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**“COULDN’T FIND THEM ANYWHERE”**  
**Thomas Glave’s *Whose Song?* (Post)Modernist Literary Queerings,  
and the Trauma of Witnessing, Memory, and Testimony**

*by Gene Jarrett*

In American Studies, the contemporary shift from the individual to the collective as an index for the study of memory has coincided with the re-interrogation and diversification of U.S. national history and of the cultural productions, traditions, and canons that had purportedly articulated this history. Hannah Möckel-Rieke notes that “what was lost, erased, repressed, or misrepresented in the record of the winners of cultural and racial conflicts, trauma, and the recovery of the occluded traces therefore form major issues in the American memory debate” (7), as does the way in which the literary imagination must occasionally compensate for the faultiness, bias, and/or ellipses marring this historical record.<sup>1</sup> Thomas Glave’s new volume of nine short stories, *Whose Song? and Other Stories* (San Francisco: City Lights Publishers, October 2000), is accordingly remarkable for its re-creation of testimony, witnessing, and the trauma of history through an identifiably (post)modernist narrative poetics. The collection also marks a pivotal moment in the formation of Black Queer Studies, African-American queer fiction in particular, and African-American literature in general. Few works published in the history of African-American writing have brought such formal, thematic, symbolic, and characterological intricacy squarely to the stories of people suffering under the intersection of oppressions—ranging from racism to classism, sexism to homophobia—and whose lives are concomitantly extraordinary for their hardship in negotiating multiple identities. *Whose Song?* tells a variety of stories about how gayness, lesbianism, bisexuality, and closetdom complicate and are complicated by marriage, racism, sexism, misogyny, community, family, and nation. In doing so, it positions itself in the contemporary renaissance of scholarly and literary interest in African-American cultural memory, one that had culminated in the late 20th-century publication of and critical response to Toni Morrison’s *Beloved* (1988).

For the marred historical record of African Americans, *Beloved* is one example of a novel that seeks to perform the very act of literary compensation to which Möckel-Rieke alludes above. Toni Morrison, while editing *The Black Book* (1974), a compilation of memorabilia spanning at least three centuries of African-American history, came across the copy of an obscure news article, “A Visit to the Slave Mother Who Killed Her Child,” that told the story of a fugitive slave named Margaret Garner who killed her baby daughter so that she would not suffer a brutal life of slavery. This document eventually became the factual foundation for Morrison’s imagination of the complex

physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritual turmoil Garner possibly endured; from here Morrison wrote the now well-known tale of Sethe Suggs and her family.<sup>2</sup> In order to address the excavated information about Garner, Morrison innovatively borrows some of the novelistic strategies of one of her acknowledged influences, William Faulkner, who was especially dedicated throughout his career to the geo-historical project of writing about the hamlets of the U.S. South, particularly the imaginary county of Yoknapatawpha, Mississippi. He said once that his goal as a literary writer was to “put everything in one sentence—not only the present but the whole past on which it depends and which keeps overtaking the present, second by second,” a statement that supports Jean Paul Sartre’s belief that, in Faulkner’s work, “the past sort of takes on a sort of super-reality; its contours are hard and clear, unchangeable.”<sup>3</sup> The notion of a “super-realistic” past that overwhelms the present philosophically resonates with one of the strategies of *Beloved*: namely, to tell the story of how the ghost of Beloved at once humanly coexists with, yet the tragic memory of whom, haunts the consciences of Sethe, Denver, and Paul D.

Morrison’s combination of two traditionally dissonant modes of memory determines the ontology of Beloved, the ghost. According to Robin Blyn, memory can function in the *mnemic* sense in which the past is re-invoked in the present as mimetic *re*-presentation (or repetition), as an image or ghost, usually (but not always) without the distortion of time or of the perspective of the rememberer; on the other hand, it can function in the *mnemonic* and “insistently constructivist” sense in which the past “is experienced in the present as a semiotic representation [. . .] [and] an epistemological reconstruction of the rememberer.” Memory, in either case, is “inseparable from the desires, fears, consequent experiences and imagination of the rememberer” (Blyn 114).<sup>4</sup> Both the reconciliation of mnemic and mnemonic models of memory of which Blyn speaks and the Faulknerian modernist conception of the past facilitate *Beloved*’s (*post*)*modernist* complication of realism and representation, the crisis of which hovers over several contemporary approaches to cultural memory. [In “A Postmodern *Absalom, Absalom!*, a Modern *Beloved*: A Dialectic of Form,” Catherine Gunther Kodat believes that Morrison’s subscription to a modernist aesthetic, mainly via Faulkner’s psychologically fragmented rendering of U.S. Southern history, modifies the postmodernist potential of her novel in question. Kodat complicates the contemporary scholarly consensus that *Beloved* is primarily a postmodernist narrative. Within the historical and theoretical context I have set up in my essay for the phenomenon of cultural memory, I recognize the validity of the viewpoint of the consensus, yet I also recognize the viability of Kodat’s reading of Morrison as a modern postmodernist and Faulkner as a postmodern modernist. For this reason, in discussing Glave’s and Morrison’s works, I prefer the terminological flexibility afforded by the parenthetical enclosure of “post” in (*post*)*modern*.<sup>5</sup> Postmodernism (without the parentheses) as I use it here signifies, in short, not only *Beloved*’s identifiable experimentation with narrative fragmentation, narratorial perspective, the production and meaning of language, and rememory to destabilize homoliner Anglo-American stories of slavery and freedom; it also calls its readers to bear with history in an age of technological innovation and fast information highways that generally prioritize the possibilities of the present and the future over accounting for the trauma of the past. Less

obviously, *Beloved* conversely suggests a re-articulation of the past in terms of the postmodern: as Morrison herself puts it, “in terms of confronting the problems of where the world is now, black women had to deal with ‘post-modern’ problems in the 19th century and earlier. [. . .] Certain kinds of dissolution, the loss of and the need to reconstruct certain kinds of stability” (Morrison, qtd. in Ferguson 110). Whether postmodern, surrealist, fantastic, mythic, magical, magical realist, or magical naturalist (terms which have consistently been interchanged by critics and scholars to characterize Morrison’s work but with which she had expressed discomfort), *Beloved* nonetheless possesses a profound cross-genre disposition that produces a difficulty, if not a crisis, in interpreting the complex means by which it revolves African-American historiography around the mnemonic trope of a ghost.

