Literary **Lab**

**Between Canon and Corpus:
Six Perspectives on 20th-Century Novels**

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Pamphlets of the Stanford Literary **Lab**

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1. Dilemmas of Selection

Of the many, many thousands of novels and stories published in English in the 20th century, which group of several hundred would represent the most reasonable, interesting, and useful subset of the whole?

This was the difficult question posed to researchers in the Stanford Literary Lab when they decided to move ahead with plans to create a fully digitized corpus of 20th-century fiction. Lacking any such resource, scholars here and elsewhere had been largely unable to engage in the kinds of large-scale quantitative analyses of literary historical data routinely performed on the texts of earlier periods, which have depended on the ready availability of corpora such as the Chadwyck-Healey database of Nineteenth-Century Fiction, Gale's Eighteenth Century Collections Online database, and the like. Using this data, the critic-researchers of the Lab had, for instance, been able to make new observations and analyses of the historical nature of novelistic genres, of large-scale shifts in novelistic language over the course of the 19th century, and the nature of style at the level of the sentence.[1] Given how often these results had been represented graphically as occurring along a historical time-line, one naturally wondered, moving the eye from left to right: what happens next? What happens to these trends in the 20th—and for that matter 21st—centuries? Do novelistic genres operate the same way in the 20th century as they did in the 19th? Does the use of words connoting

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1 See, for example, Allison, Sarah, Heuser, Ryan et al. *Quantitative Formalism: an Experiment,* 2011; Heuser, Ryan and Le-Khac, Long. *A Quantative Literary History of 2,958 Nineteenth-Century British Novels: The Semantic Cohort Method,* 2012; Allison, Sarah, Gemma, Marissa, et al. *Style at the Scale of the Sentence,* 2013.

abstract values continue to decline? Do sentences get more or less complex? And, for that matter, what entirely new literary historical phenomena might become visible in the data of more recent literary history? And there one's curiosity perforce remained in suspension, unsatisfied. Although a great deal of the literature of the 20th century has long existed in digital form on the servers of publishing houses, that data has largely not been made available for the use of scholars.

But supposing the doors to the storeroom of all of the novels and stories written in English in the 20th century were opened to inspection and selection, which of them would one even choose? After all, the number of books published in English grows exponentially. According to publishers' own data, in the last forty years alone the number of unique fictional texts published per year in English worldwide has grown from 7,948 to 278,985 (**Figure 1**).

A 20th-century corpus would therefore be selected from a number of books potentially orders of magnitude greater than one built for the 18th or even 19th century, making any aspiration we might have had toward the rigorous statistical representativeness of the new corpus unrealistic. Because the labor and expenses involved in assembling a reliable database of digitized texts are considerable, it was decided that that number would initially have to be restricted to roughly 350, the same size as some of the other high quality or reliably "clean" corpora already in use by the Lab.

