

NEH Application Cover Sheet (HD-248607)

Digital Humanities Start-Up Grants

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INSTITUTION

University of Kansas Center for Research, Inc.
Lawrence, KS 66045-7568

APPLICATION INFORMATION

Title: *Black Book Interactive Project*

Grant period: From 2016-05-01 to 2017-10-31

Project field(s): American Literature; African Literature

Description of project: The negligible number of African American (AA) literary texts digitally available for scholars working in the field of digital humanities remains a persistent problem. The Black Book Interactive Project (BBIP) responds to this critical digital invisibility by proposing to create a metadata schema that accounts for race, to make these archives more discoverable for scholarship. Using 75 novels from the Project on the History of Black Writing digital archive, we will produce a demonstration project that increases access to little known AA texts, encourages and enables text mining as a digital practice, and bridges the current gaps in computational research in literary studies. Our goal is to expand the community of users and practitioners and to make this schema a standard for the interactive exploration of similar digitized collections.

BUDGET

Outright Request	40,000.00	Cost Sharing	0.00
Matching Request	0.00	Total Budget	40,000.00
Total NEH	40,000.00		

GRANT ADMINISTRATOR

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Black Book Interactive Project

A Level I Start-Up Digital Humanities Grant

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List of Participants

Brooks-Kieffer, Jamene, University of Kansas

Cunningham, Will, University of Kansas

Earhart, Amy, Texas A&M University

Graham, Maryemma, University of Kansas

Jean So, Richard, University of Chicago

Long, Hoyt, University of Chicago

Radio, Erik, University of Kansas

Rambsy, Kenton, University of Texas Arlington

Rosenblum, Brian, University of Kansas

Williams, Dana, Howard University

Abstract

The negligible number of African American (AA) literary texts digitally available for scholars working in the field of digital humanities remains a persistent problem. The Black Book Interactive Project (BBIP) responds to this critical digital invisibility by proposing to create a metadata schema that accounts for race, to make these archives more discoverable for scholarship. Using 75 novels from the Project on the History of Black Writing digital archive, we will produce a demonstration project that increases access to little known AA texts, encourages and enables text mining as a digital practice, and bridges the current gaps in computational research in literary studies. Our goal is to expand the community of users and practitioners and to make this schema a standard for the interactive exploration of similar digitized collections.

Enhancing the Humanities through Innovation.

The Project on the History of Black Writing (HBW) requests a Level I start-up grant in the amount of \$40,000 to create a demonstration project that will model a metadata schema for the Black Book Interactive Project (BBIP). During the eighteen-month grant period, May 2016 to October 2017, working with a team of African American scholars and DH specialists¹, with our partners, KU Institute for Digital Research in the Humanities (IDRH), The Chicago Text Lab (CTL) at the University of Chicago, and the College Language Association (CLA), grad and undergrad staff, we will develop a vocabulary for structuring texts that respond to the complexities of race and specificities within African American literature. BBIP addresses the lack of metadata designed to reveal the significance of African American cultural heritage materials through the use of data mining and visualization approaches. Doing so requires that we also analyze the durability, efficacy, and relevance of existing tools in order to develop a working model for data mining within African American literature collections. This project builds upon our 2012 BBIP pilot project (See Appendix p. 23), identifying 44 fields to describe 100 African American novels available in digital archives. The 44 fields allowed data sets specific to research questions that field specialists might ask.

The kinds of statistical queries that digital tools invite are virtually non-existent in African American discourse, queries that drive DH scholarship and provide deeper analytical insight into texts that we study. Having access, for example, to a text's grammatical, linguistic, stylistic and narrative features, fictional geographies and topographies, author information, and what Gerard Genette calls the "paratextual apparatuses," all materials inside and outside the book and related to its publication,² can tell us much about structure and meaning of African American literature as a body of work. Useful examples include foundational work like the Orlando Project and the Women Writer's Project that employ schemas revealing the complexities of diverse cultural expression. To fill this void BBIP seeks to (1) create and model settings a metadata schema that identifies the critical factor of race and reflects those discourses in which scholars working in African American literature are engaged; and (2) give increased attention to the limitations of current experimental data mining tools that exclude significant groups of writers and relevant collections. Our approach recognizes the need to expand and demonstrate DH practices in both instructional and research settings. Ultimately BBIP will help us see the value of linking specialized archives with other open source data sets like linkedjazz.org to make our work more useful, more complete, more accurate and interoperable.

BBIP comes at a crucial moment in the evolution of DH and African American literature. We continue to uncover black texts and yet lack the ability to place them within a proper context. Neither are we able to provide the evidence to confirm or refute the conclusions like those drawn by Kenneth Warren in *What Was African American Literature*. For Warren the demise of Jim Crow segregation that gave coherence to the social world that created black literature as a post-emancipation phenomenon has eroded along with the accompanying literature.³ Without evidence about what black literature *is* and what it *does* in verifiable terms, his conclusions are based primarily on what circulates, is most frequently read, discussed and validated rather than what exists. Working with incomplete archives limits human knowledge and understanding. A positive outcome of the Warren debate is the renewed search for alternative meanings of African American writing as a racial project, including further investigation into contrasting meanings of race and blackness. Computational studies can help reveal the many views that responded to Jim Crow in a literature largely unknown. In computational models the *what*, *who*, and *how* converge as compelling research questions that push the study of African American literature in dynamic new directions, rather than allowing it to submit to stagnant interpretations.

Environmental Scan.

A review of the subset of Digital Literary Archives devoted to African American literature and the subsequent academic commentary on those projects reveals two acute, disheartening realities. First, the actual representatives

¹ This collaboration will also inform classroom pedagogy. Following the model developed by Amy Earhart (HBW board member and BBIP consultant), undergraduate students from HBW board members' classes will learn and implement metadata creation and topic modeling for BBIP novels.

² Gerard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge UP, 1997). p 1, 5.

