

ATTENDING TO TIME IN NARRATIVES OF ENSLAVEMENT: TEMPORAL
ALTERITIES AND LIVED EXPERIENCES OF TIME IN TONI MORRISON'S
BELOVED

BY

RACHEL BISCHOFF

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

English

May, 2021

Winston-Salem, North Carolina

Approved By:

Christopher Brown, Ph.D., Advisor

Omaar Hena, Ph.D., Chair

Rian Bowie, Ph.D.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would first like to thank my thesis advisor Dr. Brown for his feedback and kind advice over the last several months. His willingness to read any drafted material I sent him as well as his constant reminders that I was on the right track were invaluable and greatly appreciated.

Secondly, I would like to thank the other members of my committee, Dr. Hena and Dr. Bowie, both of whom I had the privilege of getting to know through my coursework and both of whom exposed me to readings that were deeply influential in this final piece. You both are generous professors who encouraged me in my work and instilled in me the confidence to view myself as a scholar.

Thirdly, I would like to thank my parents, Jeff and Mary Bischoff, for their constant love and support in all aspects of my life. Without their help, I would not be able to be where I am today, and I am incredibly grateful for their always cheering me on.

Lastly, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to Jake McGuirk. A constant figure of encouragement and friendship, he always believes in me, even when I find it difficult to believe in myself. Thank you, now and always.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Abstract..... iv

II. Introduction..... v

III. Time of Rememory: Encountering, Inhabiting, and Holding the Temporal
Landscapes of Slavery
..... 1

IV. Enslavement-Time: Living and the Value of Life-Time in the Landscape of
“always-possible death”
.....9

V. No-Time and Temporal Disfigurement: Embodied Impacts of Death-in-Life
..... 21

VI. Reckoning with Time: Recuperative Potentialities of Rememory and
Mediating the Hold of Enslavement-Time with a ‘Living Present’
..... 30

VII. Conclusion.....42

VIII. References..... 46

IX. Curriculum Vitae..... 52

ABSTRACT

This paper examines alternative temporal structures and experiences under conditions of enslavement and its afterlives in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. In particular, it looks to how the novel's characters conceive of and experience time in ways which depart from dominant temporal structures found in and reinforced by the temporality of the Western archive. I refer to these alternative temporal experiences as temporal alterities, and I examine several different kinds of time in the novel as represented in the characters' narrated phenomenological experiences. Through a series of close-readings and engagement with African Americanist scholarship, I interrogate how the condition of enslavement within the specific context of the novel produces these temporal alterities and examine the embodied and emotional impact of such time. I provide a reading of Morrison's novel which preferences the characters' lived experiences of time as a lens through which to better understand the novel's enslaved subjectivities. Additionally, I forward a reading practice that may be applied to narratives of enslavement otherwise, one which moves away from the temporality of the archive as a lens through which to read and understand enslaved subjectivities and instead opens consideration for any and all possible temporal experiences.

INTRODUCTION

The archive of slavery is a problematic space in African American studies. Questions of how to approach, work with, and potentially move away from the archive are prevalent, especially as they relate to understanding slavery's past and interrogating present relationships to slavery. These inquiries are a part of the field's interrogation of the Western historical archive and its role in leaving out, erasing, eliding, and disfiguring Black histories and subjectivities. In one sense, the archive lacks sufficient documentation of Black life in America as compared to that of white people, producing gaps or invisibilities of Black lived experience in our understanding of the past. In another sense, the archive disfigures histories of the enslaved and of Black beings thereafter, creating racist narratives and skewed depictions of Black life. Scholars and writers like Saidiya Hartman,¹ M. NourbeSe Philip,² and Christina Sharpe³ engage with these problems of the archive and advocate alternative methodologies for reading the archive of slavery. These methodologies – including strategies like narrativizing, re-writing, and re-ordering the archive – are seen as largely incongruent with dominant modes of historical thought which insist on “fact.” Though, as many scholars suggest, the

¹ In *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*, Hartman discusses her work of examining the margins of the archive, wherein lie such violent acts which are belied by notions of the mundane and the quotidian. Her work of reading the margins is a tool for examining real enslaved subjectivities and the depth of quotidian violence against them, which the archive may otherwise conceal or omit. Hartman's “Venus in Two Acts” also emphasizes the problem of the archive of slavery and interrogates ways of redressing the archive's elisions and erasures through fictionalizations of the past.

² Philip is well-known for her poetry in *Zong!*, a work which deconstructs, re-orders, and “un-tells” the story of the *Zong* Massacre. She works from the language of *Gregson v. Gilbert* legal case which deems the Black Africans onboard the *Zong* “cargo,” and practices what she calls “fragmentation and mutilation of the text,” “re-writing it through *Zong!*, or rather over it, thereby essentially erasing it, [and] the original text becomes a fugal palimpsest through which *Zong!* Is allowed to heal the original text of its fugal amnesia” (198, 204).

³ In *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*, Sharpe discusses strategies of “Black annotation” and “Black redaction” as ways of approaching the archive of slavery and its afterlives in order “to make Black life more visible, if only momentarily.” These are ways “to disrupt the dysgraphia that wrote a version of events that was riven with antiblackness” (Sharpe 123).

archive is comprised of fictions of its own, fictions passing as incontrovertible truths invalidating of and irreconcilable with real enslaved experience; fact is a form of fiction, not inherent truths but “manufactured certainties” (Hartman, “Venus,” 10). Such approaches to the archive seek to “[exceed] the fictions of history,” to move into that space “beyond what could be thought within the parameters of history” (“Venus” 9). They do so, in part, through imagining space and time beyond the archive. Many scholars have examined such time beyond the archive with specific reference to Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*, and while much has been said about the presence of time in the novel, I am interested in furthering this work by identifying and terming specific kinds of time in the novel which reach beyond the archive and by centering the conversation of time around the characters’ lived-experience of alternative temporalities under conditions of enslavement.

The problem of the archive and ways to approach (or perhaps the impossibility of approaching) archival histories of slavery are central to readings of Toni Morrison’s novels. Scholars like Stefan Brandt,⁴ Barbara Christian,⁵ and Jeanna Fuston-White⁶ read Morrison as presenting alternatives to and reconstructions of the archive and its histories in a number of ways, including preferencing the phenomenological in historiography as well as generally working against the linearity of the master-narrative of history through reconstructing and “reimagin[ing] the terrain of the past” (Christian 413). Indeed, such

⁴ Brandt points to Morrison’s work as preferencing of phenomenology over dominant modes of historiography in which “individual experience, memory, and perception may assume an important role in the unmasking of historiography as a dominant illusion” (Brandt 399).

⁵ Christian suggests that Morrison writes against the grain of the master narrative of linear history in order to “reimagine the terrain of the past,” “an inversion and refutation of the public interpretation of African Americans’ past” (Christian 413, 414).

⁶ Fuston-White views *Beloved* as a work which “reconstructs knowledges, histories, and identities, all of which allow for the inclusion of the African American subject and the African American experience” (Fuston-White 461).

readings of Morrison's works are numerous, and many look to her 1987 novel *Beloved* in particular as a challenge to or reimagining of the archive and its histories,⁷ with several citing the novel's figure of inspiration in the historical Margaret Garner⁸ – on whom Sethe is loosely based – as a key component of the novel's archival tension. Sheldon George contends that this tension is *Beloved's* fundamental underpinning: "At its most basic level, *Beloved* is an imaginative repeating and revising" of Margaret Garner's history (George 115).

The archive's role in erasing, eliding, and disfiguring Black subjectivities and histories is important for my considerations of *Beloved*. Morrison is most certainly responding to the problematics of the archive in her work, and she herself has spoken about how the violence of the archive is inherently linked to the violence of language.⁹ However, I am primarily interested not in the violence of language or the violence of archival history (though these are necessarily a part of my work) but rather in the *temporality* of the archive. Alongside Morrison's interrogation of and challenges to the language and the historiography of the archive, I argue, are interrogations of the temporality underpinning the archive, or what I want to call archive-time. Just as the archive and the written/spoken word can erase, leave out, and/or harm Black beings, so

⁷See also Christians, Higgins, Krumholz, Mohanty, and Perez, all of whom engage with Morrison's relationship to the archive of slavery through a variety of lenses including focuses on alternative methodological approaches to the archive as well as general subversion of Western/white historical traditions.

⁸ Garner, as explained by Morrison in the foreword to *Beloved*, was "a young mother who, having escaped slavery, was arrested for killing one of her children (and trying to kill the others) rather than let them be returned to the owner's plantation" (xvii).

⁹ See Morrison's 1993 Nobel Lecture for some of the author's thoughts with regards to the violence of language: "Oppressive language does more than represent violence; it is violence; does more than represent the limits of knowledge; it limits knowledge. . . . Sexist language, racist language, theistic language – all are typical of the policing languages of mastery, and cannot, do not permit new knowledge or encourage the mutual exchange of ideas" ("Nobel Lecture December 7, 1993").

too can the ways we conceive of time and temporal structures within the archive. In turning our focus to temporality and time, we may see that *Beloved* problematizes this archive-time as a lens through which to understand lived experience of the enslaved and their descendants. Perhaps in response to the short-comings and violence of archive-time as a system for understanding and reflecting enslaved experience, Morrison presents alternative temporal structures and temporal experiences as they are physically and emotionally felt by *Beloved*'s once-enslaved characters and their descendants. Through such alternative temporalities – at times referred to in this paper as temporal alterities – *Beloved* presents new ways of understanding and experiencing time which run counter to those temporalities supporting the archive, particularly in their preferencing of the phenomenological and sensorial experience of time for the novel's Black characters. Such alternative temporalities not only present a challenge to Western modes of historicization and what of the archive is often deemed unassailable fact; they also call into question dominant structures and assumed experiences of time itself.

Importantly, in line with the novel's problematizing of archive-time as a lens through which to understand enslaved experience, I propose at least four general kinds of time or temporal alternatives in the novel and examine the lived experience of such temporalities as they relate to and are informed by the logics of slavery.¹⁰ However, rather than focus mainly on how time as experienced by the characters in *Beloved*

¹⁰ The alternative temporalities I explore are as follows: Morrison's own invention of "rememory," as well as three additional kinds of time I refer to as enslavement-time, life-time, and no-time. I examine these four main temporal alternatives over the course of the paper's four sections. Importantly, these four alternative temporalities are not mutually exclusive; in fact, all four are necessarily in conversation with one another and this paper will explore some of the ways these kinds of time inform one another. These terms, then, are less discrete categorizations of how time may exist or be experienced than they are ways of conceptually naming the patterns of lived experience of time in the novel. In this sense, while different sections of my paper each roughly correspond to a particular kind of time, there are necessarily overlaps, and multiple kinds of time are usually discussed within each section.

challenges archive-time (it does), I aim to *decenter* archive-time, which tends to preference whiteness, and attend specifically to the alternative temporal experiences of the novel's Black characters as its *own* way of reading against archive-time. In this sense, I build upon the work of scholars who have identified how Morrison's work presents challenges to archive-time, though my work takes a further step in moving away from the lens of archive-time – even as something to compare time in the novel against – and instead centers and frames the lived experience of alternative temporalities in *Beloved*. In unpacking the characters' lived experience of time through a series of close-readings, I offer a reading practice of attending to the experience of time-as-lived in order to develop more nuanced understandings of *Beloved*'s enslaved subjectivities. In doing so, we may discover new lenses of time through which to understand enslaved subjectivity in the novel, lenses which may then be carried into our counter-readings of the archive of slavery more broadly.

In order to understand how my focus on such alternative temporalities rests in a critical juncture in African American studies, we must establish how the problem of the archive and the problem of time relate. Inherent to the archive is a certain model of temporality. In her work *Through other Continents: American Literature Across Deep Time* Wai Chee Dimock provides a particularly helpful image through which to understand the archive's temporal implications, and she connects our understanding of the archive and its archival histories to our consequent understanding of time itself:

This is a spatialized image: time here looks a bit like a measuring tape, with fixed segments, fixed unit lengths, each assignable to a number. The distance between any two events is measured by the distance between these numbers, telling us

whether they are remote or proximate, pertinent or not pertinent. Standardization reigns. (Dimock 2)

This sense of standardization and serialization in how Western society documents history is both informing of and informed by dominant conceptions of time. However, as Dimock points out, such standardization is not representative of how different people may experience time on an individual basis, nor of how time may truly ‘pass.’ “Are the properties of time truly identical to the properties of a number,” she asks, “[a]nd do modern human beings always experience time as a measuring tape, uniform and abstract . . .?” (2). Such a question becomes particularly relevant when we consider how Western conceptions of time which are linear and forward-thrusting preference white histories, upon which white subjectivities are based. If Western archival histories preference white histories and white subjects, then so too do the linear and forward-thrusting temporal structures which correspond to these archival standards. This presents a particular problem when considering the lived experience of Black beings under and in the wake of slavery.¹¹ The problem of the archive’s temporality – archive-time – requires that we examine and consider counter-temporalities and experiences of time beyond those held in the archive. Toni Morrison’s *Beloved* presents several of these counter-temporalities, and it is these other (and ‘Other’) kinds of time that are the focus of my work.

¹¹ “In the wake” as an idiomatic expression is not unique to African American studies or to Sharpe, but I am particularly influenced by her use of the phrase in her own work. Sharpe’s work is at once metaphorical and abstract – her many meanings of “the wake,” including that path of water which follows the slave ship and the wake as ongoing funeral service and mourning, are evocative and poetic – and entirely tangible, as she explores the social and legal conditions of Blackness inherited and continued from slavery of “non/status” translated to “ongoing criminalization” as well as those real ontological impacts of “endlessly reinvigorated brutality in, and on, [Black] bodies” (15). She writes: “In the wake, the past that is not past reappears, always, to rupture the present” (9).

My work joins that of many African Americanist scholars who examine conceptions of alternative temporalities in these ways. These alternative temporalities are not necessarily or primarily interested in the past (though they may be), but rather are interested in examining how (perhaps as a result slavery) time is both conceived of and experienced by Black beings in ways which are not congruent with our dominant conceptions of time. For example, Michelle Wright¹² and P.J. Brendese¹³ discuss the need for temporalities which are more representative of Black experience and/or not burdened by the violence of dominant temporal systems. In general, scholarship looking toward alternative temporalities in these ways is interested in examining the problems of dominant temporal systems while also proposing the need for new ways of understanding time which are more inclusive and/or representative of Black identities.