No doubt the most efficient path forward would have been for one Lab member, ideally a scholar of 20th-century literature, to select the requisite number of texts from an extensive, if by no means exhaustive, private collection of paperbacks amassed over many years as a student, teacher, scholar and general reader. An idiosyncratically "curated" corpus of this sort might have had some charm, in particular to the selector, as a modest monument to a personal (but also, of course, highly class- and otherwise-inflected) history of a relation to
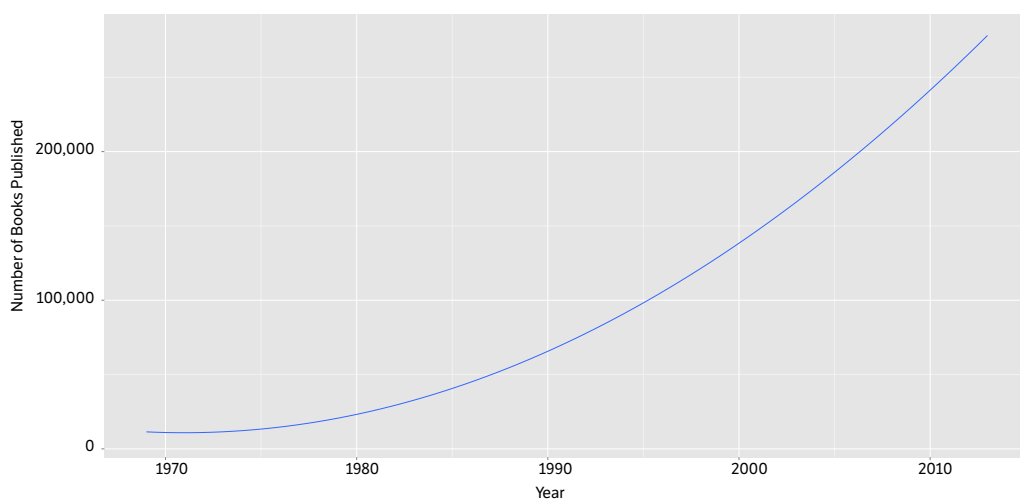

Figure 1: Number of individually titled English language books classified as single works of fiction published per year from 1969 to 2014. Information derived from Bowker's *Books in Print* database.

the field. What books had this reader acquired, whether for pleasure or necessity or some combination of both? What subset of what had been acquired should now be chosen as the basis of collective research? Alas, even given the many technical compromises and approximations one must typically accept in order to get on with digital humanities projects, this path forward seemed unwise. Although it may be the case that *any* process of selection from a much larger set of texts can justly be accused of "selection bias" of some kind—indeed, the very category of "20th-century fiction in English" is already replete with implicit assumptions about meaningfulness of temporal, generic and linguistic boundaries—this one seemed unnecessarily limited by individual whim.

Surely a better, more "scientific" principle of selection could be found, one more in keeping with the Lab's collaborative spirit? Indeed, tacking dramatically in the opposite direction, perhaps we should have simply made a random selection from the practical infinity of 20th-century fictional narrative? That would have satisfied the desire to achieve a reasonable standard of objectivity in the making of the corpus, and been responsive to a longstanding aspiration in the Lab to observe the literary field comprehensively in its "natural" state, prior to the merciless culling over time that reduces that field to a small and relatively well-kept garden of enduring monuments. But this approach would have presented a few difficulties of its own. First, what master list of all the novels and stories published in the 20th-century fiction in English would one be randomly selecting from? As it happens, to our knowledge no such list exists: even the data offered by 20th-century publishing companies becomes unreliable or absent altogether before 1969. But even supposing that data were available—or supposing a reasonable-seeming proxy could be found—what would one really have upon performing a random selection of only several hundred texts from many hundreds of thousands? Most likely something disappointing, perhaps even dispiriting. A corpus so constructed might suffer from a sense of *mere* arbitrariness, leaving out too many things—including most of the individual authors, certainly, and perhaps also whole genres and long phases of development—that scholars have come to care about.[2] At least at this early stage, the prospect of conducting research on a sampling of the 20th-century novel that would most likely not include any works by Joyce, Faulkner, Hemingway, Woolf, Ellison, Pynchon, Morrison . . . seemed less than satisfactory. Any claims made about the "20th-century novel in English" derived from such a corpus would be shadowed by doubts about their applicability to more exemplary works. A randomized selection of books might function as a viable *corpus,* then,

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2 In fact, taking advantage of so-called "expert knowledge" in the design of a corpus such as this is fully in keeping with the practices of Digital Humanities, whose statistical methods are implicitly Bayesian. In Bayesian statistics, the statistical model is informed by the analyst's prior knowledge about the "real" state of the world. That is, if we want to know something about 20th-century literature as it is understood and practiced by literary scholars, it makes sense to include information about the disciplinary configuration of 20th-century literature in the design of study. As most of the Lab studies have begun with a question (we want to know x about y), the prior assumptions about y, based on years on previous knowledge and study, have always informed the construction of the sample. In this way, designing a non-random, but still statistically rigorous sample of 20th-century novels and stories is a valid approach, assuming that the biases in our corpus accurately reflect the biased way that we want to study it.

