

## Review Article

# A Study on the Acceptation of Toni Morrison in the Past 30 Years in China

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**Abstract:** Toni Morrison, as a great classic in contemporary American literature for her profound studies of black ethnic history, ethnic culture, ethnic identity and black feminism has attracted wide attention in Chinese academic circles. Taking the academic papers about Morrison from CNKI as the data source, this study applies CiteSpace III, a visualization software, to conduct a visual map analysis through several indexes such as the authors, the institutions they come from and the high frequency keywords in their papers. Through the analysis of the prolific authors, the high-output institutions and the emerging hotspots in this field, the overall features of Toni Morrison-research among the past 30 years is revealed, the present research status of this subject in China is uncovered and future development trend is predicted. It's hoped that this paper will comprehensively and profoundly display the historical context and current situation of Morrison's research in China, help the researchers find and summarize the existing problems and shortcomings, and put forward constructive suggestions to promote a healthy and sustainable development of Morrison's research.

**Keywords:** Toni Morrison, Bibliometrics, CiteSpace

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## 1. Introduction

As a black woman writer, Toni Morrison is one of the leading figures in the field of American literature. From her first novel *The Bluest Eye* (1970) to her last masterpiece *God Help the Child* (2015), Morrison published 11 novels, 2 plays (*Dreaming Emmett* in 1986 and *Desdemona* in 2011), 1 literary review collection (*Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* in 1992), and *The Black Book* (1999) which is provided with high historical value. After Morrison winning Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1988, the Nobel Prize in Literature (1993) followed. The achievement that Morrison is the first black female writer in history to win the Nobel Prize in Literature aroused widespread concern in academia.

The introduction, translation and dissemination about Morrison and her works in China has also experienced a long process. Liu Feng and Gong Guojie were the first to introduce Morrison in China. In 1980, they gave a brief introduction to Morrison's life and three published works in

Foreign Literature report, and they first used the Chinese translation of her name. In 1984, scholars in China made an important step in the translation of Morrison. Wu Gongzhan translated the ninth chapter of *Tar Baby* and the main characters and plot of the article were briefly introduced. It is the first time for Chinese scholars to try to translate Morrison's novels, which makes the scholars in China have a more intuitive and perceptual understanding of Morrison. Morrison came to China in 1985, and since then the scholars in China has paid more and more attention to her. At the beginning of 1986, Morrison was introduced as an important black writer in *A Brief History of American Literature (Volume II)* which was published by the People's Literature Publishing House. In 1988, Morrison won the Pulitzer Prize for literature, which made her spread to a higher level in China. In the middle and late 1980s, the translation and introduction of Morrison's works also made a breakthrough in China — the complete translation of *Song of Solomon*, *Sula* and *Beloved* came out. Morrison won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1993. Since then, the translation of Morrison's works and literary theory has become an

important part of foreign literature translation in China. To summarize, the research on Morrison in China has been going through more than 30 years and has made great progress. With the increase in the number of Morrison's works published and translated, Morrison has received more and more attention in China. Bibliometrics is "an interdisciplinary science that integrates mathematics, statistics, philology and other methods can quantitatively analyze all knowledge carriers with the mathematical statistics" [1]. It takes keywords, authors, source organizations and references as measurement objects for co-occurrence/co-citation statistical analysis, which aims to summarize the law of change and then discuss the structure and characteristics of the knowledge network of a certain discipline.

At present, most of the literature review studies in Chinese academia are organized with the method of artificial data-collection and manual data-analysis. Scholars conduct the diachronic or synchronic research, or subject related research based on titles, abstracts and parts of the body. However, this approach is difficult to be carried out in the context of large and complex documents. Under these circumstances, there is a lack of systematic and comprehensive analysis in a certain field. Therefore, with the help of bibliometrics, this paper attempts to statistically analyze Morrison's research in China in the past 30 years, grasp the research status and hot spots in this field, and predict its future development trend. It's hoped that this paper will comprehensively and profoundly display the historical context and current situation of Morrison's research in China, help the researchers find and summarize the existing problems and shortcomings, and put forward constructive suggestions to promote a healthy and sustainable development of Morrison's research.

