

NAMWALI SERPELL

“Serpell is a natural social novelist, capable of conjuring a Dickensian range of characters with a painterly eye for detail.” —The Washington Post

Namwali Serpell is a fiction writer, literary critic, and professor of English at Harvard University. Her debut novel, *The Old Drift*, won the Anisfield-Wolf Book prize for fiction “that confronts racism and explores diversity,” among other awards. Her forthcoming book, *On Morrison* (2026), explores Toni Morrison’s exceptional body of work, including fiction, criticism, poetry, and plays.

Namwali was born in Lusaka and lives in New York. Her debut novel, *The Old Drift*, follows three generations of three families as they slowly become intertwined. Combining historical and science fiction, *The Old Drift* was called “a dazzling debut, establishing Namwali Serpell as a writer on the world stage” by novelist Salman Rushdie. Her second novel, *The Furrows*, was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award for fiction and named one of *The New York Times*’ 10 Best Books of 2022, among other accolades.

Her work spans novels, short stories, and essays, with topics from the image of the face, to the Zambian Space program, to *American Psycho* and beyond. Her anthology of essays on Toni Morrison, adapted from her lectures at Harvard, is currently forthcoming from Hogarth. The book explores Morrison’s work through a mixture of original close reading and archival research, bringing a dialogue between the two black women to life. *On Morrison* is slated for an early 2026 release.