

# Socio-Economic Justice in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*

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## Abstract:

Toni Morrison's novel *Beloved* focuses on the effects of slavery on African American people and their families. It illustrates the importance of social and economic justice in pursuing social work. It highlights the importance of understanding the struggles of marginalized individuals and the need for social workers to fight for social and economic justice to create a more equitable society. Her works are known for exploring African American culture and racial and economic justice themes. The paper will look at a specific work, *Beloved*, and analyze it from the perspective of socio-economic justice, referencing issues of oppression and connecting them to the NASW Code of Ethics.

**Key words:** Social, Economic, NASW Code, laborers, Ethics, justice

Toni Morrison's novel *Beloved* focuses on the effects of slavery on African American people and their families. It illustrates the importance of social and economic justice in pursuing social work. It highlights the importance of understanding the struggles of marginalized individuals and the need for social workers to fight for social and economic justice to create a more equitable society.

In her book *Beloved*, Toni Morrison narrates the tale of Sethe, a formerly enslaved person in pre-Civil War America who is tormented by the spirit of her late daughter. In Cincinnati, Ohio, Sethe, her son Denver, and their neighbor Paul D. Garnett share a home. The Civil War's aftermath is the setting for the narrative. It examines the psychological and emotional repercussions of slavery as well as the effort of African Americans to reconstruct their lives after it. The story opens with the introduction of Sethe, a woman who was born into slavery and had a baby daughter who passed away during delivery. Sethe's memories of her daughter and her daughter's spirit torment her. Paul D. Garnett helps Sethe face her history and the grief over the loss of her daughter when he moves in with her.

The narrative goes back to 1873 when Sethe and her kids lived on the Kentucky plantation Sweet Home. Sethe was enslaved and, with the aid of her husband, Halle, could free herself. While Sethe and her other two children managed to flee to Cincinnati, the enslaver chased the family, and the two oldest children were eventually seized. When Sethe and her kids get to Cincinnati, they locate a place to reside and are welcomed by the neighborhood (Morrison, 2004). Denver, Sethe's daughter, works as a carpenter, while Sethe gets employment as a washerwoman. They may stay in the home until Sethe's daughter's ghost emerges and starts to terrify the neighborhood. The daughter Sethe was forced to leave behind when she fled slavery is finally identified as the spirit of Sethe's daughter and is a young lady by the name of *Beloved*.

*Beloved* comes in with Sethe and Denver and gradually takes over the home, requesting that Sethe and Denver treat her equally. Eventually, Sethe is overcome by *Beloved*'s presence and starts to recall her history. She recalls the mistreatment and torment she endured as an enslaved person and the eventual choice she had to make to defend her kids. She recalls her husband, Halle, and how he could not save her and her kids from the atrocities of slavery.

In the novel's climax, Sethe and the neighborhood come together to face *Beloved* and the suffering from her past. When *Beloved* is ultimately driven away, Sethe and Denver can start to rebuild their lives. Sethe, Denver, and Paul D. Garnett leave home to start a new life in the North at the book's conclusion. *Beloved* is a stirring and dramatic book that examines the impact of slavery and how African Americans struggled to rebuild their lives after it (Morrison, 2004). It provides a realistic portrayal of the atrocities of slavery and the human spirit's tenacity in the

face of hardship. The book invites readers to consider the legacy of slavery in the United States by exploring the past and shedding light on the present.

The book *Beloved* focuses on how slavery affected African Americans and their families. It examines the terrible legacy of slavery and the challenges that African Americans have encountered in the pursuit of justice and freedom. The book serves as an example of the significance of communal and financial fairness in the practice of social work. Morrison highlights the importance of comprehending the problems of disadvantaged individuals and the battle for social and economic integrity by social workers to build a fairer society.