There are also a number of scholars who explore the idea of dominant and alternative temporal systems in *Beloved*, specifically. Scholars like J. Brooks Bouson, Luana de Souza Sutter, Therese Higgins, Linda Krumholz, and Andrew Hock Soon Ng tend to think about how Morrison may be breaking with dominant understandings of time and/or presenting some kind of disavowal of dominant time through new temporal systems. Their readings of *Beloved* engage with ideas of inherited trauma across time,¹⁴

¹² In *Physics of Blackness: Beyond the Middle Passage Epistemology*, Wright argues for the shortcomings of Middle Passage epistemology, arguing that it relies on linear temporal structures of Western thought. She proposes a new way of understanding Blackness in relation to time: “epiphenomenal spacetime,” which reflects the “now,” “the current moment, a moment that is not directly borne out of another (i.e., causally created)” (4).

¹³ In “Black Noise in White Time: Segregated Temporality and Mass Incarceration,” Brendese argues for what he calls a temporal segregation between white understandings of time and those of Black people and discusses how “dominant temporal flows” – which he later refers to as “white time” – situate Black beings as “out of time” or “behind the times” (84).

¹⁴ See Bouson and his argument that Morrison depicts “intergenerational transmission of victimization and shame” (5). See also de Souza Sutter, who talks about the role of trauma in bringing past into the present in the novel, and Ng, who examines the trauma and the uncanny as they are attached to space and place across time in *Beloved*.

temporal loops or temporal stasis as a result of trauma,¹⁵ hauntings of slavery past,¹⁶ and re-writings and reconstructions of the past.¹⁷ My work engages with this practice of exploring alternative temporalities and builds upon the work of these scholars and others to examine the way that different kinds of time are functioning in *Beloved*, though my work proposes unique classifications and terms for understanding the kinds of time in the novel and how they function and are experienced. Further, while my work implicitly critiques dominant temporalities and archive-time, its main purpose is to foreground the lived experiences of alternative temporalities in the novel, a less common approach in criticism in its working to center the Black characters' experiences of such time as an area of focus in and of itself.

My work explores several temporalities in *Beloved* and elaborates how some of the Black characters in the novel experience these forms of time. These other ways of understanding and experiencing time are what I call temporal alterities – relationships to and experiences of time which run counter to our dominant understandings of time reinforced by archive-time. While there are many critical lenses for exploring temporal

¹⁵ See Ng for a particularly interesting reading of *Beloved*'s 124 as presenting a temporal and spatial loop.

¹⁶ This is one of the most common ways of reading alternative temporalities in the novel, though scholars don't always talk about this idea of hauntings with specific reference to temporal disavowal. For some scholars who are explicitly framing hauntings in such a way, see Higgins (who discusses such hauntings as a disavowal of Western temporal systems in favor of African cosmologies); and see Sharpe, whose discussion of the "afterlives of slavery" will be of great interest in this paper (5).

¹⁷ See Krumholz who finds that *Beloved* points to a real potential for "reconstruction of history, both national and personal," something in opposition to many scholars who read *Beloved* as resolutely pointing to the inability to reconstruct or let go of the past (405).

alterities – for example, queer studies¹⁸ and queer time,¹⁹– this paper is particularly interested in temporal alterities linked to the condition of enslavement and its afterlives as they are encountered and experienced by some of the novel’s Black characters touched by slavery; namely, Paul D, Sethe, Denver, and Beloved.

What does one’s lived experience of time look and feel like under a system of slavery which produces “always-possible” death (Sharpe 77), and how might attending to these alternative experiences of time shed light on the novel’s representation of enslaved experience? In essence, these are the questions this paper explores. More specifically, this paper will discuss how the condition of enslavement produces alternative experiences of and relationships to time which run counter to archive-time. More crucially, however, it will examine the lived experience and embodied impact of such temporal alterities in and on the Black characters of *Beloved*. In doing so, we will find that these temporal alterities under conditions of slavery and its afterlives present lived experiences of time – what I want to call life-time – which do not necessarily accord with what archive-time says a life can and should look like. Importantly, this work will explore how the conditions and

¹⁸ While I name queer studies as one kind of critical lens for looking at temporal alterities, we must recognize that many scholars identify how queerness and Blackness are deeply imbricated. Taking “queer” to mean that which “is at odds with the ‘normal,’” we might easily understand such ideas of alternate temporalities for queer beings to also be applicable to Black beings in various ways as Blackness is too figured as “other” by the constraints of dominant temporal structures (Haplerin qtd. in Rumens and Tyler 225). Indeed, scholars like Roderick Ferguson and Robert Reid Pharr read Blackness and queerness together. While I am not approaching *Beloved* through a queer studies lens, it should be noted that the very notion of temporal alterities, particularly as they are experienced by Black beings, is deeply imbued with gestures that queer studies tend to make.

¹⁹ Quite like those scholars examining alternate temporal realities for Black subjects, J. Jack Halberstam proposes that queer subjects cannot be read with the same temporality of heteronormative subjects, and instead must be considered under “alternative temporalities,” where “futures can be imagined according to logics that lie outside of those paradigmatic markers of life experience – namely, birth, marriage, reproduction, and death” (Halberstam 14). Although not the focus of my work with time here, we should also recognize that Morrison is interested in exploring queer identities alongside Black identities, as we can see in her frequent portrayal of all-female spaces and female homosocial relationships, and one could potentially explore temporal alterities in Morrison’s novels in relation to queerness specifically.

logics of enslavement as presented in the novel potentially alter the meaning and experience of this life-time in largely harmful, though at times potentially productive ways. Perhaps contrary to many examinations of alternative temporal systems, my examination of time in the novel does not find that all these temporal alterities are necessarily productive or recuperative; while we find that the temporal logics of slavery and the meaning of life-time under enslavement may not accord with dominant (white) experiences and understandings of time, such a non-accordance does not guarantee generative experience. That being said, the sixth section of this paper (“Reckoning with Time”) will gesture toward ways the novel presents such temporal alterities as imbued with productive and recuperative potentiality while also recognizing the reality of violence in many of the novel’s temporal experiences.

Importantly, I do not attempt to make a universal claim about the either harmful or productive nature of temporal alterities under slavery within or beyond the novel; to do so would be to invalidate any variety of Black people’s lived experiences of time which may not accord with those temporal alterities discussed in this paper or with the kinds of time present in Morrison’s novel. Rather, I seek to uncover patterns of lived experiences of these different kinds of time within the specific context of the novel – be they harmful or helpful – and interrogate how the condition of slavery affects the characters’ own lived experience of time or life-time. In doing so, we may see how *Beloved* provides alternative understandings of time, not simply to counter archive-time, but also, and more importantly, to create a more nuanced way of understanding and reading depictions of enslaved life. In this sense, I do not make claims that the alternative temporalities in the novel are applicable to real enslaved experience generally; in our present positioning,

there is no way to fully capture real enslaved experience, and to attempt or purport to do so would be to potentially participate in the same logics of the disfiguring archival project. Rather, I advocate for how such an approach of attending to lived experiences of time in our readings about enslaved individuals like those in *Beloved* may help to reformulate hegemonic understandings of time and create new approaches to reading the archive of slavery which recognize and create space for alternative temporal patterns and experiences.

A Note: Why *Beloved*?

Importantly, such a reading practice may be applicable to any number of narratives of enslavement beyond *Beloved*, be they fictional or non-fictional. One might imagine a project which examines Harriet Jacobs' lived experience of time in hiding during the Fugitive Slave Act as outlined in her narrative *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*; one might also imagine a project which examines temporality in Octavia Butler's *Kindred* and how Dana's experience of time is affected by conditions of enslavement when living in the antebellum past. However, I have chosen to apply the reading practice of attending to time specifically to Morrison's *Beloved* largely because of its uniquely influential place in African American studies. As we have explored, my work with *Beloved* joins a robust tradition of African Americanist scholarship examining the relationship between slavery past and present (a deeply temporal endeavor). Many consider *Beloved* as the "paradigm" of this scholarly movement with its component historical and temporal logics that the past is not past (Best 461).²⁰ On the one hand, *Beloved*'s paradigmatic status in

²⁰ See Stephen Best, who examines *Beloved*'s influence on the melancholic scholarly movement in African American Studies: "Morrison no doubt played a major hand in . . . directing attention in African American

the field means there is much that has already been said about this novel; on the other hand, that *Beloved* has been widely researched and written-on over three-plus decades speaks to the depth of readings one may apply to this work. Simply put, *Beloved* is a text we continue to revisit across time from which we may always mine new insight and meaning. It is only one of many works we may examine through such a temporal lens, though its prominent place in the field at the intersections of such questions about Blackness and time in slavery and its afterlives makes *Beloved* an appropriate place to start.

There is also something to be said for revisiting Morrison's work in the few years following her death, wherein the afterlives of slavery continue to unfold and racial justice movements calling for an end to police brutality advocate for anti-racist policies and institutions. Following the surge of Black Lives Matter protests during the summer of 2020, Morrison's works, including *Beloved*, found themselves on many an 'anti-racist reading list,'²¹ chosen for what they may 'teach' or reveal about the history and present of racism in America.²² While we must remain critical of the kind of passive action such reading lists may promote to their primarily white audience as well as their tendency to

studies straight toward the slave past and diaspora. It would not be going too far to add that her Nobel Prize in Literature in 1993 positioned *Beloved* to shape the way a generation of scholars conceived of its ethical relationship to the past. For a distinctive if not singular moment in the history of the interpretive disciplines, a novel set the terms of the political and historiographical agenda" (459). Himself deeply critical of the melancholic scholarly trend, Best argues that we not confuse *Beloved's* impact of shaping the scholarly field with its intent, one he argues points toward the limits of such a melancholic approach.

²¹ See Jemima McEvoy, "Books About Racism Dominate Best-Seller Lists Amid Protests" and Stephanie Merry and Ron Charles, "Books about race and racism are dominating best-seller lists."

²² Such 'anti-racist reading lists' are numerous and were largely put forward during the summer of 2020 by a vast range of organizations, from national news platforms like the New York Times, to fashion magazines, to local bookstores and academic libraries. See, for example, *The New York Times's* "Ibram X. Kendi's Antiracist Reading List" which lists *The Bluest Eye*. See also, Random House's "The Antiracist Reading List" which cites Morrison's editorial project *The Black Book* (Random House), as well as Elle's "The Anti-Racist reading List," which lists Morrison's short-story "Recitatif" (Baker), and Vogue's "An Essential Anti-Racist Reading List" which lists *Beloved* (Maitland).

reduce works by Black authors to being mainly understood as ‘books about race,’²³ we must also consider the significance of Morrison’s works resting on many of these lists. That a fictional work written over three decades ago is largely thought as a text through which to learn about racism in the present day is testament to the absolute necessity of revisiting this text with a critical eye while remaining cognizant of the implications behind labeling Morrison’s work in such didactic terms. These present-day implications allow us to approach *Beloved* with any number of new lenses, including the one this paper employs of examining temporal alterities and lived experiences of time.

²³ Lauren Michele Jackson explains this tension of the ‘anti-racist reading list’ well: “An anti-racist reading list means well. How could it not with some of the finest authors, scholars, poets, and critics of the twentieth century among its bullet points? Still, I am left to wonder: Who is this for? The syllabus, as these lists are sometimes called, seldom instructs or guides. It is no pedagogue. It is unclear whether each book supplies a portion of the holistic racial puzzle or are intended as revelatory islands in and of themselves. Aside from the contemporary teaching texts, genre appears indiscriminately: essays slide against memoir and folklore, poetry squeezed on either side by sociological tomes. This, maybe ironically but maybe not, reinforces an already pernicious literary divide that books written by or about minorities are for educational purposes, racism and homophobia and stuff, wholly segregated from matters of form and grammar, lyric and scene” (“What Is an Anti-Racist Reading List For?”).

TIME OF REMORY: ENCOUNTERING, INHABITING, AND HOLDING THE TEMPORAL LANDSCAPES OF SLAVERY

One of the more notable examples of alternative temporality in the novel is in Sethe's concept of rememory. Her understanding of rememory is packed with alternative temporal movements, and it is perhaps one of the most fleshed out examples of a counter temporality in the novel:

I was talking about time. It's so hard for me to believe in it. Some things go. Pass on. Some things just stay. I used to think it was my rememory. You know. Some things you forget. Other things you never do. But it's not. Places, places are still there. . . . Someday you be walking down the road and you hear something or see something going on. So clear. And you think it's you thinking it up. . . . But no. It's when you bump into a rememory that belongs to somebody else. 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.

(Morrison, *Beloved* 43-44)

Sethe's explanation of rememory punctuates and directly follows one of Denver's own experiences with rememory. Just before this scene Denver finds herself stumbling upon the rememory of her own birth. This is not simply a remembering of a story she was once told; she physically and sensorily enters the landscape of the memory as if she is living it herself. She "hear[s] the birds in the thick woods, the crunch of the leaves underfoot; see[s] her mother making her way up into the hills . . ." (36). The deeper Denver travels into the memory, the more her sensory experience melds with her mother's, and the

pronouns “she” and “her” seamlessly shift the subject of their belonging from Denver – “see[ing] her mother” walking in the woods – to Sethe – feeling “the little antelope” digging at “the ground of her womb” (36). Here, just as Denver “stepped into the story” of her own birth, she also seems to step into her mother’s body and mind.

What is particularly interesting about Denver’s rememorying here is the physical and spatial quality of her accessing the memory. It is only when Denver approaches 124 and sees “the tender embrace of the dress sleeve” around her mother through the window, coupled with “the thin, whipping snow [Denver] was standing in” that she is reminded of the event of her birth (35). This visual and spatial encounter acts almost as a portal, a sensorial ushering-in of the rememory which allows Denver to transport herself to a temporal reality other than her own. And this transporting is one of stumbling or “bump[ing]” into that place and time which, “even though it’s all over—over and done with,” is nevertheless there (in time and space) for stumbling-into (44).

Rememory then, as a temporal logic in the novel, preferences a sort of phenomenological temporality. Under the logic of rememory, time moves according to one’s felt-experience and one may encounter and/or enter the temporal landscape – “locations marked by the past in ways that ‘literally [break] temporal continuity’” (de Souza Sutter 329) – of their own or someone else’s memories of a place and time. This kind of temporality is interested in not just thinking about the past, or of any other time, but in the lived experience of that other temporal space. It is interested in one’s sensory experience of that other time and place, how a smell, a sight, a feeling of “thin, whipping snow” around one’s body can open the door to an alternate temporal space. And while some rememories, such as the one of Denver’s birth, may appear less harmful to the one

who comes across it, we must also consider the potential for danger that accompanies such a deeply felt rememory of the enslaved. That Denver can have a deeply phenomenological experience of the temporal landscape of Sweet Home is what motivates Sethe's warning that Denver can "never go there" (44).²⁴ However, as the haunting of Beloved indicates, there is little Sethe can do to protect Denver from such dangerous temporal experiences, as the rememories of slavery's horrors (including its "afterlives" as Sharpe aptly terms them) exist well-beyond and well-after the time and place of Sweet Home plantation (Sharpe 8).