Thomas Glave’s *Whose Song?*, I must state first, does not go as far back into the past as *Beloved*’s rendering of the era and the figures of slavery and Reconstruction. (However, Glave’s collection does have a short story, “The Pit,” about the relationship of an unnamed town of people with a nearby mass grave site, both of which coexist in an unspecified region of the world and exist in the throes of a military dictatorship. Our known—and perhaps still unknown—global histories of mass torture and genocide are somewhat mappable into Glave’s fictional scenario.) And most of the stories in Glave’s volume do not directly speak to the tale *per se* of Sethe Suggs and her family, nor do they enact the same exact formal strategies with which Morrison relates cultural and racial memory, even though a discernible (post)modern kinship does exist between their respective strategies. [For the similarity in textual fragmentation *vis-à-vis* the surrealism of memory, for example, see “A Real Place” in Glave’s *Whose Song?* and *Beloved*’s extended monologue (“I am *Beloved* and she is mine.”) in Morrison’s *Beloved*.] However, both works do suggest that what constitutes a bona fide historical or historiographical literary project is highly relative and subjective, not to mention the respective orientations of their readers toward those past incidents which are witnessed and/or the subject of testimony. The “newsworthiness” of certain literary historical accounts functions in terms of whether the latter are of adequate interest for a specific audience to warrant reporting; these accounts depend on whether the writer himself or herself, always self-positionable as a member of this audience, deems them necessary to fill in gaps in historical consciousness. Just as Morrison said once in an interview that she “wrote *Sula* and *The Bluest Eye* because they were books I had wanted to read. No one had written them yet, so I wrote them” (Morrison, qtd. in Tate 161)—statements theoretically applicable to all her writing, fiction and nonfiction—Thomas Glave continues in this tradition of finding underrepresented selves in classic literature. He looked toward Faulkner’s *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936) “yearningly for representations of queer themes I would have liked to have seen written in queer texts elsewhere, in the matchless way Faulkner wrote.”<sup>6</sup> More generally, Glave states in our interview that through the function of memory as a trope of human interiority,

Morrison in particular amplifies the interior lives of people who haven’t often been written about, or at least weren’t, up until fairly recently. [Virginia] Woolf did the same thing with her female characters, as Henry James and Thomas Hardy did with

theirs. Although I wasn't aware of it when I began writing as an adult, I soon realized that I'd been yearning for the longest while to see stories that traveled through the consciousnesses, the thoughts, the needs of the characters who finally ended up making *Whose Song?*. I wanted to know what *those* people thought, *how* they thought, what motivated them, how they lived, loved, feared, and died. I wanted to see all that and more on the page in a way I felt I hadn't, ever, at least not with those characters. At first I thought somebody must have written these stories, somewhere. But I kept looking for them, and *couldn't find them anywhere*. (italics mine)<sup>7</sup>

In *Whose Song?* one can find these characters, individuals living under the intersection of oppressions and whose stories, whose songs, have rarely been uttered in American literary history. For these characters to come alive, for their interior lives to become manifest, Glave resorts to what I believe is a strategy of *queering* or *que(e)rying* literary traditions that seeks to recuperate our interest in witnessing, trauma, memory, historiography, and the subaltern through (post)modernist narrative forms.

This artistic sort of queering or que(e)rying should not be conflated with, but also not dissociated from, the scholarly kind now momentous, viable, and indispensable in the U.S. academy, particularly in studies of the African-American literary tradition. Since the publication of *Sula* (1973), for example, interviews with Toni Morrison as well as scholarly articles, books, and edited collections have proliferated on numerous topics about the author's finely crafted and provocative second novel, but perhaps none more controversially than the topic of the special nature of *Sula* and Nel's bond.<sup>8</sup> Barbara Smith's monumental "Toward a Black Feminist Criticism" (1977) inaugurates the academic debate on this subject. Here, Smith claims that "[a]ll segments of the literary world—whether establishment, progressive, black, female, or lesbian—do not know, or at least act as if they do not know, that black women writers and black lesbian writers exist" (Smith 410). This introductory statement segues into her illumination of U.S. academic and media perceptions of black women, of the disciplinary possibilities of a "black feminist criticism," and of the centrality of studying black lesbian writing to a general conception of the oppression suffered by all black women. One major rhetorical maneuver in her essay is an innovative reading of Morrison's *Sula* as a black lesbian text. The novel's "strong" images of black women and its resistance toward narrative linearity define, she believes, "innately lesbian literature" (417).<sup>9</sup> Smith's essay is groundbreaking not only for its proposal of the theoretical premises on which one can erect a black lesbian-oriented paradigm of literary interpretation; it is also noteworthy for the very *demonstration* of this interpretation as critical practice to which later scholars could subscribe or whose import they could at least recognize in the implementation of their own praxes.

Smith's theorization and close reading of *Sula* as a black lesbian text, however, have elicited skepticism over the soundness of her approach. In "New Directions for Black Feminist Criticism" (1980), Deborah McDowell, while not entirely opposed to the idea of reading the theme of lesbianism in literature, has contended that Smith's notion of "innately lesbian literature" comprises an ambiguous, oversimplified, and

overly broad definition of “lesbianism.” Far too many contemporary female *and* male writers of African-American fiction, she argues, fit Smith’s classificatory criteria. She also laments that this essentialist notion of truly lesbian discourse—along with the more general notion of truly female or feminist writing—relies on aesthetic principles that reduce the formal and contextual complexity of any literary work under consideration.<sup>10</sup> Morrison too has contributed opinions to this debate. In an interview with Claudia Tate, the author underlines the uniqueness of *Sula* for its historic articulation not of lesbianism but of the special *friendship* binding the two protagonists: “Friendship between women is special, different, and has never been depicted as the major focus of a novel before *Sula*. Nobody ever talked about friendship between women unless it was homosexual, and there is no homosexuality in *Sula*.” In other interviews Morrison’s opinions on this subject have been more implicit but consistent with what she told Tate.<sup>11</sup> Morrison’s careful synopsis of her intentions in *Sula*, of course, is not debatable on the decidedly and justifiably personal and writerly terms in which she delivers her statement. Yet what *is* debatable, as illustrated by McDowell’s measured critique of Smith’s essay, is how a black lesbian-oriented theoretical method (ology) is derived and applied. Since Smith’s “Toward a Black Feminist Criticism” and McDowell’s “New Directions for Black Feminist Criticism,” conceptual distinctions between, say, “friendship,” “love,” “lesbianism,” and “homoeroticism” as they specifically apply to how *Sula* and Nel “was girls together” (*Sula* 174) have been few and far between.<sup>12</sup>

