

recitatif literary analysis

Recitatif: A Literary Analysis Delving into Toni Morrison's Masterpiece

Introduction:

Toni Morrison's "Recitatif," a deceptively short story, packs a powerful punch. Its ambiguity, its focus on seemingly insignificant details, and its exploration of race, class, and memory have made it a staple of literary analysis for decades. This comprehensive analysis will delve deep into the complexities of "Recitatif," exploring its narrative structure, thematic concerns, and enduring relevance. We will unpack the ambiguous nature of the characters' racial identities, analyze the significance of recurring motifs, and examine how Morrison masterfully manipulates reader perception to create a lasting impact. Prepare to unravel the intricate layers of this challenging yet rewarding short story.

I. The Ambiguity of Race and Identity:

Morrison intentionally obscures the racial identities of Twyla and Roberta, the story's central characters. This deliberate ambiguity forces the reader to confront their own preconceived notions about race and identity. We are presented with fragments of information, glimpses of their lives, and their evolving relationship, yet the crucial piece of information—their race—remains elusive. This lack of clarity isn't a flaw; it's the very heart of the story. It compels us to examine how we make assumptions based on limited information and how these assumptions can shape our perceptions and interactions with others. The ambiguity also highlights the fluidity of identity, suggesting that racial categories are social constructs rather than immutable truths. The story subtly challenges the reader to question the very act of categorization and the limitations such categorization imposes. By withholding definitive information, Morrison encourages a deeper engagement with the themes of prejudice, misunderstanding, and the ever-shifting nature of self-perception.

II. The Power of Memory and its Distortion:

Memory plays a crucial role in "Recitatif." The narrative unfolds through fragmented recollections of Twyla and Roberta, their memories often contradicting each other, blurring the lines between truth and subjective experience. This unreliable narration mirrors the complexities of human memory itself, highlighting its selective and reconstructive nature. What one character remembers clearly, the other may have forgotten or remembered differently. This discrepancy isn't merely a narrative device; it reflects the subjective nature of truth and the way memories can be shaped by personal biases and evolving perspectives. The inconsistencies in their recollections emphasize the unreliability of memory as a tool for understanding the past and constructing personal identities. This unreliability, in turn, reinforces the ambiguity surrounding their racial identities and the deeper themes of misunderstanding and prejudice.

III. Recurring Motifs and Their Significance:

Several motifs reappear throughout "Recitatif," enriching the story's thematic depth. The recurring image of the "Maggie" incident, a seemingly minor event from their childhood, acts as a potent symbol. Its significance remains open to interpretation, representing different things to Twyla and Roberta, and ultimately becoming a focal point of their conflict and reconciliation. Similarly, the recurring settings – the orphanage and the various encounters throughout their adult lives – serve as backdrops for their evolving relationship and underline the persistent impact of their shared past. The repeated use of these motifs emphasizes the cyclical nature of their connection and the persistent influence of their shared history on their present lives. These recurring elements become touchstones for understanding the emotional and psychological weight of their intertwined past.

IV. The Evolving Relationship between Twyla and Roberta:

The relationship between Twyla and Roberta forms the backbone of "Recitatif." Their interactions, spanning decades, reveal the complexities of friendship, rivalry, and societal pressures. Their dynamic shifts constantly, reflecting changes in their lives and the ever-shifting social landscape. At times, they are friends, at others, rivals; their connection is marked by both affection and intense animosity. The evolution of their relationship powerfully illustrates the impact of social forces, personal experiences, and individual choices on interpersonal dynamics. The shifts in their relationship mirror the evolving societal understanding of race and class, forcing the reader to confront the enduring influence of these factors on human interactions.

V. The Significance of the Ending and its Interpretations:

The ending of "Recitatif" is famously ambiguous, leaving the reader to grapple with its implications. The final reconciliation, or lack thereof, depending on individual interpretation, is open to various readings. Some see a genuine resolution, while others find the ambiguity unsettling, reflecting the ongoing complexities of race relations and interpersonal understanding. The unresolved nature of their final encounter reinforces the story's central themes of ambiguity and the enduring influence of the past on the present. The open ending challenges the reader to contemplate the limitations of resolution and the enduring power of unresolved conflict in shaping personal and social landscapes.

A Detailed Outline of a Recitatif Literary Analysis Essay:

Title: Unraveling the Enigma: A Deep Dive into Toni Morrison's "Recitatif"

I. Introduction:

Hook: Engaging opening to capture reader attention (e.g., a provocative question or a striking observation).

Background: Brief overview of Toni Morrison and "Recitatif."

Thesis statement: Clear statement of the essay's main argument about the story's themes and techniques.

II. The Ambiguity of Racial Identity:

Analysis of the deliberate lack of explicit racial identification of Twyla and Roberta.
Examination of how this ambiguity forces the reader to confront their own biases.
Discussion of the impact of this ambiguity on the story's themes of prejudice and misunderstanding.

III. Memory, Distortion, and Narrative Unreliability:

Analysis of the fragmented and unreliable nature of the characters' memories.
Exploration of how the inconsistencies in their recollections create ambiguity.
Discussion of the psychological and social implications of unreliable narration.

