

Reframing Myths: Toni Morrison's Narrative Universe

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Abstract: *Toni Morrison's novels act as a transformative medium for reinterpreting ancient myths, a process that turns them into narratives that deeply resonate with the African American experience. This study delves into her adept integration and rewriting of classical and African mythologies to explore themes of identity, trauma, and community within African American life. In Song of Solomon, Morrison reinterprets the myth of Ulysses through Milkman's journey, transmuting an epic quest into a profound exploration of heritage and self-discovery against racial history. On the other hand, Sula uses the Pygmalion and Galatea myth to dismember perceptions of beauty and transformation within interpersonal relations, claiming that everything in identity is level and perception is power. The Bluest Eye juxtaposes the Demeter and Persephone narrative with the tragedy of Pecola Breedlove, critiquing the destructive idealisation of Western beauty standards and examining the cyclical nature of abuse and marginalisation. At the same time, Beloved echoes the haunting resonance of the Philomela and Procne myth, articulating the unspeakable traumas of slavery and the silencing of women's voices through the spectral presence of its titular character. It proves that her novels return to these myths and rewrite them bluntly, giving new narratives affirming the complexity of the African American identity through the prism of mythic transformation and rebirth. The paper will tease out the fact that her revisionist approach to mythmaking is inextricably related to her feminism and thereby adds a multilayered discussion to the way issues of race, gender, and mythology cross in contemporary literature. This work re-establishes her as one of the most crucial figures in feminist and cultural studies.*

Keywords: *feminist perspectives; identity; myth; race; resilience; slavery; trauma;*