



The Black Intellectual Tradition and the Great Conversation with Dr. Angel Parham

Lesson 9: Toni Morrison, Part I

Outline:

Toni Morrison

- She was born in 1931 in Ohio.
- She grew up with a rich imaginative life.
- She joined the Catholic Church at the age of 12.
- She was major in English and a minor in Classics.
- While working as an editor at Random House, she cultivated an all-star cast of black writers.
- In 1988 she publishes *Beloved* and wins the Pulitzer Prize. She joins the faculty of Princeton University until her retirement in 2006.

Song of Solomon, a novel by Toni Morrison

- “That fathers may soar and the children may know their names.”
- The stories of the Flying Africans.
 - In the collection of these oral histories this same story was told over and over again.
 - The mass suicide at Ebo Landing gave rise to a distinctive regional folklore.
 - This is the ultimate form of resistance. I am going back home to Africa to the home of the ancestors.
- Ruth is a major character. She is married to a wealthy, soulless black man. Ruth would like to have a baby. Pilate is her sister-in-law, and she helps Ruth to get her to have a baby.
 - This is folk tradition of healing or ministering to people in their need.
- Pilate and Ruth are in communication with their fathers even after their fathers have joined the realm of the ancestors.