IV. Key Motifs and Symbolism:

In-depth analysis of recurring motifs like "Maggie" incident, the orphanage, and specific settings.

Examination of the symbolic significance of these motifs and their contribution to the story's meaning.

V. The Complex Relationship Dynamics:

Detailed exploration of the evolving relationship between Twyla and Roberta.
Analysis of the shifts in their dynamic, highlighting friendship, rivalry, and societal influences.

Discussion of how their relationship reflects broader themes of race, class, and social structures.

VI. Interpretation and Conclusion:

Analysis of the multiple interpretations possible for the story's ending.

Summary of the essay's main points and their relevance to the overall understanding of "Recitatif."

Final thoughts on the lasting impact and significance of Morrison's work.

(The above outline would then be expanded into a full essay, with each section detailed as demonstrated in the main body of this blog post.)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):

1. What is the central theme of "Recitatif"? The central theme revolves around the ambiguity of race and identity, the unreliability of memory, and the complexities of interpersonal relationships shaped by social and historical contexts.

1. Why are the races of Twyla and Roberta ambiguous? Morrison's deliberate ambiguity forces the reader to confront their own preconceived notions and biases related to race, highlighting the social construction of racial categories.

1. What is the significance of the "Maggie" incident? The "Maggie" incident acts as a

powerful symbol, representing different things to Twyla and Roberta, and becoming a focal point of their ongoing conflict and, potentially, reconciliation. Its meaning remains open to interpretation.

1. How does memory affect the narrative? The fragmented and unreliable nature of the characters' memories mirrors the complexities of human recall and contributes to the overall ambiguity of the story.
1. What is the role of setting in "Recitatif"? The settings—the orphanage and various encounters throughout their lives—serve as backdrops for their evolving relationship and underscore the persistent impact of their shared past.
1. How does the story explore friendship and rivalry? The shifting dynamics of Twyla and Roberta's relationship illustrate the complexities of friendship, highlighting both affection and intense animosity, shaped by external social pressures.
1. What are the different interpretations of the ending? The ambiguous ending allows for multiple interpretations, ranging from a genuine reconciliation to a continued sense of unresolved conflict, reflecting the lasting complexities of race relations and interpersonal understanding.
1. Why is "Recitatif" considered a significant work of literature? Its exploration of race, memory, and identity through a unique narrative style, combined with its enduring relevance to contemporary social issues, makes it a crucial text in literary studies.
1. What other works by Toni Morrison explore similar themes? Many of Morrison's works, including *Beloved* and *The Bluest Eye*, explore themes of race, memory, identity, and the lasting impact of historical trauma, mirroring the concerns in "Recitatif."

Related Articles:

1. Toni Morrison's Use of Ambiguity in "Recitatif": An in-depth analysis of Morrison's

stylistic choices and their impact on the story's thematic development.

1. The Role of Memory in Shaping Identity in "Recitatif": An exploration of how memory and its distortions affect the construction of self and the characters' relationships.
1. Race and Class Dynamics in Toni Morrison's Short Fiction: A comparative analysis of race and class themes across Morrison's short stories, including "Recitatif."
1. The Unreliable Narrator in "Recitatif": A close reading focusing on the limitations and biases present in the narratives of Twyla and Roberta.
1. Symbolism and Motif in "Recitatif": A Detailed Examination: A study focusing on the recurring symbols and motifs and their symbolic weight within the narrative.
1. Feminist Readings of "Recitatif": An analysis examining the portrayal of female characters and their experiences within the context of the story.
1. Postcolonial Interpretations of "Recitatif": A critical analysis examining the story through a postcolonial lens.
1. Comparing and Contrasting "Recitatif" with other works by Toni Morrison: A comparative study highlighting similarities and differences between "Recitatif" and other notable works by Morrison.
1. The Enduring Relevance of "Recitatif" in Contemporary Society: A discussion examining the story's continued impact and relevance to modern discussions of race and social justice.

recitatif literary analysis: *Recitatif* Toni Morrison, 2022-02-01 A beautiful, arresting short story by Toni Morrison—the only one she ever wrote—about race and the relationships that shape us through life, with an introduction by Zadie Smith. Twyla and Roberta have known each other since they were eight years old and spent four months together as roommates in the St. Bonaventure shelter. Inseparable at the time, they lose touch as they grow older, only to find each other later at a diner, then at a grocery store, and again at a protest. Seemingly at opposite ends of every problem, and in disagreement each time they meet, the two women still cannot deny the deep bond their shared experience has forged between them. Written in 1980 and anthologized in a number of collections, this is the first time *Recitatif* is being published as a stand-alone hardcover. In the story, Twyla's and Roberta's races remain ambiguous. We know that one is white and one is black, but which is which? And who is right about the race of the woman the girls tormented at the orphanage? Morrison herself described this story as “an experiment in the removal of all racial codes from a narrative about two characters of different races for whom racial identity is crucial.” *Recitatif* is a remarkable look into what keeps us together and what keeps us apart, and about how perceptions are made tangible by reality.