## 2. An Analysis of Research Status of Toni Morrison

This paper takes CNKI as the retrieval platform and "Toni Morrison" or "Morrison" as the retrieval mode, selects the catalogue of Philosophy and Humanities, and then retrieves and downloads the data from the periodical database and the master and doctoral thesis database. Since the earliest publication date of the retrieved valid paper was 1988 and the retrieval deadline was December 31, 2018, the data interval of this study was set as 1988-2018.

3047 pieces of data have been retrieved, "among the data obtained, there are book reviews, conference announcements, recruitment notices, and literature without authors, which are not within the scope of academic papers" [2]. Therefore, the data should be standardized so as to ensure the objectivity and accuracy of visualization software running results, such as the unification of key words, abbreviations and full names, the combination of the author's organization and so on. After standardized processing of data, a total of 2828 valid data were obtained. All conclusions discussed in the paper on knowledge network structure were deduced based on the quantitative analysis of 2828 valid data.

### 2.1. The Amount of Papers Published on Tony Morrison over the Years

From the 2828 effective data, the number of papers published on Morrison is arranged by year (see Figure 1). As can be seen from Figure 1, the number of documents published over the years on the whole shows a trend of first increasing and then decreasing. Research on Morrison in China is mainly divided into four stages: the emerging period (1988-1999), the climbing period (2000-2009), the summit period (2010-2013) and the progressive decelerational period (2014-present).

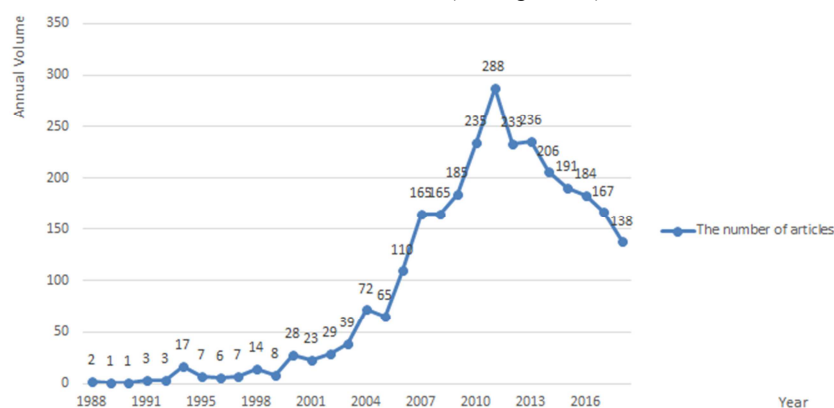


Figure 1. Annual Volume Line Chart.

Morrison was firstly introduced into China by Wang Jiaxiang in 1988 and the study then experienced the emerging period of 11 years. In these 11 years, the number of documents related to Morrison was relatively small, and most to explore themes of her works. There are only 69 articles in total, and the number of papers published each year was less

than 20. In addition, the number of 1992 is 0. It is worth noting that the number of 1994 increased significantly compared with previous years, which it is believed that it is closely related to Morrison winning Nobel Prize in Literature in 1993. From 2000 to 2009, the research on Morrison entered the climbing period. The total number of articles

published in 10 years reached 1116, showing a steady increasing trend year by year. From 2010 to 2013, the study on Morrison entered its summit period, with a total of 992 papers published in 4 years and a peak of 288 in 2011. Since 2014, the research on Morrison has stepped into the progressive decelerational period, and the number of articles has shown a slow decline. To sum up, scholars in China have made some achievements in the field of Morrison, with 2828 papers in total, about 94 papers per year on average.

More precisely, compared with foreign studies, studies in China started late and lagged behind on the whole. Although domestic scholars in China have conducted in-depth studies on Morrison in the past 30 years and strived to analyze Morrison herself and her works from different perspectives, the existing studies on Morrison in China do not match with her status and contribution in the history of American literature. Morrison herself and her works have won numerous awards since the end of the 20th century. By contrast, due to factors such as the restriction of language and research materials, the domestic critics have not done enough research on her.