Conceptual distinctions and the implications of these terms have emerged in other contemporary critical and literary contexts, however. In reference to McDowell’s exemplary queering of Nella Larsen’s *Passing* (1929), Phillip Brian Harper suggests that a more conceptually profitable exercise of queering involves an argument that

the *social context* and *cultural codes* that inform the novel, and in particular the interactions between [the two female protagonists of *Passing*], can be understood as carrying an implicit homoerotic content that is suppressed for the sake of any number of concerns—for the sake of bourgeois propriety as far as the story line is concerned, as part and parcel, in the critical discourse, of the heterosexism that permeates the culture as a whole. (*italics his*)<sup>13</sup>

While queering does not consist merely in the identification of explicit or implicit erotic relationships between literary characters of the same sex, sexuality has now become an important issue in literary texts wherein it was traditionally subordinated for other aspects of human identity. The race-based scholarly criteria employed to classify and interpret the oeuvres of Larsen or other African-American literary writers have been reconfigured to address how sexual nonnormativity informs any and all constructions of normativity. The intellectual and discursive space reserved for this reconfiguration has profited not only from the beneficial formations of Queer Studies as an academic discipline and of “queer” as a theoretical term, but also from the strategic exposure of their conceptual limitations, including the failure to develop diversified models for explaining why certain sexually nonnormative individuals

have been routinely oppressed, and why others have not.<sup>14</sup> Precisely, Queer Studies has committed itself more to local reformist efforts of combating homophobia than to more systemic investigations into treating homophobia, prejudice, racism, sexism, classism, etc., as structures of exploitation governing individual or collective beliefs and practices.<sup>15</sup> Race, gender, class, and sexuality have been the primary indices in Black Queer Studies, whose inherent disciplinary intersection of Black Studies and Queer Studies functions as a strategy of problem solving.<sup>16</sup> From the theoretical fruits of this intersection, studies of African-American literature have prospered in new and daring ways; within the past five years we have witnessed the proliferation of queerings of a tradition which has hitherto been interpreted, theorized, articulated, and circulated mostly in heterocentric—and normative—terms, terms that rely on fixed and stable, rather than fluid, categories of human sexuality.<sup>17</sup>

With the onset of sustained queerings of the tradition, more cross-generational connections of literary works are possible and currently being made, exemplified by the anthologizing of black queer creative writing. *Go the Way the Blood Beats: Anthology of Lesbian and Gay Fiction by African American Writers* (1996), edited and with an introduction by Shawn Stewart Ruff, differs from the conventional anthology of black gay and lesbian writing by including authors who are rarely contextualized as producing queer(able) fiction.<sup>18</sup> The collection features Alice Dunbar Nelson (“A Carnival Jangle”), Richard Wright (“Man of All Work”), Amiri Baraka (“The Alternative”), and Morrison (an excerpt from *Song of Solomon*), among other “classic” and contemporary authors of African-American queer fiction. In the introduction Ruff admits that he was initially reluctant to reprint Baraka’s “The Alternative.” The short story tells about a group of presumably straight black men who are initially hanging out. One of them alerts the others that one of their dormmates was spotted with a “faggot”; upon hearing this news, all of them proceed to stand outside and peer through the keyhole of a neighboring door. They all happen to receive voyeuristic pleasure and arousal from watching the “faggots” have sex, during which they eventually end up turning against each other for the sake of preserving their own masculinities. Ruff states that he had several reasons for omitting “The Alternative” from the anthology, the simplest of which was the short story’s superficial play to binaristic stereotypes of gay (jeerable sissies) and straight (dangerously macho) males. Another reason could have been that Baraka’s discourse, literary or otherwise, on homosexuality is loaded with an anti-gay sentiment that at once had inhered in Black Arts and nationalist ideology of the 1960s and 1970s and yet had intraracially and counterproductively fractured the community promoting this ideology. This discourse also has seeped into his consistent misrepresentations and/or misunderstandings of openly queer 20th-century African-American writers, namely James Baldwin.<sup>19</sup> Nonetheless, Baraka’s “brilliant short story,” in Ruff’s eyes, exemplifies that “[y]ou don’t have to read literature by gays and lesbian writers to read meaningfully about homosexuality” (Ruff xxi). The actual inequality Ruff suggests between “gay writer” and “writer of gay literature” becomes one of the main principles behind the taxonomic *expansion* of the tradition of queer literature, in the sense that the tradition appreciates the noteworthy variety of sexual preferences among its selected writers, yet mostly prioritizes those artistic expressions of queerness through which

theories of literature, society, and culture can be developed. (Just as controversially, we need to outline the concentricity of Ruff's expanded conception of queer literature and of an expanded conception of *African-American* literature that denies the easy interchange of "African-American writer" and "writer of African-American literature." In short: Has there yet been taxonomic room made for black writers of white queer literature? Or for white writers of black queer literature?)

One must consider queering, then, not strictly as an interpretive exercise performed by an academic-critical reader on a literary text, but also a formal, intertextual dynamic which occurs between literary works and which manifests one writer's engaged artistic response to another's work. This process of *intertextual* queering represents a creative re-vision not simply on the part of black gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered writers—people who actually might not incorporate into their work a discussion of the experiences specific to each of these identities—but also on the part of *any* black writer who presents in her or his own work a discernible queering, as we know it, of texts conventionally included in the African-American literary tradition.<sup>20</sup> One can set up a genealogy, as Ruff has in *Go the Way Your Blood Beats*, of queer fiction attributable to past writers such as Alice Dunbar Nelson, Wallace Thurman, James Baldwin, on the one hand, and contemporary writers like Randall Kenan, Jacqueline Woodson, and Carolivia Herron, on the other. In "Invisible Sissy: The Politics of Masculinity in African American Bisexual Narrative," Traci Carroll takes the implications of this genealogical premise further by arguing that E. Lynn Harris's *Invisible Life* (1994) has a special tropological, if queer, relationship with the concept of invisibility developed in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952), and with the tragic mulatto subject of classic passing narratives, ranging from James Weldon Johnson's *Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* (1912) to Larsen's *Passing*, from Jessie Fauset's *Plum Bun* (1929) to even William Faulkner's *Light in August* (1932). The contemporary concurrence not only of Harper's aforementioned lauding of McDowell's queering of Nella Larsen's *Passing*, nor only of the appearance of *Go The Way Your Blood Beats* and Carroll's "Invisible Sissy," but also of other similar literary anthologies and critical works, compels the extended and sustained meditation on how the scholarly queering of the literary tradition has recently coincided with the literary tradition of intertextual queering.

