



# Toni Morrison and the Queer Pleasure of Ghosts

*Juda Bennett*

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*Offers the first queer reading of all ten of Morrison's novels.*

*Toni Morrison and the Queer Pleasure of Ghosts* radically intervenes in one of the most established and sacred topics in Toni Morrison scholarship, love. Moving beyond Morrison's representation of ghosts as the forgotten or occluded past, Juda Bennett uncovers how Morrison imagines the spectral sphere as always already queer, a provocation and challenge to heteronormativity—with the ghost appearing as an active participant in disruptions of compulsory heterosexuality, as a figure embodying closet desires, or as a disembodied emanation that counterpoints homophobia. From *The Bluest Eye* to *Home*, Morrison's novels have included many queer ghosts that challenge our most cherished conceptions of love and speak to cultural anxieties about black sexualities, gay marriage, AIDS, lesbian visibility, and transgender identities. Not surprisingly, the scene-stealing ghost *Beloved* appears at the very heart of this book, but Bennett cautions against interpretative stasis, inviting readers to break free of the stranglehold *Beloved* has had on imaginations, so as not to miss the full force of Morrison's lifelong project to queer love.

“This important contribution to Morrison scholarship suggests productive new ways to interpret her individual novels and her oeuvre and makes interesting new links among her works as well.” — *CHOICE*

Juda Bennett is Associate Professor of English at the College of New Jersey and author of *The Passing Figure: Racial Confusion in Modern American Literature*.

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