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The Gaze of the Other in *Beloved*: Intertextuality, Inequality, and Inspection

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Abstract

Centering on the resurrection of a female African American baby, Toni Morrison's *Beloved* displays the ineluctable impossibility of the blacks' identity construction and simultaneously renders her own idea about their suffering in practice. For the inevitability and her ideology, both are illustrated through gazes, which take place among the characters and elucidate her own consciousness. Based on Jean-Paul Sartre's and Michel Foucault's gaze theories, not only the complicated gazes within the fiction are explicated to illuminate their socially classified torment in the hierarchical marginalization, but those outside the context are also intertextually associated and deployed to raise more moral care in the mainstream western culture. Though concurrently intertwined, the former overwhelms the latter, inducing the dilemma in which African Americans are trapped on the fringe of the society and adding up to the tragical narrative where Morrison bespeaks the lingering impacts of slavery and the necessity of their own blackness.

Keywords: Gaze, Other, Identity, Subject, Marginalization

1. Introduction

Gaze, in literary terms, goes far beyond a literal type of look with continuity and contemplation. It has been integrated into critical theories as a vital element and medium that contributes to the establishment of identities. Whereas early scholars believed that "every perceived human organism refers to… the foundation and guarantee of its probability" and "indicates a separate existence" (Sartre, 1978, p. 253), Jean-Paul Sartre, as the pioneer of gaze theory, pointed out the falseness of the consciousness that existed in a separate state: it should be the status of gazing and being gazed at between the two, that made possible the confirmation of the relationship between the self and the Other, the subject and the object. Yet, in tandem with a palimpsest of multifaceted gazes is the mutual transformation of the positions, which, though complex, can be unilaterally single more often than not. With such an invisible force "[w]hat followed was the ideological dehumanization of local cultures, and their consolidation within an orderly linear narrative of the savage Other" (Lavie & Swedenburg, 1996, p. 157). The disadvantaged ones, situated in the impasse of the gaze, are robbed of their own humanity and forcefully reduced to the role of the Other in myriad ways of life. To theoretically address the concern, Michel Foucault made demonstration of the gaze more visual and dimensional based on Sartre's account of "The Look" in *Being and Nothingness*, applying it to the explanation of

the disciplinary architectural structure that ranged from hospitals, prisons, to all of the society. Concurrently, Frantz Fanon unveiled the white masks of blacks, evinced the original factor that insinuated the predicament of African Americans, and illuminated the blackness that they were in lack of and that Toni Morrison boasted of, right in the lines of Beloved.

In this article, *Beloved* is dissected as a work of fiction replete with diverse gazes. Presenting the destructive legacy of slavery, Toni Morrison connected the gazes of characters and social systems with many other literary works. The intertextuality of pertinent gazes manages to draw more attention from the mainstream western culture and leads to more empathy of a broader group of readers who are entitled to better comprehension of the arduousness of African Americans' mental construction. However, albeit some of the characters succeed in procuring their own spiritual identity in their distorted gazes at the dead and the devil, the living and the divine, hierarchical marginalization ineluctably comes into existence outside of the places of their own. The evanescent assurance of identity in 124 and the Clearing cannot hinder or reverse the inequality they encounter or their constant dilemma of being driven to the margins of margins in the social system. According to Foucault, the gazes are passed down from the top to the bottom of "an apparatus in which the techniques that make it possible to see induce effects of power" (1995, pp. 170-171). The visual manifestation of the social mechanism offers a panoramic view of African Americans' repeated marginalization and heightens the tragical inevitability in their life, despite their previous mental construction. More generally, the entirety of *Beloved* is factually the projection of Morrison's gaze at the infanticide, the slavery, and the whitened blackness in real life. Inspecting all these issues, she conveyed her own consciousness by bestowing absolute discourse on the dead, Beloved. Therefore, gazes exist in and out of the fiction itself, on and on in the social surroundings that are created within, and even form the whole of the book as the demonstration of the writer's own ideology. By sorting out and categorizing all these gazes, the article bespeaks the delicate design to maximize the influence of blacks, the intricately marginalized network of the characters, and the elusive reflection on the writer's attitude towards blackness. Over and above the simple analysis of literary works, the elucidation centering on *Beloved* aims at the deconstruction of blacks' victimization and the redemption of all the individuals that is hidden in the writer's overtone.

2. Intertextuality: Mental Construction of the Self

In *Beloved*, characters construct their own identities through the gazes of the individual and the public, the dead and the living, ghosts and gods, which intertextually connects the fiction to classic works elsewhere that cover Greek mythology, European tragedy, and African culture. Through contextual commonalities, compassion is echoed in both minor and major social groups. Thus, the black slaves' mental construction of themselves, which could have been onerous for the public to fully sympathize with, is lucidly crystallized by this means.

2.1. Distorted Gaze in Greek Mythology: Medea

As the core issue the whole plot centers on, infanticide is done in both *Beloved* and the ancient Greek drama, *Medea*, whose major characters — Sethe and Medea — are subdued by the social ideology, to wit: Greek patriarch and American slavery. By dint of the intertextual connection, Toni Morrison "may emphasize a meaning or an implication of a myth that the 'master narrative,' the ideological script that the Western world imposes on 'others,' refuses to consider" (Jones, 1993, p. 615). After all, it is under the powerful oppression of the two governmental systems that their gaze at their children is distorted. Not only infanticide is adequately depicted and disputed, but attention from the mainstream western ideology is successfully drawn. Though contorted and incomplete, identities of Sethe and Medea are mentally constructed through the gaze of the social system and their gaze at each other in the fiction.

Before the act of infanticide, correlated social background has been torturing the two infanticides, which has already underlain part of their identities. While Sethe fleeds from Sweet Home to 124, Medea betrays her motherland, Colchis, and follows Jason to Athens. Both suffer the gazes of the Other externally and internally: the discrimination between blacks and whites, and barbarians in Colchis and superior citizens in Athens. Wherever they go, "what is certain is that I am looked-at: what is only probable is that the look is bound to this or that intra-mundane presence" (Sartre, 1978, p. 277). By and large, the combination of all these gazes is the indication of the corresponding social ideology. For one thing, Medea's rebellion is triggered under the gaze of patriarchy which determines her initial identity — a tool utilized by Jason to procure power and wealth. In Corinth where "all of us [women] judge by sight and not by knowledge," "how we [women] buy ourselves husbands, / power and alliances for them" only brings "slavery / and conquest over us [women]" (Euripides, 2006, lines 243-245). Naturally, women like Medea are reduced to the silhouette of men; realizing her inevitability under patriarchy, Medea is poised to turn to infanticide for her revenge. For another, the constant gaze of slavery at Sethe destines her act of extreme. According to Sartre, the gaze of the Other "has set us on the track of our being-for-others and has revealed to us the indubitable existence of this Other for whom we are" (1978, p. 282). Sethe's being-for-others, namely her identity, is confirmed under the gaze of whites. More pathetically than Medea, she is more like livestock than a tool, bereft of her milk that is stolen by the whites. The gaze of the public, symbolic of the social formations, incurs the distortion of Sethe and Medea who should have been benevolent mothers. With such identities imposed upon them, their gaze at others is distorted as well.

