Reading Logs: Each assigned reading day you should pick one of the following topics and write a ½ page reflection—due by the following class period. It would be preferable to keep your logs in a composition notebook.

In your logs, consider the following:

**Characters—How do they change and interact with Beloved? Who is the protagonist? Who is the heroine?**

Consider the growth of the following characters:

• Baby Suggs • Sethe • Halle • Paul D • Denver • Beloved • Stamp Paid

**Symbols Biblical Allusions**

• tree on Sethe’s back, scars “I will call them my people…” • water/baptism Romans 9:25, 9:26, 1:22, 23

• fetters/chains • colors Loaves and Fishes/Last Supper • milk of motherhood Matthew 15:15, Mark 6, Luke 9 • ghosts • characters as symbols Horsemen Riding • birds, rooster Revelations 6:2, 7:17

• ribbon in water • address 124 • Trees • feet • pregnancy

• metal, tin box, red heart • Amy D’s velvet • Butter/churn

• Community or lack thereof (isolation from a community and devastating toll)

**Language—Toni Morrison says of her writing, “My language has to have holes and spaces so the reader can come into it.”**

• Poetic • Beautiful • Paradoxical • Reveals/conceals at the same time

• Repetition of the words and phrases—unspeakable thoughts unspoken

• Stream of consciousness monologues

• Intermingling of the voices within a chapter—especially the later

• Repetition of words and phrases. For example the schoolteacher’s story is told 12 times. Only the last time is the story fully revealed.

**Irony**

* “Sweet Home”
* Garner says of his slaves, “My n\*\*\*\*\* are men”—yet everything they do negates their “manhood.”
* Sethe becomes a slave to Beloved.
* Irony in the graphic descriptions.
* Baby Sugg’s freedom is bought at expense of her son’s bondage. Baby Suggs is amazed Halle can understand the need to be free when he himself has never experience the joy.
* For years Paul D believed school-teacher broke into children what Garner had raised into men. Can you declare someone to be a man?
* Graphic descriptions—detailed accounts of the horrific/ understatement. When she wrote she tried to use the most quiet language to describe what was really the most horrific experiences (the epitome of understatement).
* Mystery—who is Beloved?
* “Sometimes I feel like a Motherless Child” Billie Holiday sang.
* Do you resent Beloved? What must have been like to be a motherless child?
* Who is Beloved? Who is she and what does she represent?

• Sethe’s conscience • Catalyst for confronting the past

• Horrors of slavery • Confronting the middle passage • Spirit of a disenfranchised people

• A ghost • Catalyst for revelations/healing

• Adult and child • The voice of the middle passage

• A daughter looking for her mother • A freed slave

**Setting**

* Sweet Home vs. 124
* Community—the clearing/ the river, etc.
* The effects of African Americans after the Civil War, Reconstruction, Fugitive Act of 1850.

**Structure & Progression of novel**

Beloved does not follow a linear plot line. It circles from past to present with series of flashbacks that gradually reveal the central characters’ stories. Keep track of the events as they unfold. When you are finished create a visual of the events, contrasting them to a standard chronological order.

**Points of View**—the haunting story of a mother’s love that frames a series of interrelated love stories. Keep track of who is speaking and how this voice affects the message.

**Themes**

• Rememory—importance of past and its connection to the present and how it defines the future.

• Community—healing power of women, sisterhood and ties that bind

• Isolation of the individual

• Slavery’s destructive effects on all aspects of life, especially motherhood and masculinity, humanity and identity.

• Freedom