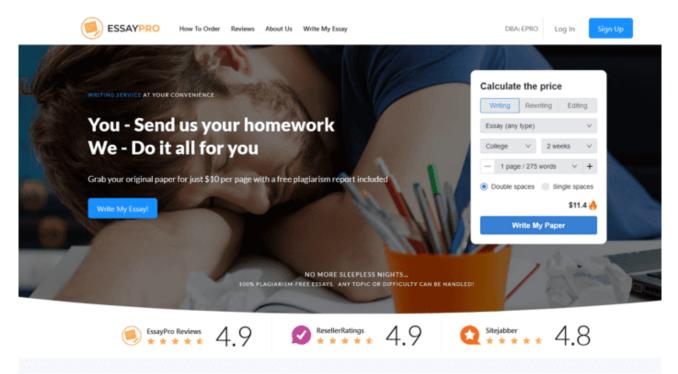
Symbolic Healing in Toni Morrison's Beloved



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Symbolic Healing in Beloved

Toni Morrison's powerful novel Beloved is based on the aftermath of slavery and the horrific burden of slavery's hidden sins. Morrison chooses to depict the characters that were brutalized in the life of slavery as strong-willed and capable of overcoming such trauma. This is made possible through the healing of many significant characters, especially Sethe. Sethe is relieved of her painful agony of escaping Sweet Home as well as dealing with pregnancy with the help of young Amy Denver and Baby Suggs. Paul D's contributions to the symbolic healing take place in the attempt to help her erase the past. Denver plays the most significant role in Sethe's healing in that she brings the community's support to her mother and claims her own individuality in the process. Putting her trust in other people is the only way Sethe is able to relieve herself of her haunted past and suffering body. Morrison demonstrates that to overcome the scars of slavery, one must place themselves in the hands of those that love them, rather than face the painful memories alone.

It is not surprising to see that Sethe named her second born daughter after the young girl that saved both of their lives. Amy Denver, a white servant girl fleeing toward Boston, gave

encouragement and first aid relief to Sethe's swollen <u>feet</u> and helped her crawl to safety. As Sethe lay dying on the uncomfortable ground, Amy approached her. "She [Amy] gathered rocks, covered them with more leaves and made Sethe put her feet on them...then she did the magic: lifted Sethe's feet and <u>legs</u> and massaged them until she cried salt tears" (Morrison, 35). Amy is free of the thriving need to abuse slaves, and this ignorance proves beneficial. U...

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...port Sethe, and in return, Sethe chooses to accept their healing attempts and walks away from Beloved.

Slavery is and will always be within Sethe. She was born a slave and raised a slave. Crossing a river to freedom doesn't change the torturous bonds of slavery. The emotional barriers slavery places on people leave different effects but one thing remains common: the feeling of no self-worth. Not all people are as lucky as Sethe to have people in their lives that help to overcome such obstacles. With the help of Amy, Denver, Baby Suggs, Paul D, and others along her journey, Sethe is able to overcome the impossible and move on from her past with a life of love and acceptance.

Works Cited

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