Note that although the concept of "tradition" is potentially fraught with taxonomic problems, as is the endeavor to construct, say, official and quite reductive genealogies of formal call and response and/or generational shifts in politico-artistic ideology, nonetheless paradigms of intertextual queering must be established so that the very interrelationships between various poems, short stories, novels, and so forth, already accepted and acceptable at this moment in African-Americanist thinking do not continue to exist, for the most part, in an exclusively heterocentric "bubble": a bubble into which one peers for those identifiable "*social contexts* and *cultural codes*" worthy of queer-theoretical inquiry, but one which has protected the enclosed tradition from major taxonomic re-structuring until very recently. In dialectical concert with scholarly queering, the process of intertextual queering implies a rupture of this "bubble" via not only a comparative and ultimately integrative approach to the "tradition" and African-American queer literature, but also an approach faithful to the identification

of specific lived sexual, racial, class, and/or gender experiences that make each work under consideration so distinctive. Intertextual queering represents a major goal on the part of writers of black queer literature to re-shape, in their own words/works, those literary worlds that may have shaped them, to make those worlds more accommodative of the intraracial diversity of the African-American community, to make those worlds, at last, less *straightforward*.

The 1997 O. Henry Award-winning "The Final Inning," one of the nine stories included in Glave's *Whose Song?*, represents a quintessential text of queering. The short story is partially inspired by the story, told by the late Assotto Saint to Glave, about an openly gay black poet, Donald Woods, who died of AIDS. At the funeral service, attended by his relatives, friends, and acquaintances, his family refused to acknowledge the fact that he was "out" in his personal and political life and that he died of this disease. Saint, who also attended, was so disturbed by the purposeful silencing of the truth that he stood up and began to shout at Woods's family for their blasphemously hypocritical conduct. "Assotto recounted all this to me in the last year of his life," Glave recalls, "then said, 'There's the story, my dear. Now go write it.'"

What does it mean for Glave to "write" a story narrated to him by Saint? How is Glave inspired to re-create the physical, communal, and spiritual aspects of Woods's struggle with AIDS; the thoughts and feelings of his friends, relatives, and acquaintances who witnessed his struggle; the special circumstances under which the death, the burial, and the "inning" of Woods took place; the experiences of the witnesses (including Assotto Saint) who attended the service; and the subsequent conversations about Woods's life and about the service itself? An implicit testimonial disparity exists between Saint's recounting of the inning and Glave's "The Final Inning." Although "removed" from the actual incident, that is, the witness to the testimony of another, Glave employs special literary strategies to overcome this distance, or the "disjuncture between the apparent ineffability of the pain and suffering experienced [...] and the moral imperative to give testimony to an audience temporally removed from the event" (Remmler 221).<sup>21</sup> Just as *Beloved* represents what Sabine Brock calls an "as-if-testimony," which partially entails the deployment of "the protagonists' very bodies [...] as the *locus* of Morrison's literary strategies to invent witnessing" (Brock 39), "The Final Inning" becomes a nexus of discourses about AIDS, about familial and communal manifestations of homophobia, about the politics of closetdom versus being out, and, in the main, about how to reconstruct the troubling memory of the inning of Woods. The story is as much, if not more, about the witnessing, the memory, and the testimony of the inning as it is about the actual facts of the service itself.

"The Final Inning" takes place at Tamara's house in the northeastern section of the Bronx, also known as Sound Hill, after the church-held funeral service of one Duane Taylor Clayton Ross, who died of AIDS. At the house, four black women—Tamara, Cee-Cee, Nicky, and Jacquie—hang out, fatigued, hungry, and disturbed; they cook food together and begin a conversation mainly about Duane's funeral service and his life. On a nearby couch, Jacquie's child, Gregory Jr., sprawls dozed off across the lap of her husband, Gregory, who is either reading *Sports Illustrated*, watching the televised baseball game, or clutching his sleeping son against his body. All six of them have attended the service, as have Duane's mother and stepfather, his friends and

acquaintances, and people who live in, and in areas outlying, Sound Hill. The key to understanding the innings and the complicity of Duane's family and of other attendees lies, first of all, in parsing out the five testimonies (excluding Gregory Jr.) exchanged in Tamara's house. Established at the outset are the reactions of each person to James Mitchell Scroggins, the light-skinned black gay man who also has AIDS and who actually goes up to the pulpit and protests against the silencing of Duane's gayness and of his contraction of AIDS. The women initially address their individual reactions to Scroggins, all the while revealing their preconceptions, prejudices, and impressions of homosexuality and, in specific reference to Scroggins, of being light-skinned. Cee-Cee is incensed by Scroggins's audacity and by his lack of authentic blackness: "I thought I was gone fall out of myself" (159); "Hmmp. Half-breed. Somebody's business. [. . .] Wouldn't no real black person do some shit like that" (160). Tamara is equally angered by the event, her comments couched in cynical humor: "I mean, now, that was wrong [. . .] —it was, you know? I mean now how you gone sit up in church at somebody's goddamn funeral and bring out all kindsa shit—" (159). Jacquie, while in disagreement with the conduct of Scroggins, does not harbor as much resentment toward him, and is not as forthcoming with her criticism: "I forgot his name already. [. . .] After he got up there and dissed everybody I wouldn't even want to—" (157). [Cee-Cee chastises Jacquie's understatement, and substitutes "goddamn disrespecting blasphemy, that's all" (157) for "dissed."] More forgiving and empathetic toward the speech of Scroggins, whom she already knows as "Jimmy," Nicky indicts Cee-Cee for her homophobic exaggeration of the facts: "It wasn't all that Cee-Cee. You got a real problem when it comes to . . ." (161).