We might turn to Sharpe's discussion of the "afterlives of slavery" to supplement our understanding of the potentially harmful and inescapable nature of rememory. Sethe's emphasis on "*bump[ing]* into a rememory that belongs to somebody else" emphasizes that there is not always choice or freedom in the rememories that one must encounter and experience (Morrison, *Beloved* 43, emphasis added). This inability to choose how, when, and which rememories one encounters then feels reminiscent of hauntings, and it reminds us of Sharpe's "hold" of slavery that continues to hold and haunt present Black life. Sharpe's "hold" is a key facet of her discussion of slavery's "afterlives," and it is one which illuminates this idea of inescapability as well as transformation and translation of rememory between and across time and space. The term "hold" references that hold of a Middle Passage ship where colonizers forcibly imprisoned and transported Black Africans to sites of enslavement, though Sharpe's "hold" encompasses the afterlives and

²⁴ As Sam Durrant notes, Sethe's fear of the temporal landscape of 124 also exceeds the physical space of 124: "Although [Sethe] then seeks to protect Denver by telling her 'you can't never go there,' her real fear is that 'there' will once again come to 124" (Durrant 84). Building on Durrant's reading and gesturing toward some of this paper's later ideas, perhaps the "there" that threatens the space of 124 is really one that threatens Denver anywhere she goes, as it is not only Sweet Home that Sethe fears but a sort of temporal logics of slavery which threaten her children with "always-possible" death (Sharpe 71).

“trans*formations”²⁵ of the ship’s hold in, on, around, and between Black bodies (Sharpe 30).²⁶ “We inhabit and are inhabited by the hold” says Sharpe, and the “hold” transforms, translates, transpires across space and time to hold Black beings in the wake of slavery (69). The “hold,” then, might be understood as a sort of temporal landscape which is itself always already existing: “Across time and space the languages and apparatus of the hold and its violences multiply” (Sharpe 100).

Indeed, like rememory, Sharpe’s “hold” is deeply temporal, or rather, “a/temporal,” in its translation and transformation across time (Sharpe 76). We might understand rememory as another site of the “hold,” as rememories of enslavement transform and translate the temporal landscape of slavery and slavery’s hold even beyond the time and space of what we understand to be the ‘period of slavery.’ Perhaps as a function of the “hold,” Sethe and Denver “inhabit and are inhabited by” rememory, even those for which they were not there to experience (69). The encountering of the hold now feels similar to this idea of rememory; the event of slavery or the era of the hold of the middle passage ship may be, as Sethe says of Sweet Home, “over and done with,” in the most literal sense, but the vestiges of the hold in the form of the prison system, police

²⁵ This term, “trans*formation,” is one Sharpe uses, and while I will not be focusing on the nuance of her “Trans*” here, her intention behind the asterisk is generally one of openness and flexibility, and it evokes meaning which is much more complex than the ‘change’ meaning of “transformation” itself: “The asterisk after a word functions as the wildcard, and I am thinking the trans* in that way; as a means to mark the ways the slave and the Black occupy what Saidiya Hartman calls the ‘position of the unthought’ (Hartman and Wilderson 2003). The asterisk after the prefix ‘trans’ holds the place for open thinking (from and into that position). It speaks, as well, to a range of embodied experiences called gender and to Euro-Western gender’s dismantling, its inability to hold in/on Black flesh. The asterisk speaks to a range of configurations of Black being that take the form of translation, transatlantic, transgression, transgender, transformation, transmogrification, transcontinental, transfixated, trans-Mediterranean, transubstantiation, . . . transmigration, and more” (Sharpe 30).

²⁶ The transformations of the “hold” across time and space seem endless as Sharpe identifies the “holding” of the prison system which “repeats the logics . . . of the slave ship” (75), the birth canal of Black mothers which delivers “non/status” (74), the normal-deemed-“furtive” movements of young Black men who “fit the description” (86).

brutality, etc., maintain and refashion that other temporal reality of the enslaved come before. The “hold” is the mechanism for the violence of rememory which Sethe describes: “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” (Morrison, *Beloved* 43-44).

Further, evocative of Sharpe’s statement that “[t]he holds multiply,” rememory itself seems to contain layers of other rememories multiplied within one another (Sharpe 73). Inside the rememory of Denver’s birth, for example, is another rememory of Sethe’s childhood. Denver remembers Sethe, pregnant with “the little antelope,” and Sethe’s dancing antelope triggers Sethe’s deeper rememory of the “song and dance” “of that place where she was born” (Morrison, *Beloved* 37). Sethe seamlessly shifts from the temporal landscape of her laboring antelope to the landscape of her childhood: “[W]hy she thought of an antelope Sethe could not imagine since she has never seen one. She guessed it must have come from before Sweet Home, when she was very young. Of that place where she was born . . . she remembered only song and dance” (37). Within the space of these sentences, Sethe bumps into the rememory of those songs and dances:

Oh but when they sang. And oh but when they danced and sometimes they danced the antelope. The men as well as the ma’ams, one of whom was certainly her own. They shifted shapes and became something other. Some unchained, demanding other whose feet knew her pulse better than she did. Just like this one in her stomach. (37)

Interestingly, the dancing of the antelope, a rememory itself, recalls the transporting quality of rememory. The dance is a portal through which people “shifted shapes and

became something other,” a description which feels quite like Denver’s senses melding into her mother’s in the act and site of rememory. And among those who dance the antelope, somewhere, is Sethe’s own “ma’am,” herself housed in rememory of the dance within the rememory of Denver’s birth (37).

Rememory then is layered, and within these layers are generations of memories and of people, “overlapping beings,” ancestors that hold and are held by the rememories (Perez 198). In stumbling upon a rememory, you stumble upon all the layers of rememories – whether yours or someone else’s – housed therein.²⁷ At the end of this rememory of the song and dance is another seamless shifting from this deeper temporal landscape of the dancing antelope back to the wider memory frame of the kicking antelope in her belly. The movement between rememories and between temporal landscapes here is smooth and fluid, and one might imagine the possible paths of such movement, all the sites of rememory into which one can bump, to be endless.

If we look deeper into the rememory, the layers and paths of rememory continue to multiply. At the start of Denver’s rememory is Sethe, walking and soon collapsing on her swollen, numb feet, sunken in “wild onions on the bloody side of the Ohio River” as she attempts her escape from Kentucky and Sweet Home (Morrison, *Beloved* 37). It is in this immobile position, on the verge of death while housing new life, that Sethe considers “the thought of herself stretched out dead while the little antelope lived on—an hour? a day? a day and a night?—in her lifeless body” (38). Thinking of Sharpe, we might

²⁷ Perez’s reading of rememory as “overlapping beings” (198) and my own discussion of the intergenerational quality of rememory might also be in conversation with Stephen Best who deems Sethe’s rememory “history as memory,” and a collective memory at that. In *Beloved*, regardless of whether a history belongs to one personally or through family, he argues, the history is collectively remembered, an experience of the collective Black existence (Best 461).

consider the dying womb here its own site of rememory, a rememory of the hold of the Middle Passage which Sethe and Denver both inhabit and are inhabited by. Sharpe says:

The birth canal of Black women or women who birth blackness, then, is another kind of domestic Middle Passage; the birth canal, that passageway from the womb through which a fetus passes during birth. *The belly of the ship births blackness; the birth canal remains in, and as, the hold.* The belly of the ship births blackness (as no/relation). ...

The slave ship, the womb and the coffle, and the long dehumaning project; we continue to feel and be the fall ... out. (Sharpe 74, emphasis in original)

Indeed, much how Sharpe frames the mother as the site and deliverer of the “hold,” we may read Sethe a site of rememory and a deliverer of that rememory. When Sethe’s ‘rescuer’ Amy Denver recalls the image of a drowned Black man and says to Sethe “[y]our feet remind me of him” she points to Sethe’s corporeal form as a site of rememory, one which holds and is held by the image and reality of Black death, and which itself is about to birth blackness in Denver both from and into the “hold” (42).²⁸

This rememory functions as a kind of alternative temporal system, one which does not require forward-thrusting linearity or which insists that events of the past cannot happen again or do not exist anymore. It points to a kind of counter temporal situation, one which speaks to the ways people might be able to move in and across time in multiple directions. Rememory is both about one’s experience of time and one’s ability

²⁸ Sharpe also points to the layers of the hold in the very naming of the fetus as an antelope. She connects the naming to a real slave ship called the *Antelope*, and she reads the layers and multiplications of the hold in the multiplying presence of other antelopes – the dance and the fetus – in the novel. We might then understand the *Antelope* to be another layer of rememory as well and one that Denver is housed in and birthed from – the birth canal and “belly of the ship that births blackness” (Sharpe 74).

(whether voluntary or forced) to move between and across time, to explore temporal realities and possibilities which may or not be their own. Indeed, the quotidian nature of “bump[ing]” into memories of enslavement as well as its deeply sensorial impacts explains the deep danger of memory that Sethe fears. Such an emphasis on these dangerous qualities of memory points to one of the larger themes of this paper exploring how the novel’s temporal alternatives may be harmful and not conducive to productive existence. That being said, such movement between temporal landscapes of memory in *Beloved* is neither solely productive nor solely harmful, and the potentially recuperative qualities of such a temporal alterity as memory will be discussed in a later section of this paper. Regardless of its potential for harm or recuperation, examining the role of memory in the novel serves to expand understandings of temporality beyond those archive-time permits and presents how looking to temporal alternatives in general may be a helpful lens for developing a nuanced understanding of the Black characters’ lived experiences.

ENSLAVEMENT-TIME: LIVING AND THE VALUE OF LIFE-TIME IN THE
LANDSCAPE OF “ALWAYS-POSSIBLE DEATH”²⁹

Since *Beloved* engages with the conditions of enslavement, we should consider how enslavement in the novel produces situations wherein characters experience time and its flows in ways that are counter to archive-time, which insists on linearity, forward-movement, measurability, and even-pacing. The condition of enslavement, including the movement of the Middle Passage, are certainly related to the tenets of rememory, and we must consider that rememory in *Beloved* is largely interested in how Black subjects in particular encounter the temporal landscape of slavery past even as beings who did not necessarily experience it themselves (“ . . .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” [Morrison, *Beloved* 43-44]). However, *Beloved* contains examples of how the condition of enslavement alters one’s experience of and relationship to time and temporal flows which are not necessarily engaging with rememory and how one moves through and across time. Whereas rememory is interested in the ways one moves through and across time and temporal landscapes, these other instances are interested in *ways time moves around/through/across a being, particularly as it relates to conditions of enslavement*. Within the context of the novel, we might call this the time of slavery or enslavement-time, and this time is interested in how the condition and logics of enslavement contribute to alterities in the way time moves and is experienced in relation to the enslaved or descendant of the enslaved subject. In naming such a time, I do not mean to insist on a monolithic experience of time under enslavement; to do so would be

²⁹ From Sharpe: “We understand the compulsions of capital in our always-possible deaths. But those bodies nevertheless try to exceed those compulsions of capital. They, we, inhabit knowledge that the Black body is the sign of immi/a/nent death” (71).

to invalidate real lived experiences of such time which do not necessarily agree with the ones I am discussing in the novel. That being said, for the purposes of examining *Beloved*, I want to discuss where there are common themes and patterns in how characters experience time as influenced by conditions of enslavement. In this section, I will examine how Paul D and Sethe experience and value time as affected by the logics of enslavement in order to explore how the novel's temporal alterities of slavery produce situations wherein one's lived-experience of time may be one of death-in-life.

The Logics and Embodied Impact of Death-in-Life: Paul D and the Prison Camp

For Paul D, time and space are deeply imbricated. Since escaping slavery, Paul D's movement has been largely dependent on how much time he spends in any given place. Preferring not to stay in any one place "for longer than a few months," Paul D's relationship to time is one of avoidance. The time of staying put is almost always too long and perhaps too painful. The pattern of his relationship to space and time has been as follows: "Move. Walk. Run. Hide. Steal and move on" (Morrison, *Beloved* 78). While much of this movement and inability to stay in any one place for too long is a necessity of escape and being on the run from enslavement, his pattern for moving on in space and time extends to his life after enslavement as well. Despite his intention to stay with Sethe, he cannot stay in 124 for long. Even his movement *within* the space of 124 – a space which might be understood in temporal terms of stasis and remaining, quite opposite from Paul D's moving and leaving – is undergirded by this compulsion to not be able to

stay in one place any longer.³⁰ As Paul D explains it, this inability to stay put springs from his past enslavement and confinement:

. . . he didn't believe he could live with a woman—any woman—for over two out of three months. . . . walking off when he got ready was the only way he could convince himself that he would no longer have to sleep, pee, eat or swing a sledge hammer in chains. (Morrison, *Beloved* 49)

Here, we see that Paul D's not staying put for too long is in some senses a matter of trying to gain control of his relationship to time; moving, leaving *at any time* is a privilege of the free, and Paul D's "walking off when he got ready" is perhaps an attempt to own how and where he spends his time (an ownership not accessible to the enslaved, whose labor and time is not their own) (49). This demonstrates an inherently temporal quality of enslavement, and it is one which informs Paul D's relationship to time as a constant battle for autonomy (and, one wonders if the afterlives of slavery allow for his having autonomy over his time at all). Crucially, Paul D's not having claim to or ownership of his time – both how he spends time and the longevity of his time alive altogether – means that his life can be taken away at any given time. It is this always impending and uncontrollable end of his time alive – life-time – which produces a kind of death-in-life under slavery; it is a conditional-life-time that can and will be lost.

