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Love in the Flesh, Toni Morrison and Hortense Spillers 30 years after *Beloved* and *Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe*

Roberto Montero

Binghamton University, rmonter1@binghamton.edu

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Abstract

The publications of Hortense Spillers' *Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book* and Toni Morrison's *Beloved* marks 1987 as an important year in the history of black textual production. Without planning, Morrison teaches us how to read Spillers and Spillers to read Morrison, despite differences in form. Spillers articulates a "praxis of ungended flesh," to theorize the relegation of the slave to commodity that sutures slavery to blackness (Spillers 1987). Morrison takes up this same task through the experiences of life, time, and memory for Sethe, an escaped slave who kills her daughter when at risk of being returned to slavery. Through powerful literary fiction, Morrison transforms Spillers' sophisticated parlance into hauntingly beautiful prose, demonstrating a common strand of thinking about slavery and its afterlife. Through an analysis of critical themes in *Beloved*, this paper seeks to articulate a reading of 'Beloved in the flesh.' Theorizing at the level of flesh requires beginning with the absolute violence of slavery necessary for the "Theft of the captive body" (Spillers, 1987, p.67). Ultimately, this paper attempts to analyze the implications of that violence upon the categories of life and death in order to understand how love might be possible in a life that is constituted by death.

Toni Morrison's *Beloved* produces complicated and fundamental questions about understanding life, death, and love in the violent relations of slavery. In the same year, Hortense Spillers published one of the most instrumental essays to contemporary black studies, *Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book*; which articulates the centrality of black female flesh to the creation of an anti-black modernity that emerges out of slavery premised on the power to enunciate African people as speaking commodities (Spillers, 1987). It is not just the year of publication that ties these works together, but that perhaps through Spillers (1987) parlance, *Beloved* represents a "scene of unprotected female flesh- of female flesh 'ungended' – [which] offers a praxis and a theory; a text for living and for dying, and a method for reading both through their diverse mediations" (p. 68). Slavery throws into crisis the ethical presumptions of modernity; living and dying operates in an entirely different field of relations for those who are denied the possibility of life in the first place. Only love, the love for her children, the love for her flesh, can move Sethe to persist in a world that necessitates her death as the reproduction of property. This presents a lived contradiction of blackness that Toni Morrison explores through haunting literary fiction and Spillers through a revolutionary theoretical

endeavor. This paper seeks to explore how the flesh can be constituted by violence and death, yet remains as the necessary space of love. The first section employs a reading of *Beloved* in the flesh as a way to sift through the questions of meaning, power, and value posed around life, death, and mothering. The second section critically analyzes the conditions of possibility for loving blackness in and as the flesh. Both works are thought together in order to understand how love might be possible in a life that is constituted by death.

This paper relies on the distinction between 'body' and 'flesh' that Spillers (1987) creates as a way to sort through the imposition of meaning onto captive bodies (p. 67). The 'body' is the sphere of liberated subject positions which can control the way meaning is extracted and imposed on it. But "before the 'body' there is the 'flesh'... if we think of the 'flesh' as a primary narrative, then we mean its seared, divided, ripped-apartness, riveted to the ship's hole, fallen, or 'escaped' overboard (Spillers, 1987, p.67). The flesh is situated by captivity and remains there despite institutional rearrangements because emancipation from slavery does not change the nature of valuation or capacity. Applying this distinction to the uses of the flesh in *Beloved* reveals something unique about this 'primary narrative.' The flesh becomes at once the terrain for violence but also the terrain for relationality for those who can only claim this 'primary narrative.' Thus the goal of liberation is not the reclaiming of the body, as this just reifies the technologies of anti-blackness. Rather it is the

discomposition of the individual... flesh/blackness, as the end/death of the individual, is the individual's decomposition. The move from logistics to logisticality—from forced availability ("in the flesh," as Hortense Spillers says) to a mechanics of undercommon hapticality, is, itself spooky action at a distance, the exterior affects and effects of the intramural (Moten and Harney, 2014).

In this context, the love between Sethe and Beloved is a move towards the end of the individual. The assertion of love in a world intent on making that impossible is the purest act of fugitivity since it refuses the way slavery imposes a proper subject in antithesis to the slave.