Furthermore, the distortion is clearly embodied in the exact process of infanticide. Meanwhile, their identities can be seen from strong contrasts. Medea, renowned for her decisiveness and obstinacy, repeatedly persuades herself when plotting the murder: "Do not weaken. / Forget you love your sons. / Forget you gave them life. / Today, remember nothing. / Tomorrow, mourn them" (Euripides, 2006, lines 1219-1226). On the contrary, nothing but cutting Beloved's throat and "holding a blood-soaked child to her chest" (Morrison, 2004, p. 175) is done when it comes to the timidity and irresolution of Sethe. The two

analogically hesitate about the life-and-death matter and encounter the gaze of themselves which consists of the inerasable gaze of the Other, because the part of them "which has been alienated and refused is simultaneously my [their] bond with the Other" (Sartre, 1978, p. 285). Provided that the social ideology stabilizes, this part of them will remain and the contortion of themselves continue. That is to say, the presence of the Other who is gazing can be unnecessary and Medea and Sethe are literally gazing at themselves from the perspectives of patriarchy and slavery before the infanticide. Hence, Medea abnormally becomes hesitant because women at that time, with neither social status nor discourse, must have criticized her for her atrocity and affirmed submission to men. By the same token, Sethe, irresolute as she is, killed Beloved decisively, as rebellion is insanely craved by most blacks around her.

On account of their return to normal afterwards, the infanticide marks a special point for Medea and Sethe. In the short period of infanticide, they may "escape the Other by leaving him with my alienated Me", because "[t]he disappearance of the alienated Me would involve the disappearance of the Other through the collapse of Myself" (Sartre, 1978, p. 285). Their identities are assured through the vicissitudes whilst their alienated "Me" is released in the act of infanticide, the cost of which is the breakdown of themselves. Notwithstanding the contrasts, Medea is a cruel female longing for vengeance as always, and Sethe a dishonored and remorseful black slave. But in the history of literature, the points of their distorted gazes differ: one is to show how an ancient Greece princess "defies public discourse, the language of the establishment" (Manolopoulos, 2015, p. 452); the other bespeaks that a female black slave kills her daughter as the only means to redeem her. Intertextually, the self-awakening journey of females which is started by Medea, is continued and sublimated by Sethe. However dear the cost is, they are mentally molded indeed, whose roles in the journey have been transformed from a one using infanticide to cut off the bond between her husband and her as an appendage, to a one openly challenging the authority of the social ideology and seeking for the freedom of her offspring.

2.2. Devil Gaze in European Tragedy: Dr. Faustus

Controversies and criticism from both whites and blacks have to be faced by Sethe after her distorted infanticide that reduced her to a mad demon in the community of blacks. In addition to torment like this, Beloved comes back to life with the body of another girl, just like the advent of Mephostophilis in *Doctor Faustus*. At this time, the gaze between Beloved and Sethe proves more meaningful and complex, for both infanticides itself and the recovery and redemption of it are entangled. In light of the textual commonality of the appearance of men and ghosts in *Beloved* and *Doctor Faustus*, to put the analysis of the former into the framework of the latter can relate "diachronically to prior texts and synchronically to any text being produced, in the present" in a process that makes the text "an heir to the past, a product of the present and a link to the future" (Farahzad, 2009, p. 126). The quest for the analogies and differences of the contract that is reached between humans and devils in the two literary works, contributes to the ideological promotion of the text and the comprehension of the mental construction of miserable female black slaves like Sethe.

After the distorted infanticide as the explosion of emotion, Sethe's energy is constantly drawn by Beloved through her desperate gaze. Literally, gaze can be influential in the construction of individuals. In reference to Sartre, the point of being looked at is "that I am suddenly affected in my being and that essential modifications appear in my structure — modifications which I can apprehend and fix conceptually by means of the reflective cogito" (1978, p. 260). Scilicet, the intervention of the Other begets fluctuation on mind which is there for the subject to commence, just as in *Doctor Faustus*, Faustus is prompted to "lay that damned book aside / And gaze not on it lest it tempt thy soul" (Marlowe, 2005, 1.69-70) by the Good Angle, who is leading him to avert the gaze of "the damned book", the concrete form of the devil, and impeding his gaze at it contrariwise; in *Beloved*, Sethe's physiological reaction that her "bladder filled to capacity"[1] (Morrison, 2004, p. 61) when Beloved's eyes and hers meet for the first time, crystallizes the immediate effect in her being and the efficient modifications in physical structure.

From both instances the function of gaze can be seen, in which both characters are mentally constructed to what they crave to be by the gazes of the devil: conqueror of the world and mother of her beloved daughter. Yet, it takes the whole of themselves to finish the construction: Faustus is eventually reduced to the slave of Lucifer with "a surfeit of deadly sin" (Marlowe, 2005, 19.37); Sethe "sat in the chair licking her lips like a chastised child while Beloved ate up her life, took it, swelled up with it, grew taller on it" (Morrison, 2004, p. 295). In accordance with Sartre's theory, the constant state of being looked at by the devil signifies continuous adjustment of themselves. They are inevitably led into the abyss of darkness by the devils, because their requirement in the beginning should have been an eternal puzzle. After all, no physicists like Faustus can achieve his great humanistic ideals simply with his own knowledge. Nor can infanticides like Sethe revive her daughter. The cruelty indicates the "conditions which render bad faith conceivable, [and] the structures of being which permit us to form concepts of bad faith" (Sartre, 1978, p. 67). As the only way to satisfy their needs, accepting the gaze of the devil is chosen by Faustus and Sethe. Hence, the setting of the gaze of the devil is a must, in order to probe into the reasonability and morality of the supremacy of knowledge and the act of infanticide. It is the religious prejudice and unequal slavery behind that induce the two tragedies, the plots of which are advanced under the gaze of two social elements, the two factual devils behind.