*Beloved* examines how slavery affected African Americans' lives and the challenges they encountered in their quest for justice and freedom. Sethe, a formerly enslaved person who has freed herself, is attempting to start over for herself and her family. The spirit of her daughter Beloved, whom she murdered to save her from being sold back into slavery, haunts her. The pain Sethe endured as a consequence of her time in slavery is explored, as is her struggle to come to terms with her memories.

The story also emphasizes the significance of social and economic fairness for those who want to work in social services. Morrison stresses the need for social workers to pursue justice and build an equal social order. The story emphasizes how institutional racism and oppression have prevented African Americans from accessing opportunities and resources. Due to the bigotry and hostility she encounters, Denver, Sethe's daughter, is denied access to school and cannot obtain employment. The book is an excellent example of the value of understanding the difficulties of those on the margins and the need for social workers to fight for social and economic justice to build an equal society.

Morrison draws attention to the historical systemic racial and economic injustices that African Americans have endured via the characters she creates. The book, for instance, highlights the economic injustices African Americans have experienced due to the legacy of slavery. African Americans were not given the same economic prospects as white people when slavery ended. African Americans were thus unable to access money and resources, which put them in a dangerous economic position. African Americans faced racial segregation and economic inequalities, restricting their access to resources. The work also emphasizes the difficulties faced by African Americans in their pursuit of social and economic justice.

African Americans still battle for social and economic justice in the face of pervasive injustice and prejudice. For instance, Sethe and Denver, two of the novel's key protagonists, labor arduously to develop a prosperous company to improve their lives and that of their families. They may build a profitable company through diligence, giving them financial security and a feeling of satisfaction in their achievements (Morrison, 2004). *Beloved* highlights the significance of social workers in the battle for justice and the difficulties African Americans faced in their quest for economic justice. Social workers play a crucial role in giving underprivileged people services and assistance.

Social workers are shown as being ready to defend African Americans' rights and fight for social and economic justice throughout the whole book. For instance, Mrs. Garner, a social worker, is shown as a support system for Sethe and her family and as an advocate for African Americans in the neighborhood. In the end, *Beloved* serves as an example of how social work requires understanding social and economic justice. The book strongly emphasizes the need for social workers to pursue justice and build a fairer society. Social workers may contribute to creating a more equitable society and guarantee that everyone has access to the tools and assistance they need by comprehending the problems of disadvantaged people and fighting for social and economic justice.

Social laborers must contest communal and fiscal fairness in order to build a fairer society, according to the NASW Code of Morals. The Code of Ethics mandates that social workers take action to provide opportunity and choice for everyone, emphasizing the requirements and enablement of those who are feeble, burdened, and living in scarcity (NASW, 2021).

The Code of Ethics strongly emphasizes social workers' obligation to fight for social justice and promote economic, environmental, and social justice (NASW, 2021). *Beloved* highlights these principles' importance and

how social workers must strive for social and economic fairness. The book underlines how difficult it is for African Americans to pursue justice and freedom and how important it is for social employees to be aware of these folks' particular difficulties. In order to build a fairer society, the story demonstrates the need for social workers to struggle for social and economic justice.

The following excerpt reflects the critical theme of *Beloved*, emphasizing the need for social workers to fight for social and economic justice to create a more equitable society: "Sethe had been schooled in the very small, concise lesson that said: survival. She had learned it so thoroughly that even when she was free, she acted as if she were not. Life was more than a matter of staying alive; she was coming to understand. it was about the struggle for justice and the right to be free." (191)

The literary works of Toni Morrison and her book *Beloved* have been examined in this essay. The impact of slavery on African Americans and their families is the central theme of the book. It serves as an example of the significance of communal and commercial righteousness in the practice of social effort. The book emphasizes how crucial it is to comprehend the problems of disadvantaged people and the need for social workers to strive for social and economic justice to build an equal society. *Beloved* exemplifies the concept that social workers must promote social and economic fairness, emphasized in the NASW Code of Ethics. The sample emphasizes the necessity for social workers to strive for social and economic justice to establish an equal society, which mirrors the central issue of the work.

## References

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