

Dr Tessa Roynon

Lecture 3: Toni Morrison: An Introduction

First, before you listen to my lecture, watch the trailer for a new film that has just been released about Morrison's life and work:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A8sUwXTWb4M>



Toni Morrison (1931-2019): A Brief Chronology of Her Life and Work

1931 - born ('Chloe Wofford' to a materially poor but culturally and emotionally rich family in Lorain, Ohio)

1949-53 Attends Howard University in Washington DC – English major; Classics minor

1953-55 Completes MA degree in English Literature at Cornell University

1957-77 Works as a university teacher, an editor for Random House both in Syracuse and then New York City, raising her two sons as a single mother, and publishes:

1970 – *The Bluest Eye*

1973 – *Sula*

1977 – *Song of Solomon*

1977-1993 Gives up her day job at Random House to write:

1983 – *Tar Baby*

1987 – *Beloved*

1992 – *Jazz* ***

Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the American Literary Imagination

1993 – awarded Nobel Prize for Literature

1998 - *Paradise*

2003 – *Love*

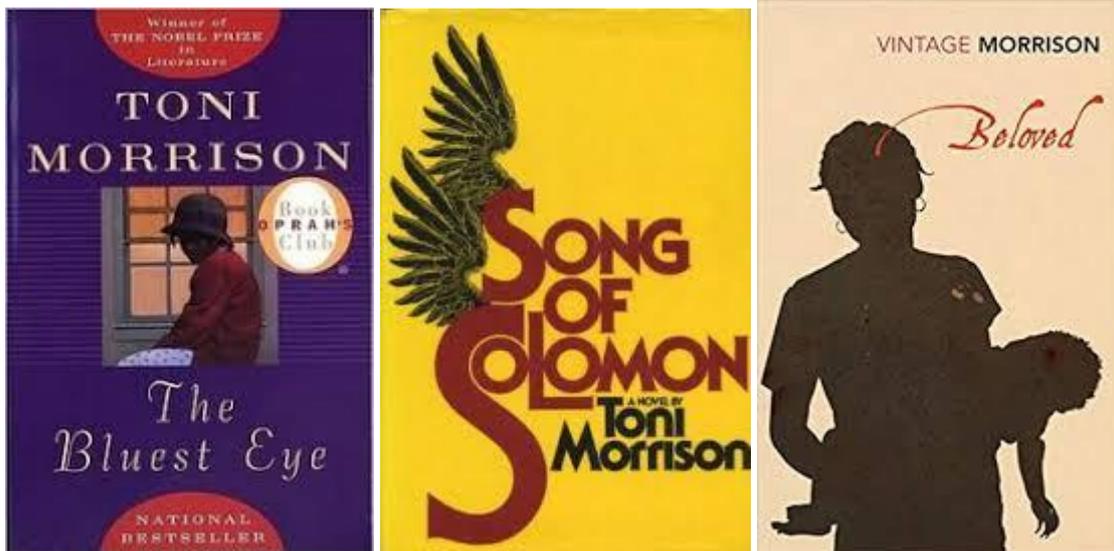
2006 – retires her from her professorship at Princeton University

2008 – *A Mercy*

2012 – *Home*

2015 – *God Help the Child*

Dies 5th August 2019



You can read and/or listen to her incredible Nobel Prize acceptance speech and lecture here:

<https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/1993/morrison/lecture/>

See if you can track down the two fabulous documentary films about Morrison and her work:

The Pieces I Am (dir. 2019) <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt9358206/>

Nb this film is currently available for rent on Prime video, if you can access that. There are also two more trailers for it on YouTube.

And

The Foreigner's Home (dir. R. Brown and G. Pingree, 2018) <https://www.theforeignershome.com/>

This is harder to find, although the trailer gives a good sense of its content.

Further reading – as a starting point, (with apologies for recommending my own book!), try Tessa Royon, *The Cambridge Introduction to Toni Morrison* (Cambridge UP, 2012), which is aimed at sixth formers, undergraduates, and anyone embarking on a study of Morrison's work for the first time.