On the other hand, duality lurks in the gaze, with Sethe and Beloved's roles exchanged: Sethe the subject of the devil gaze and Beloved the object. Under the oppression of slavery and infanticide, more than one demon is created. In this sense, Beloved is the one who signed up with Sethe, so as to physically accompany her mother at the cost of thoroughly sacrificing herself in the end, whereas Sethe, just like Mephostophilis in *Doctor Faustus*, serves for Beloved and makes up the emptiness of maternal love in Beloved's heart. Especially in the eyes of Beloved, Sethe is the devil as well the creator, endowing her with life and death. What's more, loyalty and submission, the characteristics of Mephostophilis, are embodied in the gaze of Sethe, who

likes "[w]hispering, muttering some justification, some bit of clarifying information to Beloved" (Morrison, 2004, p. 297). In their mutual gaze at each other, both Sethe and Beloved are molded into devils from different points of view, which proves that Beloved comprises the dual repetition of Doctor Faustus, and Sethe and Beloved are mythologically similar to Faustus, who "finds his soul to be alien to him, so much so that he feels it to be a burden he would be happy to be rid of" (Guenther, 2011, p. 59). For both, trauma is so crushing a blow that imploring the devil to liberate their souls turns out reluctantly practical. Beloved's intertextual connection to Doctor Faustus brings forth more deliberation of the right and wrong in the exchanged roles of humans and devils. Compared with the European tragedy, Beloved as one ghost overworks, simultaneously playing two roles as "a bridge between the dead infant and the living young woman" (Meljac, 2020, p. 42). The conflict between the devil gazes of Sethe and Beloved illuminates the complexity of African Americans' tragical confusion and illustrates their arduous journey of mental construction in a broader sense.

2.3. Divine Gaze in African Culture: Rituals

Notwithstanding the tragedies of infanticide and the deal with the devil, blacks' optimistic beliefs are also delineated in the fiction, as a divine force against their miseries. Whilst trauma is mostly embodied by Sethe, holiness and joy are explicated by her mother-in-law, Baby Suggs. As the most respectable leader and "an unchurched preacher" (Morrison, 2004, p. 102), she brings the community to the gaze of the God and casts the divine gaze herself. The ceremony she holds at the Clearing, a sacred and secret place in the woods, demonstrates the traditional African tribalism in another form. Such intertextual connection compromising the commemoration of a certain ideology, illuminates the community's sense of belonging to their own culture that supports them to move on and underlies the rite of exorcism later. For them, "to apprehend a look [of the God] is not to apprehend a look-as-object in the world…; it is to be conscious of being looked at" (Sartre, 1978, p. 258). Conscious of being under the divine gaze they see pure reference to themselves and build an indispensable part of their spiritual homeland.

Baby Suggs carries the holiness from the church to their own place of consecration. Religiously, she is the one who receives the gaze of the God, adapts the consecration to the form of their own, and enables everyone to be placed under the divine gaze. With her great heart she gathers all her fellows at the Clearing, turns them into "laughing children, dancing men, crying women" (Morrison, 2004, p. 103), mixes them up, and immerses them in jollification as well as silence. For one thing, Baby Sugg's orders of "Let your mothers hear you laugh", "Let the grown men come", ""Let your wives and your children see you dance" (Morrison, 2004, p. 103) echo with the record of the ritual practices of Dogon, an ethnic group in West Africa: "Lebe, your men have come; / Kan amma, your men have come; … Women are reunited here, men are reunited here" (Lifszyc & Paulme, 1936, p. 108). The textual commonality hints Baby Sugg's role as the preacher and the Goddess herself. From Dogon to Cincinnati, though the ritual is a bit modified, its continuity assures blacks' constant exposure to the divine gaze. Simultaneously, the ritual maintains "the original relation of myself to the Other" as "a concrete, daily relation which at each instant I experience" (Sartre, 1978, p. 257), because every individual is defined by his relation to the world, among which the most important for blacks is their God. Thanks to the connective function of rituals, they feel the consciousness of being gazed at, comprehend the look of the God, and repeatedly confirm their identity in such sacred ceremonies. The divine gaze at rituals is the mirror for blacks to ensure their being and their relation between themselves and the Other.

For another, the crying of women during the consecration is consistent with "the singing of praise songs, or hymns… in honor of the divinities" (Ray, 1973, p. 29) of Dinka, another ethnic group mostly in South Sudan. In *Beloved*, women are asked by Baby Suggs to cry "for the living and the dead" "without covering their eyes" (Morrison, 2004, p. 103). Distinct from songs and hymns that religiously conjoin them and the God, the crying is the collective expression of appreciation and hatred in the modern time, where the opening of eyes better establishes the relation between themselves and the God. By this means they know that "[h]is eyes, things in the world, are fixed on my body, a thing in the world—that is the objective fact of which I can say: it is" (Sartre, 1978, p. 61). They are not shouting in memory of the divinities as the Dinka people did, but are pining for the divine gaze at them for the blessing of more joy and less torment. Nevertheless, on another occasion in the subsequent part of the fiction, the women gather together for exorcism, "building voice upon voice" to solemnly sing for Sethe who "trembled like the baptized in its wash" (Morrison, 2004, p. 309). In honor of the God they repelled the devil in 124, in front of which a ritual is conducted for the sake of Sethe as well as all blacks. The two rituals in the fiction are each followed by the appearance and disappearance of Beloved, the devil, implying the revelation of blacks' trauma. Under the divine gaze, they make sure of their being, voice their emotions, and dispel the trauma of one certain individual by shouldering it together.

The intertextuality of African traditional rituals displays a vast social scope of the infanticide and the devil's gazes, emphasizing black's unique social ideology. As a consequence, "the African in the confines of the slave quarters" can enter "a world in which he was the spiritual center and his existence was a manifest act of the creator from whom life flowed" (Wilson, 1997, p. 496). How blacks are mentally constructed through the gazes, whether reluctantly or readily, are demonstrated in conjunction with the intertextual connection to other literary works and ethnic traditions. The resonance generated within all these gazes begets the strongest sentiment and reflection among the blacks themselves as a complement to the effect of the distorted and devil gazes above, which bring about empathy from other mainstream cultures.

3. Inequality: Hierarchical Marginalization of the Other

However, in spite of the completion of African Americans' mental construction of the self in the center of their own community, marginalization has to be confronted in the physical life, and their previous struggle may prove futile. The self, in line with their identity, is likely to be deprived when they are driven to the fringe of the society over and over again. As a mark

of slavery, nothing but inequality is there for them to embrace. By introducing the structure of observation put forward by Michel Foucault, an overall view of their unequal everyday life is depicted, from the top to the bottom, the center to the outer edge.

3.1. The Gaze between Races: Depersonalization and Destruction

When suffering from general tribulation, African Americans are also bearing different extent of inequality within specific groups among them. By visual means, whites are like a "central point" that "would be both the source of light illuminating everything, and a locus of convergence for everything that must be known: a perfect eye that nothing would escape and a centre towards which all gazes would be turned" (Foucault, 1995, p. 173). The further the light goes, the less bright it is. In tandem with the fading of the light comes the decrease of power and discourse in each social group. From the very center of the hierarchical social system, the gaze of whites determines the poignancy of blacks fundamentally, depersonalizing their nature and destroying their identity.