recitatif literary analysis: *Recitatif* Toni Morrison, 2022-02-03 'Toni Morrison was the lodestar who inspired us' Bernadine Evaristo Twyla and Roberta have known each other since they were eight years old, when they were thrown together as roommates in a girls' shelter. Inseparable then, they lose touch as they grow older, only to meet again later at a diner, a grocery store and then at a protest. The two women are seemingly at opposite ends of every problem but, despite their conflict, the deep bond their shared experience has forged between them is undeniable. *Recitatif* keeps Twyla's and Roberta's races ambiguous throughout the story. We know that one is white and one is black, but which is which? And who is right about the race of the woman the girls tormented at the orphanage? This story is a masterful exploration of what keeps us together and what keeps us apart, of race and the relationships that shape our lives. Now with a new introduction by Zadie Smith, it is as radically compelling and relevant today as it was when first written nearly forty years ago. 'Toni Morrison is the greatest chronicler of the American experience that we have ever known' Tayari Jones 'Her work is an act of giving her community back to itself, so that people - African-Americans but the diaspora as well - can see and witness themselves' Diana Evans

recitatif literary analysis: *The Source of Self-Regard* Toni Morrison, 2020-01-14 NATIONAL BESTSELLER • Here is the Nobel Prize winner in her own words: a rich gathering of her most important essays and speeches, spanning four decades that speaks to today's social and political moment as directly as this morning's headlines” (NPR). These pages give us her searing prayer for the dead of 9/11, her Nobel lecture on the power of language, her searching meditation on Martin Luther King Jr., her heart-wrenching eulogy for James Baldwin. She looks deeply into the fault lines of culture and freedom: the foreigner, female empowerment, the press, money, “black matter(s),” human rights, the artist in society, the Afro-American presence in American literature. And she turns her incisive critical eye to her own work (*The Bluest Eye*, *Sula*, *Tar Baby*, *Jazz*, *Beloved*, *Paradise*) and that of others. An essential collection from an essential writer, *The Source of Self-Regard* shines with the literary elegance, intellectual prowess, spiritual depth, and moral compass that have made Toni Morrison our most cherished and enduring voice.

recitatif literary analysis: *Playing in the Dark* Toni Morrison, 2007-07-24 An immensely persuasive work of literary criticism that opens a new chapter in the American dialogue on race—and promises to change the way we read American literature—from the acclaimed Nobel Prize winner Morrison 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. According to the *Chicago Tribune*, Morrison reimagines and remaps the possibility of America. Her 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. Written with the artistic vision that has earned the Nobel Prize-winning author a pre-eminent place in modern letters,

Playing in the Dark is an invaluable read for avid Morrison admirers as well as students, critics, and scholars of American literature.

recitatif literary analysis: *Desdemona* Toni Morrison, 2024-06-13 'This is a remarkable, challenging and bravely original work.' The Guardian Ripped from the world by her husband's paranoia, Desdemona turns in death towards the memory of Barbary, the North African maid who raised her: together, they explore the contours of death, race, war, love and motherhood, in a moving elegy. Audacious with ambition, Desdemona is Toni Morrison's intimate reimagining of the fourth act of Shakespeare's Othello, mixing monologue with Rokia Traore's lyrical songs to re-examine the Bard's presentation of race and female suffering. Part-play, part-concert, part-quest into the afterlife, Desdemona is published in Methuen Drama's Modern Classics series, featuring a new introduction by Joyce Green MacDonald.

recitatif literary analysis: The Bluest Eye Toni Morrison, 2007-05-08 NATIONAL BESTSELLER • From the acclaimed Nobel Prize winner—a powerful examination of our obsession with beauty and conformity that asks questions about race, class, and gender with characteristic subtlety and grace. In Morrison's acclaimed first novel, Pecola Breedlove—an 11-year-old Black girl in an America whose love for its blond, blue-eyed children can devastate all others—prays for her eyes to turn blue: so that she will be beautiful, so that people will look at her, so that her world will be different. This is the story of the nightmare at the heart of her yearning, and the tragedy of its fulfillment. Here, Morrison's writing is "so precise, so faithful to speech and so charged with pain and wonder that the novel becomes poetry" (The New York Times).

recitatif literary analysis: A Mercy Toni Morrison, 2009-08-11 A powerful tragedy distilled into a small masterpiece by the Nobel Prize-winning author of *Beloved* and, almost like a prelude to that story, set two centuries earlier. Jacob is an Anglo-Dutch trader in 1680s United States, when the slave trade is still in its infancy. Reluctantly he takes a small slave girl in part payment from a plantation owner for a bad debt. Feeling rejected by her slave mother, 14-year-old Florens can read and write and might be useful on his farm. Florens looks for love, first from Lina, an older servant woman at her new master's house, but later from the handsome blacksmith, an African, never enslaved, who comes riding into their lives . . . At the novel's heart, like *Beloved*, it is the ambivalent, disturbing story of a mother and a daughter – a mother who casts off her daughter in order to save her, and a daughter who may never exorcise that abandonment.

recitatif literary analysis: Sula Toni Morrison, 2002-04-05 From the acclaimed Nobel Prize winner: Two girls who grow up to become women. Two friends who become something worse than enemies. This brilliantly imagined novel brings us the story of Nel Wright and Sula Peace, who meet as children in the small town of Medallion, Ohio. Nel and Sula's devotion is fierce enough to withstand bullies and the burden of a dreadful secret. It endures even after Nel has grown up to be a pillar of the black community and Sula has become a pariah. But their friendship ends in an unforgivable betrayal—or does it end? Terrifying, comic, ribald and tragic, *Sula* is a work that overflows with life.