Importantly, as Brendese notes, "loss is endemic to the nature of time," and this idea of living toward death is universal for all living beings; "[t]he tragedy of time's passage is

³⁰ Considering 124's past as a way-station for travelers as well as a site of haunting for the baby ghost (among many other factors which will be discussed later in the paper), 124 seems to house the temporal logics of stasis and remaining in one place and time – temporal flows which run counter to Paul D's own temporal preferences of movement and leaving. There is much to be said about Paul D's relationship to *Beloved* as it relates to his inability to stay-put, though, as this paper discusses in a later section, we cannot separate *Beloved* from the temporal logics of 124, so to discuss how *Beloved* is "moving" Paul D out of the house is also to discuss how the temporal landscape of 124 is moving him too (Morrison, *Beloved* 134).

part of the finality of a mortal life: life is something we are literally ‘born to lose’” (Brendese 81). However, as Brendese also points out, the imminence and likelihood of this loss of life is more acute for Black people than for white people, leading to what he calls “segregated temporality” – the difference in lived experience of time and the imminence of losing time along racial lines (82). Paul D is disproportionately vulnerable to this loss of life and expedited death. Under the logics and afterlives of enslavement, Paul D’s life is one of those “lives meant to be unlivable” of which Sharpe speaks, threatened by the “always-possib[ility]” of death (Sharpe 22, 71)

What is the felt experience of death-in-life? We have begun to understand how the condition of enslavement produces a state of death-in-life, and we now look to how one experiences and feels such time in a deeply phenomenological sense. We might take a closer look at Paul D’s reflections on his time in the Georgia prison camp to illuminate the felt experience of living in what Sharpe calls “the present tense of death” (Sharpe 88). In examining Paul D’s (and later Sethe’s) felt-experience of this temporal alterity of death-in-life, we may observe how the condition of enslavement alters these characters’ valuation of their own life-time, where not only does the “always-possible” death at the hands of oppressor threaten one’s life-time, but one’s own valuation of life-time diminishes and death becomes preferable to the temporality of enslavement (Sharpe 71).

In the prison camp of Alfred, Georgia the passage of time is marked by the sound of a gunshot. The day begins not with the rising of the sun or a rooster’s crow, but with a sound which often precedes Black death: “All forty-six men woke to rifle shot. All forty-six.” The gunshot punctuates the next step in the time of day: “[w]hen all forty-six were standing in a line in the trench, another rifle shot signaled the climb out and up to the

ground above” (Morrison, *Beloved* 126). Yet another, some days, in the usual following step of forced fellatio gruesomely called “breakfast,” for the “kneeling man [who] chose gunshot in his head as the price, maybe, of taking a bit of foreskin with him to Jesus” (127). These gunshots and the “Hiiii!” and “Hoooo!” of the prisoner called Hi Man are the sounds which punctuate the passage of time, and they seem themselves to *usher in* the passage of time. Paul D himself seems to have no way of accounting for time internally and must rely on these external markers: “He believed to this day that the ‘Hiiii!’ at dawn and the ‘Hoooo!’ when evening came were the responsibility Hi Man assumed because he alone knew what was enough, what was too much, when things were over, when the time had come” (127-28).

Paul D’s disconnect from the passage of time on a daily basis is further emphasized by the repetitive lift and fall of the hammer: “And they beat.” The drone of the beating is as steady and unmoving as the temporal flow of confinement, and the soul-crushing labor slows almost to a stop – but not quite. It is in this temporal landscape of too-long-time that the men wish for death as a final stop to the drudging of the beating:

. . . they beat it away. Singing love songs to Mr. Death, they smashed his head. More than the rest, they killed the flirt whom folks called Life for leading them on. Making them think the next sunrise would be worth it; that another stroke of time would do it at last. Only when she was dead would they be safe. (Morrison, *Beloved* 128)

This preference for death over life is one of the major temporal alterities we find under the condition of enslavement in the novel. Notably, we see this valuing of death over life in Sethe’s decision to kill her children rather than have them sent back to Sweet Home

plantation. And while this desire for death is not specific to the condition of enslavement, it is still perhaps the fundamental example of a temporal alterity, the one which goes against the linear timeline which says one lives before he dies and that to survive is the goal. Here, in the space of the beat of time, where time loses shape and the beating is never-ending, the finality of death is the greatest reprieve. For Paul D, the temporal flow slows to such a near-stop: “Eighty-six days and done. Life was dead. Paul D beat her butt all day every day till there was not a whimper in her. . . . Life rolled over dead. Or so he thought” (129).

This is the beat of enslavement time, of confinement time, Paul D’s too-long-time which won’t stop beating. And this is the beat of not just beating hammers, but the hearts which continue to beat against their best wishes, the punctuations of being beat by the butts of rifles, the rhythmic beat of the monotonous temporal flow, that dead-space of silence in a beat between speech, the laborious beating wings of a bird keeping afloat, the beaten-down but still alive sentiment of ‘I am beat.’ In trying to maintain constant movement, never staying in one place for too long, Paul D works to avoid that temporality of slavery where how he spends his time, and the flow of time itself, calls for his death and is beyond his control.

The temporal logics of enslavement here are pervasive and extend beyond simply dictating how long Paul D is willing to stay in one place. They also appear to affect his willingness to form deep emotional attachments to people or things. When Paul D confronts Sethe with the newspaper clipping detailing the murder of her child and her subsequent arrest, we see how the logics of enslavement and confinement alter one’s temporal relationship with love and loving. Indeed, the act of loving something or

someone outside of oneself seems to have temporal implications too, implications which may also be informed by enslavement. For Paul D, loving is as dangerous as thinking that “the next sunrise would be worth it” (Morrison, *Beloved* 128), dangerous because that which the enslaved loves does not and cannot belong to them, and it can be taken away from them *at any given time*. And the biggest and most dangerous love of all for Paul D is the love of family: “A woman, a child, a brother—a big love like that would split you wide open in Alfred, Georgia” (191). While anyone, enslaved or free, can suffer the loss of a loved one unexpectedly, can have a loved one taken from them at any time, this threat is more acute under the logics of enslavement. Black death is regular under and in the wake of slavery; “one must always be prepared with knowledge of the possibility of the violent and quotidian death of one’s [loved one]” (Sharpe 78). For Paul D, when “[a] woman, a child, a brother” can be taken away at any time as part of the everyday violence of slavery – the repetitive hammering beat of Black death – loving them for any amount of time is too dangerous (Morrison, *Beloved* 191). When the man with guns can “stop you from hearing doves or loving moonlight,” can stop you from hearing, loving, or living at all (can stop *your own time*), time cannot be counted on, and the time to live, let alone the time to love, is never guaranteed (191).³¹ This points to an expectation of loss, an expectation of Black death which is part and parcel to the temporal logics of slavery; when Black lives are continuously and routinely cut-short, it changes the temporal meaning of terms and phrases like *life-span*, *life-expectancy*, the *love of my life*. M. NourbeSe Philip reflects this well in discussing the logics and laws of slavery which

³¹ Sharpe explains this idea of an altered relationship to loving with specific relation to Black mothers and children: “In the afterlives of *partus sequitur ventrem* what does, what can mothering mean for Black women, for Black people? . . . Is it mothering if one knows that one’s child might be killed at any time in the hold, in the wake by the state no matter who wields the gun?” (78).

deemed the Black Africans on board the Zong slave ship property to be thrown overboard: “Like a magic wand the law erases all ties – linguistic, societal, cultural, familial, parental, and spiritual; it strips the African down to the basic common denominator of man, woman, or child, . . . Without a history, name or culture. *In life but without life. Without life in life*” (Philip 196, emphasis added). Under the temporal flows of slavery, the *-ing* ending of loving and living that signals action and motion across the passage of time is thrown into disarray. Life is without life.

The logics of enslavement so too alter the value of the time of living. Paul D and the other prisoners “[s]inging love songs to Mr. Death” while “[killing] the flirt whom folks called Life” points to one of the largest temporal alterities in the novel which the logics of enslavement encourages for several of the characters: the (non)time of death becomes preferable to the too-long-time of enslavement. This counter-instinct to die rather than live goes against the more linear and forward-thrusting logics of dominant Western temporalities that insist that “the next sunrise will be worth it,” that the sun will rise at all (128). Such is the case for the white Edward Bodwin under the temporal logics of freedom and whiteness, for whom every night the sun may be counted on to “drop once more to give him the blessing of a good night’s sleep,” and for whom such a blessing “would be enough” (307). These are not the temporal logics for Paul D in the prison camp when even “[l]ife was dead,” nor are they the temporal logics which lead Sethe to choose the (non)time of death for her children over the too-long-time (any time is too long) of slavery (129).

The Transformed Value of Life-Time: Sethe's Killing of her Child

As of yet in this section, we have focused much of our attention on Paul D and the pervasive temporal logics of enslavement and confinement. Keeping in mind that this is only one character's experience of time under the logics of enslavement, Paul D's altered sense of time is not meant to speak to all enslaved experience, but rather, the general idea that the logics of enslavement produce situations wherein enslaved individuals may have a relationship to time and temporal flows which are not in line with dominant notions of temporality – whether these be productive, neutral, or decidedly harmful. However, the main principle undergirding Paul D's experience of time here – that his time living/loving/laboring/breathing/existing under/after slavery is not his own, Philip's life without life – is perhaps one of the more widespread temporal alterities in the novel, and something to which Sethe in her relationship to slavery is subject as well, though to different effect.

As discussed, Sethe in her action of attempting to kill her children rather than have them sent back to enslavement challenges traditional notions of what one's temporal trajectory should look like. Death in childhood is itself counter to dominant understandings of the traditional components for the *time of life* and its stages – birth, childhood, maturity, old-age, and death – and even more so when that death is seen as favorable to life. As we explored in the above section focusing on Paul D and his relationship to the temporality of loving, shortened life-expectancy and the quotidian nature of Black death is certainly an important part of why we may consider Sethe's killing of her child to be counter to dominant notions of what a life is 'supposed' to look like. However, Sethe's killing of her child contains its own unique temporal

underpinnings which are in many ways different to these issues of forced Black death at the hands of the white oppressor.

Sethe repeatedly refers to her action in killing her child in terms of moving them *elsewhere*. “I took and put my babies where they’d be safe,” says Sethe, “out, away, over there where no one could hurt them. Over there. Outside this place where they would be safe” (Morrison, *Beloved* 193, 192). This emphasis on moving her children somewhere else could be read in the literal sense, one of moving them to the shed away from the view of schoolteacher and the other slavers who have come to return the family to Sweet Home. However, we know that the shed itself is not a barrier for schoolteacher and the other slavers as Sethe and her children are quite easily discovered there; rather, the shed appears to be not the *elsewhere* to which Sethe refers, but the *site from which* Sethe sends her slain child elsewhere. Death then becomes the “elsewhere” of safety, the other place “[o]ver there,” – the ‘other side’ – where her children may not be subject to the logics of slavery in Sweet Home and beyond (192). This framing of death as a place is interesting because it supplements the temporal nature of death – that is, of time ending, or no time, or perhaps some other kind of time altogether in the afterlife – to create an understanding of death which is spatio-temporal. The *elsewhere* of death combines with the *elsewhen*, framing death as a kind of temporal landscape, one which provides an alternative to the time of slavery and the temporal landscape of Sweet Home. And if death becomes an alternative temporal landscape which is safer than that of enslavement, then Sethe’s killing of her child presents a disavowal of temporal norms which say that death is a tragedy to be avoided; when death becomes preferable and even favorable, perhaps

redemptive, the temporal logics which insist on linearity and even-pacing of the course of life are thrown into disarray. The value of life-time itself is questioned.

Importantly, while Sethe views her actions in killing her child as a way of bringing the child to safety, we must be careful to remember that, regardless of whether Sethe sees this as her choice or “claim,” the conditions of enslavement have created an environment wherein Sethe felt she did not have any other choice.³² In reading Sethe’s killing of her child as a challenge to dominant temporal understandings of the value of life and life-time and as a presentation of death as preferable to life, I do not mean to say that the child’s death presents some kind of ‘happy-ending’ or that Black death is in any way preferable to Black life. Rather, I mean to emphasize that the logics of slavery have created a situation wherein Sethe’s understanding and value of time is altered in such a way that the temporal landscape of Sweet Home and of life altogether takes on meaning which is counter to that forwarded by archive-time. This is also not to take away from Sethe’s stated agency or “claim” here; under the logics of slavery, Sethe’s valuation of time and the time of living is necessarily different than it would be under the logics of freedom and whiteness, and her claim, though distorted by the logics of enslavement, is nevertheless a claim to motherhood which is available to her under the circumstances.³³

³² See Hopkins, who explains the alteration of ‘choice’ and ‘consent’ under slavery with specific reference to readings of Harriet Jacobs’ *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* that see Jacobs’ having sex with white Mr. Flint as a liberating choice. “If you do not really have a choice, an ‘unhindered choice’ as Hartman would suggest, then can one say that you have made any choice?” (10). Though Hopkins is discussing sexual consent in particular, I believe this discussion of what may and may not be considered “unhindered choice” under slavery is relevant when considering the oppressive conditions which contributed to Sethe’s ‘choice.’

³³ Mohanty also points out that Sethe’s actions might be considered not only a way of saving her child but also a kind of resistance to these logics of enslavement I mention: “Sethe’s act of infanticide resonates differently after we have reconsidered the role of motherhood under slavery: we think, for instance, of Sethe’s unnamed mother who throws all her children except Sethe away as an act of resistance against rape and racial humiliation. It is something of this order that Sethe decides to do in slitting her child’s throat. . . . We may or may not agree with Sethe’s argument, but we need to come to terms with the historical community she claims as her own, and reexamine the moral theory we bring with us” (67-68).

Sethe's valuation of the (non)time of death – (or possibly of the other, unknown temporal landscape of death as referenced in Beloved's remembering her time in that 'other' place "[o]ver there" [Morrison, *Beloved* 146]) – as more valuable than the time of living under slavery points to how the conditions of enslavement necessitate, even require alternatives to dominant temporalities; in the case of Sethe's killing of her child, the too-long-time of slavery held in Sweet Home plantation requires the development of a counter-temporal logic which says that the (non)time of death is preferable to the time of life, figuring death as a temporal landscape – "Over there" – of safety and reprieve from the temporal landscape of the plantation (192). Whether or not Sethe's belief that she has made her daughter safe in sending her to this alternate temporal landscape is consistent with Beloved's experience is another question, though one to consider before we can say that Sethe's counter-temporal logics here are necessarily productive or redemptive.

NO-TIME AND TEMPORAL DISFIGUREMENT: EMBODIED IMPACTS OF DEATH-IN-LIFE

The temporal alterities we have explored in *Beloved* take many forms. We have discussed ways that characters move in relation to time, as crossing through and between temporal landscapes through rememory; we have also talked about ways that time moves in relation to the characters, or ways that the characters experience or feel the passage (or non-passage) of time, with specific reference to Paul D's and Sethe's experience of time's passage and the value of life-time under slavery.