The intrigue of this early exchange resides in the personality and the consistency with which the women stick to their arguments; however, the minimal and knee-jerk participation on the part of Gregory is equally curious. He seems less concerned with expressing his honest views of the service than with begging the women to refrain from replaying the incident: "Y'all still going on about what happened in the church?" (157); "The dude that got up and spoke? He wasn't no white. But I wish y'all would *stop*—" (159; italics in original, unless otherwise stated); "Why y'all gotta keep talking about it?" (160). The intermittent pleas of Gregory [which go unaddressed until Cee-Cee responds to the last question, "Why not?" (160)] signal his uneasiness with talking about Duane's service. More implicitly, he is afraid of the immediate power of *language*, within the discourse of testimony, to conjure mnemonic images of the service and to reopen the psychological, emotional, and spiritual wounds that were slowly healing through his temporal (albeit brief) removal from the process of witnessing the event. His fears are well warranted. At one point in the conversation between the women, when Gregory again interrupts with the query "Why y'all gotta keep going on and on about this damn funeral? [. . .] I just can't stand—" (163) and Tamara insinuates that the conversation is not merely about Woods and the funeral but about "faggots" too, the power of language is undeniable:

“Faggots.” He heard the word—  
 (— yes, and felt it as it flew against his cheek as he sat there almost but not quite motionless, holding his son: holding him *faggots* and caressing him the word searing his flesh and thinking )  
 (:— again? thinking but didn’t want to now oh no but yes of those places: parks, alleyways, redlit (bloodlit) bars: fuckrooms/ darkrooms and those piss-streets too he knew had known and: but no. Hadn’t been him there. [ . . ] \* \* \*:—*faggots* but naw don’t be calling them that now naw but OK *sucker* and *punk* call them that; wandering again on those streets with the the the: *Faggots*. He. Who had been unhappy and. Had wanted to wander, kiss manflesh. Find. Jacquie *but then can’t tell Jacquie*.—

Interrupting *our* contact with the conversation, or the narrator’s relaying of it to us, Gregory’s momentary fragmented memory reveals that he has kept his homosexual experiences with anonymous men—and thus his bisexuality—a secret from his wife, Jacquie. Presented to us as narrative dislocation, the mnemonic oscillations of Gregory between the past and the present, and his sensations of nostalgia, insecurity, apprehension, fear, and wonder elicited by the word “faggot,” all present a queer echo of the innumerable instances in Morrison’s *Beloved* and in several of Faulkner’s fictional works wherein memory is conjured, at times violently, at the appropriate moments of anxiety and stress. Aside from the respective narrative strategies of Morrison and Faulkner, Glave has proposed a specifically racial and cultural rationale for this manipulation of time, other than the literary (post)modernist aesthetic upon which his work arguably draws. While “keeping in mind how many Latin American writers whose work I had enjoyed had manipulated and subverted Westernized, linear constructions of time,” Glave has also

wanted to subvert conventional, linear notions and representations of time as frequently deployed in narrative; to suggest and evoke the often roundabout, elliptical modes of storytelling that abound in my family’s Jamaican culture [ . . . ]; and also, as Caribbean and African-American storytellings often do, quite differently than do pioneering modernist texts, blur divisions between past, present and future—all the while lowering the “scrim” of italics over the prose to undermine the ostensible clarity and “directness” of unitalicized prose and convey a “veiled,” “misted” effect that might in some ways lend itself more readily to peregrinations of time.<sup>22</sup>

(Morrison has also admitted the influence of black folk traditions and oral literature on her writing, and her resistance to modern, Westernized modes of storytelling.)<sup>23</sup> Well-taken is Glave’s incisive explanation of how he literarily manipulates time in order to indicate the power of language to conjure cultural and sexual memory. But we must also combine with this scenario the apparent—and ironic—*limitations* of language to capture memory, exemplified by the dynamic diction, typography, and punctuation that seem to transcribe language beyond the realm of *our* (but perhaps

not Gregory's) human utterance and comprehension; language that harnesses Gregory's anxieties over sexual self-instability, over the recollections of homosexual contact, over the danger of his homosexuality to his marriage and to his relationship with his son, friends, and community. (On what level of human cognition and emotion *do* "(—" and "\*\*\*":—" function?)

The memories of Gregory intersperse themselves throughout the conversation between the women; the testimonial ebb and flow determine his flights of fancy. At one point in the discussion, after his ruminations over "faggot," Gregory overhears Tamara confess that she had no idea that Duane was gay until the funeral service; Jacquie then questions the veracity of Scroggins's speech, and Cee-Cee begins to criticize Tamara for her blindness to the obviousness of Duane's gayness. Nicky responds that Duane confided in *her*, a fact that frightens Gregory, since now he must confront the very possibility that his own bisexuality is no longer a secret from his immediate society, that it is bound to Duane's truth: "(Yes, he thought, the God's honest truth, he had told her, Nicky, but why? did you have to tell her or anybody up here Duane? why? couldn't you keep it downtown with all them downtown faggots (—:don't call them that:—) that came up to the funeral? why?)" (166). As Nicky's voice and information begin to figure strongly in conversation, more central than they were early on; as she talks about how Duane's family, in her words, "was gone bury him with—with a *lie*. Can you imagine?"; as she talks about how Duane's family alienated him, made him an outsider, because he was gay and stricken with AIDS, a reality which undermines Cee-Cee's belief that Duane's family loved him and that the crying of his family at the service attested to that love—as Nicky continues to speak, Gregory's retrospection becomes suffused with not only mnemonic but *mnemic* images: "For the first time Gregory turned toward the marshes and felt their sweep of memory and night-knowledge shawl down over him through the silence" (167). He is so overcome by this image that he is no longer part of present reality; superseding the present, the past indeed becomes super-reality. Only at this time are we, as readers, conveyed into the actual service to which the women and Gregory have been alluding all along: The coffin rests at the front of the church, in which Duane lies ninety pounds lighter than his average weight, his skin has purple spots all over, his hair thinned and deteriorated from chemotherapy, radiation, drugs. Gregory is sobbing into the breasts of Jacquie, holding his son "tighttight." Scroggins then stands up and ascends to the pulpit. Note that by the time we actually *hear* Scroggins speak, his words and the responses of the audience are entangled within a discursive web woven by Gregory's memories. Glave employs a special narratorial/narrative/typographical technique to indicate the varied psychological, emotional, and spiritual media through which we gain access to Gregory's witnessing of the speech itself:

*the others: everybody*

They, thinking: everybody yes with hands up in the air over hats and balding heads; hands fluttering to the top of

*the faggot remember (:don't call him that:)*

and my name (*then louder*) my name is JAMES MITCHELL SCROGGINS and no you wont't make me SHUT UP cause

the church and O my God Lord Sweet Jesus what is happening God who is this this boy standing up there where's the minister well why don't you stop him what kinda going on is that and (faggot shit: growls: sissy shit: abomination: growls) O Jesus Jesus Jesus! No my son ain't no homosexual no my cousin ain't no faggot no my nephew didn't have no damn AIDS the devil's disease don't you say that in this church and O you you filthy:—and the screaming and the children Mommy who's that man and look: O God Almighty the women the ladies crying and the men their nostrils flaring and saying muttering growling We should kick his motherfucking mulatto-looking ass and getting ready to do it too: but then you could see some people thinking from what you could see in their eyes the way their heads nodded soft and slow and the ladies' dark eyes so dark revealing that way showing so much so little under those tacky hats their eyes saying only in part You speak the truth up there boy but O God O Jesus but still you speak it all the same because it's all true all of it [. . .] (170-71)