but we found ourselves thirsting, after all—and ominously—for a body of data that would have at least some of the attributes of a *canon.*

Thus it was decided that a selection bias toward canonicity would be allowed, for the time being, to persist. The only question was: what agency should be allowed to say what counts as a canonical work? What sources could be trusted with that judgment? Setting out in what we hoped would be fresh, new directions for the study of 20th-century fiction, we found ourselves visited by the restless ghosts of the notorious Canon Wars of the 1980s and 90s, when the question of inclusion and exclusion from the college syllabus had been freighted with vast ideological implications, not least at Stanford.[3]

But perhaps those ghosts, too, could be gotten into the Lab's machine?

2. A Found Canon

Surely the best-known attempt to list the truly important novels of the 20th century was the one enacted (perpetrated?) by the Modern Library just as the century was coming to a close. Selected by the editorial board of that imprint—it is controlled by the Random House Publishing Group, which itself became a division of the privately held media corporation Bertelsmann in 1998—the Modern Library 100 Best Novels of the 20th Century arrived with considerable fanfare and not a little debate about its meaning.[4] According to a body comprised of nine white men (eight of them American-born, six of them professional historians, two of them novelists) and one white British woman novelist, all born between 1914 and 1941, the best novel of the century had already been published by 1922. It was James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922). It was followed on the list by F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925), Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* (1955), Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932), William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* (1929), Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* (1961), Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* (1940), D.H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* (1913), and John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939).

Already a "top-ten" list to quarrel with on many grounds, noted many. For starters, as a group, the authors of these novels presented a demographic cohort that was almost as homogenous as the Board that selected them, and the most recent of their works had been published

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3 On Stanford as a battlefield in the Canon or, more broadly, Culture Wars of the 1980s, see Herbert Lindenberger, "On the Sacrality of Reading Lists: The Western Culture Debate at Stanford University" http://www.pbs.org/shattering/lindenberger.html [accessed 10/11/14; credit for igniting the battle is often given to Allan Bloom's best-selling *The Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987) and E.D. Hirsch's *Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs to Know* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1987; Matt Reed takes note of the remarkable shift in the conservative position with respect to the Humanities since the 1980s in: https://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/confessions-community-college-dean/remember-canon-wars [accessed 10/11/14]. To our mind, the most incisive critique of the many questionable assumptions built into the Canon Wars is to be found in John Guillory, "Canonical and Noncanonical: The Current Debate" in his *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation* (Chicago: U Chicago P, 1993) pp. 3-84.

4 The full Modern Library list is posted at http://www.modernlibrary.com/top-100/100-best-novels/ [accessed 10/11/2014]. It and the other lists we used in the construction of the corpus are included below as an Appendix.

in 1961. The appearance of eccentricity only increased on the way down the list, where, for instance, Max Beerbohm's *Zuleika Dobson* (1911), Arnold Bennett's *The Old Wives' Tale* (1908) and Henry Green's *Loving* (1945) were judged the 59th, 87th, and 89th best novels of the 20th century, respectively, beating out Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960), Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973), Marilynne Robinson's *Housekeeping* (1980), Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1985), and Don DeLillo's *Underworld* (1997), which don't appear on the list at all.

