

## Morrison (6); course conclusion

### SCHOLARS ON *BELOVED*: CHEAT SHEET

*Beloved's* most resonant question is, "If black male and female oppression stem proverbially from the same tree, then how is it possible that black male oppression makes headlines in ways that black female oppression never has nor can?" (Alexandre, 917)

Events in the United States today make it difficult to agree with readers who claim that the exorcism of *Beloved* represents a successful working through of America's racial traumas. (Berger, 415)

Such moments in the novel draw us up short, turning our attention to the flatness, objectivity, and literalism in this famously "deep" novel. I would suggest that reading *Beloved* at the surface allows us to see Morrison's project as registering the losses of history rather than repairing them. (Love, 386)

- 2.9 In literary studies, an argument relates to other arguments as contributions to a scholarly conversation.
- 2.9.1 The scholarly conversation, like ordinary conversation, is regulated by a norm of *relevance*. Because it is a slow-motion, written conversation, scholarly arguments normally make their relevance to the conversation explicit by indicating agreements, disagreements, debts, allies, and adversaries.

### LITERARY HISTORY PRINCIPLES ONCE MORE

- 6.4 In literary studies, the central historiographical concept is that of the *period*: debates about the relations between literature and history are shaped by period designations, and periods are major subjects of interpretation.
- 6.5 The historical horizons of any text include the time of composition, the time of setting, and all the times of circulation and reception.
- 6.6 Within and across periods, literary history compares texts, tracing affinities and divergences. Such comparisons are where arguments begin, not where they end.
- 6.6.1 Resemblances between texts may be explained as arising from *influence* of the earlier on the later (conscious or not), or from *homology* (shared causes), or by *coincidence*; evidence for these explanations can be both internal to texts and external to them.
- 6.6.2 Divergences from texts may also be evidence of influence, homology, or coincidence: affiliation can result in differentiation, not only resemblance. Thus, all comparison must be comparison with a context.