

Research Paper-in-a-Box

As a possible warm-up for a somewhat more ambitious project later this semester (I still haven't decided what shape that final project will take), I want you to exercise some basic research skills on a more contemporary Caribbean or Caribbean-diaspora Anglophone fiction writer whose work we're not reading. Some of the writers on the list below are popular, even best-selling, authors in the US or the UK; others are less well-known. (Some of them also write in other genres besides fiction.) Do a quick-and-dirty web search to get a sense of who most piques your curiosity. Then choose one:

- Robert Antoni
- Dionne Brand
- Nalo Hopkinson
- Marlon James
- Anthony Joseph
- Monique Roffey
- Tiphonie Yanique

—and start by selecting, collating, editing and synthesizing the best biographical and critical information you can find about your writer, distilling it into a **two- to three-page sketch**. (Double-spaced pages, one-inch margins, half-inch header in the upper right-hand corner with your surname and the page number.)

In constructing this section, you should draw from *at least* three reputable sources, no more than two of which should be openly accessible web sites. (Other potential sources: headnotes and “about the author” sections of print books and anthologies; books in the reference section of the library (or electronic reference works available through the library); scholarly journal articles; profiles or reviews in prominent magazines and newspapers; and so on.) Structurally speaking, however, you might model your work on web sites such as:

- Author pages on *Wikipedia*
- Author pages at www.enotes.com
- Author pages at literature.britishcouncil.org/writers
- Poet pages at www.poets.org or www.poetryfoundation.org

(That's not an exhaustive list.)

It should go without saying that simply cutting and pasting other people's words won't do here; neither will minor rearrangements and strategically placed synonyms. You need to extract the raw ingredients and synthesize them into a fluid narrative of your own, inserting commentary, interpretation, and connective tissue as necessary. Append a “**Sources**” page to this section, with bibliographic citations in standard MLA format. Include *all* of your sources here, including any

and all that you quote or paraphrase in your sketch. (I'm counting on you to attribute the latter such sources appropriately, using the standard MLA parenthetical method of citation.)

The remainder of your by-the-numbers research paper will consist of an **annotated bibliography** in 3 (or 4) sections. Track down the following:

- at least two good/worthwhile/oft-cited scholarly books, book chapters, or journal articles that discuss this writer and/or her work;
- at least two reference works, print or electronic, that contain entries for this writer; and
- at least two reputable electronic or audio-visual resources devoted in part or in full to this writer.

(If you have trouble filling your quota in any of these categories, you may substitute a substantial book review of one or more of the writer's works from a major West Indian, British, or American newspaper; a respected national magazine; or a literary or academic journal. I understand that there may well be some overlap between this bibliography and the "sources" page of your biographical sketch.)

Again, supply a citation, in standard MLA format, for each item in your bibliography. Then, below each citation, provide (in the form of a short, left-justified, block paragraph) an annotation that consists largely of description, seasoned with a little evaluation. That is: explain what the item is (if it's not evident from the title), what it does (or what it covers or claims or argues) and/or doesn't do, and why it's worth looking at. If you don't know what such an "annotation" might look like, there are plenty of reasonably good explanations and examples floating around out there on the web. Google "annotated bibliography."

If you are a prospective teacher, you might also consider including at least two good *teaching* resources of any type (print, audio-visual, new media), either on the writer him- or herself, or on a literary/cultural/geographical/historical topic germane to one of his/her most works. Your annotations of each of these items should justify your selection, indicating briefly how you might use it in the classroom, why it might be valuable, and what pedagogical goals it would serve.

Total length of this paper: about 10 pages, ± 2 .

Due: Thursday, October 15th at the start of class.