recitatif literary analysis: Desiring Whiteness Kalpana Seshadri-Crooks, 2002-11 A compelling new interpretation of how we understand race, using Lacanian analysis to explore the visual discrimination we make between races, and including close readings of literary and film texts.

recitatif literary analysis: Confirmation, an Anthology of African American Women , 1983

recitatif literary analysis: Toni Morrison and Literary Tradition Justine Baillie, 2013-09-26 Covering her essays, short stories and dramatic works as well as her novels, this is a comprehensive study of Morrison's place in contemporary American culture.

recitatif literary analysis: Deans and Truants Gene Andrew Jarrett, 2013-03-01 For a work to be considered African American literature, does it need to focus on black characters or political themes? Must it represent these within a specific stylistic range? Or is it enough for the author to be identified as African American? In *Deans and Truants*, Gene Andrew Jarrett traces the shifting definitions of African American literature and the authors who wrote beyond those boundaries at the

cost of critical dismissal and, at times, obscurity. From the late nineteenth century to the end of the twentieth, de facto deans—critics and authors as different as William Howells, Alain Locke, Richard Wright, and Amiri Baraka—prescribed the shifting parameters of realism and racial subject matter appropriate to authentic African American literature, while truant authors such as Paul Laurence Dunbar, George S. Schuyler, Frank Yerby, and Toni Morrison—perhaps the most celebrated African American author of the twentieth century—wrote literature anomalous to those standards. Jarrett explores the issues at stake when Howells, the Dean of American Letters, argues in 1896 that only Dunbar's entirely black verse, written in dialect, would succeed. Three decades later, Locke, the cultural arbiter of the Harlem Renaissance, stands in contrast to Schuyler, a journalist and novelist who questions the existence of a peculiarly black or New Negro art. Next, Wright's 1937 blueprint for African American writing sets the terms of the Chicago Renaissance, but Yerby's version of historical romance approaches race and realism in alternative literary ways. Finally, Deans and Truants measures the gravitational pull of the late 1960s Black Aesthetic in Baraka's editorial silence on Toni Morrison's first and only short story, *Recitatif*. Drawing from a wealth of biographical, historical, and literary sources, Deans and Truants describes the changing notions of race, politics, and gender that framed and were framed by the authors and critics of African American culture for more than a century.

recitatif literary analysis: *Citizen* Claudia Rankine, 2014-10-07 * Finalist for the National Book Award in Poetry * * Winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award in Poetry * Finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award in Criticism * Winner of the NAACP Image Award * Winner of the L.A. Times Book Prize * Winner of the PEN Open Book Award * ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR: The New Yorker, Boston Globe, The Atlantic, BuzzFeed, NPR. Los Angeles Times, Publishers Weekly, Slate, Time Out New York, Vulture, Refinery 29, and many more . . . A provocative meditation on race, Claudia Rankine's long-awaited follow up to her groundbreaking book *Don't Let Me Be Lonely: An American Lyric*. Claudia Rankine's bold new book recounts mounting racial aggressions in ongoing encounters in twenty-first-century daily life and in the media. Some of these encounters are slights, seeming slips of the tongue, and some are intentional offensives in the classroom, at the supermarket, at home, on the tennis court with Serena Williams and the soccer field with Zinedine Zidane, online, on TV—everywhere, all the time. The accumulative stresses come to bear on a person's ability to speak, perform, and stay alive. Our addressability is tied to the state of our belonging, Rankine argues, as are our assumptions and expectations of citizenship. In essay, image, and poetry, *Citizen* is a powerful testament to the individual and collective effects of racism in our contemporary, often named post-race society.

recitatif literary analysis: *Beloved* Toni Morrison, 2006-10-17 Winner of the Pulitzer Prize, Toni Morrison's *Beloved* is a spellbinding and dazzlingly innovative portrait of a woman haunted by the past. Sethe was born a slave and escaped to Ohio, but eighteen years later she is still not free. She has borne the unthinkable and not gone mad, yet she is still held captive by memories of Sweet Home, the beautiful farm where so many hideous things happened. Meanwhile Sethe's house has long been troubled by the angry, destructive ghost of her baby, who died nameless and whose tombstone is engraved with a single word: *Beloved*. Sethe works at beating back the past, but it makes itself heard and felt incessantly in her memory and in the lives of those around her. When a mysterious teenage girl arrives, calling herself *Beloved*, Sethe's terrible secret explodes into the present. Combining the visionary power of legend with the unassailable truth of history, Morrison's unforgettable novel is one of the great and enduring works of American literature.

recitatif literary analysis: *Black on White* David R. Roediger, 2010-03-31 In this thought-provoking volume, David R. Roediger has brought together some of the most important black writers throughout history to explore the question: What does it really mean to be white in America? From folktales and slave narratives to contemporary essays, poetry, and fiction, black writers have long been among America's keenest students of white consciousness and white behavior, but until now much of this writing has been ignored. *Black on White* reverses this trend by presenting the work of more than fifty major figures, including James Baldwin, Derrick Bell, Ralph

