

**Call for Papers – The Toni Morrison Society  
American Literature Association Meeting  
May 21-24, 2025  
Boston, Massachusetts**

**PANEL I:**

**Toni Morrison and eulogy.**

Toni Morrison's relationship with literary tradition has been explored at length (Baillie, 2013; Roynon, 2013, etc.); however, amidst studies dedicated to the ways in which Morrison has utilized and revised tradition (from the Greek classical myths to European fairy tales, from African folk tales to slave narratives, etc.), her appropriation of the eulogy genre did not garner much attention until the publication of *The Source of Self-Regard* – a collection of essays, speeches and “meditations”, in 2019. Pointedly, each of the book's sections starts with an elegy: to “The Dead of September 11” (Part I: The Foreigner's Home), to Martin Luther King Jr. (Interlude: Black Matters), and to James Baldwin (Part II: God's Language). This panel welcomes papers on how Toni Morrison's elegies target crucial aspects of her writing philosophy and practice and invite fruitful intertexts. Possible topics can include, but are not limited to:

- Morrison's appropriation of the eulogy genre as a source of self-regard
- Morrison's meaningful contribution to private and public healing
- James Baldwin's influence on Toni Morrison
- Speaking the unspeakable: the moral grounds of Morrison's timeless art
- Toni Morrison and the questions *we* must ask ourselves
- Morrison's seminal essay “Rootedness: the ancestor as Foundation” and “The Dead of September 11”
- “Speaking to the broken and the dead is too difficult for a mouth full of blood”: understanding, forgiveness and mercy in Toni Morrison's work

**Proposals** should not be more than **one page long** and should be submitted **no later than January 10th**.

**PANEL II:**

**Toni Morrison's only published short story: a roundtable on Toni Morrison's Recitatif**

In 2022, three years after the passing of Toni Morrison, the only short story she ever made public was published, with a foreword by Zadie Smith. The title, drawn from the French “*récitatif*”, refers to a “a rhythmically free vocal style that imitates the natural inflections of speech and that is used for dialogue and narrative in operas and oratorios” (Webster's dictionary). Stylistically, it is an artful in-between. In terms of content, it is a vocal (non-)puzzle. This panel invites a discussion of Morrison's *Recitatif* forty years after it was written, and three years after it was published. Possible points of entry into the discussion can be, but are not limited to:

- “Knowing only race, you don't know anything”: *Recitatif*, *Paradise* and *Race Matters*
- Morrison's first writerly “experiment in the removal of all racial codes”
- a dialogical, philosophical reading of *Recitatif* by Zadie Smith
- *Recitatif* and its intertexts within Morrison's work

- the house Morrison built: authorial intent in short form
- Recitatif and John Raul's "veil of ignorance" philosophy (a connection underlined by Zadie Smith in her Preface)
- reading and/or teaching Recitatif in 2025

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**Please submit a one-page proposal to Dr. Emmanuelle Andres, Program Chair and Vice President of the Toni Morrison Society**

**[emmanuelle.andres@gmail.com](mailto:emmanuelle.andres@gmail.com)**

**Scholars may submit proposals to both panels but only one proposal will be selected for presentation.**