**Call for Conference Papers**

**‘Global Morrison’**

**University of Greenwich, London**

**27th and 28th June 2017**

Conference Coordinator: Dr. Justine Baillie, University of Greenwich, London

Toni Morrison’s articulations of race, slavery, gender and history have secured her place within the literary canon and garnered extensive comment in contemporary criticism. Less evident are examinations of Morrison’s fiction and essays that emanate from global, transnational and diasporic perspectives and allow for an understanding of her engagement with global movements of peoples, Black Atlantic cultures and emerging postcolonial interest in ecocriticism, universalism and cosmopolitanism. Early Morrison scholarship necessitated important critical interventions as forms of strategic essentialism to emphasise the racial specificity of her novels by privileging folk oral tradition as an authentic source of African-American literature. Morrison’s international stature, and her elaborations on post-racial, post-nationalist identities now reverberate with wider, global concerns in literary criticism and theory. In *The Cambridge Introduction to Toni Morrison* (2013) Tessa Roynon refers to the 2010 Toni Morrison Society Conference in Paris as ‘a watershed moment – the first event of its kind to be held outside the United States, it included scholars from every continent, whose readings of her work took for granted and worked within her status as a central figure in transnational intellectual history’ (Roynon, 2013: 112).

Rather than reiterate Morrison’s importance as an African-American writer then, the conference, ‘Global Morrison’, will draw together scholars to analyse the transnational and diasporic dimensions of her work; investigate, problematise and renew the critical language of postcolonial/transnational studies through attention to the relationship between canonicity, gender and fundamentalisms in a post-9/11, post-Obama world; consider the as yet unexplored inter-textual relationship between Morrison’s work and the novels of West African writers such as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, NoViolet Bulaweyo and Taiye Selasi. The complexities involved in translating Morrison’s work will also be investigated and there will be contributions exploring the reception of her fiction and criticism across the world, for example, in France, Japan, South Africa and the Caribbean.

Proposals that address the above, as well as the following questions, are welcome:

* What is the significance of Paris as a nexus of the Black Atlantic for Morrison’s work?
* How are idealisations of transnationalism or cosmopolitanism complicated by reading Morrison’s work?
* What is the significance of Morrison’s work for contemporary postcolonial/transnational theory?
* How does attention to ecocritical, gender, translation concerns broaden an understanding of Morrison’s work within a global context?
* What does Morrison’s work reveal about questions of space, time and economic flows in relation to the transnational?

Abstracts of 2-300 words, accompanied by 100 words biography, for 30 minute papers to be sent to j.j.baillie@gre.ac.uk before 25th February 2017