Was this, nonetheless, a good place to begin? While we saw no particular reason to pay inordinate respect to the tastes of the Modern Library editorial board, the "found" nature of the list seemed a possible advantage. While this list embodies the biases of a small group of persons—on average, an award-winning white male historian born in 1927—at least those persons were not the ones who would be working with this data. What's more, the controversy surrounding their efforts was deemed to be of some value, stripping away any pretense that the construction of the corpus-as-canon could be an innocent one. In fact, the actions of the Board seemed already to concede this: from the beginning, their list would be accompanied by another list, the so-called "Reader's List," selected by means of an unrestricted online voting system.[5] Compiled in this way, this alternative list trades the questionable exclusivity of the Board for the questionable inclusivity of the public forum, opening itself not only to the enthusiasms of the reading masses but also to its organized manipulation by author-oriented interest groups. Although there was some overlap between the two, the Reader's List looked quite different from that of the Board. In the two top slots one finds Ayn Rand's *Atlas Shrugged* (1957) and *The Fountainhead* (1943), followed by L Ron Hubbard's *Battlefield Earth* (1982), J.R.R. Tolkein's *Lord of the Rings* (1942), Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960), George Orwell's *1984* (1949), and several more works by Rand and Hubbard. All of them are deemed superior to Joyce's *Ulysses*, which enters this list at #11. As data, this list was in its own way as compromised as the list compiled by the Board, and if the goal of our project had remained to produce a "neutrally" assembled corpus this would have been a serious problem. Fortunately, that was no longer the goal.

Should we have been troubled by the sheer absurdity of this list, by the evidence that its process of selection was gamed in favor of a few authors with cult followings? Perhaps if we had been acting as judges of literary quality, we would and should have been deeply troubled by the triumph of Ayn Rand and L. Ron Hubbard over their 20th-century peers. Instead, standing at a point of analytical remove from the question of the actual quality (or crappiness) of these works, these enthusiasms could simply be taken as data in their own right. Although the Reader's List seemed, to say the least, no more innocently authoritative than the one constructed by the Board, it wore its high interest as a document in the social history of reading on its face, pointing, even as it retained the form of a ranked judgment of esteem, to wide fractures in the respective tastes of lay and scholarly audiences for fiction. More, it suggested the seed of the method by which the Stanford Corpus of 20th-Century Fic-

5 See http://www.modernlibrary.com/top-100/100-best-novels/ [accessed 10/11/2014].

tion in English would in fact be constructed: why not take both lists and superimpose them one upon the other? Even allowing for overlaps, the master list so compiled, at 169 texts, would be substantially larger than the 100 works appearing on each, but it would crucially remain (via tagging and cross-referencing) decomposable into its constituent parts. These parts could now be systematically compared and analyzed as indexes of the social destiny of different kinds of text. The messy process of constructing a 20th-century corpus needn't be submerged beneath the smooth surface of a technical interface, and might generate interesting research questions in and of itself.

One immediate observation, not even requiring a spreadsheet to see it, was that the Reader's List seemed far more various in cultural level (as traditionally recognized) than its counterpart. As one might expect from its populist origins, the Reader's List contains many more works of genre fiction—e.g. Frank Herbert's SF epic *Dune* (1965) at #14, Jack Schaefer's western *Shane* (1949) at #26, Tom Clancy's military thriller *Hunt for Red October* (1984) at #81, and *eight* works by the relatively obscure (to most of us) Canadian fantasist Charles de Lint, whose fan base appears to have been highly active on his behalf. But it *also* includes several unambiguously highbrow literary classics. Not only *Ulysses*, but Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973) at #21, William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* (1929) at #33, Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952) at #69 and Flan O'Brien's *At Swim-Two-Birds* (1951) at #76. By contrast, the Board's List extends outward from obviously consecrated (and widely taught) classics into a domain it is tempting to call middlebrow—e.g. James Jones's *From Here to Eternity* (1951) at #62, Elizabeth Bowen's *The Death of the Heart* (1938) at #84, and Booth Tarkington's *The Magnificent Ambersons* (1918) at #100. It only makes room for two works readily identifiable as genre fiction, Dashiell Hammett's *The Maltese Falcon* (1930) at #56, and James M. Cain's *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (1934) at #98. It includes no works of science fiction or fantasy, but with one major exception, the genre of dystopian political allegory represented by Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932), Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* (1940), Orwell's *1984* (1949), Anthony Burgess's *A Clockwork Orange* (1962) and even, at a stretch, Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1968).

