

**REPRESENTATIONS OF THE AFRICAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE
THROUGH YORUBA MYTHOLOGY: AN ANALYSIS OF TOMI ADEYEMI'S
TRILOGY *LEGACY OF ORISHA*.**

EVA NKATHA KOBIA

**A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School in Partial Fulfilment of the
Requirements for the Award of the Degree of Master of Arts in Literature of
Chuka University**

CHUKA UNIVERSITY

OCTOBER 2025

DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS


Declaration


This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for an award of a diploma or conferment of a degree in any other institution.

Signature.....  Date 31/10/2025
Eva Nkatha Kobia
AM10/51116/20

Recommendations

This thesis has been examined, passed and submitted with our approval as University supervisors.

Signature.....  Date 31.10.2025
Dr. Jackson Gikunda Njogu, PhD
Chuka University

Signature.....  Date 31/10/25
Dr. Antony Mate Mukasa, PhD
Chuka University



COPYRIGHT

© 2025

All rights reserved. No part of this thesis may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without prior written permission of the author.

DEDICATION

To my family, your support is immeasurable.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This research would not have been possible without the help of numerous individuals and I would like to offer my heartfelt gratitude to them. I would like to extend sincere thanks to my supervisors Dr. Jackson Gikunda and Dr. Anthony Mukasa. Their unwavering support, guidance, patience and invaluable insights throughout the course of this process have been the cornerstone of my research. I am grateful to the great Chuka University for fostering a conducive environment that greatly facilitated the coming together of this research. The access to excellent facilities, resources and academic support has been vital to the coming together of this thesis. I extend my sincere thanks to Professor Muraya, Director Postgraduate Studies, the chairperson Department of Humanities, Professor Dickson Nkonge and dean Faculty of Social Sciences Professor Kyalo Wa Ngula. I wish to extend my appreciation to NACOSTI for approving my request to carry out this research. Above all, I am grateful to God for good health, his grace, strength, wisdom and for granting me clarity of mind.

ABSTRACT

Myth is the repository of the values of the society, and the writer who seeks to interpret his society must of necessity be concerned with myth. Various approaches have been adopted in the criticism of African American literature over time, including the empathy inherent in slave autobiographies, the sentimentalism of the abolitionist literature, black pride of the Harlem renaissance, the political poetry of the civil rights movement, the Black Lives Matter movement up to the modern-day digital revolution. These approaches have been enriched mainly by socio-political movements coupled with individual creativity. It is curious that despite having originated from Africa which has a rich heritage of oral traditions, writers and critics of African descent have accorded little attention to the ways in which orality contributes to the black man's experience in America. This research attempted to fill this gap by analysing the use of Yoruba mythology in African American novels, focusing on Tomi Adeyemi's trilogy *Legacy of Orisha* comprising of three texts namely *Children of Blood and Bone*, *Children of Virtue and Vengeance* and *Children of Anguish and Anarchy*. Three objectives guided this study: first, to explore various Yoruba myths in the trilogy *Legacy of Orisha*; secondly, to explore the nexus between these myths and African American experience in Tomi Adeyemi's *Legacy of Orisha*; and finally, to analyse myth aesthetics in Tomi Adeyemi's *Trilogy of Orisha*. The myth criticism theoretical framework pioneered by Claude Levi Strauss and advanced by later critics was adopted to examine the use of African orality and synthesize relevant mythological and diasporic issues. in the selected texts. Being qualitative in nature, the research relied on content analysis to analyse the selected novels. This study examined primary texts through purposive sampling, selecting a trilogy published between 2018 and 2024 that prominently features mythological elements. The trilogy is authored by an African American author and the texts are thematically rich in terms of socio-political issues. Secondary texts, including critical essays, theoretical works, and cultural studies, were systematically reviewed using a literature review matrix to identify key scholarly debates and gaps. The findings of this study show that the author presents fantastical elements suggesting that reconnection with ancestry can provide frameworks of resistance and identity formation. Additionally, the study reveals that the struggle over mythology is the struggle over narrative authority. Lastly, the study reveals that African mythology presents a rich narrative and symbolic depth just like traditionally favoured western mythologies. The study contributes to the scholarship practice. Pedagogically, the findings provide frameworks for teaching African mythology and Diasporic representations. The study provides insights for representations of myth which can be used for the development of reading material for children. Additionally, the research offers applications for journalism materials and media production.