having the acumens of black aesthetic—black vernacular.

### **Black Aesthetic: Unearthing Black Cultural Expressions**

This article explores black vernacular in *Beloved* by using qualitative methodology that navigates research work to interpretation, analysis, clarification and criticism and black aesthetic as theoretical perspective. The exploration of black vernacular through the approach of black aesthetic—form of art, criticism, or analysis—examines how expressive cultures reveal black life-world in the United States of America. The expressive cultures of black community are knotted with the social, political, economic, cultural spirit of the time. The assumption of black aesthetic is that literary texts are the product of society and they are true to their setting. Hoyt W. Fuller, on the relation between literature and society argues, “Literature, after all, is not separate from life, although many white critics seem to want to separate black literature from the realities of black life” (330). The setting of black literature is slavery and racism that have sustained a long history in the black life-world. In this sense, the revelation of black life-world virtually unfolds the history of oppression, exploitation and degradation of black community. The validity of black literature exists in the community when literary text germinates from black people having the values of black community.

Furthermore, the values of black community in the New World are affiliated with African practices though they have remained far away from time and location. So, black aesthetic, though black community is alienated from their motherland, advocates the maintenance of African history and heritage in their works. In terms of black life in black literature, David Lionel Smith, by illustrating Larry Neal and LeRoi Jones, claims that “Black literature must become an integral part of the black community’s life style. And . . . that it must also be integral to the myths and experiences underlying the total history of black people” (100). Black culture is rich in myths and legends and black aesthetic does not separate cultural values of the society from aesthetic. It suggests that black literature connects black life with black history that approaches African history and heritage.

In regard to African history and heritage, black aesthetic enlivens black vernacular in the New World by grabbing the verve of the black life-world. The verve and vivacity of black life-world in the new setting indicates the resurrection of African vernacular in black writing. Black vernacular as part of black aesthetic bears strong features of black life that manifest the historical events of happiness and agony, and hope and relief in the New World. Black vernacular in black aesthetic occupies space in expressing sorrows and happiness and curing them. Moreover, black aesthetic celebrates African music as a part of democratic practice that remains absent in Western music. James T. Steward, on the value of black music, asserts:

[m]usic is a social activity. Jazz music in particular, is a social activity, participated in by artists collectively. Within a formal context or procedure, jazz affords the participants a collective form for individual group development in a way white musical forms never did. The symphony, for instance, is a dictatorship. There is a rigidity of form and craft—practice—a virtual enslavement of the individual to the autocratic conductor. (9)

Black aesthetic incorporates black vernacular as a way of black life-world in which music is one the genres of African cultural expressions. *Beloved* is equipped with song, music and dance and connects black life in the New World with the heritage of mother country. Music as a part of black vernacular has maintained African heritage—communality and collectivity in sharing their joys and sorrows—both in literature and in everyday life.

### **Black Vernacular in *Beloved*: Continuum of African Heritage in the New World**

Black vernacular enlivens the cultural memory and the reality of the present of the black community in the foreign lands. *Beloved* tells a story of past and present connecting Africa and the New World in terms of history and heritage. While presenting history and heritage Morrison uses documentary realism in which a mother commits infanticide in order to evade children from the

suffering of slavery. The terror of slavery revives in the form of a ghost that haunts black community and spreads horror. The appearance of the ghost in the narrative reflects African vernacular that includes folktales common in African practices. On the use of ghost story in the narrative, Giulia Scarpa asserts that "As a heritage from African cultures, African American culture lingers on the continuous interaction between the spirit world and the human world. Ghosts have lives parallel to those of humans, and some people feel them, see them, and even talk to them" (96). The thing that Morrison applies in the novel validates the interaction between the ghost and the humans that modern society defies. Morrison enforces African vernacular in modern society through her writing in the form of ghost narrative and the audience of the New World and the rest have realized how American blacks have been associated with African heritage.

Moreover, black people do not matter in the New World and do not deserve space in the history of the USA despite their historical contribution in nation building. White people have erased their history and presence from the annals of the USA. However, Morrison, in *Beloved*, uses the ghost story as a tribute to her ancestors who suffered and died during the Middle Passage. Morrison manifests communal value of African culture that fosters lineage between the dead and alive as Jean Wyatt has pointed out, "*Beloved* also has a collective identity: she represents a whole lineage of people obliterated by slavery, beginning with the Africans who died on the Middle Passage, the "Sixty Million and more" of the novel's epigraph" (474). Black vernacular etched with African culture of paying homage to the ancestors identifies black community with their past in the New World that slavery has paralyzed. Morrison, though the stories are filled with melancholy, does not hesitate to keep her ancestors on the pages of her narrative.

