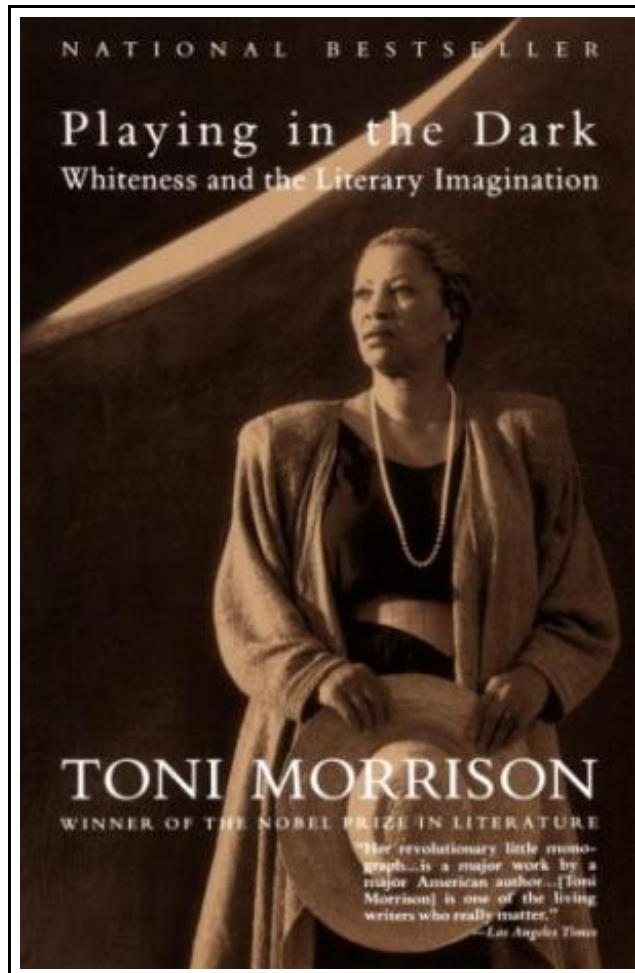


Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination



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PLAYING IN THE DARK: WHITENESS AND THE LITERARY IMAGINATION

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Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, United States, 1993. Paperback. Book Condition: New. Reprint. 218 x 137 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book. Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist Toni Morrison brings the genius of a master writer to this personal inquiry into the significance of African-Americans in the American literary imagination. Her goal, she states at the outset, is to put forth an argument for extending the study of American literature. draw a map, so to speak, of a critical geography and use that map to open as much space for discovery, intellectual adventure, and close exploration as did the original charting of the New World--without the mandate for conquest. Author of *Beloved*, *The Bluest Eye*, *Song of Solomon*, and other vivid portrayals of black American experience, Morrison ponders the effect that living in a historically racialized society has had on American writing in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. She argues that race has become a metaphor, a way of referring to forces, events, and forms of social decay, economic division, and human panic. Her compelling point is that the central characteristics of American literature--individualism, masculinity, the insistence upon innocence coupled to an obsession with figurations of death and hell--are responses to a dark and abiding Africanist presence. Through her investigation of black characters, narrative strategies, and idiom in the fiction of white American writers, Morrison provides a daring perspective that is sure to alter conventional notions about American literature. She considers Willa Cather and the impact of race on concept and plot; turns to Poe, Hawthorne, and Melville to examine the black force that figures so significantly in the literature of early America; and discusses the implications of the Africanist presence at the heart of *Huckleberry Finn*. A final chapter on Ernest Hemingway is a brilliant exposition of the racial subtext that glimmers beneath...

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