Ellison, W.E.B. Du Bois, bell hooks, Toni Morrison, and Alice Walker to take a closer look at the many meanings of whiteness in our society. Rich in irony, artistry, passion, and common sense, these reflections on what Langston Hughes called the ways of white folks illustrate how whiteness as a racial identity derives its meaning not as a biological category but as a social construct designed to uphold racial inequality. Powerful and compelling, *Black on White* provides a much-needed perspective that is sure to have a major impact on the study of race and race relations in America.

recitatif literary analysis: *God Help the Child* Toni Morrison, 2015-04-21 NATIONAL BESTSELLER • A New York Times Notable Book • This fiery and provocative novel from the acclaimed Nobel Prize winner weaves a tale about the way the sufferings of childhood can shape, and misshape, the life of the adult. At the center: a young woman who calls herself Bride, whose stunning blue-black skin is only one element of her beauty, her boldness and confidence, her success in life, but which caused her light-skinned mother to deny her even the simplest forms of love. There is Booker, the man Bride loves, and loses to anger. Rain, the mysterious white child with whom she crosses paths. And finally, Bride's mother herself, Sweetness, who takes a lifetime to come to understand that "what you do to children matters. And they might never forget." "Powerful.... A tale that is as forceful as it is affecting, as fierce as it is resonant." —Michiko Kakutani, *The New York Times*

recitatif literary analysis: *Southland* Nina Revoyr, 2003-04-01 Nina Revoyr brings us a compelling story of race, love, murder, and history against the backdrop of Los Angeles. —Winner of a 2004 American Library Association Stonewall Honor Award in Literature —Winner of the 2003 Lambda Literary Award —Nominated for an Edgar Award The plot line of *Southland* is the stuff of a James Ellroy or a Walter Mosley novel . . . But the climax fairly glows with the good-heartedness that Revoyr displays from the very first page. —Los Angeles Times Jackie Ishida's grandfather had a store in Watts where four boys were killed during the riots in 1965, a mystery she attempts to solve. —New York Times Book Review, included in "Where Noir Lives in the City of Angels" Nina Revoyr brings us a compelling story of race, love, murder, and history against the backdrop of Los Angeles. A young Japanese-American woman, Jackie Ishida, is in her last semester of law school when her grandfather, Frank Sakai, dies unexpectedly. While trying to fulfill a request from his will, Jackie discovers that four black teenagers were killed in the store he ran during the Watts Riots of 1965—and that the murders were never solved or reported. Along with James Lanier, a cousin of one of the victims, she tries to piece together the story of the boys' deaths. In the process, Jackie unearths the long-held secrets of her family's history—and her own. Moving in and out of the past, from the shipping yards and internment camps of World War II; to the barley fields of the Crenshaw District in the 1930s; to the mean streets of Watts in the 1960s; to the night spots and garment factories of the 1990s, *Southland* weaves a tale of Los Angeles in all of its faces and forms.

recitatif literary analysis: *The Girl who Fell from the Sky* Heidi W. Durrow, 2011-01-01 After a family tragedy orphans her, Rachel, the daughter of a Danish mother and a black G.I., moves into her grandmother's mostly black community in the 1980s, where she must swallow her grief and confront her identity as a biracial woman in a world that wants to see her as either black or white. A first novel. Reprint.

recitatif literary analysis: *St. Lucy's Home for Girls Raised by Wolves* Karen Russell, 2007-08-14 Here is the debut short story collection from the author of the Pulitzer Prize finalist *Swamplandia!* and the New York Times bestselling *Vampires in the Lemon Grove*. In these ten glittering stories, the award-winning, bestselling author *Orange World and Other Stories* takes us to the ghostly and magical swamps of the Florida Everglades. Here wolf-like girls are reformed by nuns, a family makes their living wrestling alligators in a theme park, and little girls sail away on crab shells. Filled with inventiveness and heart, *St. Lucy's Home for Girls Raised by Wolves* is the dazzling debut of a blazingly original voice.

recitatif literary analysis: *Queer and Feminist Theories of Narrative* Tory Young, 2021-05-13 This book argues for the importance of narrative theories which consider gender and sexuality through the analysis of a diverse range of texts and media. Classical Narratology, an allegedly

neutral descriptive system for features of narrative, has been replaced by a diverse set of theories which are attentive to the contexts in which narratives are composed and received. Issues of gender and sexuality have, nevertheless, been sidelined by new strands which consider, for example, cognitive, transmedial, national or historical inflections instead. Through consideration of texts including the MTV series *Faking It* and the papers of a nineteenth-century activist, *Queer and Feminist Theories of Narrative* heeds the original call of feminist narratologists for the consideration of a broader and larger corpus of material. Through analysis of issues including the popular representation of lesbian desire, the queer narrative voice, invisibility and power in the digital age, embodiment and cognitive narratology, reading and racial codes, this book argues that a named strand of narrative theory which employs feminist and queer theories as intersectional vectors is contemporary and urgent. The chapters in this book were originally published as a special issue of the journal *Textual Practice*.