³ Kenneth Warren, *What Was African American Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2011), p 1-3.

of DH projects in African American literature are few.⁴ The projects themselves are esoteric: their reach, even smaller, and most are virtually untraceable on the Internet.⁵ The major repositories of digitally archived texts are also problematic for scholars interested in race, in part due to indexing and cataloging practices, not necessarily an absence of digital texts. For example, the Hathitrust Digital Library that boasts “Millions of books online” only returns seven full-text novels from pre-1923 under the search terms “African American” and “Novel.”⁶ Google Books, Open Library, and Project Gutenberg are hardly better.⁷ Most telling in the HathiTrust Library is the difficulty in locating these seven novels, a difficulty of other systems as well. The subject tags, providing the primary search returns, are *human generated*. Even if a text exists in the archive, a search request might not return it without the appropriate subject tag, like “African American.” Other texts *might* exist, but have not been tagged to return results.

Second, a survey of the literatures written about the broader state of DH reveals that projects on black writing are rarely mentioned as representatives of the field (Liu, Clement, Pannapacker).⁸ In response digital humanities scholars have called for greater attention to issues of difference (Liu, McPherson, Earhart, Gil, Risam). BBIP will advance the DH field by contributing to fundamental values that higher education has long held: diversity, innovation, and a spirit of inclusion. Metadata can be the first step in developing a race-aware strategy for digitally indexed novels because, unlike other tools such as text-mining (which looks for patterns of language), metadata links textual patterns to actual social agents and institutions; it creates an interface between text, space, and place. Metadata allows for richer analysis of the field of literature. Moreover, even categories as simple as race of author or protagonists are not present in current schemas.⁹ Our preliminary schema calls for both more specific and inclusive categories, like family structure, colorism, use of vernacular language, type of publisher, or institutional affiliations.

Metadata categories important to this project are currently treated by two schemas: MODS (Metadata Object Description Schema) and MADS (Metadata Authority Description Schema). MODS capture the bibliographic information of a work, and its records can be crosswalked successfully to many other metadata schemas.¹⁰ While MODS and MADS classifications are comparable to some of our proposed metadata, they remain insufficient, because of an absence of platforms capable of processing the kinds of schemas we believe are necessary. (See Appendix p. 31 for Schema Classification). Thus, this project is exploratory in the sense that the “absent” metadata elements are the ones that most clearly point to issues of race and yet are not fully incorporated into MODS, MADS, and many other schemas. Similarly, incorporating URLs from the authority sources (ex. VIAF, LCSH) into the metadata will serve to facilitate incorporation of the data into the developing linked data ecosystem. Future work could focus on leveraging this linked data serialization to highlight relational aspects between authors and works in this corpus, in addition to making the data available through an API.

⁴ “Mapping the Green Room” and Digital Schomburg’s “African American Women Writers of the 19th Century” are among the few examples.

⁵ For example, the digital archive “Uncle Tom’s Cabin and American Culture” is only accessible through major search engines with an exact combination of search terms, suggesting the visible absence of race-related digital queries.

⁶ In an email exchange with a Hathitrust representative, after asking how to locate the total number of novels written by AA authors, we were told “This simple question would be very complicated for us to determine.” It was recommended that we search under the “subject” record for African American novels. This returned 0 full text results and 16 partials, most of which the race of the author was not obvious.

⁷ A survey of 13 of the pre-1900 novels (the most well-known novels) that have been indexed for this project yield the following results on the Google Books archive: 6 full text, 3 searchable “previews,” and 4 novels with no record. Project Gutenberg only has 15 African American authors indexed in their entire database. Open Library contains 425 African American e-books, but only 2 novels from pre-1900, and 4 from pre-1923. Other Internet databases such as Internet Archive, WikiSource, and the Digital Public Library of America contain next to nothing in terms of representation.

⁸ Best known are “The William Blake Archive,” “Romantic Circles,” “Rossetti Archive,” and “Walt Whitman Archive.”

⁹ Present schemas such as Dublin Core or DF, for example, only address basic structural components of a text. However, the flexibility afforded by XML allows for considerations concerning race to be effectively serialized as structured data. While one approach might be an extension of TEI/XML, greater flexibility is necessary. To this end, we will benefit from working with the Advanced Research Consortium (ARC), [See Letters of Support p. 16]

¹⁰ For example, in our current schema, approximately 16 categories fall under a MODS schema, which when cross-walked could be ingested into existing discovery systems like HathiTrust.

History and Duration of the Project. HBW, founded in 1983, and now based at the University of Kansas, is the oldest and most continually active literary archive that connects black writing and culture with the public humanities in the US and abroad.¹¹ Our decades of work,¹² the distinctiveness of our collection, and our content expertise in African American literature resulted in the *Cambridge History of African American Literature*, the first and most comprehensive such history to date. In 1994 funding from the Lemelson Foundation supported the development of our first digital prototype *Neither Bond Nor Free*, a 19th century novel that linked the text to historical and social contexts, using visual data. A decade later, our Project Digital Initiative began a second pilot project, *The 100 Novels Project*, looking specifically at temporal and spatial data, presenting the results in a series of public digital exhibits. With support from KU in 2012, HBW began a third pilot study, the prototype for BBIP, which established a baseline of information and provided useful data, as our overview indicates [See Appendix p. 23].

As BBIP expands the dataset to include 75 novels published in the 70 years between 1853 and 1923 from our own newly digitized collection, we open up restrictive categories with clear benefits. We bring new texts into circulation, identify a range of themes and subjects about which authors wrote and debated and the ways in which they represented people, places and communities, and see a more diverse human community. Our strategic partnership with the CTL is now in the process of digitizing the entire HBW novel collection (1000+ novels), 270 of which have been completed to date. Scholars working with this project will have access to these texts in two formats: CTL will house the HBW collection as both an individual database and as a part of a larger database they have already developed that contains 10,000 American novels and both author and text specific metadata.