Thus, before even beginning the hard work of turning these texts into fine-grained packets of data—such that one might, for instance, begin to compare the kinds of sentences and other grammatical structures, vocabularies, topics, etc. likely to appear in one list and not the other—the task of constructing our corpus had bequeathed some interesting research questions of a more or less traditional historicist nature. For instance, *what about* that attraction to political allegory on the Board's List? Is this, say, an epiphenomenon of the machinations of the Cold War education system? Is this what you get when you ask historians to judge fiction?

But why stop with just these two lists? Why not conceive the corpus as modular and in principle perpetually open to further additions/iterations? It would be a simple task for scholars working with this data to note which iteration of the corpus they are working with: whatever

inconvenience might arise from the absence of a "definitive" 20th-Century Corpus would, it was decided, be more than outweighed by the potential benefits of a database conceived as an open and evolving system. Such a system would not only allow for additions and subtractions based on the nature of a given study, but would also, for the first time, openly acknowledge the biases attendant to the construction of any corpus.

Together, the Board's and the Reader's lists comprise 169 total unique works, but the Lab had the resources to digitize over twice that number, and (in principle) the larger the corpus the better (and the more sources for the data, the more broadly representative the entire corpus becomes). Having happened upon the principle of super-imposition and modularity in the constitution of the corpus, it seemed clear that any new layer, any new list of 100 that was conceived according to similar principles, might add both to the richness of the whole and to the social-relational analyzability of its components. In a modest way, this seems to have been the thinking of the Modern Library itself, which soon added a third list to its portfolio, the so-called Radcliffe's Rival 100 Best Novels List, compiled by participants in the Radcliffe Publishing Course (a now-renamed and relocated summer institute meant to prepare young people for jobs in that industry).[6] For this group—it is tempting to position them between the Board and the Readers—*The Great Gatsby* comes out on top, followed by J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951), Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*, Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (1982), with *Ulysses* coming in at #6.

A notably more American-centric list than the Board's, at least near the top, but also (by our lights) a less eccentric one, with few or no head-scratchers on the order of Beerbohm's *Zuleika Dobson* (although Wolfe's *Bonfire of the Vanities* [1987], at #65, is surely beginning to seem a dated choice). Perhaps reflecting the relative youth of its judges, the Radcliffe List extends outward from its mainstream canonical heart in the direction of the "children's classic," e.g. E.B. White's *Charlotte's Web* (1952) at #13, A.A. Milne's *Winnie-the-Pooh* (1926) at #22, L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful World of Oz* (1900) at #47 and Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows* (1908) at #90. Adding this list to the mix, the Corpus had grown to 208 total works.

A bit more sniffing around produced two more readily available lists, and increased the "spread" of cultural level in the corpus as a whole: first was scholar Larry McCaffery's competing list of great novels in English of the 20th century, published in the *American Book Review,* which focuses more intently (and polemically) on works of obviously "experimental" form.[7] For McCaffery, a professor of English and Comparative Literature at San Diego State University, Nabokov's *Pale Fire* (1962) takes the top slot, while *Ulysses* falls to #2, followed by works by Pynchon, Robert Coover, Faulkner, Samuel Beckett, Gertrude Stein and William Burroughs. With this list, we struck an immediate blow on behalf of scholars of literature,

6 Available at http://www.modernlibrary.com/top-100/radcliffes-rival-100-best-novels-list/ [accessed 10/11/2014]

7 See Larry McCaffery, "The 20th Century's Greatest Hits: 100 English Language Books of Fiction" *American Book Review* September/October 1999 (20: 6) accessed 10/11/2014 at http://litline.org/ABR/Issues/Volume20/Issue6/abr100.html. Notably, and in distinction from our other lists, McCaffery's list briefly justifies each of his choices.

who had yet to be consulted in any way about the objects of their expertise. Second was a list of the best-selling works of each year of the 20th century according to *Publisher's Weekly*. The idea here—as with all of these lists—was to reach for low-hanging fruit, which in this case meant taking the opportunity to include a more "objective" (while still no doubt flawed) measure of popular esteem—here crudely measured in sales—than that available from the Reader's List.