The loss of themselves takes place under the gaze of the whites, in unison with Sartre's dialectical account of "The Look" — when the Other gazes at me, the Other is the subject and I the object, and vice versa. In this way, "we discover ourselves not in conflict with the Other but in communities with him" (Sartre, 1978, p. 413). Then, the slaves at Sweet Home who are constantly trapped in the status of being gazed at, unconsciously defines themselves as the commodity that "got rented out, loaned out, … stored up, mortgaged, won, stolen or seized" (Morrison, 2004, p. 29). The gazes during this period, which should have been mutual between the subject and object as the principle of identity construction, are mostly unilateral and overwhelming. By dint of the residual legality of slavery, the social system at that time was a "perfect disciplinary apparatus" that "would make it possible for a single gaze to see everything constantly" (Foucault, 1995, p. 173). The only points that can be confirmed in the eyes of blacks are silence, madness, and death. In the case of Halle, he breaks down and has butter all over his face after powerlessly witnessing his wife's milk being stolen. Silence and madness are the mere choices that they can select besides suicide. Therefore, the cost of the integral disciplinary apparatus is dear, with blacks depersonalized and reduced to non-human creatures situated on the fringe of the society.

To hamper further depersonalization, visibility of the self is a must. In general, it takes time for an individual to see himself or herself with their growth, and it takes especially longer for individuals of color, whose opportunities are relatively rare. In *Beloved*, not until Sethe stops by to listen to the teaching of the Schoolteacher — "No, no. That's not the way. I told you to put her human characteristics on the left; her animal ones on the right" (Morrison, 2004, p. 187), does she start to contemplate the unfairness and inhumanity in her life. This is an archetypal moment when "we suddenly separate ourselves from the activity in which we are engaged and see the activity and ourselves as though through the eyes of the Other" (Dolezal, 2017, p. 426). The gaze brings forth enlightenment for Sethe to become aware of her physical body and see herself from an alien angle — in the eyes of the whites. Her subsequent consultation with Mrs. Garner enables her to learn more about the distanced viewpoint of others and makes herself in the fundamental relation of "being-for-others," "in which the Other must be given to me directly as a subject although in connection with me" (Sartre, 1978, p. 253). Thereafter, the gaze of identity construction from the Other is discerned by more of the slaves, who long for the escape from all the suffering at Sweet Home that they used to take for granted and that they eventually see, from the viewpoint of the whites as the Other.

Pessimistically, spatial segregation cannot solve the issue and whites' destruction of blacks remains, because "[f]ar from disappearing with my first alarm, the Other is present everywhere, …, and I continue to feel profoundly my being-for-others" (Sartre, 1978, p. 277), which is to say, the gaze of the Other can temporally linger on and mental destruction is not as avoidable as physical one. In the fiction, Sethe is enlightened to discover her trauma, but unable to fix it, she passes it down to her daughter, who is not allowed to step out of their house in case of the potential danger of white people. Worse still, inferiority has been rooted since "racists destroy other people's life chances by forcing them comprehensively into a subaltern mode of existence in which they are unable to express or utter anything" (Zimmermann, 2016, p. 3). Subalternity is the most used way of seeing themselves under the immanent gaze of the Other that will not disappear with whatever movement in space. Fixed in such a mode, they see nothing in themselves and the Other. Though deprived, their discourse is mostly articulated for whites, the ones continuously gazing at them and ubiquitously destroying them. Having been gazed at since birth, black slaves are placed on the margin of the society, encountering greater hazard within and ahead of themselves

3.2. The Gaze between Genders: Struggle and Shame

Under the suppression of whites from a higher social level, communal conflicts occur synchronically among blacks themselves. In retrospect, the social mechanism, as a disciplinary apparatus, is not "an architecture that is no longer built to simply to be seen…, but to permit an internal, articulated, and detailed control — to render visible those who are inside it" (Foucault, 1995, p. 172). In turn, the visibility of different individuals is destined in slavery: blacks are visible to whites, female blacks more visible than male among blacks, and younger females even more visible within females. Noticeably in the fiction, male and female characters contrive to figure out their identity through their mutual gazes, going through vicissitudes and taking up the struggle against their own trauma.

Be it intentional or not, these conflicts can be attributed to the shame of blacks. Specifically, shame is triggered under the gaze of the Other — "the indispensable mediator between myself and me" (Sartre, 1978, p. 222). For instance, Sethe's reunion with Paul D. incurs her reminiscence of her shameful past life as a slave. His arrival "stirred her rememory [sic] and brought her more news: of clabber, of iron, of roosters' smiling" (Morrison, 2004, p. 222), reawakening Sethe's poignant memories of being despised, raped, scourged, and categorized. When the Other is absent, Sethe may struggle to hide her shame from herself with "bad faith,"[2] which is the symptom of her habitual action of numbing, torturing, and imprisoning herself with endless

labor work. Confession like this hints Sethe's silent abjuration — her submission to slavery. With the infiltration of the Other, "every mention of her past life hurt" and "[e]verything in it was painful or lost" (Morrison, 2004, p. 69). In practice, Sethe recognizes the vulgarity of herself and feels ashamed. According to Sartre, the Other is a pivotal mediator for the generation of shame; otherwise "in the field of my reflection I can never meet with anything but the consciousness which is mine" (1978, p. 222). Although Sethe is able to "[c]ry and tell him things they only told each other" (Morrison, 2004, p. 20) in the company of Paul D., in the meantime she rediscovers all her grievous experiences and reawakens her shame. The gaze of Paul D., carrying their miserable moments in his eyes through time, "disturbs the rhythm of … living as an embodied consciousness and introduces the irrevocable experience of being exposed as a body before the Other" (Sharma & Barua, 2017, p. 69). By and by like this, Sethe becomes sheerly visible and shameful under his gaze, so much so that struggle is given up and abjuration mutely chosen.