For the BBIP Pilot Project, we constructed the outline of our website and begin work on the graphic interface. Five domains emerged that will serve as prompts for developing the metadata schema prototype (See Appendix p. 29 for Description of Domains). Domains are designed to crosswalk with other standard metadata, including Library of Congress headings. These structures provide the framework for the creation of metadata. This grant will allow us to navigate the tension between what is interoperable with standard metadata and the critical absence of metadata that accounts for race. Thus, the initial schema presented in this project is not exhaustive, but an evolving schema that represents our initial findings about how African American texts are digitally represented, indexed, and analyzed. (See Appendix p. 31).

We will use Fall 2015 and Spring of 2016, prior to notification of funding, working closely with IDRH, especially metadata librarian Erik Radio, to (1) survey existing metadata schemas used to encode literature; (2) identify those schemas that might be adjusted for greater inclusion of racially-significant factors; (3) determine which metadata categories properly crosswalk to other resources that use existing schemas; and (4) complete the process of digitizing the HBW novel archive through our partnership with CTL. We will host a preliminary meeting (9/25/15) with DH and AA scholars (funded by KU Center for Research) and identify 75 novels for BBIP. In April, 2016, working with our partner CLA, we will have a scheduled meeting for DH-interested scholars.¹³

Work Plan May 2016 – September 2017

Benchmark I (May-June 2016): Immediately upon notification, we will curate scholarly community for metadata creation, develop project management portal for communication and access; and hire co-project managers. (1) May–consult with Advanced Research Consortium (Laura Mandell) for development of Resource Descriptive Framework (RDF) datasets representative of the 75 novels. (See Letters of Support, page 16) (2) June- All participants and partners meet in Chicago to set guidelines and timeline for overall project, and for training session for using new Digital Archive in classroom instruction.

¹¹ HBW's international work includes "Teaching Toni Morrison in Translation," Paris, 2009; *Faces of Haiti*, 2011; "Making the [Richard] Wright Connection," 2010; and collaborations with the Japanese Black Studies Association and Central China Normal University (Wuhan).

¹² HBW has received over 25 grants, 15 from NEH (Research, Public Programs, Seminars/Institutes).

¹³ This workshop is part of an NEH grant previously submitted under the NEH HBCU humanities initiative and our best opportunity to access the largest community of African American literary.

Benchmark II (July – December 2016): Orientation and Training for HBW staff and select scholars identified at CLA through online workshop with Erik Radio (IDRD). Complete Metadata Creation in first 35 novels. Identify other suggested venues for information sharing and conference presentations.

Benchmark III (January-March 2017): Metadata creation in final 40 novels. Online workshop for implementing use of digital archive in selected classrooms, using Earhart's model. Continue to develop and modulate partnerships with additional groups.

Benchmark IV (April – September 2017): Compile all information for completion of project and data instruction of 75 novels; Presentation of results at workshop for CLA conference (April). Revise and update web portal with findings. Continue and expand dialogues through online discussions with the following major libraries: Schomburg Library for Research in Black Culture (New York), the Moorland Spingarn Collection (Howard University), Fisk University Library (Nashville, TN), The Woodruff Library (Atlanta University Center), and the Furious Flower Poetry Center (James Madison University, the only print archive dedicated to African American poetry). Included will also be smaller, important collections such as the Margaret Walker Papers (Margaret Walker Research Center, Jackson State University; portions of the which have been digitized); Gwendolyn Brooks Collection (recently obtained by the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana), and the Eugene Redmond Collection (Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville). Outline next stage of project for grant proposal.

Staff:¹⁴

Maryemma Graham, University Distinguished Professor, University of Kansas, Project Director

Will Cunningham, PhD Candidate, English Co-Project Manager

TBA – GRA- PhD Candidate, English, Co-Project Manager

Amy Earhart, Associate Professor, English and Digital Humanities, Texas A & M University, Lead Consultant,

Kenton Rambsy, Assistant Professor, English and Digital Humanities, University of Texas, Arlington, Content and Digital Specialist

Dana Williams, Chair, Department of English and Modern Languages, Howard University, Content Specialist

Partners

Hoyt Long, *Richard Jean So*, University of Chicago, Chicago Text Lab

Brian Rosenblum, (Co-director), *Erick Radio* and *Jamene Brooks-Kieffer*, Institute for Digital Research in the Humanities, KU Libraries

Dana Williams, President, College Language Association

Final Product and Dissemination. Beginning in the summer of 2016, we will schedule sessions for annual meetings of established organizations for sharing our findings for feedback and revision, including the International Digital Humanities Conference, the College Language Association, Multiethnic Literature Association, and the American Library Association (via HBCU Library Alliance). At the end of the eighteen months, we will prepare a full essay for publication on the use of Metadata Schema in Black Texts. The KU Libraries ScholarWorks, Omeka and the HBW website will house the project, and we will begin our work on an implementation grant that expands the project to 1200 novels in our collection and builds more partnerships.

¹⁴ Please reference the budget and budget narrative for detailed information on the anticipated commitment for each individual.

Data Management Plan

Project Objective:

The Black Book Interactive Project (BBIP) proposes to create, develop, and integrate a metadata schema that allows for access and discovery of African American literary texts, making the archive more useful for research and scholarship. BBIP will use approximately 75 novels from the Project on the History of Black Writing digital archive as our model texts to produce: (1) a metadata schema that fully accounts for race in a digital context; (2) enhanced access to little known African American texts; and (3) interdisciplinary discussions among professionals to foster a greater understanding of text analysis and related computational research in African American literature. Our goal is to develop and foster a “best practices” schema that is sensitive to race and to establish a relational coordination between the producers of content (humanities researchers and teachers), academic librarians, and African American archivists.

Roles and responsibilities:

This data management plan will be implemented and managed by the Project manager (Will Cunningham), assisted by two Graduate Student GRAs, under the project supervision of Maryemma Graham, PhD. The Project manager will assist with all phases of the work, transferring final project artifacts and data to the University of Kansas (KU) institutional repository KU ScholarWorks. KU Libraries will have long-term responsibility for the permanent storage needs of the data.