recitatif literary analysis: Goodness and the Literary Imagination Toni Morrison, 2019-10-01 What exactly is goodness? Where is it found in the literary imagination? Toni Morrison, one of American letters' greatest voices, pondered these perplexing questions in her celebrated Ingersoll Lecture, delivered at Harvard University in 2012 and published now for the first time in book form. Perhaps because it is overshadowed by the more easily defined evil, goodness often escapes our attention. Recalling many literary examples, from Ahab to Coetzee's Michael K, Morrison seeks the essence of goodness and ponders its significant place in her writing. She considers the concept in relation to unforgettable characters from her own works of fiction and arrives at conclusions that are both eloquent and edifying. In a lively interview conducted for this book, Morrison further elaborates on her lecture's ideas, discussing goodness not only in literature but in society and history—particularly black history, which has responded to centuries of brutality with profound creativity. Morrison's essay is followed by a series of responses by scholars in the fields of religion, ethics, history, and literature to her thoughts on goodness and evil, mercy and love, racism and self-destruction, language and liberation, together with close examination of literary and theoretical expressions from her works. Each of these contributions, written by a scholar of religion, considers the legacy of slavery and how it continues to shape our memories, our complicities, our outcries, our lives, our communities, our literature, and our faith. In addition, the contributors engage the religious orientation in Morrison's novels so that readers who encounter her many memorable characters such as Sula, *Beloved*, or Frank Money will learn and appreciate how Morrison's notions of goodness and mercy also reflect her understanding of the sacred and the human spirit.

recitatif literary analysis: Rumbo al Hermoso Norte Luis Alberto Urrea, 2009-05-19 Nayeli es una chica de diecinueve años que trabaja en una taquería de tres Camarones, un poblado mexicano. Ve en sueños a su padre, que emigró al norte cuando era niña. Recientemente se ha dado cuenta de que su padre no es el único hombre que se ha ido del pueblo, de hecho ya casi no quedan hombres, todos se han ido al otro lado, a los Estados Unidos. Un grupo de narcotraficantes también se ha percatado de ese hecho y ven la oportunidad para apoderarse. Pero una noche, durante la exhibición de la película *Los Siete Magníficos*, Nayeli tiene una revelación: Debe dirigirse al norte a reclutar sus propios *Siete Magníficos*, para que la protejan de los criminales y coadyuven a repoblar Tres Camarones. Ella y sus amigas viajan al norte y en el camino hacia esa extraña y fascinante tierra de sus sueños, ese mítico lugar donde su padre desapareció, van sumando una colección de inusitados y sorprendentes aliados. La meta es un poblado del estado de Illinois, donde Nayeli espera encontrar a su padre y reclutar a sus guerreros. Con suerte, hará realidad también su destino.

recitatif literary analysis: Home Toni Morrison, 2012-05-08 The latest novel from Nobel Prize winner Toni Morrison. An angry and self-loathing veteran of the Korean War, Frank Money finds himself back in racist America after enduring trauma on the front lines that left him with more than just physical scars. His home--and himself in it--may no longer be as he remembers it, but Frank is shocked out of his crippling apathy by the need to rescue his medically abused younger sister and

take her back to the small Georgia town they come from, which he's hated all his life. As Frank revisits the memories from childhood and the war that leave him questioning his sense of self, he discovers a profound courage he thought he could never possess again. A deeply moving novel about an apparently defeated man finding himself--and his home.

recitatif literary analysis: *The Dancing Mind* Toni Morrison, 2007-07-24 On the occasion of her acceptance of the National Book Foundation Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters on the sixth of November, 1996, Nobel laureate Toni Morrison speaks with brevity and passion to the pleasures, the difficulties, the necessities, of the reading/writing life in our time. She was our conscience. Our seer. Our truth-teller. —Oprah Winfrey

recitatif literary analysis: *Toni Morrison Box Set* Toni Morrison, 2019-10-29 A box set of Toni Morrison's principal works, featuring *The Bluest Eye* (her first novel), *Beloved* (Pulitzer Prize winner), and *Song of Solomon* (National Book Critics Award winner). Staring unflinchingly into the abyss of slavery, *Beloved* transforms history into a story as powerful as *Exodus* and as intimate as a lullaby. This spellbinding novel tells the story of Sethe, a former slave who escapes to Ohio, but eighteen years later is still not free. In *The New York Times* bestselling novel, *The Bluest Eye*, Pecola Breedlove, a young black girl, prays every day for beauty and yearns for normalcy, for the blond hair and blue eyes, that she believes will allow her to finally fit in. Yet as her dream grows more fervent, her life slowly starts to disintegrate in the face of adversity and strife. With *Song of Solomon*, Morrison transfigures the coming-of-age story as she follows Milkman Dead from his rustbelt city to the place of his family's origins, introducing an entire cast of strivers and seeresses, liars and assassins, the inhabitants of a fully realized black world. This beautifully designed slipcase will make the perfect holiday and perennial gift.