So, black aesthetic encourages its artists to imitate black life in artistic creation. In African practice, a dead body should be properly buried by following proper funeral rites. They believe that the soul of the properly buried body does not stray and has rest if the burial takes place by following the convention. Sixty million and more people did not get proper burial when they died during the Middle Passage. Their soul is haunting black community and has spread horror all over. Morrison includes African myth and folktale in *Beloved* in which *Beloved* represents the spirit of the ancestors whose dead bodies were thrown without customary funeral rites. Fethia El Hafi discusses on the presence of the ghost of *Beloved* as: "According to Morrison, millions of Africans were caught in the Middle Passage. Those who died were denied burial and mourning. . . . *Beloved*, herself is a walking reminder of the improperly buried" (92). Morrison's ghost story, in one hand, reveals the painful history of slavery in the New World, and on the other hand, gives life to alienated black vernacular of folk stories and myth in the New World.

Likewise, music is African cultural expression that flows in the blood of blacks though they are living outside their motherland. Morrison encompasses the fusion of music and African life in her novels. The union of life and art is the call and clarion of black aesthetic to keep their heritage lively. *Beloved*, though written in the USA for international readers, enriches its narrative with the amalgamation of music. In this regard, "Music is everywhere and all around in Toni Morrison's novel *Beloved*. . . . The novel's most intense "musical" moment certainly occurs towards the end of the tale, when 30 community women succeed in driving out the mysterious and haunting child-woman *Beloved* from Sethe's home at Bluestone Road 124" (Eckstein 271). Music augments black vernacular in the New World and so does it concurrently establishing the identity of black community. The spirit exorcising ceremony conducted by thirty women in the modern world suggests the upkeep of black vernacular. And moreover, the company of "thirty women" in the novel who . . . walked slowly, slowly toward 124" (303), denotes the African culture of teamwork in solving the problem of the member of their community. This collaboration reminds black community delved in individualism the responsibility to their members in the new ambience.

Similarly, Morrison employs African rituals in *Beloved* that reminds the present generations whose ancestors are connected Africa but they are not. Modern society practices science proved medicines and procedures but Morrison uses traditional African way of healing physical as well as psychological problems. Black community suffers from wound and scars of slavery and racism and

Baby Suggs helps her people release pain in traditional manner that modern society revokes. Baby Suggs leads her people to the jungle to perform the ritual of healing that black community needs. The healing ritual demonstrates: "It started that way: laughing children, dancing men, crying women and then it got mixed up. Women stopped crying and danced; men sat down and cried; children danced, women laughed, children cried until, exhausted and riven, all and each about the Clearing damp and gasping for breath. In the silence that followed, Baby Suggs, holy, offered up to them her great heart" (103). Black vernacular encompasses African heritage in which the concern of the community matters. The dominance of vernacular stands on performance that promotes communality for the common good, be it in the motherland or abroad. Morrison incorporates the element of ritual in *Beloved* that suggests the magnitude of African culture in the New World.

African expressive culture, in the New World, functions as a therapy to evade mental and physical wounds and woes caused by slavery and racism. Black community has sustained long history of slavery that has occupied the psyche of black people as collective memory. On the practice of African healing procedure, Linda Krumholz clarifies, "Morrison uses rituals as a model for the healing process. Rituals function as formal events in which symbolic representations— such as dance, song, story, and other activities— are spiritually and communally endowed with the power to shape real relations in the world" (396). Dance, song, story and other activities performed by blacks in any part of the world release and relieve them from the pain they have borne away their homeland. These elements of black vernacular are still intact in black community keeping their African roots lively and meaningful at present, too. Moreover, Trudier Harris, on Morrison's concern of African presence in the New World, points out that "Folk-tales, songs, quilting, beliefs, superstitions, and a host of other oral forms layer Morrison's works and ground them to the folk about whom she writes. From spirituals of slavery to the jazz of the 1920's, Morrison incorporates the history and the folk traditions that have defined African existence on United States soil" (325). The presence of black community in the New World has got authenticity as cultural people through African practices and Morrison validates it by incorporating folk traditions in the novel.

