



The Black Intellectual Tradition and the Great Conversation with Dr. Angel Parham

Lesson 11: Toni
Morrison, Part III

Outline:

Song of Solomon, a novel by Toni Morrison, continued

- Reference to the Odyssey: **The theme of wandering and homelessness.**
 - Macom Dead's father dies and Macom Dead becomes wealthy from real estate.
 - He has not cultivated a sense of home with his family.
 - Pilate goes off on her own to Virginia. Where do I have people? Where is home?
 - She has to continually leave different places. She takes a rock from each place, which is her way of holding on to a sense of groundedness.
 - Many characters have been on a quest for home.
- Reference to the Odyssey: **Circe and the Cyclops**
 - Circe was the midwife who had delivered Macom Dead and Pilate.
 - Their Odyssey begins with hospitality from Circe.
 - They leave Circe's house.
 - When Macom throws something at the white man in the cave and it hits him in the middle of the head (evocative of the Cyclops).
 - The whole scene evokes the struggle of Odysseus and his men when they go into the Cyclops cave for hospitality. They engage in a horrible struggle that threatens to destroy them all.
 - The first side of Circe that we saw was one of incredible hospitality.
 - Milkman Dead encounters Circe. Milkman is also in search of his people. He runs into Circe.
 - Her wonderful hospitality was enchanted, the men she entertained were turned into pigs. In this story, they were perhaps transformed into dogs.
 - This is a commentary on race and justice over time.