As for Paul D., shame is more affordable, considering his identity as a male at that time. When living in 124, Paul D. is "no longer master of the situation" because "[w]ith the Other's look the 'situation' escapes me" (Sartre, 1978, p. 265). Indeed, Paul D. is devoid of his subjectivity under Sethe's gaze from time to time. Sethe's past memories being reawakened, Paul D. has his "tobacco tin" reopened too, a spiritual item in which he hides secrets and misries. To some extent, his masculine selfness is temporarily alienated and deconstructed under Sethe's gaze, which, though weak, places him into a sense of inferiority. However, the mutual gaze between Sethe and him is unequal. It is Paul D. who "could walk into a house and make the women cry" and takes the initiative: he "saw the float of her breasts and disliked it, the spread-away, flat roundness of them that he could definitely live without" (Morrison, 2004, p.25). The positions of the two characters at this moment denote their power and status. The body of Sethe placed at the bottom of the space, which "obeys, responds", is "manipulated, shaped, trained" (Foucault, 1995, p. 136) by the one on the top. In other words, the latter disciplines and marginalizes the former, turning their gaze into "looking down" and "looking up." Albeit both of them are suppressed by whites and have little space to survive, Paul D. is less marginalized than Sethe among the blacks. Also, he goes through the process of struggle and abjuration under Sethe's gaze, but their abjuration differs, because more opportunities are bestowed on black males like Paul D., who can decide whether to leave 124 or not and make his own living. With physical advantages, they are more likely to have a place on the fringe of the hierarchical society. As a result, "the network of gazes that supervised one another was laid down" (Foucault, 1995, p. 171), with whites surveilling blacks and black males surveilling females. Once again, black females like Sethe, are thrusted to the margins of margins, where reluctant abjuration tends to be their only choice.

Furthermore, Paul D. plays the role of a savior in their subsequent relationship, which confirms their identity construction between male and female. Learning the conditions of Sethe from Denver after the disappearance of Beloved, Paul D. is determined to shoulder his responsibility and attend to Sethe. Given the potential danger behind, Sethe still looks at him and "sees it — the thing in him, the blessedness" (Morrison, 2004, p. 321). Even if "[b]ecoming objectified by the gaze is a recognized feeling for those people who live at the margins of society and well recognized by women" (Heru, 2003, p. 110) like Sethe, she chooses to be objectified rather than avoid the gaze, for benefits may overweigh harms. From the perspective of Sethe who deems herself doomed, Paul D. as the blessed one can expectedly bring her comfort. Only in the company of Paul D. can she confide all her miseries: "that time didn't stay put; … that Amy was scared to stay with her because her feet were ugly and her back looked so bad" (Morrison, 2004, p. 321). Under such circumstances, "[t]he other's look and breakdown of my lived absorption bring about both the revelation of my possibilities in my instrumental complex" (Mitchell, 2020, p. 5). For Sethe, facing the gaze of Paul D. can be the best solution to her brimming sadness. When she is pushed to the margins of margins, to give up identity construction and embrace the gaze of someone she trusts is the key to her living, which pathetically formed a vicious cycle where black females have to go through torture and breakdown that are incurred and also addressed by their male counterparts.

3.3. The Gaze between Individuals: Affliction and Alienation

For further investigation, black females with the greatest vulnerability are nudged to the very fringe of the society — a well-organized disciplinary apparatus, where "the slightest incompetence, if left unnoticed and therefore repeated each day, may prove fatal to the enterprise to the extent of destroying it in a very short time" (Foucault, 1995, p. 175). As a result, on the margins of margins, there is little space for black females to survive in, yet the most accumulated affliction to shoulder. Different from the trauma caused by the gazes between races and genders, the affliction on this level varies from person to person and is hard to digest. So pitiful it is that they are alienated through their powerless gazes at each other.

Ultimately, Sethe's affliction reaches its peak under the gaze of Beloved. Heretofore "in the shock which seizes me when I apprehend the Other's look, this happens — that suddenly I experience a subtle alienation of all my possibilities" (Sartre, 1978, p. 264-265). As for Sethe, the past experience of being gazed at by whites and black males furnishes her with new perspectives to observe her life and the world. The perspectives, which should have been out of her perception, provoke shock as well alienation. When it comes to the gaze within black females afterwards, Sethe can no longer assume the accumulating affliction, especially in front of Beloved. Whether as a ghost or a girl, Beloved is the dead daughter of Sethe. The former's gaze implies the interrogation of the latter as a murderer. Such a mind-boggling one it is that "[t]he bigger Beloved got, the smaller Sethe became; the brighter Beloved's eyes, the more those eyes … became slits of sleeplessness" (Morrison, 2004, p. 295). Weak as Beloved is physically, much spiritual power is conferred on her as the victim of slavery and inequality. On the contrary to the relationship of offender and victim, Beloved is transformed into the Other when gazing at Sethe, building up her identity in the conflict. In turn, Sethe's reactions to the Other's look consist of "the feeling of being in danger before the Other's freedom, … the feeling of being finally what I am but elsewhere, over there for the Other, [and] the feeling of the alienation of all my

possibilities," namely fear, shame, and the recognition of her slavery (Sartre, 1978, p. 268). All the possibilities of her daughter not being killed pop up in her mind through their eye contact. So do those of not being a black female. Thus, the most traumatic incident induces the most alienation of herself, leading her from the outer edge to an abyss replete with affliction.

Meanwhile, on the margins of margins there is the transference of affliction, and identity construction can be unavailable if the gaze of the Other is absent from the very beginning. Just like whites' suppression on blacks and black males' superiority to female, older ones afflict younger ones in the delicate disciplinary apparatus. Different from Beloved, Denver is a mortal being confined to her mentally ill mother who strictly imposes the discipline of forbidding children's going out. Such a family rule manifests her trauma of infanticide, together with all those miseries in the past, which, in the process, transfers Sethe's affliction to Denver to diminish the guilt of the former. On the one hand, Denver's permanent status of being gazed at by her mother makes her identity construction simple and incomplete and leads her towards a duplicate of Sethe's traumatic consciousness. Denver's situation at her early age "which is partly constituted by my own projects and filled with referents to my consciousness is decentred when the Other appears" (Buchan, 1996, p. 201). Isolated from the circumstances which should have been accessible, Denver is alienated in the little 124 filled with monotony and deadness, the center of which are her mother and she herself. On the other, the extreme isolation adds to the difficulty of Denver's subsequent leaving home. The moment she walks into the street she fears the gazes everywhere — "she kept her eyes on the road in case they were whitemen [sic]… Suppose they flung out at her, grabbed her, tied her" (Morrison, 2004, p. 288), which fully embodies the potential torment that Sethe underlies. Reluctantly, Denver can only "grasp the Other's look at the very center of my act as the solidification and alienation of my own possibilities" (Sartre, 1978, p. 263). Her prevention of being bullied, grabbed, and tied is the outcome of contemplating her possibilities under those gazes. One after another, difficulties take place abruptly, which should have been conquered one by one if affliction had not been transferred. Considering Denver's identity of a young, black, female teenager, her life can be the mixture of myriad sorts of hardships on the margins of margins.

To encapsulate, the outer edge of the society in *Beloved* can be crowded and convoluted and there is hierarchy within hierarchy. The social disciplinary apparatus centers on whites who are the central light point. They successively illuminate and gaze at blacks as a whole, then more specifically black males, black females, and black female teenagers, so the groups of blacks hierarchically go through the process of depersonalization and deconstruction. Concurrently, shame and alienation are the inevitable results of their struggle and affliction in vain. After all, "the gaze of the Other has the destructive power on my existence, which makes me alienated and fade away" (Zhu, 2014, p. 22). Born in such an unfair disciplinary apparatus, black slaves are constantly being gazed at as an unavoidable daily routine. Identity construction is contrived yet failed as always in these endless gazes, despite the spiritual homeland they have built. The look, which should have helped them find out who they are, becomes the tool to marginalize them in an endless cycle.