Winning the Pulitzer Prize in 1988 catapulted Morrison to global fame. In the following years (1988-1993), “many western scholars, such as Harold Bloom, Nellie McKay, Wilfred Samuels, Doreatha Mbalia, Barbara Rigney, Trudier Harris and others, began to write books to have an in-depth study on Morrison”[3]. On the contrary, the domestic situation is that although the research on Morrison in China also started in the 1980s, there were only 10 relevant literatures from 1988 to 1993, among which only a few were comments about works, and the rest were brief introduction to the plot of works. “In 1993, Morrison won the Nobel Prize in literature, which attracted extensive attention of western readers and critics, and a large number of research monographs and papers emerged”[3]. The scholars in China have also taken an important step in the research on Morrison, which is evident from facts that some learned periodicals have started to publish relevant research papers and the number of papers reached a small peak (17 pieces) in 1994. However, “according to statistics, more than 300 papers have been collected into the UMI (the thesis database of America) before 2000” [3], the number of related research results in China is relatively small compared with that in foreign countries, and they are basically limited to the discussion on the theme and expression techniques of the works. Besides, compared with the research on Morrison in foreign countries in the same period, the research perspective in China is relatively narrow and obviously lagging behind. With the continuous publication of her new works, people pay more and more attention to Morrison, especially to her

representative works (*The Bluest Eyes*, *Beloved*, *Song of Solomon*, etc.). Since then, the research on Morrison has shown an upward trend of fluctuation, reaching a peak (288 pieces) in 2011, and then entering a period of slowdown.

Generally speaking, there is a certain gap between the quality and quantity of the research on Morrison in China and her literary status. Language restricts the researchers’ interest and research scope. Although researchers in China are good at capturing cultural hot spots and tracking the direction of mass media, the topics discussed are relatively single and the theoretical perspective is relatively outdated.

2.2. Productive Authors and Their Cooperation

Through visual analysis of main researchers through CiteSpace, researchers who have made great contributions to the development of this field can be found, and according to the font size displayed in their images, the number of published papers can be clearly reflected. With “Authors” as the Node Types, by setting thresholds (2, 2, 10), (3, 3, 10), (4, 3, 10) and start-stop year for 1988-2018, and the time slice is set to every 3 years, the result of running CiteSpace III is a knowledge network map of the productive authors in the field of the research on Morrison (see Figure 2). A total of 131 nodes were obtained in the Figure 2, with 6 lines between nodes.

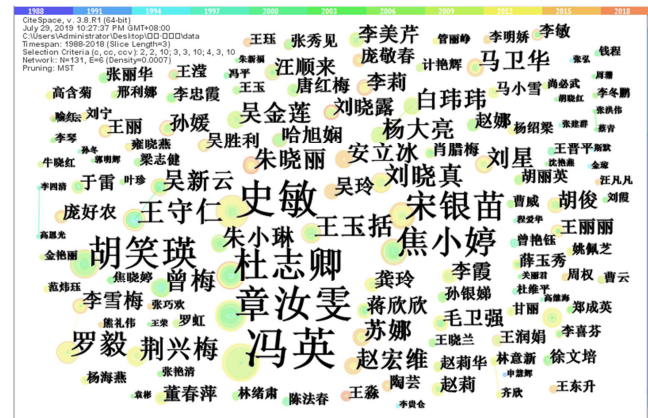


Figure 2. Statistical Chart of Main Researchers on Morrison.

In the visual chart generated by CiteSpace author, each circle (i.e. node) represents an author, and the node size represents the number of articles each one publishes. The larger the node, the more the author posts. The specific effect shown in the figure is that the larger the font, the more the author posts. For the convenience of readers to see more clearly, Table 1 lists the top 10 authors’ names and the corresponding number of articles.

Table 1. Main Researchers on Morrison.

	Name	Number of Articles		Name	Number of Articles
1	Feng Ying	17	6	Song Yinmiao	12
2	Shi Min	15	7	Jiao Xiaoting	12
3	Zhang Ruwen	14	8	Luo Yi	10
4	Du Zhiqing	13	9	Wang Shouren	10
5	Hu Xiaoying	13	10	Liu Xiaozhen	9



It can be seen from Table 1 that the main researchers about Morrison in China are Feng Ying, Shi Min, Zhang Ruwen and Du Zhiqing, etc. There is a certain cooperative relationship between the authors, and scholars with close cooperative relationship can be regarded as a scientific research team. The line between nodes represents the connection between authors, which is, the thicker the line, the closer the connection. However, there are only 6 links in the chart. It can be seen from the lack of obvious centrality in Figure 2 that there is no obviously academic correlation between the major researchers. The research on Morrison is characterized by decentralization and fails to compose a sustained scientific research team.