This project will continue to work in partnership with two entities: (1) The **Chicago Text Lab (CTL)**, led by Hoyt Long, PhD and Richard Jean So, PhD. The CTL group explores the quantitative and computational methods for conducting macro-scale comparative inquiries that have a direct correlation to the work we are doing. The partnership has already supported the full digitization of HBW's novel collection and will house the collection. (2) **The Institute for Digital Research (IDHR – KU Libraries)**, Brian Rosenblum and Erik Radio. Erik is the Metadata Librarian at the University of Kansas. His work in the libraries and with BBIP focuses on curating data and enhancing its discoverability. Brian Rosenblum, co-director of IDHR and associate librarian for Digital Scholarship, will assist and support BBIP in areas of access, production, and technical support.

Finally, Amy Earhart, PhD, who co-founded the Institute of Digital Humanities, Culture, and Media at Texas A&M, and teaches African American literature and the Digital Humanities, will serve as a special digital consultant. She has written extensively on matters of race in DH and most recently published *Traces of the Old, Uses of the New: The Emergence of the Digital Humanities* (2015).

Expected Data:

The metadata schema is intended to promote access to and analysis of African American literature. There are 5 levels of expected data:

- Academic papers or reports
- Project Reports
- Documentation of schema creation
- Digitized texts
- Metadata schema and records

Currently, data is stored on a networked hard drive. Project files and artifacts will be moved from the KU campus networked folder. Project artifacts will be stored on KU campus servers, as will any reports documenting the text analysis and project processes. At the project's conclusions, any finalized project files will be converted to PDFs and saved on the KU ScholarWorks server.

Period of Data Retention:

All final versions of the data resulting from the project (artifacts) will be deposited in KU ScholarWorks for perpetual storage and preservation upon completion of the project study. Once data is transferred to ScholarWorks, all data will immediately be made publically available.

Data formats and dissemination

Data Type:	Data Format:
Academic Papers or Reports	PDF, DOC, RTF
Project Reports	PDF, DOC, RTF
Documentation of Schema Creation	PDF, RTF
Digitized Texts	PDF, TXT
Metadata Schema and Records	XSD, XML

Through its commitment to long-term preservation of scholarly output, KU Libraries managed ScholarWorks Repository will allow easy sharing and accessibility. This repository contains scholarly work created by KU faculty, staff and students, as well as material from the University Archives. As an open access repository, ScholarWorks gives access to a wide audience and ensures its preservation.

Data storage and preservation of access

All public data will be deposited in KU ScholarWorks, which manages, archives, and shares digital content. ScholarWorks allows access to the public via persistent URLs, provides tools for long-term data management, and permits permanent storage options. KU Libraries has built-in contingencies for disaster recovery including redundancy and recovery plans.

Additionally, data not designed for open access storage will be stored in the University's Research File Storage (RFS). This data is accessible both within the KU network and remotely via VPN. Data is RAID protected and backed up on a rolling 30 day period.

HBW's Digital Novel Archive will be store both at the University of Chicago and KU's RFS.

Description of Appendices

Black Book Pilot Project Summary Sheet

Description:

During the 2013-2014 academic year, Kenton Rambsy and Will Cunningham developed the prototype for a metadata schema to demonstrate the kind of information that a race-aware schema would produce. Using 37 texts from the HBW archives, this pilot project provided BBIP with the foundational data that has grown into this proposal. This schema represents the type of categorical information that we believe is especially useful in the quantitative study of African American fictional texts.

Domain Descriptions:

Description:

These domain descriptions will serve as prompts for developing the extended metadata schema. Each domain highlights and illustrates aspects of African American literature that require newer and more nuanced schema classifications in order to be studied digitally.

Schema Classification and Interoperability

Description:

This sheet is an expanded list of metadata categories that account for race and issues of racial difference. The chart also presents those categories currently interoperable with the schema classifications most often used by major digital repositories and search engines. It further demonstrates the technical absence of race-aware metadata. The chart was created with the assistance of KU metadata librarian Erik Radio.

Author	Novel	Novel Content	Sex of Protagonist (1)	Name of Protagonist	Approx. Age of Protagonist	Genre
James Baldwin	<i>Go Tell It on The Mountain</i>		Male			Coming-of-age
Paul Beatty	<i>The White Boy Shuffle</i>		Male			Coming-of-age
Octavia Butler	<i>Kindred</i>		Female			Speculative Fiction
Edwidge Danticat	<i>Breath, Eyes, Memory</i>		Female			Coming-of-age
Ralph Ellison	<i>Invisible Man</i>		Male			Coming-of-age
Ernest Gaines	<i>A Lesson Before Dying</i>		Male			Neo-slave narrative
Alex Haley	<i>Roots</i>		Male			Neo-slave narrative
Zora Neale Hurston	<i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i>		Female			Coming-of-age
Charles Johnson	<i>Middle Passage</i>		Male			Neo-slave narrative
Edward P. Jones	<i>The Known World</i>		Male			Neo-slave narrative
Gayl Jones	<i>Corregidora</i>		Female			Coming-of-age
Terry McMillan	<i>Waiting to Exhale</i>		Female			Urban fiction
Toni Morrison	<i>Beloved</i>		Female			Neo-slave narrative
Toni Morrison	<i>The Bluest Eye</i>		Female			Coming-of-age
Walter Mosley	<i>Devil in a Blue Dress</i>		Male			Speculative Fiction
Gloria Naylor	<i>The Women of Brewster Place</i>		Female			Neo-slave narrative
Ann Petry	<i>The Street</i>		Female			Urban fiction
Ishmael Reed	<i>Mumbo Jumbo</i>		Male			Speculative Fiction
Iceberg Slim	<i>Trick Baby</i>		Male			Urban fiction
Sister Souljah	<i>The Coldest Winter Ever</i>		Female			Urban fiction
Alice Walker	<i>The Color Purple</i>		Female			Coming-of-age
Margaret Walker	<i>Jubilee</i>		Female			Neo-slave narrative
Colson Whitehead	<i>The Intuitionist</i>		Female			Speculative Fiction
Sherley Anne Williams	<i>Dessa Rose</i>		Female			Neo-slave narrative
Richard Wright	<i>Native Son</i>		Male			Urban fiction
William Wells Brown	<i>Clotel; or, the President's Daughter: A Narrative of Slave Life in the US</i>		Female			Slave Narrative
Frank Webb	<i>The Gaeries and Their Friends</i>		Male			Slave Narrative
Harriet Wilson	<i>Our Nig</i>		Female			Sentimental/Coming of Age
Lorenzo Dow Blackson	<i>Rise and Progress of the Kindoms of Light</i>		Varied/Biblical			Religious Fiction
Thomas Detter	<i>Nellie Brown, or the Jealous Wife</i>		Male			Slave Narrative/Travel Narrative
Robert Benjamin	<i>The Defender of Obadiah Cuff</i>		Male			?
Frances Ellen Watkins Harper	<i>Iola Leroy</i>		Female			Sentimental
Amelia E. Johnson	<i>The Hazeley Family</i>		Female			Romance
Walter Stowers & William Anderson	<i>Appointed: An American Novel</i>		Male			Urban Fiction
J. McHenry Jones	<i>Hearts of Gold</i>		Varied/Female			?
Paul Laurence Dunbar	<i>The Uncalled</i>		Male			Religious fiction
Sutton Elbert Griggs	<i>Imperium in Imperio</i>		Male			Political fiction