4. Inspection: Conscious Projection of Toni Morrison

In addition to all the hardships the characters undergo, jump out of the intricate gazes of the characters and a wider view can be seen, namely, the gaze of the writer at *Beloved* as a whole. As the Other, Toni Morrison expressed her look at all the issues by right of the context of the fiction, which is the subject and the concrete manifestation of herself, because "[t]he look which the eyes manifest… is a pure reference to myself" (Sartre, 1978, p. 259). Videlicet, in the course of gaze not only the subject is constructed but the Other as the watcher is also mirrored. Besides the gaze within gazes that has been analyzed, the gaze out of the gazes, equivalently worthy of attention, provides an efficient point of view to comprehend the writer's intention and thereby elucidates the gazes that she delineated.

4.1. To Gaze at Infanticide: Moral or Immoral

As has been mentioned in *Beloved*'s intertextual connection with *Medea*, infanticide molds the image of Sethe and Medea and grapples to arouse the attention of blacks and whites "in a sense of redemption from the horrors of slavery" (Gardner, 2016, p. 203). Except for their identity construction under the suppression of the slavery and the gaze of the Other, the presentation of the plot reflects the writer's gaze at infanticide in real life, to wit: Toni Morrison's authoritative consciousness. In light of the unfixable and intricate morality of the issue, Morrison revived Beloved to beseech her maternal love eighteen years later. Gazing at the issue for a spell of meditation, Morrison reckoned that "[m]y work is to become those characters in a limited way, to see what they see" (Morrison & McKay, 1983, pp. 423-424), and hand over the discourse to the dead. Even though the act of killing the child for her liberation from slavery can be drastic but debatable, Morrison's handing over the issue to the dead is not an objective illustration of this contradictory tragedy, but a subjective projection of her consciousness. Probe into more of the infanticide in the fiction and morality can be found as the enunciation and outcome of the writer's gaze.

To begin with, the setting of infanticide is Morrison's articulation of her own "rememory."[3] Similar to Beloved, Morrison was "both decorative and attention-craving, as a second child who believed she had no status in the family" (Akerman & Ouellette, 2012, p. 389). Yet, rather complicated and artistic in the fiction, Morrison illustrated her trauma separately, demonstrating her confusion of past memories through Sethe and endowing Beloved with similar identity to herself to claim analogical miseries: whereas "[Sethe's] hurt was always there — like a tender place in the corner of her mouth," "Beloved was making her pay for it [the infanticide]" (Morrison, 2004, pp. 69, 295); while Sethe suffers from the traumatic memory clips as Morrison did, it is Beloved's controversial acts that prove the "rememory" justifiably worthy of attention. Taking into account the weak discourse that blacks possess in the hierarchical discipline apparatus, to articulate the miseries by the ghost will be a better means than by blacks themselves, which can also be sensed in the commonality between *Beloved* and *Doctor Faustus*.

Therefore, Morrison managed to divide her thoughts into two parts, respectively Sethe and Beloved. In her gaze at the offender and victim of the infanticide, "the self was given in the form of an object and only for the reflective consciousness" (Sartre, 1978, p. 260). Morrison, in the place of the Other, embodied herself in the text through the two characters. Along with the story of Margaret Garner, the counterpart of Sethe as an infanticide in real life, the presentation of such an incident bespeaks the knotty morality hidden in the past of the writer and the poignancy of all blacks.

Deep down in the infanticide is far more than Toni Morrison's personal agony. Instead, she delineated the common trauma of all blacks, setting "the desire for human connection against the weight of the past" (Page, 2007, p. 427). The more perplexing and unacceptable the morality is, the more blacks' trauma can be related to. In this term, Morrison's repeated depiction of Sethe's reluctance and regret for the infanticide can be justified. The constant bounces between the border of morality and the so-called immorality are actually to illuminate the extreme perplexity and lead on to more contemplation. On top of the writer's reflective consciousness of her own experience, the unreflective one is enunciated collectively, because "the unreflective consciousness is a consciousness of the world" and "can not be inhabited by a self" (Sartre, 1978, p. 260). In broad terms, the entirety of the unreflective consciousness is the archetypal ideology of all blacks. As an indispensable part of it, Morrison's gaze consists of both her private emotions and their shared ideal, where "the women assembled outside 124" (Morrison, 2004, p. 307) to rescue Sethe from the ghost and the "rememory" of infanticide. This scene of union, as well as a solemn ritual, indicates their forgiveness for Sethe's murdering her child and their common goal of steeling themselves against their shared "rememory" of the infanticide. Sarcastically, it is protecting the infant from the whites' repression by killing it, that contributes to the mere moral part of the vicious cycle where blacks are trapped.

Replete with the immorality of whites, their life ought to be devoid of the adverse impact of "rememory," in order to save themselves from the weight of the past. Cruel as the infanticide is, it does help accelerate the elimination of adversity. The gaze of Morrison does not singly "carve me out in the universe; it comes to search me at the heart of my situation" (Sartre, 1978, p. 263). In addition to the superficial illumination of the tragedy of infanticide, at the core of Morrison's heart is to put their past behind. In the end of the story this motif is pointed out, where Paul D. considers Sethe as the "best thing", putting it that they "got more yesterday than anybody" and "need some kind of tomorrow" (Morrison, 2004, p. 323). At this moment, the infanticide's motive of "putting their children out of harm's way by the only means available to them", is sublimated in another aspect, highlighting her duty of "fulfilling rather than rejecting their sacred charges as mothers" (Roth, 2007, p. 176). All she pines for is the release of yesterday and the start of tomorrow, but neither can be achieved for her offspring. Out of a mother's morality, extreme action is taken under the extremely immoral situation that blacks encounter. Hence, Sethe's "rememory" of the infanticide can be eventually replaced with something more sacred, and morality clearly seen with the disclosure of the writer's contemplative gaze.

