

Assign each student a motif—a “theme” or an actual object—that they track throughout their reading of the novel and then give a small presentation and/or write a short paper analyzing their findings. They might consider questions such as: What seems to be the function of this motif in *A Mercy*? How (if at all) does Morrison’s representation of the motif change throughout the novel? Does the motif change in chapters told by different characters, and if so, why?

Example motifs:

- Shoes
- Rum
- Iron
- Gold
- Manuscript writings
- Christianity
- Spirituality
- Food
- Illness
- Pain (physical)
- Pain (emotional)
- Rivers
- The ocean
- The wilderness
- Construction / building
- Pregnancy and childbirth