Beloved in the flesh

The depictions of life throughout *Beloved* are always articulated as just out of grasp for the enslaved. When Sethe, Paul D, and Denver go into town for the carnival, Paul D says to Sethe that “we can make a life, girl. A life” (Morrison, 1987, p.46). Morrison repeats the phrase ‘a life’ multiple times over the course of the next few pages because she is inviting the reader to reflect on what the possibilities of life may look like. Sethe knows ‘a life’ is what she desires, but even saying it requires repetition because she does not fully know what that desire entails. Sethe is trying to come to terms with what kind of relationality might finally constitute a life. The closest she gets is when she sees the shadows of Paul D, Denver, and herself all holding hands. This gives her the feeling of family; of what life can be (Morrison, 1987, p.47). Sethe has to search for ‘life’ because this is the only word she can connect to what she desires, yet what she truly desires may be so much more than the ‘freedom’ she has been provided. Life and freedom become one in the same, producing a rhetorical appeal and dependency upon a language of vitalism to describe the possibility for affirmation in a world where black people are not deemed non-human by slavery. Life is always positioned as the goal but structurally denied to certain people, yet there is no linguistic alternative to vitalism which situates what is valuable or desired in the first place. It may be difficult to break out of the seductive trap of life, but to do so requires analyzing the relation of life as much more than just the dialectical opposite of death.

Beloved characterizes the ways in which blackness is constituted and inscribed in the

flesh which necessitates a fugitive modality for navigating a life that is always lived on the run. Morrison (1987) describes the interaction between slaves in flight as “silent, except for social courtesies, when they met one another they neither described nor asked about the sorrow that drove them from one place to another. The whites didn’t bear speaking on. Everybody knew” (p. 52). No one need speak about the past because the past is written and rewrites the present, forcing instability and fatigue upon those who managed to run away. This is not to say that all slaves have the same experience, rather that slavery constitutes a structure - not an experience - that situates black people in their relation to the world. There is a desire for freedom that escapes the possibility of articulation. The presumed communication of purpose demonstrates a commonality of slaves that binds them to their flight from the plantation. Yet if running away implies an origin and a destination, where is the destination where black life can be free? Even once Sethe finally escapes from Sweet Home, she can still be returned at any moment. This is the impossibility of finding a destination where black life is safe. The paradox of running away without a destination results in the animating event of the novel; when Sethe kills her daughter because schoolteacher has found her. If crossing the Ohio River did not make Sethe free, then the origin of her unfreedom must not be in the spatial operations of the plantation unless that particular form of power operates beyond the material conditions of enslavement.

The cruel calculations and cold brutality of slavery lay bare this formulation of power that is able to make blackness totally open and available for circulation. Sethe confronts this inhuman epistemology most directly when she overhears schoolteacher describing to his students the proper way to do an assignment that requires reducing Sethe to her ‘human and animal characteristics’ (Morrison, 1987, p.193). Slavery exceeds a material relation once again as it requires for its very existence a project of knowledge where a human can be reduced to the

position of non-human (Sethe's 'animal characteristics') and studied like a science experiment; arbitrarily comparing and redefining the boundary between blackness and humanity as if one were listing the differences of plant and animal cells in a biology class. Hortense Spillers (1987) reminds us that this

'atomizing' of the captive body provides another angle on the divided flesh: we lose any hint or suggestion of a dimension of ethics, of relatedness between human personality and its anatomical features, between one human personality and another, between human personality and cultural institutions. To that extent, the procedures adopted for the captive flesh demarcate a total objectification, as the entire captive community becomes a living laboratory (p.68).

The articulation of captive flesh as atomized traits and characteristics, animal or otherwise, dissolves any distinction between subjects as living beings or as even distinct from the 'cultural institution' of slavery that situates them. The slave comes to be defined in its parts, precluding the possibility of self-interpretation in favor of an ascription of captivity upon blackness engendering property relations as law. Scripting blackness as captivity is not a passive process; rather it is an active enunciation of a violence that sustains the regime's function, symbolic and material alike. The way Sethe interprets and constructs her sense of self is in direct opposition to the way the world constitutes Sethe within this system of power. Sethe's very existence and self-fashioning contradicts her scripting within the world as just anatomical parts on passive flesh. The struggle for Sethe's positionality occurs on the terrain of life and humanity as such.