4.2. To Gaze at Slavery: Lingering or Vanishing

In 1865, slavery was theoretically abolished with the advent of The Emancipation Proclamation. In the same year in Beloved, Baby Suggs dies; Buglar and Howard, sons of Sethe, leave their home that is haunted by Beloved's ghost. Thereafter, the slavery politically vanishes but its lingering influence is bespoken in specific. To view the fiction wholly, the past suffering under the slavery that can "defame and dehumanize the self/soul of Black people" (Ghosh et al., 2020, p. 840) is delicately cut into pieces and inserted into the chronological narration of Sethe's agonizing life after the abolishment, adding up to the chaos and complexion of the plot. Worse than the practical existence of slavery, it is mentally incessant throughout the fiction. Based on the content within that has been analyzed in the hierarchical marginalization of the Other, the narrative technique deployed by Toni Morrison further embodies her consciousness of gazing at the slavery that has never literally vanished. For Morrison, "I am fixing the people whom I see into objects; I am in relation to them as the Other is in relation to me" (Sartre, 1978, p. 266). The elaborate narrative technique enables her to deconstruct and reconstruct black's miseries in real life, and integrate her gaze at others and her being gazed at into the fiction.

The fragmented narrative is utilized to demonstrate the incidents before 1865, so as to highlight the characters' selfness that is fragmented by the slavery. It is "a way to accurately portray the psychological mechanism of traumatic memory reproduction" (Yang, 2023, p. 4), as well as the writer's masterly recombination of her gaze at the slavery. Naturally, unwanted recollection of the past hidden in a specific period cannot be related and rendered like other ones. At the exact moment after "sopping the chamomile away with pump water and rags", Sethe sees "Sweet Home rolling, rolling, rolling out before her eyes" (Morrison, 2004, p. 7). Sweet Home, the most symbolic image of slavery, pops up in Sethe's mind without any reason. Her memory clips have been set by the slavery to be randomly activated. Whether in terms of character or narrative technique, the selfness is deprived in such fragmentation. By the same token, Sweet Home is involuntarily recalled when Paul D. glimpses the chokecherry tree on Sethe's back; his remembrance of Sixo, who has been killed by the Schoolteacher, is unfolded. All these unexpected flashbacks, or the intentionally interposed narration, display the characters' inner world where too many items and moments can incessantly remind them of their poignant past. Similar to Medea, they are always placed under the gaze of the slavery, "for the separation of the Other and of myself is never given" (Sartre, 1978, p. 285). Nor can they alter their selfness that has long been determined by the slavery. Plus, in Paul D.'s talk with Stamp, memory clips of "smiling roosters, fired feet, laughing dead men…, Halle in the butter, ghost-white stairs" (Morrison, 2004, p. 277) erupt in his mind. Together with the fragmented narrative comes the accumulation of these clips. This further brings about the eruption of suffering and the destruction of selfness.

Also, the fragmented narrative by Morrison is utilized in more than the straightforward illustration of the characters' gloomy past. It is deployed to display the contrast — the setting of an unusual white female named Amy Denver. To bespeak "the

psychological and aesthetic difficulties …of narrating the stories and histories of slave bodies" (Dobbs, 1998, p. 564), Morrison concentrates on both trauma and hope, with which the slavery system is an entirety. As for the hope, Sethe's previous experiences with Amy are basically divided into two parts in the plot, denoting Sethe's unremitting wish to enter a world bereft of slavery. Delicately, the first memory clip ends up in Amy massaging Sethe's feet, which can be Sethe's first close touch with a white. Their relationship does not reach its peak until Seth bears Denver with Amy's assistance in the second clip. For all of the blacks in Beloved, a white female's involvement in bearing babies is unimaginable. Morrison effectively controlled the timely pause of narration and the degree of fragmentation. Her gaze at Sethe and Amy illustrates "a relation of myself-as-object to the object-looked-at-something like the attraction which two masses exert over one another at a distance" (Sartre, 1978, p. 266). Or rather, the two characters, black and white, connote the two poles of magnets that attract each other, which forms a strong contrast with the actual situation at that time and fully reflects the lingering impact of slavery with hope and trauma.

In summation, Morrison's gaze at the slavery is enunciated through her carefully designed narrative. Most representatively, just as "Morrison's narrators must authorize the supernatural or 'magical' if the narrative is to exist at all" (Lanser, 1992, p. 134), they are required to accept their fragmented selfness as well. And this is exactly Morrison's authoritative consciousness. While "rememory" provides the content of the fragmented narrative, the two elements demonstrate blacks' trauma and share the same aim: the former (content) is to fight against the weight of the past, the latter (narrative) exhibit the wish to walk out of the world of slavery. As the "look-as-object," Toni Morrison organically and flexibly combines the two and "constitutes an organized whole which is the look…; that is, an instrumental complex which is endowed with an inner finality" (Sartre, 1978, p. 266). The fiction as an entirety is the projection of her consciousness, and the end of her gaze at the slavery is a recombined form of blacks' torment that is performed with the fragmented narrative. Albeit finality is bestowed on the fiction, the impact of slavery is destined to linger on spiritually, in light of the permanent fragmentation of the victims.

4.3. To Gaze at Blackness: Black or White

In tandem with the fragmentation brings about the deprivation of the selfness, which, for African Americans, connotes the eventual loss of blackness. As has been mentioned, the presence of the Other can be unnecessary in the gaze of two. The characters are not only subjugated, but are accustomed to gazing at themselves from the eyes of whites and render themselves spiritually close to whites. The phenomenon is consistent with Frantz Fanon's claim in *Black Skin, White Masks* that "[t]he black man among his own in the twentieth century does not know at what moment his inferiority comes into being through the Other" (2008, p. 83). The secret infiltration of whites replaces their blackness with whiteness and compels them to have only one way of life — being and living for people with no color. In *Beloved,* whiteness is also underlined in incidents of the infanticide, the ghost, and the hierarchical gazes. Different from the consistency between the content and narrative used in the demonstration of their past, the sarcastic whiteness is illustrated by the blackness. Notwithstanding the whiteness, the language of the narration is completely black throughout the fiction. At this time, in her gaze at the fact of blackness, Toni Morrison "obtain an explicit self-consciousness inasmuch so I am also responsible for a negation of the Other which is my own possibility" (Sartre, 1978, p. 287). Denying the authority of white in the aspect of language, which is the only possibility of blacks, Morrison constructed an external self with blackness. Whiteness serving for irony, it is blackness that enriches the fiction with its own black significance.

"Rememory,"[4] literally meaning the repetition of memory, is the mixture of "remembrance" and "memory." This coinage is intentionally designed to represent blacks' trauma of the most importance. For Morrison and her characters, "I subjected myself to an objective examination, I discovered my blackness, my ethnic characteristics" (Fanon, 2008, p. 84). The characters with unique features are freely and fearlessly exposed to the gaze of the reader, who is "revealed to me in that flight of myself toward objectivation" as "that object in the world which determines an internal flow of the universe" (Sartre, 1978, p. 257). Powerful as the reader's gaze is in terms of objectivation and identity construction, the essence of blackness is an advanced requirement for the criticism or appreciation of *Beloved*. To comprehend the features that may determine the character's identity, "rememory" as one of the most crucial points must be accepted. By this means, the characters' "'speaking hands' tore at the hysterical throat of the world. The white man had the anguished feeling that I was escaping from him and that I was taking something with me"[5] (Fanon, 2008, p. 96). For whatever reasons, to read Beloved is to authorize Black English and contribute to blacks' escape from the dominant whiteness. Moreover, "rememory" is gradually transformed from a noun to a verb in the fiction, each occurring five and four times. The flexibly transformative part of speech hints the characters' rooted blackness and concurrently challenges the whiteness, both inside and outside of the fiction.

