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   Denise Heinze and Catherine E. Lewis
   Toni Morrison weaves together fact and fiction, folklore and history, the real and the supernatural, to translate the African American experience into the broader context of what it means to be American.

2. Morrison Creates a Black History That Is an Essential Part of the American Dream 32
   Sture Allen
   With generosity of spirit, Toni Morrison creates from myth and history the fabric of the black experience in America.

3. Morrison Based Beloved on a True Story 36
   Cincinnati Enquirer
   A news story appearing in a nineteenth-century Ohio newspaper details the real-life murder of a black infant that Toni Morrison used as the basis for her novel Beloved.

Chapter 2: Slavery in Beloved
1. Beloved Shows How the Power of Love Helped Black People Survive Slavery 42
   Carolyn C. Denard
   Many students assume that Toni Morrison’s intention in Beloved is to show the horrors of slavery. That is only part of the story—her real intent is to show how black men and women managed to maintain their humanity despite being enslaved.

2. Morrison Uses Slave Songs to Show the Humanity of Slaves 54
   Peter J. Capuano
Slave songs are an important part of the African American oral tradition. While it was dangerous to speak of the horrors of slavery, slaves were able to confront and come to terms with their demeaning experiences through song.

3. Racial Solidarity Is the Only Solution to Slavery and Racism

Doreatha Drummond Mbalia

African Americans continue to confront racist attitudes as oppressive as those that existed during slavery. Just as the characters in Beloved survive slavery by their love and support for each other, African American people today can conquer racism by coming together.

4. The Character Beloved Depicts the Loss of Cultural Identity That Occurred During Slavery

Lisa Williams

The character Beloved represents not only Sethe’s murdered infant but all the Africans who endured passage to America on slave ships. Depicted as a ghost, she symbolizes the displacement of Africans who were separated from their history and culture.

5. An African American Identity Was Forged by Slavery

Timothy L. Parrish

African Americans forged an identity as a people through their shared experience of slavery. Slaves created supportive communities to preserve their humanity. These communities helped them to develop resilience and to reclaim their history and culture.

6. Slavery Robbed African Americans of Their Personal Identities

Jennifer L. Holden

The schism between Sethe and Beloved—with neither one understanding their true connection as daughter and mother—represents the personal dislocation created by slavery, as Africans were separated from their land, culture, religion, and families. Slavery reduced African Americans to objects and denied them their essential natures as unique individuals.
7. *Beloved* Exposes the Psychological Trauma Caused by Slavery

*J. Brooks Bouson*

Slaves were subject to both physical abuse and psychological humiliation, resulting in trauma. Psychological trauma led to feelings of shame and self-loathing. Sethe murders her infant to spare her from being subjected to this degradation.

8. Morrison Examines the Divisive Impact of Racial Oppression

*Babacar M’Baye*

In *Beloved*, Morrison explores the harm created by racist attitudes. The notion that whites are superior to blacks was at the root of slavery and continues to this day to impede successful relationships between blacks and whites.

9. Slavery Damaged the Mother-Child Relationship

*Wilfred D. Samuels and Clenora Hudson-Weems*

Slavery created irreparable damage to the mother-child relationship. It is the natural instinct for mothers to love and protect their children; however, slaves had no possessions—even their children were the property of their masters—and therefore mothers had no way to protect their children.

### Chapter 3: Contemporary Perspectives on Slavery

1. Slavery Remains a Significant Global Problem

*E. Benjamin Skinner, as told to Terrence McNally*

Despite the fact that slavery has been officially banned worldwide by the United Nations, there are 27 million people in slavery today, forced to work under threat of violence for subsistence pay. In contrast to slaves in nineteenth-century America, who were considered valuable property, today’s slaves come cheap and are considered disposable.
2. US Companies Are Complicit in Modern-Day Slavery  
Sarah C. Pierce

Although human trafficking has been a crime in the United States since October 2000, it is a crime that frequently goes unprosecuted. Corporations are particularly successful at evading prosecution, as they use subcontractors to distance themselves from the victims forced into labor.

3. It Is Possible to Eradicate Modern Slavery  
Kevin Bales

Most people are unaware that many basic commodities are created using people forced into slavery. Steel, food, cotton, gold, computers, clothing, and sporting goods are just some of the items that have been produced by victims of human trafficking. Fortunately, modern slavery is a problem that can be solved.

4. Human Sex Trafficking Is Big Business  
Rodney Hill and Amanda Walker-Rodriguez

Human sex trafficking is the fastest-growing criminal activity worldwide. The problem is both global and local. Many victims from developing nations are forced into slavery and sold into the United States, and an increasing number of runaway teens are recruited into the sex trade.

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