

## Toni Morrison: A Critical Companion (Critical Companions to Popular Contemporary Writers)

Missy Kubitschek

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Winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1993, Toni Morrison is among our most distinguished contemporary novelists. Morrison describes herself as a black woman novelist, and all her novels deal with African American characters and communities. Exploring the entire cycle of human life in a spiritual context, her novels are also universal in their depiction of families, especially mothers and their children. From her first novel, *The Bluest Eye*, to her most recent, *Paradise*, Toni Morrison has explored the African American experience, and by extension, the human experience. Her characters linger in our minds long after we have finished reading the novel. This is the only book-length study to discuss all of Morrison's novels published to date.

This study analyzes in turn each of Morrison's novels. It also provides the reader with a complete bibliography of her writings, as well as selected reviews and criticism. Following a biographical chapter on Toni Morrison's life, Kubitschek discusses Morrison's writing in the tradition not only of African American literature but of the great modernist and postmodernist American writers. Each of the following chapters examines an individual novel: *The Bluest Eye* (1970), *Sula* (1973), *Song of Solomon* (1977), *Tar Baby* (1981), *Beloved* (1987), *Jazz* (1992), and *Paradise* (1998). The discussion of each novel features sections on plot and character development, narrative structure, thematic issues, and an alternative critical approach from which to read the novel. Written specifically for high school and college students and general readers, this study illuminates and enriches the reading of Morrison's novels.



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