Plus, blackness is illuminated through some grammatical phenomenon that may lead to either misunderstanding or recognition. The two symbolic features of Black English, double negative and the "be" verb "ain't," add to the difficulty of comprehending the fiction for non-native readers. The reply of the slaves to Mr. Garner on Sweet Home in the beginning of the story, "Ain't no nigger men" (Morrison, 2004, p. 12), has generally underlain the gaze of Toni Morrison at the blackness. It is through Black English that the slaves claim their wish of their independent blackness. No matter in content or language, Morrison as a black female confronts the mainstream white culture "formally by constructing a narrative stance that reconfigures authority" (Lanser, 1992, p. 122). Placing herself together with all the characters in a position filled with blackness, Morrison builds her own authority and allows millions to follow her gaze at Beloved. Especially for her black readers, they "can discover myself in the process of becoming a probable object for only a certain subject," "just as the Other is a probable object for me-as-subject" (Sartre, 1978, pp. 256-257). To take themselves into the gaze of Morrison who is the Other, they find more of their selfness through the eyes of others, and the blackness in *Beloved* is beyond the promulgation among whites. It

concerns the inheritance among blacks in an era where "white civilization overlooks subtle riches and sensitivity" (Fanon, 2008, p. 96). By dint of the fiction, blackness shines in the society dominated by the white culture.

Still, it is through double negative that many black miseries are bespoken. Rather casually and reluctantly, black trauma is enunciated in their own way: "Grown don't mean nothing to a mother," "Don't love nothing," "That don't help nothing," and "I don't call myself nothing"[6] (Morrison, 2004, pp. 54, 108, 114, 167). Incurred by whites, desperate repression in these utterances is articulated in an unchangeable way — archetypal Black English. Whatever they lose, their language can be used and passed down at the core of their culture, suggesting their unerasable blackness among the overwhelming whiteness. This explains why "the novels do not translate the inflections of spoken Black English into a deviant typography," because "the visual class distinction between narrator and characters" (Page, 2007, p. 129) is a must to fill the gap between the two. Whilst Morrison is gazing at the characters to discover blacks' selfness, she is concurrently being gazed at by the characters. Accordingly, "there is a regrouping in which I take part…, a regrouping of all the objects which people my universe" (Sartre, 1978, p. 255). The mutual gaze, entangling the two and mixing them up, makes up for the in-between difference and assists both sides to figure out the critical "blackness."

As a consequence, Morrison's consciousness is apparently projected onto *Beloved*, which is deemed "as one of fictional reconstruction or 'literary archeology'" (Davis, 1998, p. 245). To delve into her ideology, morality is confirmed for Sethe's infanticide within lines and the lingering effect of slavery criticized. In sync, the fiction centers on the blackness of the black characters. Even though few white characters are delineated, one of them contributes to the writer's ideal imagination of the harmony between black and white. Except for all sorts of gazes within the fiction and associate with other works of art, the whole of Beloved is the exemplification of Morrison's gaze at all the counterparts of the incidents in real life. By virtue of deconstruction and reconstruction, blackness as the keynote is pinpointed along with all the suffering of blacks.

5. Conclusion

The diffused and stratified analysis of gaze in *Beloved* proclaims Toni Morrison's inspection at African Americans' traumatic torment. In her era when blackness was ebbing away, Morrison went against the grain and epitomized black culture through her reminiscence of her grandfather's "flight from poverty and racism" as a miner in Kentucky, and the "thrilling and terrifying ghost stories" (Morrison & McKay, 1983, pp. 413-414) told by her parents who assured her advanced education. Combining literary technique with everyday observation and rumination, Morrison plotted the fiction in an authentic voice of Black English that whites can comprehend as well. Given the in-between dilemma of neither whiteness nor blackness confronted by African Americans at that time, *Beloved* is an embodiment of their cracked experiences of woe and anguish accompanied by the incessant reemergence of the gazes of power and discipline.

As the object that tends to be looked at by the Other, characters in the fiction have been physically and mentally under construction, but failed to procure their own identity as always. So powerful the gaze of the Other is, that it effortlessly subverts their selfness that is established in the gazes among their own culture and highlighted through its intertextual connection to other literary or cultural context. Though in fragmented narrative, Toni Morrison illuminates a clear and panoramic picture of the hierarchical marginalization that each group of African Americans goes through. From the articulation of characters including Sethe, Beloved, and Denver, Morrison projected onto the novel her gaze at blacks' personal and collective trauma of "rememory," their fractured selfness, and their nature as blacks that has been severely infiltrated by whites, which are in sequence related to the unfortunate morality of infanticide, the lingering repression of slavery, and their rooted blackness that should be handed down especially in the western mainstream culture.

Be it scholarly or humanistic, to discern the gaze in literary works is of significant necessity for analyzing traumatic incidents and deepening the scope of identity construction. By virtue of the gaze theories of Jean-Paul Sartre and Michel Foucault, an intricately delicate disciplinary apparatus of the fictional macrocosm as well as the meditation of the writer is dimensionally elucidated with the artful insertion of detailed mutual gazes. Minority groups like African Americans in *Beloved*, deprived of selfness and perched on the very fringe of the society, are empowered to demonstrate their experiences in interrelated research, where the source of their being victimized can be truly revealed by tracking and dissecting the gaze.

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Endnotes

[1] Since her childhood, Sethe have been confused by such uncontrollable emergency where she always suffered from incontinence despite her rushing out of the house.
[2] When shame is revealed, people utilize bad faith to hide it from themselves and thereby flee the being of themselves. Since both shame and bad faith are confessions, Sethe's mental state only deteriorate by this means.
[3] When it comes to "rememory" in a talk with Denver about the concept of time, Sethe refers it to the reappearance of memories where "[s]ome things go" and "[s]ome things just stay" (Morrison, 2004, p. 43).
[4] From the perspective of linguistics, "rememory" refers to the combination of "re-" (prefix) and "memory" (root).
[5] In the relatively equal talk with Mr. Garner, their owner, the slaves do wish that there were no nigger men on the farm and males allowed no nigger men around their wives.
[6] According to the grammatical rules of double negative, the four respectively denote "Grown means nothing to a mother," "Love nothing," "That helps nothing," and "I call myself nothing."