In seeing the many forms of time in the novel, we cannot necessarily classify the temporal alterities here under any single universalizing term of understanding. That being said, most of the experiences and relationships to time we have encountered seem to produce circumstances which are not conducive to productive and/or healthy existence for our characters. In fact, it would seem that several of these temporal alterities (like their dominant counterparts) are part and parcel to situations which actively work to harm, disfigure, and/or annihilate the Black characters, whether emotionally or physically. Such a harming of alternative time here adds another dimension to Brendese's focus on the violence of dominant "white-time" on Black beings as, like dominant understandings of time, the alternative temporalities in the novel we have explored also "[function] as . . . instrument[s] of racialized social control, incarceration, disenfranchisement, and enforced political invisibility" (Brendese 83). Indeed, while the linear and forward-thrusting temporal logics which undergird archive-time are thrown into disarray in the temporal alterities we have examined thus far, these alternative temporalities house violences of their own. This is not to say that archive-time ends up being preferable for the characters, nor is it to say that disavowal of dominant

temporalities cannot be reparative or recuperative in any sense (I will actually explain where I *do* think there are recuperative possibilities in the novel's temporal alterities in the next section of this paper). Rather, it is to recognize that alternative temporalities in *Beloved* are not necessarily going to be more productive than dominant ones as, in the case of the novel, many kinds of time found under conditions of enslavement we have discussed are *forced* alternatives to dominant temporal experiences. The most prominent of these forced alternatives, and the one which produces the greatest challenge to life-time, is the temporality of "always-possible [death]" (Sharpe 71).

Paul D and Sethe have both experienced a kind of death-in-living under enslavement time which produces a desire not for time to move forward or progress, but for it to stop altogether; not necessarily a desire for death itself (though it can be) but a desire for a kind of timelessness, or no-time.³⁴ In this sense, time under enslavement here seems to distort life-time into a no-time, a no-time wherein the non-movement of time produces a phenomenological sense of everlasting wait; not an end to life in the biological sense or a removal of time altogether, per se, but a *being-stuck-in-time* which, in one's stuckness and non-motion, produces a no-time to counter the motion of life-time. This no-time recalls Brendese's process of "the long-term wasting that comes from exploitation and *being forced to wait indefinitely* for goods, services, and status—a variant of what Lauren Berlant terms 'slow death'" (Brendese 84, emphasis added). When stopping life is preferable to the progression of life (which is itself no longer

³⁴ My use of the term "no-time" is different from Calvin Warren's, who uses it to highlight the atemporality of interminable Black grief: "The event-horizon of slavery resides precisely within the *no-time* of black grief. To assume that black grief is over or in the past misunderstands grief itself because grief is not subject to the metaphysics of time that orients historical subjects. The violence of slavery constitutes an interminable grief that resists the vectors of present, past, and future" (Warren 66, emphasis added). That being said, we could easily look to the temporal underpinnings of Warren's "no-time" when looking to the alternative temporalities of *Beloved* more generally.

imbued with the temporality of living but rather the temporality of “always-possible [death]”), life-time is disfigured for *Beloved*’s enslaved and their descendants (Sharpe 71). If the process of living is converted into the non-process of stuckness – a kind of “long-term wasting” (Brendese 84) – and stuckness becomes endemic to life, how can one’s experience of life-time – again, one’s lived experience of time – be conducive to the motion required for the *-ing* of living, surviving? Such questions become particularly relevant when examining perhaps the most complex temporal landscape of the novel, 124 Bluestone Road, and the temporal alterities of its permanent residents. As we will see, 124 becomes a particular site of this no-time, the disfigurement of productive life-time in the wake of slavery.

124 has its own unique kind of time, and its history as a rest stop for runaways and travelers, as well as its being home to the haunting of the baby ghost, imbues this space with a sort of temporal liminality. A “way station” for the living and dead alike, 124 houses a temporality of pausing, stopping, and breaking (with) time (Morrison, *Beloved* 77). This temporality of breaking always undergirds the space of the house, though it becomes most acute toward the end of the novel when Sethe, in attempting to make up for lost time with Beloved, most deeply experiences the violent effects of 124’s no-time.

As Sethe begins to realize Beloved as her slain child come back to her, we see 124 become a sort of temporal vacuum. Toward the end of the novel’s second part, Sethe references 124 as having a kind of desirable timelessness, a sort of reprieve and escape from the dangerous movement of time outside the house (the same time which led to the death of her daughter in the first place). Certainly, for a little while, there is contentment

in this space where time seems to disappear. In a space of no-time, Sethe thinks, there is no need to worry about actions of the past or consequences in the future. “I don’t have to remember nothing,” says Sethe (Morrison, *Beloved* 216). Further, thinking Beloved’s presence means the handsaw is forgiven, Sethe believes she can finally release the time of the past which weighs on her: “I can forget it all now . . . because you came back here to me and I was right all along: there is no world outside my door” (217). Here, Sethe begins to live in the temporality of the stop, and the break with/from time is at its deepest. This is not the temporality of temporary pause or ‘taking-a-break’ we might see for a traveler stopping-through the way-station of 124-days-past; Sethe lives in and leans into the stop with time and is consumed in such a way that the temporality of temporary-pause-from-time becomes the temporality of no-more-time.³⁵

The beginning of the novel’s third part places us squarely in the temporal landscape of 124, a space of never-ending pause. Shortly after realizing most clearly that Beloved is her slain child come back for her – “once Sethe had seen the scar,” on Beloved’s neck in the place where she had been loved with a handsaw³⁶ – Sethe devotes

³⁵ Looking at this specific instance of breaking with time as harmful for Sethe doesn’t preclude us from considering ways such a break with time could be generative, and the end of this section explores some readings which advocate for such generativity. Fred Moten too discusses complex topics of the temporal in his work *In the Break* and gestures toward breaking with time as generative: “. . .we might look at that temporal-spatial discontinuity as a generative break, one wherein action becomes possible, one in which it is our duty to linger in the name of ensemble and its performance. That break allows, indeed demands, a fundamental reorientation that we might call novelty, that always exists at the heart of tragedy and elegy” (Moten 99). I believe that “generative break[s]” can be found in the novel – we might consider the next section of this paper examining the recuperative potentialities of rememory to be dealing in a kind of generative break with time, in some senses – and even in the beginning parts of no-time at 124, if temporarily. However, the novel seems to indicate that there are limits to how generative the stop of no-time can be; as Denver indicates, there comes a time when the generative nature of this time with Beloved in 124 transforms into a degenerative one – “[t]hen the mood changed and the arguments began” (Morrison, *Beloved* 283) – and it is only a matter of time before the non-movement of no-time turns to wasting.

³⁶ While Sethe has certainly made this connection between Beloved and her “crawling already?” (178) daughter prior to this point in the novel, the revelation of the scar seems to be a transformative moment in the relationship between Sethe and Beloved unlike any other and the moment where the connection becomes most direct and most fraught. While Sethe certainly thinks of Beloved as her daughter prior to

all of her energy to making up for lost time with Beloved (Morrison, *Beloved* 281). Her entire being is in service of Beloved, and there is no room or time for anyone else, including her living daughter, Denver; “[T]he two of them cut Denver out of the games. The cooking games, the sewing games, the hair and dressing-up games.” The games of ‘playing house’ dominate all other concerns, and Sethe seems to lose track of time, “going to work later and later each day” and being subsequently fired from her job. She stops making money and stops buying food, and all of her time is spent “playing all the harder with Beloved” (282). This time with Beloved is itself a kind of no-time. Concern for or awareness of time seems to fade away, and “neither Beloved nor Sethe seemed to care what the next day would bring” (286); in Sethe’s mind, there is no next day; there is only the “timeless present” where she need not worry about the past nor fear Beloved’s leaving in the future (217). However, Sethe’s impulse toward no-time mentally and emotionally is at deep odds with her physical being; in having no desire for time to move beyond this “timeless present,” all concerns for time outside Beloved fall away, and we see the physical toll of leaning into no-time with Beloved. Sethe gets no other job, obtains no other food, begins “pick-eating” only scraps and crumbs found around the kitchen, and allows herself to starve (285). Her impulse toward no-time is at odds with her body’s temporal needs, and starvation of the body becomes evacuation when “Sethe spit up something she had not eaten.” This is the danger of the stuckness of no-time, of being “locked in a love that wore everybody out” (286). These are the physical

seeing the scar, it is only after this point that Sethe speaks *directly* to Beloved as the daughter Sethe killed – “Did she know it hurt her when mosquitoes bit her baby? That to leave her on the ground to run into the big house drove her crazy? That before leaving Sweet Home Beloved slept every night on her chest or curled on her back?” (284). In this sense, Sethe’s relationship to Beloved is at its most tangible, and its most violent, in these latter parts of the novel.

consequences of a continued pattern of being “subjected to impositions upon [one’s] time that shorten and expropriate [one’s life] to the point of literally having no time left” (Brendese 88).

We might understand then, that in trying to make up for lost time with Beloved, Sethe loses control of her own present life-time – time spent at her job, time getting food, time with Denver – and the embodiment of her life-time, her living form, begins to run out of time itself, and she starts to physically and mentally decay. Denver watches her mother’s physical being wither away: “The flesh between her mother’s forefinger and thumb was thin as china silk and there wasn’t a piece of clothing in the house that didn’t sag on her” (Morrison, *Beloved* 281). Neglecting her own life-time in favor of Beloved-time, Sethe becomes a figure of death-in-life, her “eyes bright but dead, alert but vacant, paying attention to everything about Beloved” (285), evidence for Ng’s assertion that here “[h]er life has ceased continuing” (Ng 237) Sethe makes good on her promise to Beloved “[t]hat she would trade places any day. Give up her life, every minute and hour of it, to take back just one of Beloved’s tears” (Morrison, *Beloved* 284). In her attempts to give time to Beloved and stop time from taking her away, to replace the time lost and remove the time of the handsaw, Sethe siphons off her own life-time – literally, her *time left to live* – and in siphoning off this life-time, she is consumed by no-time, falling into Brendese’s “long-term wasting” (Brendese 83).

We must also note that the temporality of 124 seems entirely tied up with Beloved’s demand for more time. Beloved, like 124, holds within her a temporal liminality of life and death, of living-in-death and death-in-living. Indeed, the temporal landscape of 124 and the temporal alterity of Beloved are deeply imbricated as the house

holds the event of Beloved's death in its temporal makeup and Beloved remains, as baby ghost, as living flesh, and as buried remains herself. Perhaps this deep connection between 124 and Beloved explains why Denver has always regarded 124 "as a person rather than a structure. A person that wept, sighed, trembled and fell into fits" (Morrison, *Beloved* 35). The time of 124 holds Beloved in all her temporal forms. She tells us: "This is where I am" (89).³⁷ It only makes sense, then, that the no-time of 124 seems so connected to, perhaps part and parcel to, time with Beloved; as Sethe's life-time is consumed and siphoned by the impulse toward no-time, Beloved only grows stronger, as a seeming parasitic agent of the no-time which consumes her mother: "The bigger Beloved got, the smaller Sethe became; the brighter Beloved's eyes, the more those eyes that used never to look away became slits of sleeplessness. . . . *Beloved ate up her life*, took it, swelled up with it, grew taller on it" (295, emphasis added).³⁸

Importantly, while I have given much focus to the destructive nature of time with Beloved in these latter parts of the novel, it is not my intention to classify Beloved in such a singularly harmful way. It must be stated that many view such degeneration as

³⁷ Ng also talks about the connection between Beloved and 124, though he frames it more specifically as Beloved and 124 being perhaps one-in-the-same: "[I]t is noteworthy that Beloved, when she becomes flesh, nevertheless identifies herself as a place (the house). She tells Denver, for example, that 'This the place I am' (123; my emphasis). Of course, this could be Beloved's clumsy way of saying that 124 is where she belongs—that is, with her mother. But it is equally possible to construe this strange statement as Beloved establishing, not so much her possession of the house, but her being embodied by it (and vice versa). . . . [I]nstead of distinguishing the haunting entity from the haunted space, Morrison's tale suggests that the two are merged and inseparable. Hence, when Beloved appears as a young woman, it is not only specter taking on flesh, but a house becoming *personified*" (Ng 238).

³⁸ Given her portrayal as such a parasitic haunt, particularly in this no-time of 124, it is understandable that readers may view her as a "trickster figure" who prevents healing "as [a] . . . devil-child" (Krumholz 396, 401). We must be careful, however, to remember that while Beloved may be a figure of that haunting, Beloved is herself a victim of enslavement, a being who is also subject to the temporal alterities of violence which cut her life short and transform her into a haunting figure of death-in-life. Despite her appearance to the town and perhaps to the reader as a "devil-child," Beloved is not herself the source of temporal violence in 124, only the mechanism, the product of the logics of enslavement which encourage such temporal alterities as her own embodied form (Morrison, *Beloved* 308). Beloved's death and Beloved's reemergence are not her choice; they are the forced consequences of enslavement's temporal flows.

itself the opening for healing. Time with Beloved, like Krumholz says of the character herself, may be “both the pain and the cure,” without which, Sethe can never heal (Krumholz 400). Ng’s understanding of 124 as “a site that both entraps and liberates, ... a place that liberates through entrapping” could be applied to time with Beloved and the no-time of 124 as well if we are to view it as the necessary destruction which sets Denver’s asking for help and the subsequent rescue-mission led by the town’s women into motion (Ng 244). While some view Sethe’s degeneration in 124’s temporal landscape (itself imbricated with Beloved’s own temporalities) as necessary for healing, we need ask if there are limits to such a healing. How much destruction can Sethe’s body handle before she is fully destroyed, dead, and healing is no longer available? Denver makes starkly clear the imminent consequences of Sethe’s no-time with Beloved, and while “Sethe [is] happy when Beloved [is],” living in no-time with Beloved is clearly unsustainable: “Sethe spit up something she had not eaten and it rocked Denver like a gunshot. The job she had started with, protecting Beloved from Sethe, changed to protecting her mother from Beloved. Now it was obvious that her mother could die and leave them both” (Morrison, *Beloved* 286). Sethe’s degeneration under no-time in 124 points to the untenable nature of staying in a “timeless present” – where time and its component trauma need not be dealt with – and while we may gesture toward the ways such a break with time may be generative and healing, we must also weigh the possibility of healing in this way with the real possibility of self-destruction (217).