In summary, it can be seen from Figure 2 that there are many researchers on Morrison in China. Most of them have conducted continuous research in this field, and they are the main contributors. It shows that some researchers in China adhere to the research on Morrison to a certain extent and form a relatively complete research team.

### 2.3. Institutions that Productive Authors Come From

With "Institution" as the Node Types, by setting thresholds (2, 2, 10), (3, 3, 10), (4, 3, 10) and other parameters remain unchanged, the result of running CiteSpace III is a

knowledge network map of institutions that productive authors come from. A total of 111 nodes were obtained in the Figure 3, with 6 lines between nodes. By adjusting the size of the nodes in the visual map and moving them appropriately, the institution or institutional department that productive authors come from in 1988-2018 can be clearly displayed (see Figure 3). According to Figure 3, the top 10 institutions with the number of published papers are listed (see Table 2), and then the specific analysis is carried out on the colleges or departments of these institutions.



Figure 3. Institutions that Productive Authors Come From in 1988-2018.

Table 2. The Top 20 Institutions.

Institutes	Frequency	Institutes	Frequency
Henan University	29	Nanjing University	12
Northeast Forestry University	19	Xianning University	12
Yancheng Teachers University	18	Shanghai University	12
Guangdong Polytechnic Normal University	16	Sichuan Normal University	11
Liaoning Normal University	16	Ningxia University	11

As shown in Table 2, the institutions with the highest number of published papers in 1988-2018 were Henan University (29 pieces), followed by Northeast Forestry University (19 pieces) and Yancheng Normal College (18 pieces), Guangdong Normal University of Technology (16 pieces), and Liaoning Normal University (16 pieces). The research institutions ranked 6-10 are detailed in Table 2. Combined with Figure 3 and Table 2, most of the above research institutions are well-known foreign language universities or foreign language department of comprehensive universities, which are convenient to carry out relevant research on Morrison.

### 2.4. Key Words Co-occurring in the Research on Morrison

The key words of a research can reflect the development direction and development tendency, and can also reveal the theme and hotspots of the field. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct visual analysis of the key words in the research on Morrison. With "Keyword" as the Node Types, by setting thresholds (2, 2, 20), (4, 3, 20), (4, 3, 20) and other parameters remain unchanged, the result of running CiteSpace III is a knowledge network map of keywords in the research on Morrison. A total of 192 nodes were obtained in the Figure 4, with 231 lines between nodes. By adjusting

the size of the nodes in the visual map and moving them appropriately, the co-occurring keywords in 1988-2018 can be clearly displayed (see Figure 4).

"Each node displayed in the visual map represents a keyword. The larger the circle, the more frequently the keyword appears" [4]. The nodes look like growth rings, whose size represents the frequency of the keyword. There is a connection between nodes, indicating that there is a co-occurrence relationship between them. The more obvious the connection between nodes is, the closer the co-occurrence relationship is.

According to the frequency of keywords, the top 20 are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Keywords of the Research on Morrison in China (the top 20).

Keywords	Frequency	Keywords	Frequency
Morrison	1354	Jazz	81
Beloved	528	trauma	72
Song of Solomon	247	feminism	72
The Bluest Eyes	246	the novel	68
the black women	177	Home	63
Sula	141	ecofeminism	61
A Mercy	133	identity	60
the black	97	self	58
Paradise	92	slavery	56
Black culture	92	race	52



Figure 4. Key Words Co-occurring in the Research on Morrison.

