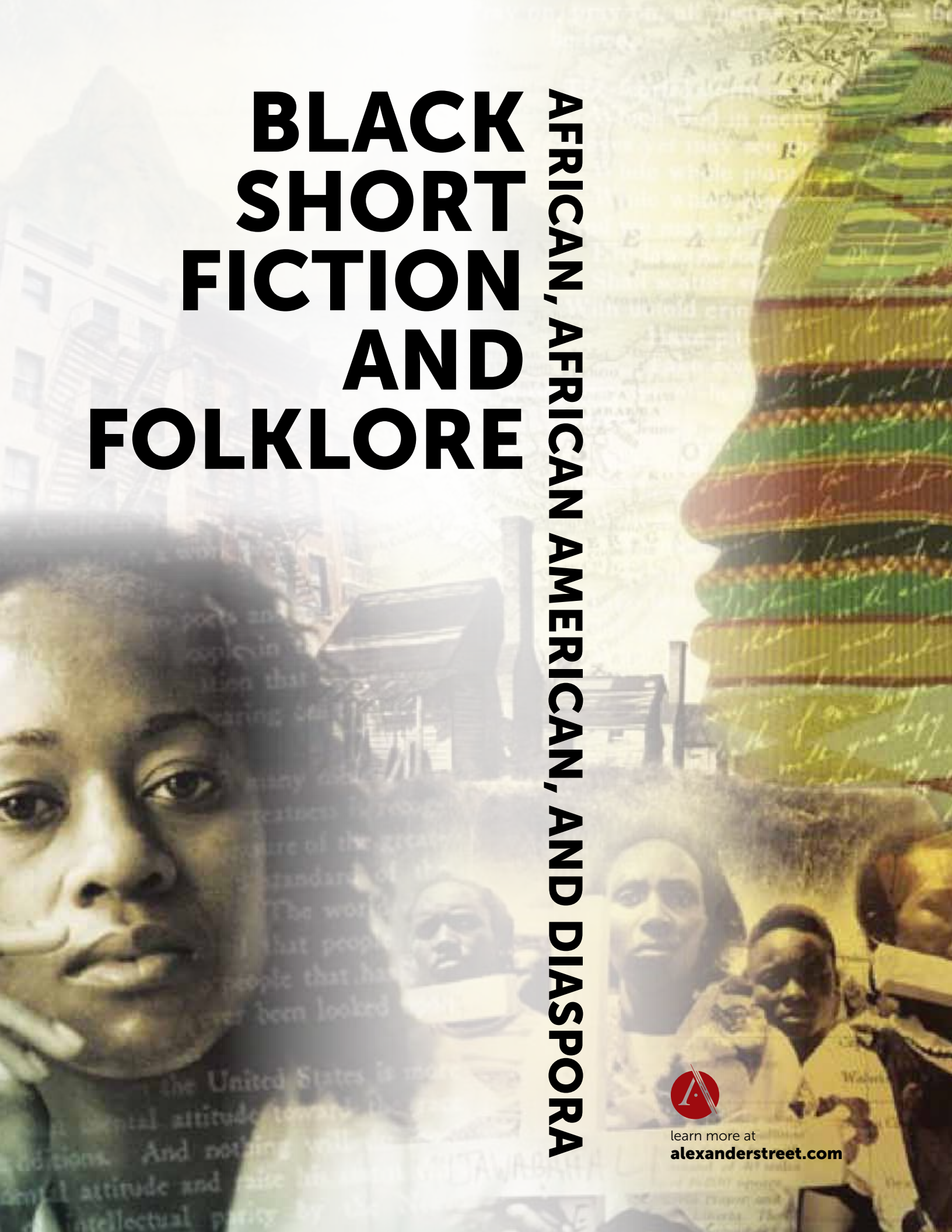


# BLACK SHORT FICTION AND FOLKLORE

AFRICAN, AFRICAN AMERICAN, AND DIASPORA



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# Black Short Fiction and Folklore

## African, African American, and Diaspora

*Black Short Fiction and Folklore* brings together 50,000 pages and an estimated 8,000 works of short fiction produced by writers from Africa and the African Diaspora from the earliest times to the present. The materials have been compiled from early literary magazines, archives, and the personal collections of the authors. Some 30 percent of the collection is fugitive or ephemeral, or has never been published before.

The project unifies an astounding variety of traditions ranging from early African oral traditions to today's hip-hop. It covers fables, parables, ballads, folk-tales, short story cycles, and novellas—all the writings included will have fewer than 10,000 words. The presentation of this material in a single, cohesive, searchable form together with extensive indexing—will enable scholars to study the writings in a wholly new way.

The collection will provide unparalleled avenues of research for students and scholars of literature at all levels. Users can trace the evolution of the genre from its beginnings through to the present, with a comprehensive resource. For instance, with one search, users can find numerous examples of literary devices that are native to black short fiction, such as trickster tales—a type of folktale in which animals exhibit human speech and behaviors.

