

Role of symbolism in beloved novel

[Literature](#), [Novel](#)



I think that the house, 124 Bluestone Road, is a symbol of the baby's ghost. Or maybe not just a symbol, but like an embodiment of it. The baby's ghost is the house.

Right off the bat, the novel begins with, 124 was spiteful. Full of a baby's venom (Morrison 3)

Here, Morrison personifies the house as a person. She could've said, 124 is haunted by a spiteful ghost, which would've made more technical sense since a house is an object, not a person with emotions. But she doesn't do that. She says that 124 was spiteful, as though the house is capable of feeling emotions such as spite. This illustrates the link between the baby's ghost and the house because the house IS the baby's ghost and vice versa. 124 Bluestone Road isn't just haunted by a ghost, the ghost is the house itself. Everyone in 124 knows that the house is full of a baby's venom (Morrison 3), which I think means the baby's ghost is everywhere: in the walls, the floorboards, the windows, the door, etc.

Also, there's very compelling evidence that proves 124 Bluestone Road is haunted by a baby ghost. For example, Sethe's two sons leave the house after each encounter the ghost

As soon as merely looking into a mirror shattered it (that was the signal for Buglar); as soon as two tiny hand prints appeared in the cake (that was it for Howard) (Morrison 3)

And another example when Paul D came to visit and suddenly, the floorboards were shaking and the grinding, shoving floor was only part of it.

The house itself was pitching. . . A table rushed toward [Paul D] (Morrison 22).

This is creepy. Those are actual supernatural events because it isn't logical for a mirror to suddenly just shatter and for two hand prints to appear out of nowhere and for a house to start shaking. Honestly, I got a little creeped out just reading this. I don't blame the boys; I think I would've run away too.

Sethe has a scars on her back from the beating the schoolteacher inflicted upon her after he caught her trying to run away. Her scars form the shape of a chokecherry tree, which I think symbolizes her connection to Beloved and also her pain and sadness from the past.

Sethe tells Paul D that the whitegirl who helped her said that the scars on her back looked like a chokecherry tree. Trunk, branches, and even leaves. Tiny little chokecherry leaves (Morrison 18)

I did a little research and learned that chokecherry trees are poisonous (Ohio State University Weedguide), which I think connects to what Morrison said earlier about 124 Bluestone Road being full of a baby's venom (Morrison 3)

I think the chokecherry tree is like a symbol to represent the link between Sethe and the baby ghost because the baby ghost is Sethe's daughter. The chokecherry tree ties her to 124 Bluestone Road, since the house is the baby ghost. Sethe tells Paul D that she will never leave this house because she doesn't want no more running" from nothing and that she will never run from another thing on this earth (18).

I think the chokecherry tree also represents Sethe's pain and sorrows from the traumatic events in her past, like losing her baby, the beating

Her sorrow, the roots of it; its wide trunk and intricate branches (Morrison 20)

I've noticed that the dynamics of Sethe's relationship with Beloved is contrasting of her relationship with Denver. With Beloved, Sethe seems more open.

Between Sethe and Beloved, Beloved follows Sethe everywhere. Literally everywhere. Beloved could not take her eyes off Sethe. . . Sethe was licked, tasted, and eaten by Beloved's eyes. . . Like a familiar, she hovered, never leaving the room Sethe was in unless required and told to (Morrison 68). Clearly, Beloved adores Sethe to an obsessive point, which is given since Sethe is her mother. Interestingly, while Sethe feels flattered by Beloved's open, quiet devotion, had Denver behaved the same way, Sethe would feel annoyed . . . at the thought of having raised such a ridiculously dependent child (Morrison 68).