

# Toni Morrison Society

Call for Papers -- Toni Morrison Society panels  
American Literature Association conference, Boston, 26-29 May, 2027

## Panel 1: Moving pictures in Toni Morrison's novels

"How can I say things that are pictures?", says Beloved in the choral interior monologue that speaks and chants the haunting, unspeakable Middle Passage (Beloved, 210). This question invites a consideration of the possibilities of the visual, amplified by Morrison's description of her work as moving "from the image to the text, not from the text to the image" as part of her creative practice (The Site of Memory). Conversely, she warned against image increasingly "[ruling] the realm of shaping" (The Fisherwoman: Introduction to A Kind of Rapture: Photographs). We are hoping to trigger conversations on Morrison's visual aesthetics and (at times ambivalent) relation to visual arts and cinema throughout her career, as well as the role they played in her art, criticism and humanistic thought. Possible topics can include, but are not limited to:

- Images as the archival origins of Morrison's creative work
- the visual and/or cinematic elements in Morrison's writing
- Morrison and moving images/cinema
- Slow motion scenes in Morrison's novels
- Ekphrasis in Morrison's novels
- Reenvisioning masterpieces: Morrison's residency at the Louvres (2006)
- Morrison's collaboration with her visual artist son Slade on children's books
- Morrison's collaborations with visual artists, playwrights and filmmakers

Proposals should not be more than one page long and should be submitted to [emmanuelle.andres@gmail.com](mailto:emmanuelle.andres@gmail.com) no later than 15 December, 2026.

## Panel 2: (Re-)introducing Toni Morrison's oeuvre in 2026 (2027)

Throughout her career, Toni Morrison expressed ambivalent feelings about introducing her own work, worrying that those "thresholds" hindered readerly participation. Her critical work, in the form of speeches, essays and seminars, further allowed her to discuss and seamlessly reintroduce her novels, sometimes decades after they were published. The recent publication, by Vintage, of new editions of Morrison's novels, featuring introductions by fellow writers, artists and intellectuals, presents a new opportunity to ponder, renew or reassess the function and stakes of introducing her creative fiction. Furthermore, Namwali Serpell's *On Morrison* (2026) imparts vigorous reading insights into Morrison's novels and essays, defying the assumed biographical stance in the title. The new rush of work on Morrison and the new Vintage editions – the approaches engaged in introducing her work -- thus provide context for this proposed panel. Possible topics can include, but are not limited to:

- Leading the readers inside (Cf. the Latin word *introducere*): the function(s) of introducing Morrison's novels
- Introductions as publishing choices
- "Old" versus "new" approaches to introducing Morrison's work
- The dialogical function of the new Vintage introductions
- On, not about: Namwali Serpell's approach to Morrison's work in *On Morrison* (2026)
- What is left to be told? The value and difficulty of introducing a canonical writer whose work has been extensively read and explored
- Reading Morrison beyond borders: introductions and international readership

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