Neither of these additions came without conceptual baggage. In the first case, although McCaffery is doubtless an eminent scholar of 20th-century experimental fiction, the corpus would now be factoring in the opinions of a single person. In the second, we would be creating an arguably artificial temporal spread by listing the best-selling work of *each year* rather than the top 100 selling books of the century as a whole. While a case could be made for the latter approach, an increasing number of readers would bias this list to the last decades of the century: in fact, 6 of the top 20 bestselling books of the century were written after 1975, while 15 were published after 1950.[8] This is the inverse of the problem of "accumulated esteem" arguably bedeviling the Board's List, which contains very few works of then recent— 1980s or 90s—vintage. Instead, the year-by-year bestseller reveals a running indicator of popularity throughout the century, although, because many books were the top selling book for sequential years (for example Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind* [1936]), this list yielded less than 100 books.[9] In the case of both of these new components, having internalized the modular, and in principle open-ended and accretive, nature of the corpus, the guiding principle was to work with what was readily found, confident that both the transparency of its construction and the decomposability of its components would safeguard against scholars being misled by the eccentricities of any one list.

By superimposing these five lists, the corpus now numbered 352 unique works, and the researchers at the Lab were ready to engage in some preliminary analyses leading to some interesting findings. With all of its flaws, and in the parlance of the software iteration, it would be the 20th-Century Corpus 1.0:

1. Modern Library Board's List of 100 Best Novels of the 20th Century

2. Modern Library Reader's List of 100 Best Novels of the 20th Century

3. Radcliffe's Rival List of the 100 Best Novels of the 20th Century

4. Larry McCaffery's List of the 100 Best Novels of the 20th Century.

5. The yearly best-selling works of the 20th Century.

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8 Statistics compiled from Wikipedia's "List of Best-selling Books", http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_best-selling_books [accessed Nov 11, 2014]

9 As *Publishers Weekly* statistics only began in 1913, this is was necessarily truncated on the early end as well.

3. Preliminary Analyses

Although, as we have argued, the strength of this combined corpus lies in its modularity, each list having been assembled according to a different set of criteria for "the best 20th-century fiction," the guiding logic of the lists remains mostly consistent, making these differences meaningfully comparable. A different dimension of this consistency becomes visible in the considerable number of works that the lists share with each other. This overlap represents not only accidental points of intersection between the lists, but also the extent to which each list is in agreement with the others about which novels were the century's best.

Of the five lists, the Modern Library Board's List and the Radcliffe List are the most "embedded" into the corpus as a whole and the most intertwined with each other: each of them shares 63 of their 100 works with at least one other list, including 31 works shared between them. The Modern Library Reader's List is close behind, with 52 works shared between it and rest of the corpus. That the significant cross-penetration of these three lists has a lot to do with the accumulated artistic prestige of many of the works they contain seems obvious, but gives us something to chew on in the case of the Reader's List in particular. The Reader's List is not simply a list of "popular" works. Its inclusion of a novel like *Ulysses* suggests its "seriousness"—that is, the willingness of many lay readers to recognize the value of some notoriously difficult masterpieces of the 20th century even as they rate certain works of genre fiction as worthy of standing alongside them.[10] Seeing the likes of Ayn Rand and L. Ron Hubbard—or even a less controversially beloved writer like JRR Tolkien—next to a works of high art disturbs our usual sense of categorical distinctions of cultural value, and points to the broader truth that the criteria by which one judges a literary work as great might be various even in the mind of a single individual, let alone a larger group.