Sethe's relation to life demonstrates that slavery transmitted through generations, in the flesh. Sethe's only rememory with her mother involves a private interaction one day when Sethe's mom

opened up her dress front and lifted her breast and pointed under it. Right on her rib was a circle and a cross burnt right in the skin. She said, this is your ma'am. This, and she pointed. 'I am the only one got this mark now. The rest dead. If something happens to me and you can't tell me by my face, you can know me by this mark,' Sethe replies "but how will you know me? Mark me, too... She slapped my face... I didn't understand it then. Not till I had a mark of my own (Morrison, 1987, p.61).

Sethe's mother's articulation of herself amounts to just a marking on her skin. Since her life is at perpetual risk, and at risk of such brutal methods of terror that her face may not even be identifiable, she needs to prepare for her inevitable confrontation with death. Perhaps the desire to prepare for death is to ensure that she can have a proper burial, some desire for decency or dignity in the afterlife. Regardless of desire, the only locus in which she can differentiate herself is seared into her flesh. One can understand such marking as an instance of "hieroglyphics of the flesh" which Spillers (1987) articulates as the "phenomenon of marking and branding [that] actually 'transfers' from one generation to another, finding its various symbolic substitutions in an efficacy of meanings that repeat the initiating moments" of captivity (p.67). Sethe's mother obviously has no desire to brand her child, and slaps her for her failure to recognize the ludicrousness of such a question. Sethe eventually becomes marked, but the condition of possibility for this marking was already transmitted to from her mother in the lineage of slavery.

The complexity of the situation is too much for Sethe to comprehend at such a young age, but it is when she has a mark of her own that she begins to understand her mother's purpose. Perhaps she is teaching Sethe how to interpret the hieroglyphics in her own flesh, which is to say how to navigate and survive a world that is set on making that impossible. Spillers (1987) reminds us that attempts to interpret the hieroglyphics of the flesh ultimately fall short since

legibility is never a guarantee (p.67). For Sethe, being able to identify her mother's dead body might provide some valuable sort of closure, but that closure will always be insufficient to fill the absence of mothering in the first place. Yet Morrison (1987) tells us that Sethe was never actually able to identify her mother since her body was so ravaged. Ultimately what Sethe's mother attempts to secure is unsuccessful, but Sethe manages to learn something from her mother despite the conditions that render them unable to claim each other. Her mother's aspiration for this lesson is sutured by a constitutive failure. Sethe's mother's lessons will always be insufficient because violence follows black flesh as if it was haunted; specters of slavery follow its descendants across generations. The perpetual disturbance of a presence not yet at rest mirrors the way instability comes to define blackness as vertigo, the absence of coherence (Wilderson, 2011). This consistent instability means that Sethe's relationship as a mother, like her relationship to her own mother, is always interpolated as the reproduction of death.

Morrison (1987) makes clear that the passing of trauma from slavery continues well beyond its so-called end, by juxtaposing the reproductive cycle of bluefern spores to the reproduction of black life directly after Sethe gives birth to Denver.

Often they are mistook for insects—but they are seeds in which the whole generation sleeps confident of a future. And for a moment it is easy to believe each one has one—will become all of what is contained in the spore: will live out its days as planned. This moment of certainty lasts no longer than that; longer, perhaps, than the spore itself (p.84). Placing such a passage right after describing giving birth is an active move to force a comparison between the life of a spore and that of a slave in order to make the reader contemplate the instability of the future for black life. The moment of certainty in the life of the spore is precarious. This precarity resonates with Sethe because she knows she has no capacity to

guarantee a future for her children. The future is always meant to represent the promise of a better tomorrow, where the pure unknowing of what is going to happen provides comfort from what she fears will be the reality of her daughter's life: death. Such a bleak outlook on the future is to be expected as life has always been precarious, and especially so for a black baby girl. Still so innocent, yet already charged by the world as guilty. Morrison narrates in such a way to show us the way Sethe's thoughts move because even though she has just given birth, she is still on the run. She so desires a full life for all of her children, a safe one filled with love, but is perpetually uncertain of her ability to do so.

