

Hortense Spillers, Vanderbilt University To the Bone: Some Speculations on Touch

The question of touch, to be at hand without mediation or interference, might be considered the fundamental element of the absence of self-ownership. It defines at once the most terrifying personal and ontological feature of slavery's regimes across the long ages; yet touch, for twentieth-century critics, notably poet Audre Lorde, reverts to the realm of the erotic. 'To the Bone' attempts an entry into this paradox as an exploration of a troubled legacy.