I'm PROUD to be here today as a GAY friend of DUANE's and a (*shouting over the rage*) HUMAN BEING GODDAMIT just like DUANE WAS TOO and now why won't you SAY IT he died of AIDS of AIDS (*Lord God the screaming remember how their eyes looked everybody shouting* SIT DOWN WHERE YOU THINK YOU AT SIT DOWN) say it AIDS we all KNOW IT because I know some of you know I HAVE THIS DISEASE TOO [. . .] HE LOVED OTHER MEN he loved all of us and WE LOVED HIM yes he had AIDS it KILLED HIM we us here now we should SAY IT SAY IT you're trying to IN him I'm bringing him OUT again for God's sake please I'm asking you for once won't you just SAY IT SAY IT (170-72)

In the left column we see that Scroggins shouts that Duane indeed was gay and died of AIDS, and that this truth must not be buried along with his body, covered either with lies of his heterosexuality and death of a "natural" cause or with silence, through which the family can take solace in *not* confronting the truth, and which also might bar others who might not have known Duane as closely from learning the truth. Bear in mind that the left column does not represent the *actual* speech but a narrative formed through Gregory's witnessing of the audience's growth in anger and combativeness—impressions that are presented in more nuanced fashion in the right column. Audience members, particularly those of his family, deny that Duane had "the devil's disease." A thematic parallelism, via the typographical structure, exists in this column with the left one, in terms of the rage welling up in the audience against Scroggins, "the one they had called a halfbreed, lightskinned, who even talked white like them trying-to-be-white downtown niggers on the West Side and the East Side and in the Village, that one" (derogatory colorism that Cee-Cee and Tamara would

take up afterward). But there are also people who admire Scroggins. Inwardly they encourage Scroggins to speak the truth, against all odds, but outwardly they participate in the commotion over the unexpected spectacle. They are personally conflicted: "You speak / the truth up there boy *but* O God O Jesus *but* / still you speak it all the same because it's all / true all of it" (italics mine). What is most unbearable to the family and to some members of the audience about Duane's death is that he died not only as a "faggot," nor only with AIDS, but, worst of all, perhaps, because he contracted what they felt to be "whitefolks shit." The disease, which a significant portion of the Sound Hill community has associated with whiteness, complicates the authenticity of Duane's blackness and indirectly his membership in the black community of Sound Hill.

After we are "removed" from the funeral service, the conversation between the women escalates into a contentious one. Nicky indicts the others for their inattentiveness to Duane's failing health, and claims that "Jimmy" was one of the few individuals who cared for him; on the defensive, Jacquie, Cee-Cee, and Tamara try to stem the outflow of Nicky's epithets and criticism, but to no avail. While a now irate Nicky is being kicked out of the house, Gregory continues to remember his relationship with Duane, to wonder whether his mostly anonymous homosexual experiences will ever come to the surface, and to ponder his future as a husband, father, and procreator. Duane's contraction of AIDS provokes Gregory to reconsider whether he, too, has at some time, somewhere, contracted the disease, and whether he has infected Jacquie, although he whispers into the darkness of the room in which he puts his son in bed, "*I ain't gone bring home nothing to make her sick, Duane*" (180). Telepathically, Jacquie has noticed something in relation to her husband's apprehension: at one time during the evening she senses that "he whom she loved, still holding on his broad lap their son, was (but for how long? and why?) in flight heavy with purpose and sadness away from her—from all of them." But Gregory, although mournful of Duane's death, is still relieved that he can continue his heterosexual marital life, as long as he can resist the fleshly ghost and ghostly flesh of his homosexual past: "Keep them safe from ghosts and secrets and redrooms filled with:—*it wasn't safe*, some other ghost had once hissed into his innermost parts: *notsafe notsafe*" (181).

The emphasis of "The Final Inning" on personal negotiations of homosexuality within heterosexual relationships appears throughout the collection, *Whose Song?*. Such an emphasis is timely, since contemporary queer-theoretical discourse are attempting to move away from the often overstated polarization of homosexuality and heterosexuality toward considerations of how these qualities are both possessed and expressed by the human body, in the form of bisexuality or, if one is opposed to the binaristic gender and sexual implications of "bi," pansensuality/pansexuality.<sup>24</sup> Such a diversified conception of sexual preference is central to *Whose Song?*, in which four of the nine stories in the collection—"Flying," "Commitment," "The Final Inning," and "Their Story"—deal with how people have negotiated their gayness or lesbianism prior to, during, or subsequent to their heterosexual marriages. "Flying," for instance, relies on an inventive figuration of the tension between gayness and straightness. Here we have the story of a forty-eight year-old, Spanish-looking man named Craig Sint-Jago who loves flying on planes, the process of which enables him

to avoid staying at his Lexington, Massachusetts, home with his drunkard and underachieving thirty-seven year-old wife, Mercedes. The plane flights also facilitate his lustful encounters with men to whom he is vaguely attracted and his equally lustful imaginations of homosexual encounters. What is interesting about "Flying" is its topological displacement of hidden gay life from the closet to the plane, its underscoring of the *liminality* which at once delights Craig yet reifies his own sexual indecision and ambiguity. Other stories in *Whose Song?* are stationed in Sound Hill, a site of heterosexism and recurrent homophobic violence. In "Their Story," two elderly men, Mr. Winston and Uncle McKenzie, try to recover from the deaths of their wives by gravitating toward and depending on one another; they become so intimately social that they are considered like one person in the Sound Hill community, where they both live. One day, when Uncle McKenzie encounters a black gay male being beaten by a group of homophobic men, he orders them to stop; but the men eventually turn on him, injuring him so severely that he is taken to a hospital, where he dies under the sorrowful eyes of Mr. Winston. A similar kind of homophobic violence is evident in "Whose Song?": also set in Sound Hill, it is the story of a light-skinned lesbian woman (Cassandra) gang-raped by three black men (Robbie, Dee, and Bernard) primarily because she is beautiful yet is not attracted to them. The rape serves partially to *de-lesbianize* Cassandra, through which the men try to reaffirm their blackness, heterosexuality, and masculinity. A comparably violent misogyny is evident in "Commitment," which, unlike "Whose Song?" and "Their Story," takes place in a Southern town. A young man named Ricky enjoys an erotic, homosexual relationship with Lou Jay, but is threatened by his father, Daddy Malcom, to marry a woman (Renee) who lives in town and for whom he has little affection. When he realizes he can neither stay with Lou Jay, avoid marriage and its many responsibilities, nor rebel directly against his father, who repeatedly wields a gun at him, at the end of the story Ricky pummels Renee into the ground, demolishing the object of his hate.