According to Figure 4 and Table 3, there are 20 keywords appearing 52 times or more, all appearing more than 50 times, and 7 appearing more than 100 times. The total number of keywords is large and the frequency is high, indicating that the research content in this field is relatively rich, but there are also some problems of repetitive research. "Morrison", "Beloved", "Song of Solomon", "The Bluest Eyes", "the black women" and other top keywords indicate that there are many relevant researches on these aspects. According to the frequency of the keywords, the research on Morrison's works focuses on *Beloved*, *Song of Solomon* and *The Bluest Eyes*. But there are few studies on other works, which is not conducive to discovering the commonality of Morrison's works. According to the frequency of keywords and Figure 4, the perspective of the research on Morrison can be divided into four aspects:

First of all, scholars analyze the racial issues in the works from various perspectives, including black feminism, black culture, slavery, racial discrimination, white culture, and identity, etc. As a contemporary black female writer, Morrison consciously links the creation of novels with the national liberation mission, and vividly depicts the living conditions of the black people in her works, revealing the destruction of the hegemonic culture to the minority culture. Moreover, she also tried to appeal black intellectuals to turn to the black national culture itself, and to reconstruct the national consciousness from the traditions that were despised by the white culture. For example, by analyzing the main characters in *A Mercy*, Wang Shouren probed into the nature of "slavery" and assumed that "Morrison's perspective that beyond race reveals her profound insight into history, society and heart" [5]. At the same time, relying on her unique female perspective and special female experience, Morrison closely linked the process of black women's self-seeking with the reconstruction of black national consciousness, which forms a development trend of mutual progress. For example, from the perspective of feminist criticism, the rebellious behavior of Sula, the protagonist of *Sula*, not only ignores all kinds of social laws and regulations, subverts the patriarchal rule, but also reflects her life process of seeking and constructing herself, making her "the forerunner of black women's resistance to twofold discrimination and

oppression"[6]. This can be seen from the keywords such as "feminism", "eco-feminism", "gender", "black feminism", and "subjectivity".

Secondly, taking the historical and cultural background of works as a starting point, scholars in China have studied the historical writing of Morrison, with key words including "new historicism", "magical realism" and "post-colonialism". It can be seen from the creation of novels that Morrison is a writer of great and profound historical vision. "Almost every work of her takes the major events or historical context in American history as the pre text, which can be said that it is largely recording history, writing pain and restoring the history ignored by the mainstream culture" [7]. Morrison describes the ups and downs of black society over the past 300 years, and presents a magnificently historical picture of the black community. By reflecting on the cultural context of Beloved and its textual representation, Wang Yukuo pays attention to "who is telling the past stories and how these stories determine the way of contemporary people understanding slavery, which reflects the theoretical achievements and textual practice of new historicism in the United States since the 1980s" [8].

Thirdly, the post-modern narrative strategy of Morrison's works has always been an important breakthrough point and innovation point for scholars in China. They focus on the analysis of the text narrative strategy; highlight Morrison's excellent post-modern narrative skills, and point out that Morrison revealed the value system of the mainstream society and the illusory nature of historical writing through various narrative strategies. The key words "intertextuality", "image", "subjectivity", and "spatial narrative" are highly relevant to this theme. For instance, some scholars take "the transformation of narrative perspective" as the starting point to explore that "through 'multiple internal focalization' and 'insight into characters' hearts', Morrison revealed the thematic meaning and enhanced the aesthetic effect of works" [9], which makes her works more rich on the aesthetic level.

Fourthly, from the key words like "body", "construction", and "subject", the body consciousness in Morrison's works is also a new cut-in point for scholars in China. Morrison reflects on the female subjectivity through the post-modern narrative strategy: the subject is not rigid, but a dynamically generated open process. The body plays an important role in the reconstruction of female subjectivity. Ying Weiwei (2009) "respectively focused on the political interpretation of the important women's bodies in the three novels, expounded how black women lost themselves under the oppression of the strong white culture and the misunderstanding of male chauvinism with the black race, and explored that how to reconstruct the female subjectivity in the nirvana of death" [10].

In general, researchers in China have made full use of various theories, including feminism, archetypal criticism, deconstructionism, narratology and body theory, to interpret Morrison's works from multiple perspectives.

Strongest citation bursts of keywords refers to "the frequency of the occurrence of keywords suddenly increases

significantly, or the term that appears suddenly in a short time, which is based on detection of CiteSpace III" [11]. By extracting mutant terms from titles, abstracts, keywords, descriptors, and symbols in literatures, the sudden growth of the interest of frontier research in a discipline can be detected and the development trend can be identified and tracked. CiteSpace is used to conduct the strongest citation bursts of keywords in the research on Morrison, and it is found that there is no strongest citation bursts of keywords in relevant research papers, indicating that in the corresponding period of time, keywords of previous studies failed to attract extensive attention from scholars in China, and the research focus on Morrison was relatively scattered.

