Morrison reminded her readers frequently that she did not write autobiographical fiction. She also did not draw characters who represented all African Americans (or all whites); rather, her figures were distinct individuals. Bill Cosey in *Love* might have been a womanizer bordering on a pedophile, proud of his money-making ability, but Morrison never intended Cosey to represent all wealthy African American men. As she wrote,

> My books are frequently read as representative of what the black condition is. Actually, the books are about very specific circumstances, and in them are people who do very specific things. But more importantly, the plot, characters are part of my effort to create a language in which I can posit philosophical questions. I want the reader to ponder these questions. I want the reader to ponder these questions not because I put them in an essay, but because they are part of a narrative. … I would like my work to do two things: be as demanding and sophisticated as I want it to be, and at the same time be accessible in a sort of emotional way to lots of people … That’s a hard task. But that’s what I want to do. (Con I, 106)

The active narrative lines of *Love*, then, which lead to and culminate in the death of Heed Cosey, memorialize not only this character’s existence but the tragedy that she was “married” to Bill Cosey while still a child. That she endured through sheer will was a tribute to her native intelligence – and her sad recognition that her family was
willing to sell her for a very small price. (As she would much later
tell Christine, “Mind you, at eleven I thought a box of candied pop-
corn was good treatment”; Love 186). In reality, her death resulted at
least partly from the decades of unhappiness she spent as Mrs. Bill
Cosey – and her guilty need to immortalize him in writing.

The novel was another illustration of Morrison’s statement about
the nature of love as emotion: “I’m trying to get at all kinds and
definitions of love. We love people pretty much the way we are. I
think there’s a line, ‘Wicked people love wickedly, stupid people
love stupidly,’ and in a way we are the way we love other people”
(Con I, 106). It was also an oblique illustration of the power of
music – not only in people’s lives but in the creative world’s underly-
ing symbiosis.

At Princeton, Morrison had developed an arts program that drew
from fields far from the literary, as well as the literary. Known as the
Atelier program, this interdisciplinary workshop placed at its center
such artists as Maria Tucci, Lars Jann, Yo Yo Ma, Jacques d’Amboises,
A. S. Byatt, Louis Massiah, Richard Danielpour, Roger Babb, Gabriel
García Márquez and others. Just as she had years before written
the story and lyrics for New Orleans: The Storyville Musical (in 1981,
working with Donald McKayle and Dorothea Freitag), in 1995 she
helped to create Degga, an interdisciplinary work with composer
Max Roach and choreographer, dancer Bill T. Jones. She had also
been writing lyrics for songs performed by Sylvia McNair, Jessye
Norman, and Kathleen Battle (with André Previn; with Judith Wier);
hers work toward both Margaret Garner and, to come, Desdemona, first
performed in 2012, directed by Peter Sellers with Rokia Traore, was
an extension of her interest in musical composition.

She had commented to an interviewer that “writing lyrics for
André Previn and Kathleen Battle … experts at what they did, and
I was an expert at what I did; but I was a novice in what they did.
I didn’t know anything about it, so working with them was just
amazing. So I started to shape language to do other things. Not to
be the music, but to just sit there and hold it, so that somebody else
could do what they did” (Con II, 251). And she often made aes-
thetic comments that tied literature to music; as she noted to Diana
Cooper-Clark, “the way in which one arrives at the idea in a book is
via the words and the sentences and the dialogue. It’s like knowing
what the notes are in the last chord in music” (Cooper-Clark 201).