Moreover, black people trust on communal values and spirituality, and 'love for all' directs their manner. Since God has created them, they are hopeful that God never ignores them and their freedom is not far away though their past was tragic. Emily Griebinger, on the role and responsibility of Baby Suggs in caring and curing her brethren, observes:

Following the tradition of black holiness, Baby Suggs preaches and prays a strong message of grace and redemption through love. Those who weep, laugh, dance, sing, and shout at her meetings in the Clearing proclaim a victory over the "sins" of slavery, including the sinful mutilation of their flesh. Whatever they have suffered, however intolerable their past they can, if they choose, imagine that God has not forsaken them, that life is not therefore as hopeless as it appears to be. (689)

Music, singing, dancing, laughing, weeping, in black vernacular, connect black community with God and these elements are profuse in black writing. The recurrent use of vernacular in *Beloved* promotes African culture decaying and dying in the New World. Black literature that does not incorporate black culture fails to be original in form and content.

Black people use black vernacular to express their sorrows and joys. They cannot express the feelings of their experiences in words but they are articulate in the performance. Feasting, singing and dancing are their common traits in revealing their joys and sorrows. Morrison, in *Beloved*, uses songs to reveal the pent-up feelings that the characters cannot express. Paul D sings a song of his experience in Sweet Home that reflects the exploitation of blacks in the New World as:

Little rice, little bean,  
No meat in between.  
Hard work ain't easy,  
Dry bread ain't greasy. (lines 1-4)

This song of Paul D is an epitome of black vernacular used in literary text by Morrison and this song speaks bitter experience of the slaves. In slavery, Paul's song is the representative expression that

indicates the violation of basic human rights of food working people need. Expressive culture like, spirituals, blues and work songs are the tools of black people to share their condition in slavery. The heritage of songs is latent in black community in the New World that means Africa is within them though they are unaware of it.

Morrison incorporates dialogues between Sethe and Beloved and in this type of conversation there is the element of the song of 'call-and-response.' Cheryl Hall, on the dialogue, comments that "When the voices are integrated after Beloved's second solo performance, the same variations are revisited, this time in call-and-response fashion. Sethe and Beloved begin: "Tell me the truth. Didn't you come from the other side?/Yes" (215). Morrison rationally embeds the feature of song in dialogue in order to add and connect Africa with the New World. Likewise, William R. Handley, on African music and speech clarifies that "In West African culture, speech and music are part of the same expressive pattern. Within this tradition, music is a manifestation of *nommo*: it produces and commands rather than substitutes for the thing it expresses, much as the Western symbol, in contrast to allegory wants to express an essence that is not divided that which it signifies" (698). West African belief ties with spiritual culture in which the word bears the magical power to call things into being and give life to things. Even this practice speech and music preserve cultural memory that *Beloved* exploits.

This section of the study has manifested the use of black vernacular in Morrison's *Beloved* in matter of connecting black community to their African roots. Dance, folktales, work songs, spirituals, blues, jazz, rhythm have been dominant in the text in terms of the expression of joy and sorrow. The dialogues between the characters encompass the African culture of call and response in music. Black aesthetic appeals black artists to be accountable to their values. So, Morrison has been liable to her people and their values by ministering African expressive culture in her product in the New World.

### **Conclusion: Black Vernacular Dormant in Black Community**

This article has explored black vernacular in Morrison's *Beloved* by having insights of black aesthetic and focused on how black vernacular has endorsed the presence of black community in the New World as a cultural people. Black aesthetic explores black life-world in an alien place where African roots are intact but dormant. The black vernacular enriches Morrison's narrative technique by incorporating pristine African cultural expressions and maintaining them. So, black vernacular, expressive art and culture, has rooted its rhizomes in the literary and artistic creations of black writers in the New World. Memory of the dead during the Middle Passage, telling of ghost story, improper burial of Beloved, healing ritual in the Clearing, and the song of Paul D in *Beloved* manifest Morrison's concern in connecting black population with their roots. The rhizomes of black vernacular in black narratives support the creation being original to African history and heritage. Black people away from their homeland get connected with their ancestors and their practices through vernacular elements in the narratives. Morrison uses black vernacular in *Beloved* to keep the community aware of their history and heritage that helps them to get identity in the world. She uses myth, memory, story, song and ritual in the novel to suggest the latent African culture in the New World. Black people are conscious about their identity that is intricately linked with African heritage—vernacular. All in all, this study will support the prospective researchers to explore how cultural expressions in literary text speak voice of their community.