Author	Geographic Region (1)	Specific City Setting	Historical Time Period
James Baldwin	Northeast		War, Prosperity, and Depression (1918-1939)
Paul Beatty	West		End of the Century (1990-1999)
Octavia Butler	South		Post-civil rights, and Black Power Era (1970-1990)
Edwidge Danticat	Outside of U.S.		Post-civil rights and Black Power Era (1970-1990)
Ralph Ellison	Northeast		War, Prosperity, and Depression (1918-1939)
Ernest Gaines	South		World War II- Post War Era (1940-1960)
Alex Haley	Outside of U.S.		Slavery Era (1800-1865)
Zora Neale Hurston	South		War, Prosperity, and Depression (1918-1939)
Charles Johnson	South		Slavery Era (1800-1865)
Edward P. Jones	South		Slavery Era (1800-1865)
Gayl Jones	South		World War II- Post War Era (1940-1960)
Terry McMillan	West		End of the Century (1990-1999)
Toni Morrison	Midwest		Reconstruction Era (1863- 1877)
Toni Morrison	Midwest		World War II- Post War Era (1940-1960)
Walter Mosley	West		World War II- Post War Era (1940-1960)
Gloria Naylor	Northeast		War, Prosperity, and Depression (1918-1939)
Ann Petry	Northeast		World War II- Post War Era (1940-1960)
Ishmael Reed	Northeast		War, Prosperity, and Depression (1918-1939)
Iceberg Slim	Midwest		World War II- Post War Era (1940-1960)
Sister Souljah	Northeast		End of the Century (1990-1999)
Alice Walker	South		War, Prosperity, and Depression (1918-1939)
Margaret Walker	South		Slavery Era (1800-1865)
Colson Whitehead	Northeast		End of the Century (1990-1999)
Sherley Anne Williams	South		Slavery Era (1800-1865)
Richard Wright	Midwest		War, Prosperity, and Depression (1918-1939)
William Wells Brown	South & Midwest	Varied	Slavery Era (1800-1865)
Frank Webb	South and NE	Philadelphia	Slavery Era (1800-1865)
Harriet Wilson	NE		Slavery Era (1800-1865)
Lorenzo Dow Blackson	Biblical	Mythical	Biblical
Thomas Detter	South & Mountain West	Virginia/Nevada/Idaho/California	Reconstruction Era (1863- 1877)
Robert Benjamin	South	Varied	Reconstruction Era (1863- 1877)
Frances Ellen Watkins Harper	South - NE - South	Varied	Slavery Era (1800-1865) & Reconstruction Era (1863- 1877)
Amelia E. Johnson	NE		Reconstruction Era (1863- 1877)
Walter Stowers & William Anderson	NE & Midwest	Detroit	Reconstruction Era (1863- 1877)
J. McHenry Jones	Midwest	Ohio	Reconstruction Era (1863- 1877)
Paul Laurence Dunbar	South & Midwest	Ohio	Reconstruction Era (1863- 1877)
Sutton Elbert Griggs	Southwest	Waco, Texas	Reconstruction Era (1863- 1877)

