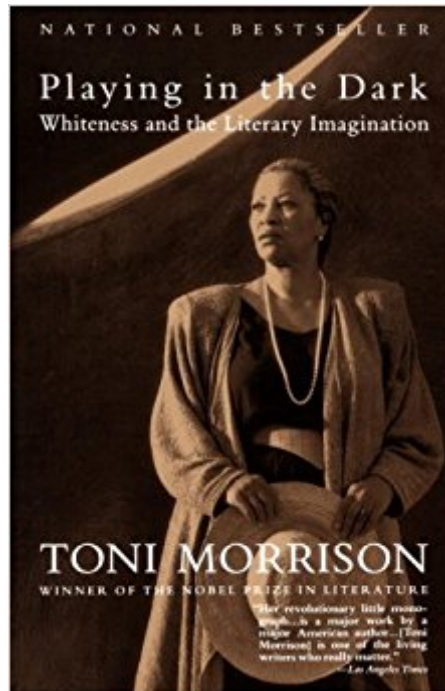




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# Playing In The Dark: Whiteness And The Literary Imagination



## Synopsis

The Nobel Prize-winning author *Ã* now gives us a learned, stylish, and immensely persuasive work of literary criticism that promises to change the way we read American literature even as it opens a new chapter in the American dialogue on race. Toni Morrison's brilliant discussions of the "Africanist" presence in the fiction of Poe, Melville, Cather, and Hemingway leads to a dramatic reappraisal of the essential characteristics of our literary tradition. She shows how much the themes of freedom and individualism, manhood and innocence, depended on the existence of a black population that was manifestly unfree--and that came to serve white authors as embodiments of their own fears and desires. Written with the artistic vision that has earned Toni Morrison a pre-eminent place in modern letters, *Playing in the Dark* will be avidly read by Morrison admirers as well as by students, critics, and scholars of American literature. "By going for the American literary jugular...she places her arguments...at the very heart of contemporary public conversation about what it is to be authentically and originally American. [She] boldly...reimagines and remaps the possibility of America."--Chicago Tribune "Toni Morrison is the closest thing the country has to a national writer."The New York Times Book Review

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Novelist Morrison takes a turn as a literary critic, examining the American literary imagination and finding it obsessed with the white/black polarity. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist Morrison ( *Jazz* , LJ 4/15/92) believes that an African American presence, largely ignored by critics, has always permeated white American literature. She opens by carefully setting her parameters and defining her terms--e.g., Africanism: "the denotative and connotative blackness that African peoples have come to signify, as well as the entire range of views, assumptions, readings, and misreadings that accompany Eurocentric learning about these people." The first few pages feature densely packed language whose meaning becomes clearer when Morrison examines such specific works as Willa Cather's *Sapphira and the Slave Girl* . This brief, highly provocative book, which considers "the impact of racism on those who perpetuate it," is highly recommended not only for Morrison's many admirers but for all those interested in American literature.-Louis J. Parascandola, Long Island Univ., Brooklyn Campus , New YorkCopyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

A gift for American writers -- the gifts from Ms. Morrison just keep on coming! Thank you, Toni.

As always, beautifully perfect!

I am not a fan of literary criticism, but this book puts things in perspective for me and makes what we see as ordinary extraordinary and highlights. Her concept of what she calls "American Africanism" is fascinating. I would say it is like Edward Said's *Orientalism* but about African American studies.

Toni Morrison "Playing in the Dark" shed's light to the ignorances of narrow mines that does not justify it's means.I've read all of Toni Morrison's books which always takes the reader to the place and time of the characters she creates. From beginning to end of each story, Morrison concludes a lesson that preceded adversity which withstands the storms of life. I would recommend this book to people.

Ordered for a class. Very helpful/insightful.

Morrison's book puts American literary history on permanent and telling reset by identifying the role of slavery, of Jim Crow, and of racism generally at it its core. Her subtle and sweeping analyses set the record straight on our country's original and originating sin.

the book came as described: new, with pristine pages. I am very pleased with my purchase.

Playing in the Dark raises important questions about white hegemony in our literary traditions. It is extremely well written and will make you look at everything you read in a different light. Great book.

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