### **Works Cited**

- Barnett, Pamela E. "Figurations of Rape and the Supernatural in *Beloved*." *PMLA*, vol. 112, no. 3, May 1997, pp. 418-27.
- Bast, Florian. "Reading Red: The Troping of Trauma in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*." *Callaloo*, vol. 34, no. 4, fall 2011, pp. 1069-86.
- Eckstein, Lars. "A Love Supreme: Jazzthetic Strategies in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*." *African American Review*, vol. 40, no. 2, summer 2006, pp. 271-83.

- Edmondson, Belinda. "Black Aesthetics, Feminist Aesthetics, and the Problems of Oppositional Discourse." *Cultural Critique*, no 22, autumn 1992, U of Minnesota P, pp. 75-98.
- Fuller, Hoyt W. "The New Black Literature: Protest or Affirmation." *The Black Aesthetic*, edited by Addison Gayle, Doubleday and Company, 1971, pp. 327-48.
- Gates, Henry Louis, Jr., et. al., editors. *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. vol. 1, W. W. Norton & Company, 2014.
- Griebinger, Emily. "Why Baby Suggs, Holy, Quit, Preaching the Word: Redemption and Holiness in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*." *Christianity and Literature*, vol. 50, no. 4, summer 2001, pp. 689-702.
- Hafi, Fethia El. "Punished Bodies in Soyinka's *The Bacchae of Euripides* and Morrison's *Beloved*." *Journal of Black Studies*, vol. 41, no. 1, Sept. 2010, pp. 89-107.
- Hall, Cheryl. "Beyond the 'Literary Habit': Oral Tradition and Jazz in *Beloved*." *MELUS*, vol, 19, no. 1, spring 1994, pp. 89-95.
- Handley, William R. "The House a Ghost Built: 'Nommo,' Allegory, and the Ethics of Reading in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*." *Contemporary Literature*, vol. 36, no. 4, winter 1995, pp. 676-701.
- Harris, Trudier. "The Worlds That Toni Morrison Made." *The Georgia Review*, vol. 49, no. 1, spring 1995, pp. 324-30.
- Krumholz, Linda. "The Ghost of Slavery: Historical Recovery in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*." *African American Review*, vol. 26, no. 3, autumn 1992, pp. 395-408.
- Labrie, Peter. "The New Breed." *Black Fire: An Anthology of Afro-American Writing*, edited by Amiri Baraka and Larry Neal, Black Classic Press, 1968, pp. 64-77.
- Magras, Lydia. "Popular Reception of Toni Morrison's *Beloved*: Reading the Text through Time." *Reception: Text, Readers, Audiences, History*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2015, pp. 29-44.
- Morrison, Toni. *Beloved: Reading Guide Edition*. Vintage, 2004.
- Scarpa, Giulia. "Narrative Possibilities at Play in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*." *MELUS*, vol. 17, no. 4, winter 1991- winter 1992, pp. 91-103.
- Schapiro, Barbara. "The Bonds of Love and the Boundaries of Self in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*." *Contemporary Literature*, vol. 32, no. 2, summer 1991, pp. 194-210.
- Smith, David Lionel. "The Black Arts Movement and Its Critics." *American Literary History*, vol. 3, no. 1, spring, 1991, pp. 93- 110.
- Spargo, R. Clifton. "Trauma and the Specters of Enslavement in Morrison's *Beloved*." *Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal*, vol. 35, no. 1, March 2002, 113-31.
- Steward, James T. "The Development of the Black Revolutionary Artist." *Black Fire: An Anthology of Afro-American Writing*, edited by Amiri Baraka and Larry Neal, Black Classic Press, 1968, pp. 3-10.
- Wyatt, Jean. "Giving Body to the Word: The Maternal Symbolic in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*." *PMLA*, vol. 108, no. 3, May 1993, pp. 474-88.