recitatif literary analysis: *Lemon* Kwon Yeo-sun, 2021-10-26 *New York Times Book Review*: Editor's Choice *Philadelphia Inquirer*: Best Book of the Month *World Literature Today*: Notable Translation of the Year *CrimeReads*: Best International Crime Novel of the Year *Ms. Magazine*: Most Anticipated Book of the Year *Washington Independent Review of Books*: Favorite Book of the Year *Parasite* meets *The Good Son* in this piercing psychological portrait of three women haunted by a brutal, unsolved crime. In the summer of 2002, when Korea is abuzz over hosting the FIFA World Cup, eighteen-year-old Kim Hae-on is killed in what becomes known as the High School Beauty Murder. Two suspects quickly emerge: rich kid Shin Jeongjun, whose car Hae-on was last seen in, and delivery boy Han Manu, who witnessed her there just a few hours before her death. But when Jeongjun's alibi checks out, and no evidence can be pinned on Manu, the case goes cold. Seventeen years pass without any resolution for those close to Hae-on, and the grief and uncertainty take a cruel toll on her younger sister, Da-on, in particular. Unable to move on with her life, Da-on tries in her own twisted way to recover some of what she's lost, ultimately setting out to find the truth of what happened. Shifting between the perspectives of Da-on and two of Hae-on's classmates struck in different ways by her otherworldly beauty, *Lemon* ostensibly takes the shape of a crime novel. But identifying the perpetrator is not the main objective here: Kwon Yeo-sun uses this well-worn form to craft a searing, timely exploration of privilege, jealousy, trauma, and how we live with the wrongs we have endured and inflicted in turn.

recitatif literary analysis: *Jazz* Toni Morrison, 2007-07-24 From the acclaimed Nobel Prize winner, a passionate, profound story of love and obsession that brings us back and forth in time, as a narrative is assembled from the emotions, hopes, fears, and deep realities of Black urban life. With a foreword by the author. "As rich in themes and poetic images as her Pulitzer Prize-winning *Beloved*.... Morrison conjures up the hand of slavery on Harlem's jazz generation. The more you listen, the more you crave to hear." —*Glamour* In the winter of 1926, when everybody everywhere sees nothing but good things ahead, Joe Trace, middle-aged door-to-door salesman of Cleopatra beauty products, shoots his teenage lover to death. At the funeral, Joe's wife, Violet, attacks the girl's corpse. This novel "transforms a familiar refrain of jilted love into a bold, sustaining time of self-knowledge and discovery. Its rhythms are infectious" (*People*). The author conjures up worlds with complete authority and makes no secret of her angst at the injustices dealt to Black women."

—The New York Times Book Review

recitatif literary analysis: Writing Essays About Literature Katherine O. Acheson, 2010-12-20 This book gives students an answer to the question, “What does my professor want from this essay?” In lively, direct language, it explains the process of creating “a clearly-written argument, based on evidence, about the meaning, power, or structure of a literary work.” Using a single poem by William Carlos Williams as the basis for the process of writing a paper about a piece of literature, it walks students through the processes of reading, brainstorming, researching secondary sources, gathering evidence, and composing and editing the paper. *Writing Essays About Literature* is designed to strengthen argumentation skills and deepen understanding of the relationships between the reader, the author, the text, and critical interpretations. Its lessons about clarity, precision, and the importance of providing evidence will have wide relevance for student writers.

recitatif literary analysis: Communion Pat Mora, 1991-01-01 *Communion*, a third collection of poetry by Pat Mora, builds upon her previous writings and her new experiences to provide a healing voice, additional depth and maturity, and an international perspective in considering the art of poetry itself, male/female relationships, separation from children, homeland and tradition. The concerns of our domestic culture in the United States are seen here from within the framework of the Third World in Asia and Latin America. The poetic works of Pat Mora once more explore the themes of womanhood, political and sexual borders, the Southwest and interior landscapes, all in a rich, lyrical style.

recitatif literary analysis: The Cambridge Introduction to Toni Morrison Tessa Roynon, 2013 Lively and accessibly written, this Introduction offers readers a guide to the complex and rewarding literature of Toni Morrison.

recitatif literary analysis: Small Things Like These Claire Keegan, 2021-11-30 Shortlisted for the 2022 Booker Prize A hypnotic and electrifying Irish tale that transcends country, transcends time. —Lily King, New York Times bestselling author of *Writers & Lovers* *Small Things Like These* is award-winning author Claire Keegan's landmark new novel, a tale of one man's courage and a remarkable portrait of love and family It is 1985 in a small Irish town. During the weeks leading up to Christmas, Bill Furlong, a coal merchant and family man faces into his busiest season. Early one morning, while delivering an order to the local convent, Bill makes a discovery which forces him to confront both his past and the complicit silences of a town controlled by the church. An international bestseller, *Small Things Like These* is a deeply affecting story of hope, quiet heroism, and empathy from one of our most critically lauded and iconic writers.

recitatif literary analysis: The Origin of Others Toni Morrison, 2017-09-18 What is race and why does it matter? Why does the presence of Others make us so afraid? America's foremost novelist reflects on themes that preoccupy her work and dominate politics: race, fear, borders, mass movement of peoples, desire for belonging. Ta-Nehisi Coates provides a foreword to Toni Morrison's most personal work of nonfiction to date.