The unsustainability of living and surviving in productive and healthy ways under no-time and under the temporal alterities we have discussed in general then necessitate some kind of balance. How does one live within the temporal harm of slavery, the

alteration and disfigurement of life-time, without succumbing to that harm? Paul D and Sethe seem to have two very different strategies for living and surviving such temporal alterities – Paul D runs from such temporal flows while Sethe wholly submits to them. Still, neither finds entirely productive existence, Paul D denying himself love and attachment and rest in his constant movement and Sethe being consumed by 124’s temporal vacuum and the destructive time of too-thick love.³⁹ Is there a way to mediate such responses, to find the ‘yes, and’⁴⁰ of facing the hold of enslavement-time while also living, moving on from it? Such a question speaks to Morrison’s own sentiment: “There is a necessity for remembering the horror, but of course there’s a necessity for remembering it in a manner in which it can be digested, in a manner in which the memory is not destructive” (“In the Realm” 247-248). So too does time and one’s relationship to it need to be digestible, livable, and ideally, not just-barely livable but active and generative *living*. The next section of this paper will look at how, despite the harmful nature of temporal alterities in the novel, there are also ways that such alternative experiences of time may allow for productive existence and resistance, not a removal of time’s violence altogether but a mediation of such harmful temporalities with temporal alternatives that promote collective healing and allow for a simultaneous holding on (and being held by) and moving on.

³⁹ “This here Sethe talked about safety with a handsaw. This here Sethe didn’t know where the world stopped and she began. . . . [M]ore important than what Sethe had done was what she claimed. It scared him. . . . ‘Your love is too thick,’ he said” (Morrison, *Beloved* 193).

⁴⁰ Here, I reference an idea in Claudia Rankine’s *Citizen: An American Lyric* wherein the phrasing and idea behind “yes, and” is one which speaks to a dichotomy of living in the wake of slavery that Rankine thematically addresses throughout her work: *yes*, the violence of slavery past is irrevocable, *and*, simultaneously, there is the insistence and persistence of Black life. The actual mention of the “yes, and” phrasing in Rankine’s work is as follows: “You . . . decided that ‘yes, and’ attested to a life with no turn-off, no alternative routes” (Rankine 8).

RECKONING WITH TIME: RECUPERATIVE POTENTIALITIES OF REMEMORY
AND MEDIATING THE HOLD OF ENSLAVEMENT-TIME WITH A ‘LIVING
PRESENT’⁴¹

We must recognize that Morrison does gesture toward moments of temporal recuperation, wherein these counter experiences and relationships to time are accessed in potentially generative ways. Sethe’s “rescue” from the temporal vacuum of 124 by thirty neighboring women is one of these instances (Morrison, *Beloved* 301). As the climax of the novel, this rescue serves not only as an essential turning point in terms of Sethe’s survival and Beloved’s removal, but it also points to a key departure from how the characters typically engage with and are affected by alternative temporalities. Rather than be consumed by or moved by their counter-experiences of time as Sethe or Paul D, the thirty women access their temporal alterities, most specifically their rememories housed in the yard of 124, and reappropriate these alterities as tools for Sethe’s and their own (limited) healing and recuperation. While this may complicate our understanding of temporal alterities thus far in the novel, it is important to examine how Morrison gestures toward the possibility of reckoning with such temporal alterities in ways which may allow productive existence as a potential mediation to the harmful effects of time otherwise.

In the climactic moment of Sethe’s “rescue” from the temporal vacuum of 124 and the parasitic Beloved, we see the temporal alterity of rememory functioning in a potentially recuperative manner (Morrison, *Beloved* 301). Led by a woman called Ella

⁴¹ This phrasing comes from Brandt (397) though his use is in discussing the function of Morrison’s work overall, not in terms of time within the novel itself: “Morrison *excavates* the ‘lost memories’ of historical practice and simultaneously *reconstructs* them, thus turning these fragments of the *past* into integral components of a living *present*” (397, emphasis in original). I borrow the phrasing here because it inflects much of what I am interested in with rememory in this section of my paper.

and her hatred for “the idea of past errors taking possession of the present,” thirty women of the town allow themselves to remember the temporal landscape of 124 and the memories housed within (302). Interestingly, it is the act of remembering which convinces the women to release their long-held disdain for Sethe and the space of 124 planted the day of the baby’s death. In seeing Denver’s suffering in 124, the women remember their own connection to that temporal landscape:

All of them knew her grandmother and some had even danced with her in the Clearing. Others remembered the days when 124 was a way station, the place they assembled to catch news, taste oxtail soup, leave their children, cut out a skirt. One remembered the tonic mixed there that cured a relative. One showed her the border of a pillowslip . . . French-knotted in Baby Suggs’ kitchen They remembered the party with twelve turkeys and tubs of strawberry smash. One said she wrapped Denver when she was a single day old and cut shoes to fit her mother’s blasted feet. Maybe they were sorry . . . (Morrison, *Beloved* 293)

Such a flood of connections to 124’s past points to a sense of collective feeling and collective memory. The memories are listed without connection to any one name, and the anonymity of the rememberer creates a sense that each memory could belong to any one of the women. The language of the individual *one* – “[o]ne remembered” and “[o]ne showed” – weaves with the language of collective *they* – “[t]hey remembered” and “maybe they were sorry” (293). Here, though, Morrison appears to reverse the focus away from “the collective memories of the trauma” of the baby’s death – the kinds of memories Bouson thinks the novel chiefly centers – toward the *collective memories of community belonging* (Bouson 3). In collectively remembering the temporal landscape of

124 beyond and outside the event of the handsaw and the baby's blood, the women open themselves to helping Denver, and later, to saving Sethe; in remembering all those times outside the tragedy, "the personal pride, the arrogant claim staked out at 124 seemed to them to have run its course" (Morrison, *Beloved* 294).

In remembering their ties to 124, thirty women open themselves to helping the woman who is stuck there, and in physically returning to the space of 124's front-yard, remembrance transforms into rememory. Like Denver bumping into Sethe's rememory of crawling in the woods, the women "bump into" the rememory of themselves and each other (Morrison, *Beloved* 43), and they encounter that previous temporal landscape to which they all, at one point or another, belong/ed:

When they caught up with each other, all thirty, and arrived at 124, the first thing they saw was ... themselves. Younger, stronger, even as little girls lying in the grass asleep. . . . Mothers, dead now, moved their shoulders to mouth harps. The fence they had leaned on and climbed over was gone. The stump of the butternut had split like a fan. But there they were, young and happy, playing in Baby Suggs' yard, not feeling the envy that surfaced the next day. (304)

Here, the women physically join with that other temporal landscape, fully immersed in the sensorial experience of the feast on the day before the baby's death eighteen years prior. Different from the remembrances of 124 which detailed the events of the past as finished and complete – see, "One remembered the tonic mixed there that cured a relative," for example (293) – the women experience the rememory of the feast *in the act of occurring*. "Catfish was popping" and "[c]obbler oozing" and Baby Suggs "urging more" food be eaten (304). The scene plays out before them as a film, though small

details of the missing fence and the splitting stump indicate that this is not simply a viewing of an intangible past, but a melding of the present and past in one temporal space. The rememory exists *alongside* the present and the women exist in the same temporal landscape as their dead mothers and their younger selves.

The logics of this rememory are in essence the same as how Sethe describes them to Denver earlier in the novel. She says of the temporal landscape of Sweet Home, “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” (Morrison, *Beloved* 44). This “happen[ing] again” applies for the space of 124 as well; upon going to 124 – the site of rememory – the women witness and take part in the feast again, the rememories which were waiting for over eighteen years in the front yard for someone to “bump into” (43). Though, unlike the waiting rememories of a space like Sweet Home, the rememories of the women which rest in the front yard of 124 are not waiting to strike with violence. Instead of a Sweet Home rememory which devours the finder, these 124 front-yard rememories of gathering and community hold peace. We might consider this the recuperative side of collective memory, the healing impetus of which is community. This move toward a rememory which soothes rather than strikes is the novel’s “reparative urge,” the show of “potentially healing power of the sense of safety and connection offered by the African-American community” that Bousoon sees as underlying all of Morrison’s works (Bousoon 5). And given the pastness and presentness of such rememory, this is a community that exists across time as well, wherein grown-up daughters may stand alongside their passed-on mothers in the melding of temporal landscapes. Here too is the duality of rememory: while the rememory of the handsaw and the baby’s blood remains in the front yard, so too do the rememories of

childhood, purple teeth and “horse ride[s],” and rest without envy that comes with that old community (Morrison, *Beloved* 304).

It is understandable that the women forgot the good waiting in the ground of 124; like Stamp Paid and Paul D, the primacy of the archive-time undergirding the narrative of newspaper-clipping-Sethe⁴² expands the temporal memory of the handsaw, and the memory of baby’s blood blots out the temporal happenings on either side of the killing. However, as is consistent with the logics of rememory, the life-time on either side of the newspaper-clipping, on either side of the handsaw that day, remains in the temporal landscape of 124 whether or not someone is there to remember it. Consider Sethe’s words on rememory in the context of 124:

Places, places are still there. If a house burns down, it’s gone, but the place—the picture of it—stays, and not just in my rememory, but out there, in the world.

What I remember is a picture floating around out there outside my head. I mean, even if I don’t think it, even if I die, the picture of what I did, or knew, or saw is still out there. Right in the place where it happened. (Morrison, *Beloved* 43)

Rememory is a spatio-temporal “place.” The rememory of the feast the day before the killing has its place in space and its place in time. That is why, in physically revisiting the site of rememory, the women experience again those temporalities which, although invisible elsewhere, have their place here. And here, also, is where the temporal alterity of rememory can be recuperative for Sethe and everyone else attached to that day

⁴² Here, I refer to the eighteen-year-old news report of Sethe’s act that Stamp Paid reveals to Paul D about halfway through the novel. In this clipping there are signs that the report has painted a particular image of Sethe – both literally and figuratively – which are not fully representative of her subjecthood, suggesting the distorting effects of the archive and archive-time: “The print meant nothing to [Paul D] so he didn’t even glance at it. He simply looked at the face, shaking his head no. No. At the mouth you see. And no at whatever it was those black scratches said, and no to whatever it was Stamp Paid wanted him to know” (Morrison, *Beloved* 183).

eighteen years ago: in realizing the rememories of 124, pleasant and painful, they access all the life-time that lies outside the archive-time of the newspaper clipping that deems Sethe a madwoman and criminal. In rememorying the time before the handsaw, the women open themselves to reckoning with the life-time of Sethe which the newspaper condenses in favor of expanding and sensationalizing the handsaw. This is a turning over of the “amnesia” produced by the archive-time as well, the realization of once-forgotten memories, without which Sethe’s actions and her own destruction “appear to emerge from nowhere” (Brendese 96), framing Sethe as both ‘victim’ and ‘agent’ of her own disaster.⁴³ In this sense, the rememory of the women expands on the archive-time which says baby’s blood and a madwoman are all there was and is; it opens up understanding for all that came before the handsaw and all that comes after.

Here, the alternative temporality of rememory creates recuperative and collective understanding, Mohanty’s “fusing” of perspectives that allows for “new knowledge and a new way of knowing,” of knowing Sethe, the event, and even themselves and their own role in the tragedy (Mohanty 61, 58). The collective time of communal peace held in the yard, and the connections all the women have to Sethe therein find space here in this temporal landscape, and the time on either side of the handsaw – including the role of enslavement in Sethe’s action as well as the town’s role and complacency in the tragedy – spreads out, clear as day for all to see.

⁴³ See Sharpe, who discusses this duality of victim/agent in terms of Black motherhood, particularly applicable to Sethe’s framing as victim and agent of her own destruction as a result of killing her child: “There is an extensive representational repertoire . . . of the conflation of blackness and death and multiple ‘commonsense’ representations of Black maternity . . . as condemning one to a life of violence. We trace this history back to chattel slavery and the law of *partus sequitur ventrem* . . . Black women and children continue to be cast as . . . victims and agents of ‘natural’ disasters . . .” (Sharpe 79).

We must also realize that this rememory is not simply repeating nor exactly a re-creating of the past event as it happened. This rememory is a combination of temporal landscapes, not an exact ‘time-travel’ to or revival of the past, so to speak, but a merging of *that* day and this one. Mohanty is right when she says this scene of rememory is a “braiding and fusing of voices and emotions,” though her claim feels somewhat at odds with her following assertion that the rescue “re-create[s] the past and future” (Mohanty 61); a “fusion” of emotions, memories,⁴⁴ or temporal landscapes is not re-creation or repetition, but rather, a realization and recognition of multiple temporal landscapes alongside one another. Rather than read the result of collective rememory as a re-creation or even as Krumholz’s “repetition . . . with a difference” of a past temporal landscape, I want to emphasize this rememory’s function as a *combination and mediation* of temporal landscapes (Krumholz 396). The missing fence and the split stump alongside the rememory of the women in the yard point to this coexistence of landscapes; here, things remain as they were while simultaneously changing, a “space . . . of overlapping beings” as Perez aptly terms it (Perez 198).

The overlap here is permanence alongside impermanence, and it is this dual im/permanence which simultaneously evokes the essence of the tragedy eighteen years ago while also allowing an altered present-day relationship to the event. The women see

⁴⁴ Mohanty also talks about “fused memory” in relation to her ideas of braided emotions with specific relation to a passage where Sethe and Paul D’s memory of the same event at Sweet Home is narrated as almost one “fused memory” (58). The problem with Mohanty’s reading is not with such understandings of fusion and braiding, which feel very relevant to our discussions of melding temporal landscapes and recuperative rememory, but with her impulse to say that such fusing of time is a “collective imagination and will” that “re-create[s] past and future” (61). Important to my section here on recuperative rememory is that the time of the past where Beloved was killed cannot be re-created, reconfigured, repeated with a difference, etc.; no rememory can undo Beloved’s death. What *can* be re-created, however, is Sethe’s and the town’s relationship and view of the past event and how they may relate to that temporal landscape in the present.

their past selves as both one with and separate from their current selves, and so too do they see the temporal landscape of the past as one with and separate from the landscape of the present. In this sense, they do not fall into the temporal landscape of rememory past; they see it, stand alongside it, and *reckon with it*. In reckoning with the temporal landscape of the past (which, under rememory, is itself not past), there is opportunity to examine the traumatic without being consumed by it. Importantly, this is not an alteration of the past or a re-writing of the event as the language of many scholars might suggest; instead, it is a dealing with, a recognition of horrors past and the impossibility of removing them which allows for a kind of moving on. There is no removing the rememory of that day, even in healing; the only option is to “[k]now it, and go on” as Baby Suggs says (Morrison, *Beloved* 288).