Nevertheless, researchers have begun to try to explore the potential text in Morrison's works from a new perspective. For example, Wang Shouren interpreted Morrison's new work *Home* from the three aspects of "country", "community" and "house", and discussed Morrison's imagination of the reality and possibility of the living space of African Americans in the 1950s [12]. These studies show the expression and penetration of various cultural elements in Morrison's works. According to the literature papers published in the past two years, the research on Morrison will form a new strongest citation bursts and stimulate another research climax driven by these new perspectives.

### 3. Analysis of Research Frontiers and Trends on Morrison

In order to understand better the research hotspots and development trends of the research on Morrison, the cluster table and the strategic diagram are drawn clearly based on the co-word cluster analysis and the strategic coordinate analysis. In this way, the academic foreground can be dug more deeply, the hot topics can be tracked and the future directions can be predicted.

#### 3.1. Co-word Clustering Analysis

Co-word clustering analysis is a kind of main method to explore the discipline hotspots, and it is widely used in Information Science. "As a very active bibliometric and visualization method in data collecting, co-word clustering analysis gathers some keywords with high co-occurrence intensity to form a cluster one by one according to the co-occurrence intensity between keywords" [13]. According to the principle of co-word clustering analysis, the following 36 keyword clusters are obtained from a 192-by-192 matrix, and these clusters are labeled and generalized with a name for strategic coordinate analysis.

Table 4. 36 Clusters of Keywords in the Research on Morrison.

Cluster	Cluster Name	Cluster	Cluster Name	Cluster	Cluster Name	Cluster	Cluster Name
1	Jazz and narrative	10	black culture	19	conflict	28	narrative technique
2	black	11	literary ethics	20	grow up	29	colonialism
3	foregrounding	12	alienation	21	New Historicism	30	identity reconstruction
4	<i>Beloved</i> and black women	13	liberation	22	self-consciousness	31	slavery
5	<i>Home</i> and space	14	self-subjectivity	23	awareness	32	Defamiliarization
6	racism	15	identification	24	<i>Paradise</i>	33	binary opposition
7	feminism	16	trauma theory	25	blank narration	34	black traditional culture
8	<i>Sula</i>	17	redemption	26	postmodernism	35	racial oppression
9	reader	18	cultural hegemony	27	Bible	36	archetypal criticism

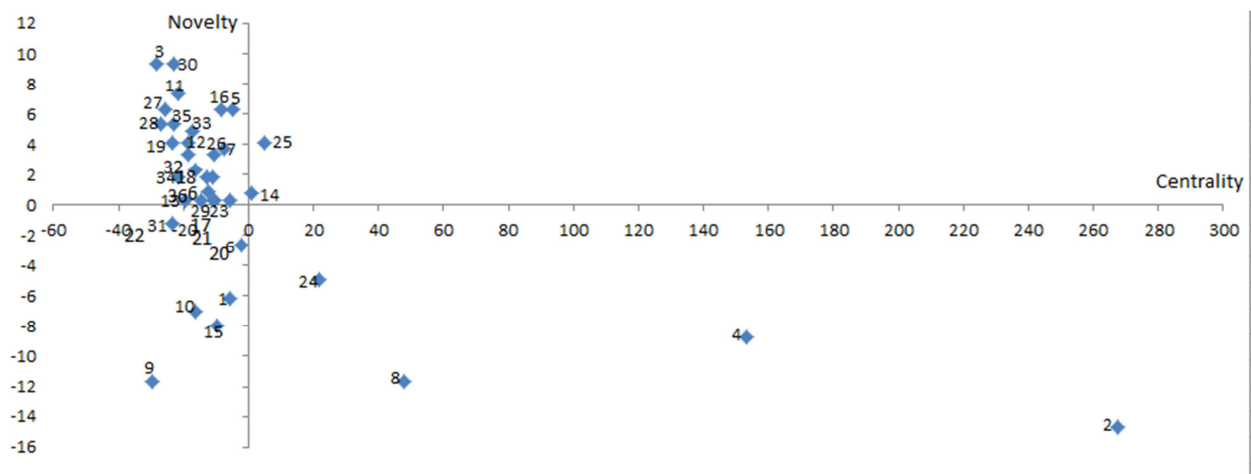


Figure 5. Strategic Diagram of the Research on Morrison in 1988-2018.