The relevance of the collection extends well beyond literature:

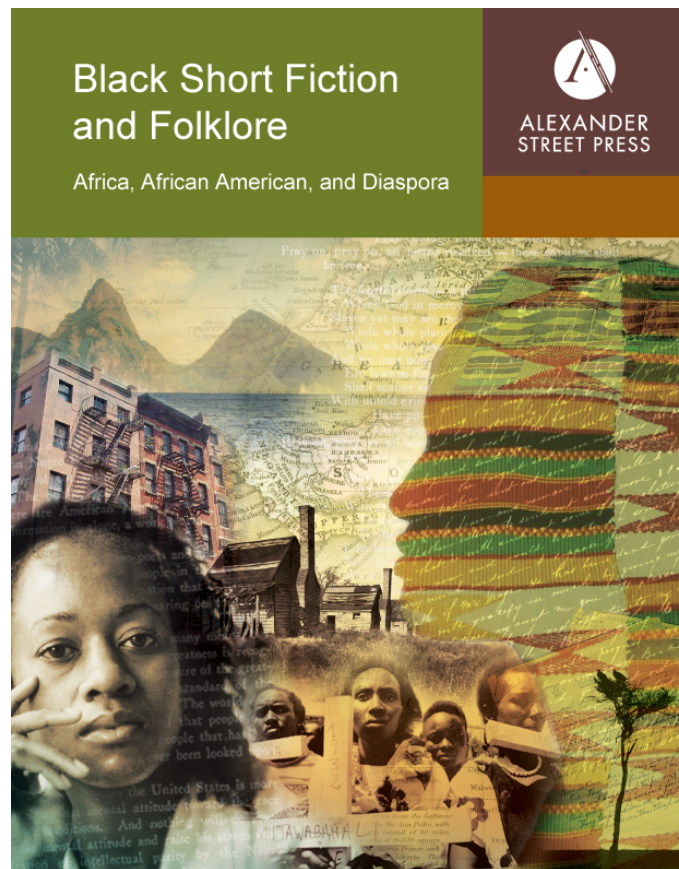
- Fables and folktales provide unique insights into a culture's history and memories. Social anthropologists and psychologists will find this collection to be rich in myth and societal customs. The extensive indexing even makes it possible to see how certain parables evolve over time and to compare New World fables with those told in Africa today.
- Ideas expressed here often are not found in mainstream publications; getting novels published through traditional publishing channels was often impossible for blacks. But through short stories, these writers could express themselves quickly and distribute their works effectively through literary journals and other alternative forms.
- Historians will find the collection to be rich in political discourse, social commentary, and polemic.

### NORTH AMERICAN COVERAGE

The North American coverage in the collection begins with Southern blacks such as William Wells Brown, Pauline Hopkins, Alice Dunbar-Nelson, and Frances W. Harper, and extends to cover Charles Waddell Chesnutt. Many of Chesnutt's stories incorporated characteristics of the American local color movement, and several were classified regionally as plantation literature.

*Through characterization, theme, and incident black writers of the South repudiated the romantic image of the plantation. Chesnutt's Uncle Julius, for instance, contradicted the white portrayal of the faithful black servant, epitomized by Page's Sam and Joel Chandler Harris's Uncle Remus. The idyllic portrait of plantation life created by white writers was in stark contrast to the image Chesnutt and other blacks showed of a system infested with greed, inhumanity, deception, and cruelty.*

– Encyclopedia of Southern Culture





From here, coverage moves into the Harlem Renaissance. Key authors targeted for this section include Claude McKay, Jean Toomer, James Weldon Johnson, Arna Bontemps, Zora Neale Hurston, Countee Cullen, Marita Bonner, Langston Hughes, Jessie Fauset, Rudolph Fisher, and Wallace Thurman.

For the period following the Harlem Renaissance, our target list includes Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison, James Baldwin, Amiri Baraka, Chester Himes, Alex Haley, and Ann Petry.

From the contemporary era, we aim to include Alice Walker, Toni Morrison, Rita Dove, James McPherson, Ernest J. Gaines, John Edgar Wideman, Nikki Giovanni, Alice Childress, Toni Cade Bambara, Gloria Naylor, Jamaica Kincaid, and Walter Mosley.

## **AFRICAN COVERAGE**

The database will include a rich array of materials from English-speaking Africa. The following authors are targeted for inclusion: Chinua Achebe, Ama Ata Aidoo, Sembene Ousmane David Maillu, Ben Okri, Bessie Head, Ken Saro-Wiwa, Richard Rive, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Amos Tutuola, Obi Egbuna, and Ike Chukwuemeka.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHIES AND ADVISORS**

Some of the sources consulted are listed below. Our academic advisory board includes Trudier Harris, Professor of English at the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill; F. Abiola Irele, Visiting Professor of Afro-American Studies and of Romance Languages and Literatures at Harvard University; and Peter Kargbo, Librarian for Africana Studies at New York University's Bobst Library.

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## **PUBLICATION DETAILS**

*Black Short Fiction and Folklore* is available on the Web, either through annual subscription or one-time purchase of perpetual rights. In addition to the full text of 8,000 works, it contains a rich archive of related ephemera, including sample readings by authors. *Black Short Fiction and Folklore* uses the same software and interface as Alexander Street's *Black Drama*, the award-winning database of plays by African and African Diaspora writers.

Other titles in *Alexander Street Literature* include *South and Southeast Asian Literature*; *Black Women Writers*; *Caribbean Literature*; *Latin American Women Writers*; *Latino Literature*; *Scottish Women Poets of the Romantic Period*; and others. All content is cross-searchable through a unified search tool. For more information contact [sales@alexanderstreet.com](mailto:sales@alexanderstreet.com) or visit <http://alexanderstreet.com>.

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