



YALE NATIONAL INITIATIVE

to strengthen teaching in public schools®

Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative

2012 Volume II: Storytelling: Fictional Narratives, Imaginary People, and the Reader's Real Life

Beloved: A Case Study in Storytelling Analysis

Guide for Curriculum Unit 12.02.08, published September 2012

by Tiffany DiMatteo

Teaching critical analysis skills to upper-level high school seniors is a necessity in any literature-based classroom. Having taught *Beloved* by Toni Morrison several times, I approach it in this unit from the specific perspective of storytelling and how it fits into the curriculum of either an AP Literature or IB English A1 classroom. How is the story conveyed from narrator to reader? What is the historical context and significance of a story about a former slave and her family? There are also the stories that the characters tell each other; personal stories of physical and psychological trauma that raise the questions, what stories should be told, and who decides when, how, or why they are told? The goal of this unit is to provide literature teachers with a roadmap to teaching the novel with analytic technique signposts along the way, including oral tradition, flashback, magical realism, and bildungsroman. The novel is also significant for its historical context and how that interfaces with the fictional narrative; this section includes a method for examining Sethe's "rough choice" alongside a primary historical document. I hope other teachers find this to be a useful unit on literature analysis whether they have taught this novel several times or are approaching it for the first.

(Developed for AP English Literature, grade 12; recommended for IB English 12 and AP English Literature and Composition, grade 12; and English Electives: Women Writers and Writers of Color, grades 11-12)

<https://teachers.yale.edu>

©2023 by the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Yale University, All Rights Reserved. Yale National Initiative®, Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute®, On Common Ground®, and League of Teachers Institutes® are registered trademarks of Yale University.

For terms of use visit https://teachers.yale.edu/terms_of_use