In order to analyze the possibility of life for Sethe we must interrogate the conceptions of time throughout *Beloved*. In a rudimentary sense, one's life is the experience of the passage of time. Yet Sethe always seems to have trouble with time. The past is traumatic for all the formerly enslaved peoples in *Beloved*, since they have experienced the ultimate negation of freedom in the destitute conditions of slavery. Even though Sethe manages to escape Sweet Home, it still stays with her. It is engraved on her back and carved into her feet. It finds her in the still moments of the day when her mind wanders to some painful 'rememory' and it finds her quite materially when schoolteacher comes to 124. Thus, moving through such a time, progressing even, is an arduous task. "To Sethe, the future was a matter of keeping the past at bay. The 'better life' she believed she and Denver were living was simply not that other one" (Morrison, 1987, p.74). The way Sethe experiences and conceptualizes time demonstrates the power the trauma of slavery has on the slave's psyche. Making the distinction of a 'better life' is rendered absurd when one has already experienced the worst of what life has to offer, perhaps even the absence of life itself. How could Sethe move forward if she always has to keep the past away? Although such a consistent struggle with producing a future by pushing out the past might gesture towards a real

futurity or progress, Morrison reminds us that the past has a material hold.

When Sethe is describing to Denver the ways she copes with rememory and time, she says:

Where I was before I came here, that place is real. It's never going away. Even if the whole farm—every tree and grass blade of it dies. The picture is still there and what's more, if you go there—you who never was there—if you go there and stand in the place where it was, it will happen again; it will be there for you, waiting for you. So, Denver, you can't never go there. Never. Because even though it's all over—over and done with—it's going to always be there waiting for you. That's how come I had to get all my children out. No matter what. Denver Picked at her fingernails. 'If it's still there, waiting, that must mean that nothing ever dies.' Sethe looked right in Denver's face. 'Nothing ever does' (Morrison, 1987, p.36).

History is as real as any other thing in *Beloved*. There is an affective resonance from the active engagement with history that makes rememory such a unique concept. Sethe's generational transmission of pain is not some metaphor or fictional device, rather it is a quite simple reality of mothering while a slave. Sweet Home is so real because it is not just a place but a modality for an operation of power defined by slavery. Sethe has brought Denver (and the rest of her children) into a violent world that has no concern for their life outside of an exchange value written onto their skin, meaning that her role amounts to doing what she can to protect them from what she knows is already inevitable. A tragedy emerges when one recognizes that bringing a child into slavery is condemning them to slavery, originating the act of cruelty in birth. When Sethe says she has to get all of her children out, it is already a futile task since she brought them into the world. This is not to say that Sethe as a mother is responsible for bringing her children into a

violent world, but rather that mothering is a cruel task when a slave can barely claim one's self, yet alone one's child. It makes it impossible to judge Sethe's actions when she has already failed her task from the offset, she cannot save her children from the world and the attempt to love them only produces more possibilities for pain. This is why Sethe's mother-in-law, Baby Suggs, tries to disconnect herself from her children because she could never care as fully as she desires, but partially caring for them produces the most tragic form of resentment (Morrison, 1987). When the consent to reproduce is devastated, the ability to nurture and love your child is infringed upon.

Spillers (1987), reminds us that

even though the enslaved female reproduced other enslaved persons, we do not read 'birth' in this instance as a reproduction of mothering precisely because the female, like the male, has been robbed of the parental right, the parental function" (p.77-78).

A static conception of mothering is interrupted by property relations since the mother is denied ability to claim her child because she has already been claimed as flesh. The ethical paradox produced by the "reproductive matrix of slavery", to use the language of Joy James (2013), elucidates the rationale for Sethe to say "if I hadn't killed her she would have died and that is something I could not bear to happen to her" (Morrison, 1987, p. 236). *Beloved* demonstrates a specific ethical dilemma of mothering engendered by slavery. The distinction Morrison draws here between being killed and having died gestures towards an ironic reading of what it might mean to have death. A future in which Beloved grows up into slavery she would have nothing, since as property she is denied the legal and grammatical capacity to have anything. Yet Sethe believes that she would have died. This does not mean that her life would cease in the biological

sense, but that the only thing she would possess is death. We must ask how one can create a life when the only thing one possesses is death, especially when that possession is constituted as having nothing at all.