#### 3.2. Strategic Coordinate Analysis

"The strategic coordinate method was proposed by John Law et al in 1988 to analyze the structure and development

of research hotspots in a certain field" [13]. The strategic coordinate graph takes "Attention" as the horizontal axis and "Novelty" as the vertical axis, which can visually show the distribution of each cluster in the field. Then, according to

the characteristics and the distribution clusters of the four quadrants, the research status and development trend of this field can be described (see Figure 5).

As shown in the Figure 5, 2 of 36 clusters are in the first quadrant, 24 clusters are in the second quadrant, 6 clusters are in the third quadrant, and 4 clusters are in the fourth quadrant. Their distribution in each quadrant reflects the current research focus and future development direction of the research on Morrison.

In the first quadrant, there are cluster No. 14 and No. 25, whose attention and novelty are both greater than 0, indicating that the research contents represented by these clusters tend to be mature. In other words, “identity”, “construction of the self-subjectivity” and “blank narration” in Morrison’s works all belong to mature research contents and directions in this field. They are at the core of this field and have attracted much attention in the whole research field. In the second quadrant, the clusters of 3, 5, 7, 11, 12 and 13, whose attention is less than 0 and whose novelty is greater than 0, indicate that the research contents represented by these clusters are new research topics emerging from 1988 to 2018, but they are less concerned in the academic circle. Among these new and developing contents, some research directions will leap to the first quadrant with the increasing attention of experts and scholars, becoming new and mature research directions in the field. These clusters are related to “space”, “ecofeminism”, “literary ethics”, etc. These clusters are potential research fields for Morrison and her works. The attention and novelty of 1, 6, 9, 10, 15 and 31 in the third quadrant are both less than 0. The research contents represented by these clusters are not highly concerned and appear very early, which is a marginalized research content. They can be roughly divided into two types: the first is that they have received less attention since their emergence, and there are still few studies on them in recent years. The second one is that they were once research hotspots in the research field, but gradually faded out of people’s sight due to its timeliness or the influence of the academic trend. These clusters are at the edge of the field of the research on Morrison, and it is uncertain whether they can become new research hotspots in the future. The above mentioned clusters include ones with racist connotations like “black mothers”, or “slavery”. The attention of 2, 4, 8, and 24 in the fourth quadrant is greater than 0, and their novelty is less than 0, indicating that these research contents are the foundation of the field. Although they are not new topics, they have been receiving a high degree of attention. They include Morrison’s representative works *Song of Solomon*, *Beloved*, *Sula* and the perspective “feminism”. The research contents represented by these clusters are the works or basic themes that scholars often pay attention to when they carry out the research on Morrison.

### 3.3. Interpretation of Emerging Hot Spots and Important Theoretical Basis

Figure 5 can clearly show several research directions with high attention and novelty in the research on Morrison, such

as 5 (psychological space and social space), 11 (ethical literary criticism), 7 and 16 (psychoanalysis) in the second quadrant as well as 14 (body, subjectivity) in the first quadrant 1, etc.

The study of spatial awareness and consciousness of body politics in Morrison’s works are topics of general interest in recent years. Li Xi analyzed the narrative art in Morrison’s historical trilogy from the perspective of spatial awareness, and believed that “the author wields the incoherent concepts of time and space, repeated images, multiple-perspective narrative to deepen the theme” [14].