Together, the stories of *Whose Song?* reveal the artistic sophistication and ambition of Thomas Glave, a writer whose presence, despite at such an early stage in his career, surely will not go unnoticed on the American literary landscape during this millennium. And in light of the astonishing excerpts of his novel-in-progress, *Hurricane Night*, which only *Callaloo* so far has had the privilege of publishing,<sup>25</sup> surely the best has yet to come in African-American literature.

#### NOTES

1. Hannah Möckel-Rieke, "Introduction: Media and Cultural Memory." For a cultural and ethnic extension of Möckel-Rieke's informative overview, see Amritjit Singh, Joseph T. Skerret, Jr., and Robert E. Hogan, eds., *Memory and Cultural Politics*.
2. For a discussion of the gestation of *Beloved* in terms of the compilation of *The Black Book*, see Marilyn Sanders Mobley, "A Different Remembering." For a more factually specific juxtaposition of these two books, see Catherine Gunther Kodat, "A Postmodern *Absalom, Absalom!*, a Modern *Beloved*."
3. For the first quotation, see Malcom Cowley, *The Faulkner-Cowley File, Letters and Memories 1944-62*, 112; for the second, see Sartre, "On *The Sound and the Fury*: Time in the Work of Faulkner,"

89. For an extended treatment of Faulkner's use of time, see Carl E. Rollyson Jr., *Uses of the Past in the Novels of William Faulkner*. And for an excellent comparative study of Faulkner and Morrison, see Carol A. Kolmerten, Stephen M. Ross and Judith Bryant Wittenberg, eds., *Unflinching Gaze: Morrison and Faulkner Re-Envisioned*.
4. Robin Blyn, "Memory Under Reconstruction." Blyn's theoretical invocation of memory in the *mnemic* sense highlights "the confines of the critical tendencies of the postmodern memory crisis" (115). The scholarly works Blyn interrogates include Emily Miller Budick, "Absence, Loss, and the Space of History in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*," *Arizona Quarterly* 48.2 (1992): 117-38; Mae Henderson, "Toni Morrison's *Beloved*: Re-Membering the Body as Historical Text," *Comparative American Identities: Race, Sex, and Nationality in the Modern Text*, ed. Hortense Spillers (New York and London: Routledge, 1991), 62-86; and David Lawrence, "Fleshly Ghosts and Ghostly Flesh: The Word and the Body in *Beloved*," *Studies in American Fiction* 19 (1991): 189-201.
  5. See Kodat, "A Postmodern *Absalom, Absalom!*, a Modern *Beloved*." For insightful postmodernist approaches to *Beloved*, see Sabine Brock, "Postmodern Meditations and *Beloved*'s Testimony"; Blyn, "Memory Under Reconstruction"; Rebecca Ferguson, "History, Memory and Language in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*"; and Rafael Perez-Torres, "Knitting and Knotting the Narrative Thread."
  6. The second quotation comes from Thomas Glave, *Faulkner, Balanchine, Suzanne Farrell, Gelsey Kirkland, and Morrison*.
  7. From my interview with Glave, "A Song to Pass On," published in this issue of *Callaloo*. All quotations about the creative process are taken from this interview, unless otherwise stated.
  8. In the small black neighborhood of Medallion, Ohio, Sula Peace and Nel Wright possess a bond that we can call, for now, "special"; it is exceptional for its ability to withstand the stark dissimilarities in their respective upbringings, home environments, family backgrounds, personalities, and attitudes toward each other and the enveloping Medallion community. Brought up in a relatively ordered and immaculate household, for example, Nel has resided in Medallion for nearly all her life; during this time she has subscribed to several of the town's traditional social, cultural, and moral values, exemplified both by her marriage to Jude Greene, a handsome man well-respected in the town, and by her commitment to the idea of raising a stable family. Coming from a home more unpredictable in its sociofamilial habits and ethics, on the other hand, Sula represents more of an evil "trickster" figure. After a decade-long mid-life hiatus away from Medallion, during which she presumably attends college and tests out urban life, Sula incites much communal volatility and anxiety. Her sexual seductiveness threatens the town's moral fabric; folks are especially at "leave to protect and love one another [. . .] against the devil in their midst" (117-18) when she beds with Jude, who then deserts Nel for good. Sula embodies the incidental antithesis, if not the utter rejection, of all that Nel represents. Yet in spite of all this, the relationship between Nel and Sula is a weathered one; it represents a constant and durable psychic, emotional, and spiritual embrace that remains relatively locked throughout *Sula*, even through the aforementioned act of adultery, and through the quarrel between Nel and Sula as the latter lay on her deathbed. The singularity of their bond comes to the fore at the very end of the novel, when Nel is momentarily reflective after her attendance of Sula's funeral. She finally realizes that Jude's desertion itself did not hurt her as much as the implications of Sula's selfish role in it: "'All that time, all that time, I thought I was missing Jude.' And the loss pressed down on her chest and came up into her throat. 'We was girls together,' she said as though explaining something. 'O Lord, Sula,' she cried, 'girl, girl, girlgirlgirl'" (174). See Toni Morrison, *Sula*.
  9. "Despite the apparent heterosexuality of the female characters," Smith continues, more specifically, "I discovered in re-reading *Sula* that it works as a lesbian novel not only because of the passionate friendship between Sula and Nel, but because of Morrison's consistently critical stance toward the heterosexual institutions of male/female relationships, marriage and the family. Consciously or not, Morrison's work poses both lesbian and feminist questions about black women's autonomy and their impact on each other's lives" (417-18).
  10. Deborah McDowell, "New Directions for Black Feminist Criticism." Also see her interesting reflection on this critique in McDowell, "*The Changing Same*."
  11. Claudia Tate, "Toni Morrison," *Conversations with Toni Morrison*, 157. Morrison reiterates this comment in Sandi Russel, "'It's OK to say OK,'" and more implicitly, in terms of love, in Robert Stepto, "Intimate Things in Place: A Conversation with Toni Morrison," and Gloria Naylor, "A Conversation: Gloria Naylor and Toni Morrison."