Fugitive Love

“Dearly Beloved,” these are the first and only two words that Sethe hears at the funeral service for her unnamed daughter (Morrison, 1987, p.184). Since Sethe cannot afford to write “Dearly” on the tombstone, “Beloved” is meant to suffice as the entire legacy of her child’s short life. The unnamed child becomes Beloved, just so she can be loved. Sethe’s desire to write ‘Dearly Beloved’ on the tombstone that represents the naming of her daughter as Beloved is the quintessence of the intimate and immanent relation of blackness and death. This tragic naming makes it impossible to dissociate death from Beloved, even when she returns. In this light, it makes sense that Beloved comes back to haunt 124. Sethe is always gathered to mourn her dearly beloved because she has never left the moment when she is shattered by the inescapable death of her daughter. Sethe is doomed to hear the same two words of the funeral procession for eternity; Dearly Beloved.

Informed by the critical labour of Spillers, Christina Sharpe (2016) tells us to think of the wake. Understanding the wake as simultaneously the collective mourning of a funeral but also the displacement of waves behind a slave ship gestures towards the constant repetition of slavery for those who descend from it. Morrison teaches black folk how to wade through the wake, to think, feel, care, love, and mother despite the lived relation of “always-imminent death” (Sharpe, 2016, p.38). Beloved is already situated within the wake as anti-black operations of power predicated on slavery have reduced her to flesh. Sethe is constantly dealing with, and working

through, such violence. The common flashbacks to her time at Sweethome demonstrate that Sethe is still living in the wake of slavery, just as she lives in *Beloved*'s wake. Sethe knows that the violence of slavery follows her and her children, a looming specter of terror that influences the way she can attempt to live what life she has, even leading her to killing her child.

Beloved is the ghost that haunted 124, yet even when she materializes she is still marked by death, a marking that as Spillers and Morrison teach us is sutured into black flesh. When Paul D first arrives at 124 he gets rid of the baby ghost, but Sethe interprets this differently. She believes "Paul D ran her off so she had no choice but to come back to me in the flesh" (Morrison, 1987, p.200). Coming back in the flesh means finding love in the conditions for violence itself. 'Hieroglyphics of the flesh' tell the tales of absolute terror and brutality, but also the beauty and potentiality of relationality outside of the world in fugitive resistance (Spillers 1987, p.67). Mothering despite its tragic inevitabilities is a fugitive form of love, always lived as a refusal of violence it cannot control. Even though *Beloved* produces a figure of blackness that is produced in, and by, the intimate relation to death; it also sets the condition for type of love on experienced in the afterlife, in what is beyond the stable categorization of life and death. A praxis "for living and for dying" requires relinquishing the stable notions of life and death that have been fundamentally altered by the resonating ethical conflicts of slavery (Spillers, 1987, p.68). Morrison's use of fiction plays out the material transversal of death, leading the reader to a way of thinking from the flesh that accepts blackness as love within death. Fred Moten and Stefano Harney (2013) articulate this tension as 'the incalculable benefit of the unbearable cost', for them "the hold's terrible gift was to gather dispossessed feelings in common, to create a new feeling in the undercommons" (p.97). The dispossessed selves that made up slavery are denied the possibility of having from the offset. The absolute moment of degradation leaves only pure flesh

in the hold of the slave ship but creates a particular feeling in common for the flesh. This ‘new feeling in the undercommons’ is a joy lived in the shadow of death, it is Beloved returning to Sethe in the flesh. For Sethe, even though Beloved was not with her, the love she has is strong enough to transcend death and bring her daughter back.

Sethe does not discover the power of dispossessed sentimentality when Beloved mystically returns to her, it was what Baby Suggs had always taught her. In the clearing during one of her unique sermons, Baby Suggs tells her followers that:

In this here place, we flesh; flesh that weeps, laughs; flesh that dances on bare feet in grass. Love it. Love it hard. Yonder they do not love your flesh. They despise it. They don’t love your eyes; they’d just as soon pick em out. No more do they love the skin on your back. Yonder they flay it. And O my people they do not love your hands. Those they only use, tie, bind, chop off and leave empty. Love your hands! Love them. Raise them up and kiss them. Touch others with them, pat them together, stroke them on your face ‘cause they don’t love that either. You got to love it, you! And no, they ain’t in love with your mouth. Yonder, out there, they will see it broken and break it again. What you say out of it they will not heed. What you scream from it they do not hear. What you put into it to nourish your body they will snatch away and give you leavins instead. No they don’t love your mouth. You got to love it. This is flesh I’m talking about here. Flesh that needs to be love... The dark, dark liver—love it, love it, and the beat and beating heart, love that too. More than eyes or feet. More than lungs that have yet to draw free air. More than your life holding womb and your live giving private parts, hear me now, love your heart. For this is the prize (Morrison, 1987, p.88).

