

A black and white portrait of Zena Khafagy. She is a woman with voluminous, curly hair, wearing a dark blazer over a white collared shirt and a dark necktie. She is looking slightly to the right of the camera with a serious expression. Her right hand is raised, showing a large ring on her ring finger and a watch on her wrist. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Playing in The Dark

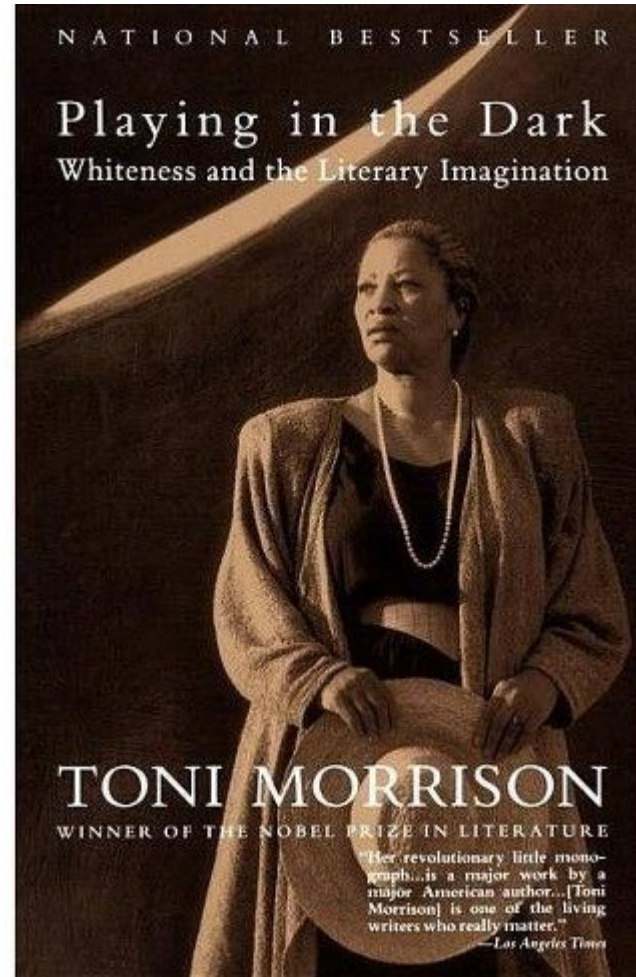
Zena Khafagy

About Toni Morrison

- Born as Chloe Anthony Wofford Morrison on February 18th, 1931 in Ohio and died on August 5th, 2019.
- Was a beloved American novelist, essayist, book editor, and college professor.
- Her first novel, *The Bluest Eye*, was published in 1970. The critically acclaimed *Song of Solomon* (1977) brought her national attention and won the National Book Critics Circle Award.
- In 1988, Morrison won the Pulitzer Prize for *Beloved* (1987); she gained worldwide recognition when she was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1993
- Graduated from Howard University in 1953 with a B.A. in English
- Earned a master's in American Literature from Cornell University
- On May 29, 2012, President Barack Obama presented Morrison with the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Playing in The Dark

- Compilation of 3 essays
- Race studies vs. post colonialism
- "Blackness" and "whiteness"



“Black Matters”

- Critiques American Literary Canon
- Lack of black writers
- Major characteristics of national literature as a response to a "dark, abiding, signing Africanist presence" (5)
- Africanism and the "Invented Africa" (7)
- Ignoring race in literature
- Explore impact of racism on victim and perpetrator
- Africanist presence is reflexive
- "Othering"

“Romancing the Shadow”

- Cultural identities formed and informed by literature.
- Early American literature (Romance) explores anxieties, slave population as canvas for creativity.
- No longer America v. Britain
- “Nothing highlights freedom- if it did not in face create it- like slavery.”



"Disturbing Nurses and the Kindness of Sharks"

- Africanist presence still crucial even when work is not *about* race
- White characters' interactions with black characters
- Black character used to further white character's narrative
- Linguistic strategies employed
- Economy of Stereotype
- Fetishization
- Dehistoricizing allegory
- Patterns of explosive, disjointed, repetitive language

Questions

- What does it mean to belong to either group?
- What are the underlying implications of racialization?
- How are racialized identities constructed?

"All of us, readers and writers, are bereft when criticism remains too polite or too fearful to notice disrupting darkness before its eyes."