12. Note Barbara Johnson, "Lesbian Spectacles: Reading *Sula*, *Passing*, *Thelma and Louise*, and *The Accused*," *Media Spectacles*, eds. Marjorie Garber, Jann Matlock and Rebecca L. Walkowitz (New York: Routledge, 1993) 160-66, which, according to the MLA Bibliography, is one of the few discussions about *Sula* in terms of black lesbianism. Also see the lesbian-based linkage of *Sula* and *Beloved* in Caroline Rody, "Toni Morrison's *Beloved*: History, 'Rememory,' and a 'Clamor for a Kiss'."
13. Charles H. Rowell, "An Interview with Phillip Brian Harper," 866. Harper is referring to Deborah McDowell, Introduction.
14. Queer Studies, in the once (and perhaps still) general, universalist, and *entelechi*al sense—that is, in the sense of its embodiment of an unspoken concentration primarily on Anglo Americans—arose in the late 1970s, and developed not in the wake of but concurrent with gay (and lesbian) identity politics, even though the term "queer" itself was not used regularly until the early 1990s by academics working mainly in the Humanities and concerned with social and cultural criticism. Queer Studies recognizes the fluidity of sexuality in various historical contexts; it progresses beyond the dichotomies of straight and nonstraight, gay (male) and lesbian (female), and it also welcomes the sexology not only of the predisposition of the body (as in the case of defining bisexuality) but also of *and* within the body itself (as in the case of defining the transgendered and the pan-sexual). For a distinction between "gay" and "queer," see Gregory W. Bredbeck, "The New Queer Narrative"; for a theoretical overview of Queer Studies and postmodernism, see Donald Morton, "The Politics of Queer Theory in the (Post)Modern Moment"; for a succinct discussion of the intersection of queer and race, see Jennifer DeVere Brody and Dwight A. McBride, "Introduction to *Plum Nelly*," as well as Ruth Goldman, "Who is that *Queer* Queer?," which also talks about "queer" as a theoretically (un)accommodative term.
15. In "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens" (1997), Cathy Cohen asserts that "those individuals who consistently activate only one characteristic of their identity, or a single perspective of consciousness, to organize their politics, rejecting any recognition of the multiple and intersecting systems of power that largely dictate our life chances [. . .] misrepresent the distribution of power within and outside gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered communities, and therefore limit the comprehensive and transformational character of queer politics" (440-41).
16. Examples include the Black Queer Studies in the Millennium Conference (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill: April 7-9, 2000) and the concurrently published special issue of *Callaloo*.
17. For a competently organized bibliography, see Nicholas Boggs, "Queer Black Studies: An Annotated Bibliography."
18. *Go the Way the Blood Beats: An Anthology of Lesbian and Gay Fiction by African-American Writers*, Shawn Stewart Ruff, ed. Examples of anthologies whose criteria for selecting authors differ from Ruff's include *Black Men/White Men: A Gay Anthology*, Michael J. Smith, ed.; *In the Life: A Black Gay Anthology*, Joseph Beam, ed.; *Afrekete: An Anthology of Black Lesbian Writing*, Catherine E. McKinley and L. Joyce DeLaney, eds.; and *Does Your Mama Know?: An Anthology of Black Lesbian Coming Out Stories*, Lisa C. Moore, ed.
19. In close readings of Black Arts poetry, Phillip Brian Harper has resisted homogenizing interpretations of the movement. He has shown how the works of Amiri Baraka (Leroi Jones), Nikki Giovanni, Haki Madhubuti (Don L. Lee), and Sonia Sanchez, among others, have circulated the anxious and social divisional logic of black violent masculinity and homophobia, a logic that sought, ironically, to cohere the black community around the cause of black cultural nationalists/aesthetes. See Phillip Brian Harper, *Are We Not Men?*, especially chapter 2, "Nationalism and Social Division in Black Arts Poetry of the 1960s." For Baraka's relationship with Baldwin, see Dwight A. McBride, "Can the Queen Speak?"
20. And I do not limit this queering of African-American writers strictly to this tradition. Advantageous have been those incidental and theoretical re-structurings of, say, Henry Louis Gates, Jr.'s paradigm of primarily intraracial, intergenerational intertextuality [or Signifyin(g)] to accommodate other interracial, intercultural, and international possibilities in the aesthetic and political ideological formation of the African-American literary tradition. See Tracy Mishkin, ed., *The Harlem and Irish Renaissances*. Tracy Mishkin, a protagonist in the movement toward a theorization of interracial intertextuality in American letters, notes that Gates's model depicts several instances of antagonistic intergenerational Signifyin(g) between black and white writers (9). These works send the wrong message about African-American canon formation, Mishkin emphasizes: "Perhaps the next generation of African Americanists will [. . .] become more comfortable with the type of cross-cultural influences which appear in [her

- edited collection, *Literary Influence and African-American Writers* (New York: Garland Publishers, 1996)] and accepting that interracial influence means not that a black canon is not self-sufficient but that it did not grow in a vacuum" (15).
21. Karen Remmler, "Sheltering Battered Bodies in Language: Imprisonment Once More?," *Displacements: Cultural Identities in Question*, ed. Angelika Bammer (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994): 216-32. For a synthesis of Remmler's argument in terms of *Beloved*, see Brock, "Postmodern Meditations," 36-39. For an informative overview of theories of the relationship between literary art and testimony, see Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub M.D., *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (New York: Routledge, 1992). In reflecting on the relation of witnessing to the truth, Laub identifies three distinct levels of "removal" from an experience: "the level of being a witness to oneself within the experience; the level of being a witness to the testimonies of others; and the level of being a witness to the process of witnessing itself" (75).
  22. Glave, *Faulkner, Balanchine, Suzanne Farrell, Gelsey Kirkland, and Morrison: Lessons in Dance, Time, and Tempo*.
  23. See, for instance, Toni Morrison, "Memory, Creation, and Writing," and "Rootedness: The Ancestor as Foundation."
  24. See Goldman, "Who is that Queer Queer?" Ruth Goldman has argued compellingly that this academic gravitation toward the pansexual "carries a phenomenal amount of political impact" (177).
  25. See Thomas Glave, "On the Eve of the Hurricane," and the other excerpt from *Hurricane Night* included in this issue of *Callaloo*.

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