recitatif literary analysis: Paradise Toni Morrison, 2014-03-11 The acclaimed Nobel Prize winner challenges our most fiercely held beliefs as she weaves folklore and history, memory and myth into an unforgettable meditation on race, religion, gender, and a far-off past that is ever present—in prose that soars with the rhythms, grandeur, and tragic arc of an epic poem. “They shoot the white girl first. With the rest they can take their time.” So begins Toni Morrison's *Paradise*, which opens with a horrifying scene of mass violence and chronicles its genesis in an all-black small town in rural Oklahoma. Founded by the descendants of freed slaves and survivors in exodus from a hostile world, the patriarchal community of Ruby is built on righteousness, rigidly enforced moral law, and fear. But seventeen miles away, another group of exiles has gathered in a promised land of their own. And it is upon these women in flight from death and despair that nine male citizens of Ruby will lay their pain, their terror, and their murderous rage. “A fascinating story, wonderfully detailed. . . . The town is the stage for a profound and provocative debate.” —Los Angeles Times

recitatif literary analysis: I Survived the Japanese Tsunami, 2011 (I Survived #8) Lauren

Tarshis, 2013-08-27 The disaster felt around the world . . . Visiting his dad's hometown in Japan four months after his father's death would be hard enough for Ben. But one morning the pain turns to fear: first, a massive earthquake rocks the quiet coastal village, nearly toppling his uncle's house. Then the ocean waters rise and Ben and his family are swept away-and pulled apart-by a terrible tsunami. Now Ben is alone, stranded in a strange country a million miles from home. Can he fight hard enough to survive one of the most epic disasters of all time?

recitatif literary analysis: Monkey Bridge Lan Cao, 1998-06-01 Hailed by critics and writers as powerful, important fiction, Monkey Bridge charts the unmapped territory of the Vietnamese American experience in the aftermath of war. Like navigating a monkey bridge—a bridge, built of spindly bamboo, used by peasants for centuries—the narrative traverses perilously between worlds past and present, East and West, in telling two interlocking stories: one, the Vietnamese version of the classic immigrant experience in America, told by a young girl; and the second, a dark tale of betrayal, political intrigue, family secrets, and revenge—her mother's tale. The haunting and beautiful terrain of Monkey Bridge is the luminous motion, as it is called in Vietnamese myth and legend, between generations, encompassing Vietnamese lore, history, and dreams of the past as well as of the future. With incredible lightness, balance and elegance, writes Isabel Allende, Lan Cao crosses over an abyss of pain, loss, separation and exile, connecting on one level the opposite realities of Vietnam and North America, and on a deeper level the realities of the material world and the world of the spirits. • Quality Paperback Book Club Selection and New Voices Award nominee • A Kiriama Pacific Rim Award Book Prize nominee

recitatif literary analysis: Love Toni Morrison, 2023-09-07 VINTAGE CLASSICS' AMERICAN GOTHIC SERIESpines-tingling, mind-altering and deliciously atmospheric, journey into the dark side of America with nine of its most uncanny classics. A haunting and affecting meditation on love from the Nobel-prize winning author of Beloved. May, Christine, Heed, Junior, Vida - even L - all are women obsessed with [Bokinfo].

recitatif literary analysis: Toni Morrison's Fiction David L. Middleton, 2016-01-28 This collection of contemporary criticism explores her concern with racial and gender issues and analyzes her in relation to other major modern authors, her philosophical and religious speculations, and her preoccupation with the process of fiction-making. These classics provide a broad look at critical argument about Toni Morrison's meanings and significance during the past 10 years. From the formative effects of learning one's Otherness as a result of majority perception, to the apocalyptic implications of racial memory, to the moral and psychologically constructive act of storytelling, to the structural function served by improvisational jazz music, to the imagery associated with both flight and naming, to the uniquely female experience of community-major issues raised by Morrison's body of work are explicated here.

recitatif literary analysis: Women on the Edge Corinne H. Dale, J. H. E. Paine, 1999 First Published in 1999. Routledge is an imprint of Taylor & Francis, an informa company.

recitatif literary analysis: The Chrysanthemums John Steinbeck, 1937

recitatif literary analysis: The House of Deep Water Jeni McFarland, 2020-04-21 Perfect for fans of The Mothers and Olive Kitteridge, in this stunning and perceptive debut novel three women learn what it means to come home--and to make peace with the family, love affairs, and memories they'd once left behind. Here are voices from the heartland rendered real, raw, and aching. . . . Reminiscent of Celeste Ng's Little Fires Everywhere, this novel announces Jeni McFarland as a writer of our generation. --Aja Gabel, author of The Ensemble River Bend, Michigan, is the kind of small town most can't imagine leaving, but three women couldn't wait to escape. When each must return--Linda Williams, never sure what she wants; her mother, Paula, always too sure; and Beth DeWitt, one of River Bend's only black daughters, now a mother of two who'd planned to raise her own children anywhere else--their paths collide under Beth's father's roof. As one town struggles to contain all of their love affairs and secrets, a local scandal forces Beth to confront her own devastating past. Filled with the voices of mothers and daughters, husbands, lovers, and fathers, The House of Deep Water explores motherhood, trauma, love, loss, and new beginnings found in a most

unlikely place: home.

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