This reckoning is what underpins Sethe’s actions in the present here too, and it is the impulse underlying her letting go of Beloved’s hand and directing the handsaw-turned-icepick away from her daughter and toward the white horseman in Mr. Bodwin. Given the parallels between the past event and this one, it’s not surprising that this scene has often been read as a re-living or rehashing of the past. Indeed, so much of this happening mirrors the one eighteen years ago. This time, like last time, she sees the wide-brimmed hat of the horseman coming down her drive. Again, she thinks, “[h]e is coming into her yard and he is coming for her best thing.” This time, like last time, “[s]he hears wings” of hummingbirds around her head (Morrison, *Beloved* 308). In fact, the narration for this time and last time is nearly identical as Sethe begins to go through the motions again of saving her daughter from the man in the hat. Compare the scene eighteen years ago and the one happening now. Eighteen years past:

[S]he heard wings. Little hummingbirds stuck their needle beaks right through her headcloth into her hair and beat their wings. And if she thought anything, it was No. No. Nono. Nonono. Simple. She just flew. (Morrison, *Beloved* 192)

And now:

She hears wings. Little hummingbirds stick needle beaks right through her headcloth into her hair and beat their wings. And if she thinks anything, it is no. No no. Nonono. She flies. (309)

The moment of realization is almost entirely the same, though there is a key difference in these passages, and it is this difference which tells us this scene cannot be read as a re-living or rehashing, nor exactly as a “re-creating” (Mohanty 61): here, the narration moves to present-tense. The shift to present tense punctuates the potentiality of this moment, and it is this presentness which underlies the recuperative nature of this rememory. This is not quite Wright’s “epiphenomenal spacetime,” though there are elements of Wright’s idea that may help us to understand the possibility imbued in Sethe’s presentness. As Wright defines it, epiphenomenal time is one in which “[n]o moment one experiences depends directly on a previous moment in order to come into being. . . . We do not come from the past but exist only in the now” (16). Such an idea feels almost entirely at odds with the thrust of Morrison’s novel and with much of the argument of this paper, both of which emphasize the hold of slavery time and the irrevocable connection of the past and present; rememory, perhaps the fundamental temporal alterity of the novel, is irreconcilable with a temporal system which insists “[w]e do not come from the past” (16). That being said, Morrison’s shift to present tense here is stark and unignorable, and the presentness of Sethe’s actions as a direct-follow-up

to the thirty women's collective rememory makes us ask if we might see something like Wright's impulse of presentness alongside the hold of the past.

Importantly, the shift to present tense is not to say that Sethe no longer "come[s] from [her] past" (Wright 16), or that this is a re-living or rehashing of the past with a different result; rather, it is the syntactical show of Sethe's reemergence from the no-time of 124 back into the time outside wherein the pastness of the trauma, though unerasable, is now mediated with the presentness of *moving-on*. The present tense of Sethe here quite literally loosens the hold *on* and *of* Beloved as Sethe releases her daughter's hand and runs out into the yard of rememories. Importantly, this is not a true letting-go of Beloved (there is not letting go), but a reconfiguring of Sethe's relationship to Beloved and all she represents: the traumatic event, the hold of slavery, the inflection of life with death.⁴⁵ Here, collective rememory of the women and Sethe does not remove such horrors but mediates them in such a way that Sethe need not decay in the landscape of no-time but may recognize her trauma and move on, not from, but *with it*. Perhaps then we might understand that the temporal logics of *Beloved* are not so entirely oppositional to Wright's time of the 'now' as we may initially think; while the novel is certainly not one which says "[w]e do not come from the past," this moment of Sethe's present-tense-mediation of traumatic rememory is one which says yes, Sethe does come from her past, and she can also exist in the present 'now' (Wright 16).

⁴⁵ Krumholz discusses this idea of a new relationship to the past, though she does so in considering the novel's function more broadly rather than with regards to Sethe's relationship to her own past specifically: "Morrison's novel reconstructs slave history in a way that history books cannot, and in a way that cannot be appropriated by objective or scientific concepts of knowledge and history. By inscribing history as a trickster spirit, Morrison has recreated our relationship to history in a process baffling and difficult, but necessary." While I am not working with Krumholz's understanding of *Beloved* as a "trickster spirit," I do agree with her implicit connection between the figure of Beloved and her role in altering relationships to the past (407).

This, then, is the recuperative potential of temporal alterity under systems of enslavement in the novel: a collective rememory which mediates the trauma of the past with possibility of a living and livable present. Indeed, it is the collective rememory of the thirty women and Sethe together which imbues the pastness of the temporal landscape with new understanding, “a new way of knowing,”⁴⁶ and thereby a new relationship to that past (Mohanty 58). The collective rememory of the women is that which produces the group singing, “the sound that broke the back of words,” that bathes “Sethe . . . like the baptized in its wash” and allows for her reemergence into the time outside (Morrison, *Beloved* 308). This is the reemergence from no-time offered by this rememory, a presentness which mediates the traumatic past in such a way that Sethe may “go on out the yard,” go out and face the rememories of trauma past and survive them (288).

We must be careful not to read Sethe’s going out into the yard and directing her weapon toward the horseman rather than her daughter as an overturning of the past traumatic event, nor exactly is it Ng’s reading⁴⁷ as a “*confrontation* with her past trauma” in the argumentative and hostile sense the term ‘confrontation’ implies (Ng 241, emphasis added); as the novel has shown, there is little to no healing accomplished in “beating back the past” (Morrison, *Beloved* 87). Instead, the moment of Sethe’s leaving

⁴⁶ Here, I take Mohanty’s reading of how fused emotions and memories create “new knowledge and a new way of knowing,” both of the self and of history and apply it to the comparable fusing of temporal landscapes and temporal perspectives that occurs through this process of collective rememory (58). While I disagree with Mohanty’s language that “collective imagination and will” may be tools for “*re-creat[ing]* the past and future,” I do agree with her emphasis on the importance of collectivity and community in Sethe’s healing from her trauma: “in order to adequately understand this ownership [of one’s self, essential to freedom from enslavement and the all-consuming hold of the past], we need access to the buried memories and experiences of others who might have shared our experience. . . . “[I]f [Sethe’s] past is not just hers alone, she can only regain its meaning through collective effort – with Paul, with Denver and Beloved” (60-61).

⁴⁷ Importantly, Ng asserts the importance of collectivity and community in Sethe’s recuperative moment here. However, his emphasis on this scene as a “confrontation” emphasizes a sort of conflict and opposition between past and present which presents more of a “yes, but” relationship between Sethe and her past, rather than my “reckoning” which invokes a more nuanced “yes, and” approach (261).

the porch and releasing her grip on Beloved is the culminating gesture of her own and the other women's collective rememory, a moving-through the mediated temporal landscapes wherein lies the reality of past trauma alongside the potentiality of a livable present. Such collective rememory is what tempers the destructive strike of the temporal landscape of the past in such a way that the horrors are not removed but made "digest[ible], . . . [and] the memory is not destructive" ("In the Realm" 248). The presentness here in Sethe's collective-rememory-rescue is not an erasure of the past; it is an imbrication of the past trauma and the present moment which allows those at 124 to see the violent hold of slavey time, reckon with it, and move on, not *from* but *with* it.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ This feels similar to themes in Margo Natalie Crawford's discussion of the melancholic trend in African American studies. As Crawford says, "melancholy does not have to be crippling," and, referencing Joseph Winters, she suggests that melancholy can be the very means by which many Black subjects do "move on" (804). Crawford notes a movement toward redefining melancholia, one which does not subscribe to the melancholia of which Stephen Best is famously critical, but which rather embraces a more fluid stance that allows Black subjects to "*move on* with unresolved grief" (805). Indeed, one might read Sethe's rememory as deeply melancholic, though Crawford's reading of melancholia allows us to also read rememory with a nuanced understanding of the potential for moving on *with* grief rather than being consumed by it or running from it.

CONCLUSION

This paper has explored how the logics of enslavement create situations in which one's relationship to time runs counter to those that the dominant narrative of time, or archive-time, insists upon. These counter experiences are what I have chosen to call temporal alterities. Morrison plays with time and presents many temporal alterities (in many forms) in order to show how the logics of enslavement create temporal experiences which are not aligned with the dominant archive of slavery and our dominant temporal structures which undergird that archive. And, as discussed and exemplified in the second and third sections of this paper, such temporal alterities in the novel frequently enact and/or accompany violence on the Black characters, creating a temporal theme of death-in-life or no-time which is not conducive to productive existence or survival.⁴⁹

Undoubtedly, this harmful reality of such temporal alterities is one of the larger thrusts of the novel, and the pattern of lived experiences of time that the majority of this essay explores. That being said, we have also looked to ways that Morrison points toward the recuperative potential of such temporal alterities through collective rememory, which allows for a mediation between the horrors of slavery past and the possibility of the present moment. This collective rememory is such that the novel's characters,

⁴⁹ Again, it must be emphasized that dominant temporal structures and archive-time also, and perhaps more frequently, enact such violence, especially when considering the implications of such views of time outside the novel. In fact, we might consider how the temporal alterities we have explored are a product of enslavement, a system purposefully designed to perhaps create alternative temporal experiences which harm. Brendese explains this well when he examines how "white time" figures Black beings as "out of time" (85, 83), while also examining alternative temporal experiences like "slow death" as themselves harmful (Berlant qtd. in Brendese 84). These alternative temporalities are the "countertempos that confine those upon whom white time depends" (Brendese 102). Looking at the ways that these alternative experiences of time in the novel produce harmful situations is not to say that dominant temporalities are preferable or are less harmful, and the idea that both dominant and alternative temporalities may enact violence on marginalized beings only further points to the necessity for uncovering more ways of experiencing time which may not produce the same harm.

particularly Sethe, are able to adjust their relationship to the horrors of the past and mediate the hold of enslavement-time with a living present. Such a mediation is not a removal or erasure of the past or an overhaul of the harm found in the temporal experiences under enslavement and its afterlives, nor should it overshadow the reality of the harmful temporal experiences this paper has outlined; rather, it is the production of that “digest[ible]” manner for remembering the violence of slavery’s hold (“In the Realm” 248).

This paper then has produced two separate but equally important understandings in the field of African American studies more generally. The first of these is to do with *Beloved* and our reading of the novel itself. In attending to time and close-reading the characters’ lived experience of time in the novel, we find that Morrison emphasizes the novel’s dangerous reality of time-as-lived under conditions of enslavement and the destructive possibilities of remembering and relating to the time of slavery past. However, the presentation of collective rememory suggests that the novel’s depiction of temporal alterities is not an entirely pessimistic one, and in fact points to the need for and possibility of mediating that harmful nature of time and memory with more recuperative temporal alternatives which may perhaps be most effectively achieved through collectivity and community. *Beloved* provides alternative understandings of time not simply to counter archive-time, but also to create a more nuanced picture of enslaved life and gesture toward the necessity to mediate the harm and violence of the hold of slavery’s temporal flows with a potentially more recuperative temporality of memory (and rememory) alongside a living-present. In this way, we might consider Morrison’s presentation of temporal alterities in the novel as its own reckoning with the reality of

slavery past and a mediating methodology of how one may live in the wake of slavery.

The novel is itself the enactment of Baby Suggs' advice to Denver:

But you said there was no defense.

'There ain't.'

Then what do I do?

'Know it, and go on out the yard. Go on.' (Morrison, *Beloved* 288)

The second understanding we have gleaned is one which extends beyond the novel into the field more broadly. The alternative temporalities and temporal experiences I have identified in the novel are not meant to be applicable to enslaved experiences beyond the novel; we cannot take my readings of enslavement-time or life-time as they exist in the novel to be universal understandings for reading enslaved experience. However, there is much to be gleaned from my reading practice which attends to time and considers alternative lived experiences of time. In considering temporalities beyond the limits of archive-time in our reading about enslaved experiences, be they explicitly fictional like Morrison's or held in documented archival histories, we enact a reading practice which moves away from hegemonic understandings of time and history and open ourselves to new methodological lenses through which to think about slavery past. In this sense, what I have done with my reading of Morrison – considered the possibility of alternative temporalities and attended to time-as-lived as its own lens for understanding the subjects more deeply – is something we might do when engaging with any number of texts about enslaved subjectivities. Such an approach is not a prescription of how time actually works or is experienced; rather, it is reading practice which removes the restraints and comparisons of archive-time so that we may open ourselves to new

considerations of how temporalities *could* be experienced. In the very considering of alternative temporal patterns and ways of experiencing time, we work to create space for these temporalities and temporal experiences which heretofore have been overridden and deemed illegitimate by the predominance of archive-time. Importantly, the creation of such space for temporal alternatives in our approach to the archive of slavery does not and cannot guarantee full understanding of enslaved experience, nor should it attempt to. Instead, we should consider this practice of attending to time in these ways as a potential method for working through the archive and its histories, one which pushes away from archive-time as a lens for understanding enslaved subjectivities and promotes our considering any number of lived temporal possibilities.

REFERENCES

- “The Antiracist Reading List.” *Random House Books*,
www.randomhousebooks.com/lists/antiracist-reading-list/. Accessed 4 Apr. 2021.
- Baker, Brea. “The Anti-Racist Reading List.” *ELLE*, 27 May 2020,
www.elle.com/culture/books/g32687973/black-history-books-reading-list/.
Accessed 4 Apr. 2021.
- Best, Stephen. “On Failing to Make the Past Present.” *Modern Language Quarterly*, vol. 73, no. 3, Sept. 2012, pp. 453–74. doi:10.1215/00267929-1631478.
- Bouson, J. Brooks. *Quiet As It’s Kept: Shame, Trauma, and Race in the Novels of Toni Morrison*. SUNY Press, 2000.
- Brandt, Stefan L. “History, Time, and Lived Experience in Toni Morrison’s *Beloved* (1987), *Jazz* (1992), and *Paradise* (1997).” *Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik*, vol. 65, no. 4, 2017, pp. 395–411. *ProQuest*, doi: 10.1515/zaa-2017-0037.
- Brendese, P.J. “Black Noise in White Time: Segregated Temporality and Mass Incarceration.” *Radical Future Pasts: Untimely Political Theory*, edited by Coles et al., University Press of Kentucky, 2014, pp. 81-111. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/wfu/detail.action?docID=1712952.
- Butler, Octavia. *Kindred*. 1979. Beacon Press, 2003.
- Christian, Barbara. “‘The Past Is Infinite’: History and Myth in Toni Morrison’s Trilogy.” *Social Identities*, vol. 6, no. 4, Routledge, Dec. 2000, pp. 411–23. *EBSCOhost*, doi:10.1080/13504630020026387.