Author	Narrator Perspective/Point of View	Theme (1)	Theme (2)	Author Information	Author	Author Sex	Author Birth City/State
James Baldwin	First person	Religion	Family	James Baldwin	James Baldwin	Male	
Paul Beatty	First person	Identity		Paul Beatty	Paul Beatty	Male	
Octavia Butler	First person	Family	Slavery	Octavia Butler	Octavia Butler	Female	
Edwidge Danticat	First person	Family	Memory	Edwidge Danticat	Edwidge Danticat	Female	
Ralph Ellison	First person	Identity	Memory	Ralph Ellison	Ralph Ellison	Male	
Ernest Gaines	First person	Religion	Memory	Ernest Gaines	Ernest Gaines	Male	
Alex Haley	Third Person	Slavery	Family	Alex Haley	Alex Haley	Male	
Zora Neale Hurston	Third person omniscient	Identity	Family	Zora Neale Hurston	Zora Neale Hurston	Female	
Charles Johnson	First Person	Slavery	Identity	Charles Johnson	Charles Johnson	Male	
	Fragmented Point of View--Multiple Characters						
Edward P. Jones	Characters	Slavery	Identity	Edward P. Jones	Edward P. Jones	Male	
Gayl Jones	First person	Slavery	Memory	Gayl Jones	Gayl Jones	Female	
Terry McMillan	First person	Identity	Family	Terry McMillan	Terry McMillan	Female	
Toni Morrison	Third Person	Slavery	Family	Toni Morrison	Toni Morrison	Female	
	Fragmented Point of View--Multiple Characters						
Toni Morrison	Characters	Identity	Family	Toni Morrison	Toni Morrison	Female	
Walter Mosley	First person	Identity	Memory	Walter Mosley	Walter Mosley	Male	
Gloria Naylor	Third Person omniscient	Family	Identity	Gloria Naylor	Gloria Naylor	Female	
Ann Petry	Third person	Identity	Memory	Ann Petry	Ann Petry	Female	
Ishmael Reed	Third person omniscient	Religion	Identity	Ishmael Reed	Ishmael Reed	Male	
Iceberg Slim	First person	Identity	Family	Iceberg Slim	Iceberg Slim	Male	
Sister Souljah	First person	Family	Identity	Sister Souljah	Sister Souljah	Female	
Alice Walker	First person	Identity	Religion	Alice Walker	Alice Walker	Female	
Margaret Walker	First person	Slavery	Identity	Margaret Walker	Margaret Walker	Female	
Colson Whitehead	First person	Identity	Memory	Colson Whitehead	Colson Whitehead	Male	
Sherley Anne Williams	Third Person omniscient	Slavery	Identity	Sherley Anne Williams	Sherley Anne Williams	Female	
Richard Wright	First person	Identity	Family	Richard Wright	Richard Wright	Male	
William Wells Brown		Slavery	Family	William Wells Brown	William Wells Brown	Male	Lexington, KY
Frank Webb		Slavery	Family	Frank Webb	Frank Webb	Male	Philadelphia, PA
Harriet Wilson		Slavery	Family	Harriet Wilson	Harriet Wilson	Female	New Hampshire
Lorenzo Dow Blackson		Religion	Race	Lorenzo Dow Blackson	Lorenzo Dow Blackson	Male	Christiana, DE
Thomas Detter		Slavery	Identity	Thomas Detter	Thomas Detter	Male	Washington, DC
Robert Benjamin		Identity	Civil Law	Robert Benjamin	Robert Benjamin	Male	Island of St. Keys
Frances Ellen Watkins Harper		Slavery	Identity	Frances Ellen Watkins Harper	Frances Ellen Watkins Harper	Female	Baltimore, MD
Amelia E. Johnson		Identity	Religion	Amelia E. Johnson	Amelia E. Johnson	Female	Toronto, CA
Walter Stowers & William Anderson		Identity	Family	Walter Stowers & William Anderson	Walter Stowers & William Anderson	Male/Male	Stowers: Detroit
J. McHenry Jones		Identity	Family	J. McHenry Jones	J. McHenry Jones	Male	Easter, Ohio
Paul Laurence Dunbar		Religion	Identity	Paul Laurence Dunbar	Paul Laurence Dunbar	Male	Dayton Ohio
Sutton Elbert Griggs		Politics	Identity	Sutton Griggs	Sutton Griggs	Male	Chatfield, Texas

Author	Author Birthdate	Author Birth Decade	Author Residence When Novel Was Published (City)	Author Residence When Novel Was Published (State)	Author Wikipedia Page	Level of Author Wikipedia Page Development	Guggenheim Fellowship
James Baldwin		1900s			Yes		Yes
Paul Beatty		1960s			Yes		No
Octavia Butler		1940s			Yes		No
Edwidge Danticat		1960s			Yes		No
Ralph Ellison		1910s			Yes		No
Ernest Gaines		1930s			Yes		No
Alex Haley		1920s			Yes		No
Zora Neale Hurston		1890s			Yes		Yes
Charles Johnson		1940s			Yes		Yes
Edward P. Jones		1950s			Yes		No
Gayl Jones		1940s			Yes		No
Terry McMillan		1950s			Yes		No
Toni Morrison		1930s			Yes		No
Toni Morrison		1930s			Yes		No
Walter Mosley		1950s			Yes		No
Gloria Naylor		1950s			Yes		Yes
Ann Petry		1900s			Yes		No
Ishmael Reed		1930s			Yes		No
Iceberg Slim		1910s			Yes		No
Sister Souljah		1960s			Yes		No
Alice Walker		1940s			Yes		Yes
Margaret Walker		1910s			Yes		No
Colson Whitehead		1960s			Yes		No
Sherley Anne Williams		1940s			Yes		No
Richard Wright		1900s			Yes		Yes
William Wells Brown	6 Novmber 1814		London	England	Yes		No
Frank Webb	21 March 1828		London	England	Yes		No
Harriet Wilson	15 March 1825		Boston	Mass	Yes		No
Lorenzo Dow Blackson		1817	Philadelphia	PA	No		No
Thomas Detter	1827 or 1831		Elko	Nevada	No		No
Robert Benjamin	31 March 1855		Lexington KY	KY	No		No
Frances Ellen Watkins Harper	24 September 1825				Yes		No
Amelia E. Johnson		1858	Boston	Mass	No		No
Walter Stowers & William Anderson	Stower: 1859		Detroit/Detroit	MI	No		No
J. McHenry Jones		1859	Charleston, WV	WV	No		No
Paul Laurence Dunbar		1872	Washington DC	District of Columbia	Yes		No
Sutton Elbert Griggs	19 June 1872		Nashville	Tennessee	Yes		No