Given McCaffery's explicit intent to counter the "ludicrousness" of the Modern Library Board's list, which he found to be "way out of touch with the nature and significance of 20th-century fiction," it is not surprising that his list shares only 41 titles with the others, the real surprise perhaps being that it shares so many.[11] It is the *Publishers Weekly* list, however, that is clearly the outlier. Of its 94 unique titles, it shares only 8 with the other lists, including Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind*, Philip Roth's *Portnoy's Complaint* (1969) and, interestingly, Stephen King's *It* (1986), which it shares with the Reader's List.

The question of why the *Publishers Weekly* list is so different is an important one. First and foremost, and as opposed to the more heterogeneous Reader's List, it seems to confirm the systematic differentiation, if not contradiction, between artistic and commercial value that some have argued was crucial to the emergence of the novel genre as a form capable, on oc-

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10 Of course, it is interesting to speculate on the different kinds of readers—or even "factions" thereof—who contributed to the Reader's List. It may be that while some of these readers mostly replicated the judgments of value found in and around the school and university, others took a more pointedly populist and insurrectionary approach to the task of ranking. The Reader's List we have does not conserve these possible striations of sensibility and intent.

11 McCaffery's opinion of the original Modern Library List is recorded at http://spinelessbooks.com/mccaffery/100/index.html [accessed 10/11/14].

casion, of producing works of "fine art." This was one manifestation of what Pierre Bourdieu, most prominently, has discussed as a growing tension between the so-called autonomous and heteronomous poles of artistic production in the 19th century.[12] It would also appear to speak to the relative difficulty and even unpleasantness of canonical literature, which, outside the academic book market, has the effect of limiting its sales.

Yet the *Publishers Weekly* list is different in one very important additional way: unlike the four other lists, which were consciously created as "best of" lists by a defined group of readers, the "popular" list is merely a record of sales data, an impersonal aggregate of economic activity. This helps to explain why it shares so few works with the other lists, and points to an instructive irony in the dynamic unfolding of literary history: in our subsequent efforts to actually purchase all of the texts that will appear in the Corpus, the works on the *Publishers Weekly* best-sellers list have proven by far the most difficult to find. This creates difficulties in one sense, but an opportunity in another: in our work with these corpus modules, the *Publishers Weekly* list gives us a kind of control sample, equally but *differently* biased in its selection criteria. If, in other words, we see resonances between this list and the others, we can be more confident that it is a real-world phenomenon in 20th-century literature in general and not just an artifact of the arbitrary list-making process. On the other hand, this list also gives us leverage against what we might call the aspirational dimension of judgments of literary worth: whatever people might say or think, these are the kinds of novels they *actually* like to read, or at least to buy.

The relationships between these lists, including their relative similarities and their overlap, can be seen at a glance if we visualize the members of the corpus as a network (**Figure 2**).

In this representation of the corpus, each box is a single text and each text is connected to all of the lists (represented by the central, labeled, boxes in each color group) to which it belongs.

Based on this visualization, the position of each list vis-a-vis the others indicates how similar it is to any other list (effectively, how many works are shared between them and how many they have in common with all of the other lists). The Modern Library Board's List and the Radcliffe List are placed next to each other (as they share the most books), while the Modern Library Reader's List is on the opposite side: still close, but distinctly different. McCaffery's list and the *Publishers Weekly* list are at the two poles of the network, representing their greater degree of distance from the rest, but while McCaffery's list is still relatively close in the northwest, the *Publishers Weekly* list is very far away in the southeast, demonstrating again how little it is like the other components of the corpus.