- Christians, Yvette. "Time Out of Joint: The Temporal Logic of Morrison's Modernist Apocalypics." *Toni Morrison: An Ethical Poetics*. Fordham University Press, 2013. *ProQuest Ebook Central*,
ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/wfu/detail.action?docID=3239788.
- Crawford, Margo Natalie. "The Twenty-First-Century Black Studies Turn to Melancholy." *American Literary History*, vol. 29 no. 4, 2017, p. 799-807. *Project MUSE* muse.jhu.edu/article/678068.
- de Souza Sutter, Luana. "Rememorying Slavery: Intergenerational Memory and Trauma in Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987) and Conceição Evaristo's *Ponciá Vicêncio* (2003)." *Contemporary Women's Writing*, vol. 13, no. 3, Oxford Academic, Dec. 2019, pp. 321–38. *Oxford Academic*, doi:10.1093/cww/vpaa002.
- Dimock, Wai Chee. *Through Other Continents: American Literature Across Deep Time*. Princeton University Press, 2006. *ProQuest Ebook Central*,
ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/wfu/detail.action?docID=539787.
- Durrant, Sam. *Postcolonial Narrative and the Work of Mourning: J. M. Coetzee, Wilson Harris, and Toni Morrison*. State University of New York Press, 2003. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/wfu/detail.action?docID=3408539.
- Ferguson, Roderick A. *Aberrations in Black: Toward a Queer of Color Critique*. University of Minnesota Press, 2004.
- Fuston-White, Jeanna. "'From the Seen to the Told': The Construction of Subjectivity in Toni Morrison's 'Beloved.'" *African American Review*, vol. 36, no. 3, 2002, pp. 461–73. *JSTOR*, doi:10.2307/1512209.

- George, Sheldon. "Approaching the 'Thing' of Slavery: A Lacanian Analysis of Toni Morrison's *Beloved*." *African American Review*, vol. 45, no. 1-2, Johns Hopkins University Press, Spring/Summer 2012, pp. 115–30. *EBSCOhost*, doi:10.1353/afa.2012.0008.
- Halberstam, J. Jack. *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives*. New York University Press, 2005. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/wfu/detail.action?docID=2081650.
- Hartman, Saidiya. *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*. Oxford University Press, 1997.
- . "Venus in Two Acts." *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism*, vol. 12, no. 2, Duke University Press, June 2008, pp. 1–14. *Duke University Press*, doi:10.1215/12-2-1.
- Higgins, Therese E. *Religiosity, Cosmology and Folklore: The African Influence in the Novels of Toni Morrison*. Taylor & Francis Group, 2002. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/wfu/detail.action?docID=1694425.
- Hopkins, Patricia D. "Seduction or Rape: Deconstructing the Black Female Body in Harriet Jacobs' *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*." *Making Connections; Bloomsburg*, vol. 13, no. 1, Fall 2011, pp. 4–20.
- Jackson, Lauren Michele. "What Is an Anti-Racist Reading List For?" *Vulture*, 4 June 2020, www.vulture.com/2020/06/anti-racist-reading-lists-what-are-they-for.html.
- Jacobs, Harriet. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. 1861. Dover, 2001.

- Kendi, Ibram X. "Ibram X. Kendi's Antiracist Reading List." *The New York Times*,
www.nytimes.com/2019/05/29/books/review/antiracist-reading-list-ibram-x-kendi.html. Accessed 4 April 2021.
- Krumholz, Linda. "The Ghosts of Slavery: Historical Recovery in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*." *African American Review*, vol. 26, no. 3, 1992, pp. 395–408. *JSTOR*,
doi:10.2307/3041912.
- Maitland, Hailey. "An Essential Anti-Racist Reading List." *Vogue*, 31 May 2020,
www.vogue.co.uk/arts-and-lifestyle/article/black-lives-matter-reading-list.
Accessed 4 Apr. 2021.
- McEvoy, Jemima. "Books About Racism Dominate Best-Seller Lists Amid Protests." *Forbes*, 11 June 2020, www.forbes.com/sites/jemimamcevoy/2020/06/11/black-lives-matter-dominates-best-seller-lists-amid-protests/. Accessed 4 Apr. 2021.
- Merry, Stephanie, and Ron Charles. "Books about Race and Racism Are Dominating Bestseller Lists." *Washington Post*, 4 June 2020.
www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/books/books-about-race-and-racism-are-dominating-bestseller-lists/2020/06/04/e6efdab6-a69b-11ea-bb20-ebf0921f3bbd_story.html. Accessed 4 Apr. 2021.
- Mohanty, Satya P. "The Epistemic Status of Cultural Identity: On 'Beloved' and the Postcolonial Condition." *Cultural Critique*, no. 24, University of Minnesota Press, 1993, pp. 41–80. *JSTOR*, doi:10.2307/1354129.
- Morrison, Toni. *Beloved*. 1987. Vintage International, 2004.

- . "In the Realm of Responsibility." *Conversations with Toni Morrison*, edited by Danielle Kathleen Taylor-Guthrie, University Press of Mississippi, 1994, pp. 246-54.
- . "Nobel Lecture December 7, 1993." *The Nobel Prize*, www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/1993/morrison/lecture/. Accessed 28 Dec. 2020.
- Moten, Fred. *In the Break: The Aesthetics Of The Black Radical Tradition*. University of Minnesota Press, 2003. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/wfu/detail.action?docID=310622.
- Ng, Andrew Hock Soon. "Toni Morrison's Beloved: Space, Architecture, Trauma." *Symploke*, vol. 19, no. 1/2, University of Nebraska Press, 2012, pp. 231-245. *ProQuest*, search.proquest.com/docview/1015734091/abstract/4CA99F0598B74F9APQ/1.
- Perez, Richard. "The Debt of Memory: Reparations, Imagination, and History in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*." *Women's Studies Quarterly*, vol. 42, no. 1/2, Feminist Press, 2014, pp. 192–200. *ProQuest*, search.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/debt-memory-reparations-imagination-history-toni/docview/1544864056/se-2?accountid=201395.
- Philip, M. NourbeSe. *Zong!* Wesleyan University Press, 2008.
- Rankine, Claudia. *Citizen: An American Lyric*. Minneapolis, Graywolf Press, 2014.
- Reid-Pharr, Robert F. "Disseminating Heterotopia." *African American Review*, vol. 50, no. 4, Johns Hopkins University Press, Winter 2017, pp. 923–33. *EBSCOhost*, doi:10.1353/afa.2017.0147.

- Rumens, Nick and Melissa Tyler. "Queer Theory." *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy in Organization Studies*, edited by Raza Mir, Hugh Willmott, and Michelle Greenwood, Taylor & Francis Group, 2015, pp. 225-236).
- Sharpe, Christina. *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*. Duke University Press, 2016.
- Warren, Calvin. "Black Time: Slavery, Metaphysics, and the Logic of Wellness." *The Psychic Hold of Slavery: Legacies in American Expressive Culture*, edited by Soyica Diggs Colbert, et al., Rutgers University Press, 2016. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/wfu/detail.action?docID=4543090.
- Wright, Michelle M. *Physics of Blackness: Beyond the Middle Passage Epistemology*. University of Minnesota Press, 2015. *ProQuest Ebook Central*, ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/wfu/detail.action?docID=1977409.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Education

MASTER OF ARTS - ENGLISH | WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY | MAY 2021

- 4.0 GPA, Graduate Assistantship with full tuition scholarship and stipend.
- Coursework in African American Studies, Postcolonial Queer Studies, Victorian literature, 20th-Century Irish Poetry, Chaucer, Composition Studies, Creative Non-Fiction.
- Master's Thesis: "Attending to Time in Narratives of Enslavement: Temporal Alterities and Lived Experiences of Time in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*."

BACHELOR OF ARTS – ENGLISH AND DRAMATIC ARTS | CENTRE COLLEGE | 2018

- 3.96 GPA, Brown Fellows Scholarship, *Summa Cum Laude*, Phi Beta Kappa.
- Related coursework: British and American Literature surveys, 18th-Century Literature, Arthurian Legends, Irish Literature, Dramatic Literature, History of the English Language.

Teaching Experience

GRADUATE ASSISTANT – WRITING TUTOR | WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY | AUG 2019-MAY 2021

- Tutor undergraduate and graduate students in all stages of the writing process and from all academic backgrounds/disciplines; advise and mentor a small group of undergraduate tutors on staff; assist in administrative duties including emailing professors and clients, and general center management.

EDUCATION/TEACHING ARTIST APPRENTICE | ACTORS THEATRE OF LOUISVILLE | JULY 2018-APRIL 2019

- Devised and taught original lessons plans on dramatic literature and performance to elementary, middle, and high school students; led nine-session playwriting residency with high school students on playwriting fundamentals, drafting and revising processes, and provided regular verbal and written feedback to students; engaged in administrative work in a non-profit educational environment; coordinated and facilitated educational outreach programming.

TEACHING ASSISTANT | CENTRE COLLEGE | AUG 2017-DEC 2017

- Assisted lead professor in Introduction to Acting courses in lessons on theatre performance and dramatic literature; solo-taught workshops on basic acting skills and techniques; provided feedback to students on assignments and performance.

TUTOR AND MENTOR | CENTRE COLLEGE | SEP 2015-MAY 2018

- Mentored a 5th grade student one-on-one; helped with homework and taught lessons; formed personal relationships; served as a trustworthy adult figure; utilized listening and advising skills.

Relevant Work with Students

CO-RESIDENTIAL SUPERVISOR | KENTUCKY GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS | SUMMERS 2018, 2019

- Supervised and led all residential life of the summer program for 250+ high school students; led staff of 25 Residential Advisors; assessed all disciplinary/sensitive student issues and implemented effective responses; interacted with high school students on a daily basis in supervisory and educational settings; served as liaison between residential and administrative staff.

ADMISSIONS INTERVIEWER | CENTRE COLLEGE | AUG 2017-MAY 2018

- Conducted admission interviews with prospective students of the college; wrote student-assessments post-interview to contribute to application review.

EDUCATION INTERN | STAGEONE FAMILY THEATRE | SUMMER 2017

- Assisted in running of a theatre summer camp for children ages 8-11; led students in educational theatre activities; closely collaborated with other staff members; was responsible for well-being of children.

RESIDENTIAL ADVISOR | KENTUCKY GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS | SUMMERS 2016, 2017

- Supervised and assisted in well-being and enjoyment of students in residence halls and on campus; led small group of students in activities for education and personal growth; managed and planned events of the program.

CAMP SUPERVISOR | JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER OF LOUISVILLE | SUMMERS 2015, 2016

- Supervised and advised high school student counselors; managed schedules and meetings; created and implemented lesson plans; maintained safe environment for children ages 5-12.

Research Experience

MASTER'S THESIS | WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY | MAY 2021

- Thesis entitled "Attending to Time in Narratives of Enslavement: Temporal Alterities and Lived Experiences of Time in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*."
- Research in the fields of African American Studies, Critical Race Theory, Queer Studies.
- Examined alternative models and experiences of time as affected by conditions of enslavement in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*.

ARTS EDUCATION IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY: PERSONAL AND STATE-WIDE SIGNIFICANCE | CENTRE COLLEGE | OCT 2017

- Summer enrichment project funded by the James Graham Brown Foundation in conjunction with Centre College and the Brown Fellows Scholars Program, June-Oct 2017.
- Research based on my work with two premiere arts educational programs in Kentucky.
- Examined strengths and weaknesses of these programs for Kentucky students.
- Proposed solutions for improvement of programs, particularly in terms of expanding student demographics served.

THE VALUE OF ARTS EDUCATION: STUDENT AND EDUCATOR PERSPECTIVES | CENTRE COLLEGE | SEPT 2016

- Summer enrichment project funded by the James Graham Brown Foundation in conjunction with Centre College and the Brown Fellows Scholars Program, June-Sept 2016.
- Compared student and educator perspective of arts education at two different programs: Kentucky Governor's School for the Arts and the West End Musical Theatre Training Program in London, England.
- Examined systemic problems of arts educational offerings, particularly accessibility of high-cost, "pay-to-learn" programs.
- Presented benefits and detriments of these basic arts-educational offerings.

Honors and Awards

CREATIVE NON-FICTION CONTEST WINNER | WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY | 2020

- Winner of creative writing flash-fiction (28 words maximum) contest in the non-fiction category.

GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIP | WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY | 2019

- Full-tuition scholarship and stipend to serve as a Graduate Assistant to the English Department.
- Serve as a supervisor and tutor in the university writing center.

JAMES WARE PARISH II ENGLISH PRIZE | CENTRE COLLEGE | 2018

- Awarded to the student submitting the best independent study in the field of British and/or American literature.
- Awarded for English Senior Seminar Paper: “The Defined and the Damned: How Defining Humanity Perpetuates the Systemic Oppression of Marginalized Groups with Reference to Kazuo Ishiguro’s *Never Let Me Go*.”

GEORGE C. YOUNG ENGLISH LITERATURE PRIZE | CENTRE COLLEGE | 2018

- Awarded to the highest-ranking senior majoring in English.

GEORGE HANDY ENSMINGER ENGLISH PRIZE | CENTRE COLLEGE | 2018

- Awarded to a high-ranking senior English major who preferably wants to enter the teaching profession.

JOHN W. YERKES ENGLISH LITERATURE PRIZE | CENTRE COLLEGE | 2017

- Awarded to the highest-ranking junior majoring in English.

JUNIOR MARHSALL | CENTRE COLLEGE | 2017

- Distinction granted to the top ranking 19 students in the junior class by the start of their spring semester.

BROWN FELLOWS SCHOLARSHIP | CENTRE COLLEGE | 2014

- Premier four-year merit scholarship including full cost-plus awarded to 10 students each year.
- The top scholarship awarded at Centre College.

PERFORMING ARTS SCHOLARSHIP | CENTRE COLLEGE | 2014

- Awarded to students talented in the performing arts based on audition and application.
- Awarded for skill in acting.

NATIONAL MERIT FINALIST | BALLARD HIGH SCHOOL | 2014

- Awarded to 16,000 high school seniors with top scores on the PSAT.