Author	MacArthur Foundation Fellowship	Attended Some College	Attended Some Graduate School	Other Information	Publisher	Publication Year	Publication Decade	Movie Adaptation
James Baldwin	No	No	No		Alfred A. Knopf		1950s	Yes
Paul Beatty	No	Yes	Yes		Houghton, Mifflin		1990s	No
Octavia Butler	Yes	Yes	No		Doubleday		1970s	No
Edwidge Danticat	Yes	Yes	Yes		Vintage Books		1990s	No
Ralph Ellison	No	Yes	No		Random House		1950s	No
Ernest Gaines	No	Yes	Yes		Alfred A. Knopf		1990s	Yes
Alex Haley	No	Yes	No		Doubleday		1970s	Yes
Zora Neale Hurston	Yes	Yes	Yes		J.B. Lippincott Company		1930s	Yes
Charles Johnson	Yes	Yes	Yes		Atheneum		1990s	No
Edward P. Jones	No	Yes	Yes		Amistad		2000s	No
Gayl Jones	No	Yes	Yes		Random House		1970s	No
Terry McMillan	No	Yes	Yes		Viking Press		1990s	Yes
Toni Morrison	No	Yes	Yes		Alfred A. Knopf		1980s	Yes
Toni Morrison	No	Yes	Yes		Holt, Rinehart, & Winston		1970s	No
Walter Mosley	No	Yes	Yes		Norton		1990s	Yes
Gloria Naylor	No	Yes	Yes		Viking Press		1980s	No
Ann Petry	No	Yes	Yes		Houghton, Mifflin		1940s	No
Ishmael Reed	No	Yes			Doubleday		1970s	No
Iceberg Slim	No	Yes	No		Holloway House Publishing Co		1960s	Yes
Sister Souljah	No	Yes	No		Pocket Books		2000s	No
Alice Walker	No	Yes	No		Harcourt Brace Jovanovich		1980s	Yes
Margaret Walker	No	Yes	Yes		Houghton, Mifflin		1960s	No
Colson Whitehead	Yes	Yes	No		Anchor Books		1990s	No
Sherley Anne Williams	No	Yes	Yes		Williams Morrow & Co.		1980s	No
Richard Wright	No	No	No		Harper & Row		1940s	Yes
William Wells Brown	No	No	No		Partridge & Oakly	1853		No
Frank Webb	No	?	No		Routledge	1857		No
Harriet Wilson	No	No	No		Rand & Avery	1859		No
Lorenzo Dow Blackson	No	No	No		Nicholas	1867		No
Thomas Detter	No	Schooling"	No		Caddy & Hughes	1871		No
Robert Benjamin	No	No	No		Privately Published	1887		No
Frances Ellen Watkins Harper	No	Yes	No		Garrigues Brothers	1892		No
Amelia E. Johnson	No	No	No		American Baptist Publishing Society	1894		No
Walter Stowers & William Anderson	No	Possibly	Possibly		Detroit Law Printing	1894		No
J. McHenry Jones	No	Yes	Possibly		Daily Intelligence Stem Co.	1896		No
Paul Laurence Dunbar	No	No	No		Dodd, Mead and Company	1898		No
Sutton Elbert Griggs	No	Yes	No		Editor Publishing Co.	1899		No

Author	Year Movie Adaptation was Released	Approximate Number of Pages	Over 5 Novel Cover Editions	Novel Wikipedia Page	Level of Novel Wikipedia Page Development
James Baldwin		200-300 Pages	Yes	Yes	
Paul Beatty		200- 300 Pages	Yes	Yes	
Octavia Butler		200- 300 Pages	Yes	Yes	
Edwidge Danticat		200- 300 Pages	Yes	Yes	
Ralph Ellison		500- 600 Pages	Yes	Yes	
Ernest Gaines		200- 300 Pages	Yes	Yes	
Alex Haley		Over 400 Pages	Yes	Yes	
Zora Neale Hurston		200- 300 Pages	yes	Yes	
Charles Johnson		200- 300 Pages	No	Yes	
Edward P. Jones		Over 400	Yes	Yes	
Gayl Jones		100- 200 Pages	No	No	
Terry McMillan		Over 400 Pages	Yes	No	
Toni Morrison		300- 400 Pages	Yes	Yes	
Toni Morrison		100- 200 Pages	Yes	Yes	
Walter Mosley		200- 300 Pages	Yes	Yes	
Gloria Naylor		100- 200 Pages	Yes	No	
Ann Petry		Over 400 Pages	Yes	Yes	
Ishmael Reed		200- 300 Pages	No	Yes	
Iceberg Slim		300- 400 Pages	No	No	
Sister Souljah		300- 400 Pages	Yes	Yes	
Alice Walker		300- 400 Pages	Yes	Yes	
Margaret Walker		Over 400 Pages	Yes	No	
Colson Whitehead		200- 300 Pages	Yes	Yes	
Sherley Anne Williams		200- 300 Pages	Yes	No	
Richard Wright		300- 400 Pages	Yes	Yes	
William Wells Brown		200-300		Yes	
Frank Webb		300-400		No	
Harriet Wilson			100	Yes	
Lorenzo Dow Blackson		200-300		No	
Thomas Detter		100-150		No	
Robert Benjamin		?		No	
Frances Ellen Watkins Harper		200-300		Yes	
Amelia E. Johnson		?		No	
Walter Stowers & William Anderson		300-400		No	
J. McHenry Jones		300-400		No	
Paul Laurence Dunbar		200-300		No	
Sutton Elbert Griggs		200-300		No	

Domain Description

Themes and Subjects. The themes and subjects domain will be a way to show a more complex dialogic between ideas, topics and themes that are more nuanced in terms of race, class historical periods and international relations. The traditional narrative arc of African American novels and their authors is the liberatory narrative or a response to the constraints of race and is directly tied to the theme of migration. Major literary periods (New Negro (Harlem) Renaissance, Chicago Renaissance, Black Arts Movement, Black Women's Literary Renaissance) appear to confirm the centrality of this theme. What evidence do we have that this modal experience is equally dominant in the larger canon? Novelists publishing between the New Negro Renaissance and the Depression era sought alternative responses to social inequality. An exploration of the complicated relationship between cultural nationalism and Marxism in African American fiction, for example, forces us to ask whether focusing on the *protest novel* as a genre overshadows our ability to understand the extent to which black writers pursued different themes

Fictional Geographies. We use this term in two ways: (1) the places where the actions occur, the relationship between the actions, the unfolding of the plot, and final outcome; and (2) the peopling of fiction: individual characters, the social processes and relationships in the novel. Themes and subjects are directly related to these fictional geographies, just as cities/regions/countries where authors reside are related to the kinds of people and places about which they write. How much or how little space is configured within any individual story and how/when does this begin to change? Of the 100 novels in the BBIP pilot study, 56% of the protagonists reside in northern cities. Large numbers of male protagonists make treks to northern cities, like James Weldon Johnson's *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* (1912), Langston Hughes's *Not Without Laughter* (1930), Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952), and James Baldwin's *Go Tell It on the Mountain* (1953). One of the most significant statistics we discovered is that 55% of the protagonists are women, contradicting the conventional view that black fiction until the 1980s was dominated by male protagonists. Male protagonists *do* represent a majority in *canonical texts*, revealing more about the cultural validation than the tradition of African American writing itself.