In addition to the study of space in Morrison’s works, the study of ethics in her works is one of the emerging topics in recent years. Many foreign critics show their understanding and rethinking from the perspective of ethics on Morrison. In the *End is the Beginning: Toni Morrison’s Post-Modern, Post-Ethical Vision of Paradise* (2011) by Johnny R. Griffith discussed Ruby Town of male supremacy and the monastery dominated by women in *Paradise* from the perspective of postmodern ethics. He assumed that it was not only a war between the two communities, but also a struggle within one’s heart. In recent years, scholars in China have also made considerable achievements in this respect. For example, from the perspective of narrative ethical criticism, Cai Yanhua represented the ethical relations between parents and children, husband and wife, brothers and sisters in the story in *Song of Solomon*, and focused on analyzing the ethical proposition conveyed by Morrison from the aspects of moral security and the construction of mainstream ethics [15]. From what have been discussed above, it can be seen that the integration of other disciplines has begun to take shape, such as the combination between ethics and literature. In the future, there may be more viewpoints based on the integration of linguistics and literature, even corpus and literature.

Cluster 7 and cluster 16 can be generalized as the psychoanalysis of Morrison’s works. The psychoanalysis in Morrison’s works mainly includes two parts: one is to use the Psychoanalytic theory to explore the emotion and subjectivity construction of the characters in the works as well as the relationship between the characters; the other is to use the concept of “trauma” in psychoanalysis to analyze the characters in the works. A large number of foreign scholars have conducted in-depth researches in this direction. Reza Hassan Khan and Shafiqur Rahman explored the sadism and the masochism in *The Bluest Eyes* on the basis of the theory of subjectivity of Freud and Lacan (*The Framework of Racism in Toni Morrison’s The Bluest Eye: A Psychosocial Interpretation* in 2014). They pointed out that “in such an internalized racist framework, the victims either become masochists or delusions in order to fight against the capitalist machine which suppresses black people” [16]. Wang Xiaoyan believed that *God Help the Child* turns the writing perspective of psychological trauma to childhood experience, family estrangement and racial discrimination. “The author highlights the ‘Delay’ and ‘Repetition’ of the character’s trauma through the narrative technique of time and space interlacing. The transformation of narrative perspective



shows the cause and performance of the character's trauma from multiple perspectives, realizing the unity of trauma and effect. "The combination of the characters' discourse mode and narrative perspective further deepen the theme of trauma in the novel" [17].

From a macro perspective, clusters in four quadrants are all in constant motion and change, which vividly shows us the emergence, movement and disappearance of hot spots in the field of the research on Morrison, and helps us realize the research value of this field more intuitively.

## 4. Conclusion

"Bibliometrics employs fair data to describe the whole picture and distribution characteristics of the research object with accurate quantification" [1]. It has been 30 years since the relevant research on Morrison was introduced into China. From macro themes (feminism, racial discrimination), narrative techniques (spatial narrative), and psychoanalysis (trauma, recovery) to micro consciousness (the consciousness of body politics), the relevant research has been deepening in depth and expanding in scope. It has become a research focus in American literature that cannot be ignored.

Taking the academic papers about Morrison from CNKI as the data source, this study applies CiteSpace III, a visualization software, to conduct a visual map analysis through several indexes such as the authors, the institutions they come from and the high frequency keywords in their papers. Through the analysis of the prolific authors, the high-output institutions and the emerging hotspots in this field, the overall features of Toni Morrison-research among the past 30 years is found out, the present research status of this subject in China is uncovered and future development trend is predicted. It's hoped that this paper will comprehensively and profoundly display the historical context and current situation of Morrison's research in China, help the researchers find and summarize the existing problems and shortcomings, and put forward constructive suggestions to promote a healthy and sustainable development of Morrison's research. The research findings are as follows: First, Feng Ying, Shi Min and Wang Shouren are the key figures of the research on Morrison in China in the past 30 years. Second, the foreign department of various universities such as the Foreign Languages Department of Henan University and the Foreign Studies School of Northeast Forestry University is high-yield scientific research institutions in this field. Third, the research achievements in this field are remarkable, and the research content is rich, but the quality of papers is uneven. Fourth, the research perspectives include feminism, narratology, new historicism, postmodernism and body, which are innovative and diversified. Fifth, the research methods are mainly close reading and comparative study. Sixth, there are abundant researches on the female writing in Morrison's works, including the attention to physics, biology, animal and plant and other natural sciences. The key words of the research on Morrison seldom reflect her interest in visual and auditory art

forms such as painting and music. There are some limitations in this paper, such as data standardization, indexer effect and so on, which may have some influence on the analysis results, but will not affect the basic conclusions. These problems need to be further improved in the future research.

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