To be and love in and as flesh provides a critical avenue for resistance and spiritual nourishment in the wake of slavery. Even when you have not taken a free breath, love is what creates the possibility for value in an anti-black world that is always against you, and especially against you loving your own flesh. Baby Suggs is describing a fundamentally political act since that love is a refusal of slavery's mode of subjection that categorizes black people as fungible commodity and radically asserts blackness as the condition for affirmation. Perhaps loving yourself as flesh is so powerful because it disregards the prior denial of freedom, agency and the capacity of having a self. It is with this fugitive sentimentality that Sethe can still love Beloved because in this undercommon place of modernity, saving Beloved from slavery was the ultimate act of love. To say that flesh needs to be loved means that dealing with the trauma of slavery requires care. At hand is not the possibility of a Nietzschean overcoming, but a collective form of relationality that embraces the messy and painful sentiments of the violence of blackness as the ultimate reclamation of the flesh. The subversive affirmation of blackness, as the love for the weeping, laughing black flesh, reconstitutes the parasitic nature of the world upon blackness towards a refusal of an anti-black modernity. The descendants of slavery may not achieve full liberation or acquire credit and compensation for stolen bodies, lives, and labour power but if one sets out to love one's flesh, one's heart, then one can share the temporary relief of social life with those that "dwell in the same compulsion" (Moten and Harney, 2013).

To grapple with the deathly presence of the flesh requires a turn away from life. The pursuit of liberal notions of freedom, premised on anti-black models of subjectivity, is synonymous with living the good or better life; this is just the denial of fugitive love that only exists in the space outside the binary of life and death. Morrison guides us to wallow in the painful beauty of loving the flesh. The overwhelming sentiment of loving in the wake is a love

for blackness in its rawest, fleshiest form. Perhaps for Sethe the call to love her heart might represent a love for her children before a love for the beating heart that carries her through the day. Loving your flesh means loving your *flesh and blood* which is to say the bonds that we come to call family. Sethe embodies this to its fullest by protecting her child at any cost.

Eventually, Beloved returns to Sethe 'in the flesh' (Morrison, 1987, p.200). This return is made possible by Sethe's dedication to saving Beloved from slavery. Such dedication that she was willing to give her up forever. What might seem to the contemporary observer as an irrational decision is the only logical choice for Sethe when she knew that returning to Sweethome would be worse than death for her child. Sethe is afraid that Beloved will grow up on Sweethome and experience sexual violence at the hands of her masters. Especially since any children that Beloved would have on the plantation would not be hers, and she would have to constantly deal with the loss of her own children like Sethe does. Sethe knows that the world she has brought Beloved into provides her no guarantee of safety or happiness. In killing Beloved, Sethe creates the condition for finally claiming her child. The writing of Beloved on the tombstone allows Sethe to name her child, something she was unwilling to do because she did not want to get attached. Because she knew that if she invested herself it would only hurt more. This act of naming, only possible outside of the boundaries of life, brings Beloved back in the flesh. She has to come home. Her mother has called her. Sethe's love is so strong that its call could transcend death and Beloved answered that call, not just in her return but her continual presence in 124. Sethe and Beloved never left each other because the bond between them transcends death.

Morrison demonstrates that to embrace the flesh as a narrative for life outside of its vitalist connotations is the praxis "for living and for dying" or living while dying, as the living

dead, that Spillers (1987) sets out to theorize (p.68). Reading Morrison with Spillers is still necessary 30 years after *Beloved* and *Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe* because both works engage in conceptualizing this praxis in the flesh that is still necessary given the precarity of black life. The constant circulation of Black Death on social media demonstrates that the haunting that Morrison describes is not act of fiction. The digital reproduction of scenes of gratuitous violence represents a contemporary haunting that require more than ever a way for black people to love their flesh. Whether it is laughing and weeping or broken and seared black flesh needs to be loved. Reading *Beloved* in the flesh provides a theory, through Spillers, and a pragmatic, through Morrison, for conceptualizing and actualizing fugitive love in an anti-black world.

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