Language, Stylistic and Narrative Features. The emergence and persistence of a distinct oral tradition provides an expansive reservoir from which African American literature draws: folklore practices, language variations within African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and black expressive modalities including music, performance and visual culture. Because these markers of identity are not static, but extremely dynamic, we must be attentive to the ways in which they influence African American fiction: who narrates a story, what strategies are used, what constructions of black social and institutional life are present. African American novels employ multi-vocality. Novels can use sermons, speeches, newspaper clippings, political documents, or folk tales, can include various speaking voices from standard American English to AAVE, and vary depending upon whether the setting is in the rural, coastal or urban South, or in the North, Midwest, West Coast or beyond. Novels by Paul Laurence Dunbar (*Sport of the Gods*) and J. McHenry Jones (*Hearts of Gold*) show contrasting views of the black South that resists the kind of essentialist readings that often appear. Metadata descriptions will need to be able to capture this diversity of literary conventions, styles, and language.

Author Information. Traditionally, we look for family information, birth place, education and career paths, but the level of specificity in the case of African American novelists has very much to do with America's racial history. For early and lesser-known authors, biographical reconstruction can be difficult, in which case we consider what information is available and extrapolate. Birthplace matters as does level of education, but a distinction between an education at an HBCU (Historically Black College or University) or a predominantly white university also matters as does knowing at what point in an author's life a novel was written, whether before, after or in conjunction with a career (service in the military, the ministry, etc.). We note here that contemporary authors in our BBIP pilot study demonstrate a major shift as more and more writers become "professionalized" through academic degree programs (MFA/ PhD). Such shifts affect expectations of both writers and readers, the market and literary culture.

The Publishing Process. The history of publishing has had a major impact on the distribution, reception and interpretation of the African American novel. Print Culture Studies, a relatively new field, is just turning its attention to black literature. The early practice of racial exclusion dictated who and what type of work got published. Even when the industry became more open, particular narratives took precedence over others. Self-publishing, as a result, has been a

consistent option for many novelists. Sutton E. Griggs (1872-1933), self-published his five novels. His first, *Imperium in Imperio*, depicts the overthrow of Texas by blacks, a story no established publisher would consider in 1899. In the BBIP pilot study, publishers range from the trade houses to black themed-publishers (Amistad: Edward P. Jones's *The Known World*) and black-owned publishers (Black Classics Press: Walter Mosley's *Gone Fishin'*). The domain of publishing brings us back to peritexts: cover designs, the author's name, the dedication, titles, prefaces, introductions, chapter breaks and endnotes—all that affects the book's presentation. According to *Publishers Weekly*, "the increase in self-publishing, the importance of social media and author platforms to e-book originals, new reader interests, and the elusive search for discoverability" means "all the old rules [are] crumbling," opening up a market that ignores former publishing conventions, categories, and strategies.¹ At the same time, today's trade publishers take fewer risks, showing less interest in a debut author "without a major platform or built in audience," says Dawn Davis.² This domain is made more important with the decline of dedicated black media and black book stores as new media and blogs proliferate.

¹ Diane Patrick, "The State of African American Publishing," *Publishers Weekly*, December 10 2012.

² *Ibid.*

Metadata Schema:	Examples of data values:	Interoperable?
Author	Name	MODS :name
Novel	Title	MODS:title
<i>Novel Content</i>		
Sex of Protagonist (1)	male, female	
Name of Protagonist	name	MODS:subject
Age of Protagonist	number	
Family Structure	Married, single parent, grandparent, orphan	
Protagonist Connection to Slavery	Enslaved, Enslaved then freed, 1st generation free, ancestral, N/A	
Colorism	black, brown, ebony, blue-black, yellow, pale, ivory, etc	
Vernacular		
	coming of age, speculative fiction, neo-slave narrative, urban fiction, religious fiction, romance	MODS:genre
Genre		
Social Institutions	Clubs, organizations, gangs, churches	MODS:subject
Geographic Region (1)	Northeast, north, west, south, midwest, biblical, etc	MODS:subject
Geographic Region (2)	Northeast, north, west, south, midwest, biblical, etc	MODS:subject
Method of Movement (if applicable)	foot, car, train, plane	
Specific City Setting	name	MODS:subject
	War, Prosperity, and Depression (1918-1939), End of the Century (1990-1999), Post-civil rights, and Black Power Era (1970-1990)	MODS:subject
Historical Time Period		
Narrator Perspective/Point of View	First person, third person, third person omniscient, fragmented, etc	MODS:subject
Theme (1)	religion, identity, family, slavery, politics, memory, civil law, race	MODS:subject
Theme (2)	religion, identity, family, slavery, politics, memory, civil law, race	MODS:subject
<i>Author Information</i>		
Author	Name	MADS:name
Author Sex	male, female	
Author Birth City/State	name/state	
Author Birthdate	number	MADS:name
Author Residence When Novel Was Published (City)	name	
Author Residence When Novel Was Published (State)	name	
Author Wikipedia Page	yes/no	
Received Fellowship	yes/no	
Fellowship Type	MacArther, Guggenheim, etc	
Attended Some College	yes/no	
College Name	name	
Attended Some Graduate School	yes/no	
Graduate school name	yes/no	
<i>Other Information</i>		
Publisher	name	MODS:originInfo
Publisher Geographic Location	name	
Press Type	commercial, trade, vanity, academic, self	
Publication Year	number	MODS:originInfo
Anthologized	name	
Movie Adaptation	yes/no	MODS:relatedItem
Year Movie Adaptation was Released	number	MODS:relatedItem
Approximate Number of Pages	number	MODS:extent
Original Novel Cover	text, original artwork, original photograph,	
Number of novel covers	number	
Novel Wikipedia Page	yes/no	