Interestingly, on a text-by-text basis, this network also lets us explore the relationship between individual texts and the lists that they belong to. In the center of the cluster of the four

12 See, for instance, Pierre Bourdieu, trans. Susan Emanuel, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1996). The American side of the story of the novel's upward mobility is analyzed in Mark McGurl, *The Novel Art: Elevations of American Fiction after Henry James* (Princeton UP, 2001).
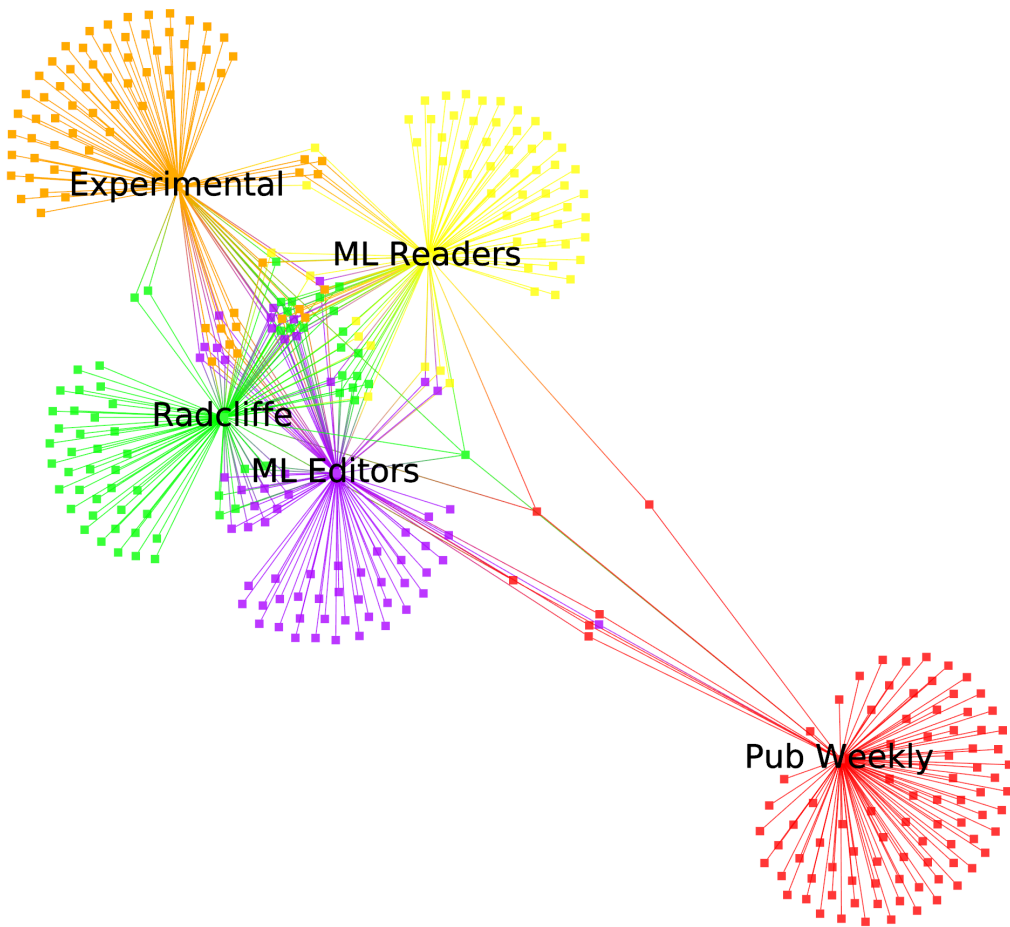
Figure 2: Force-directed network of texts included in the five original lists. Each text is represented by a colored node, the edges represent the connections between individual texts and the lists to which they belong: every text node is linked to one or more list nodes. The colors indicate the list membership: purple is the Modern Library Board's list, yellow is the Modern Library Reader's list, green is the Radcliffe List, orange is McCaffery's experimental fiction list and red is the *Publishers Weekly* list. The color of a node that was found on more than one list was determined by the highest ranked position of that node on any of the lists of which it was a member. Hence a work such as *Ulysses* that appeared as #1 on the Modern Library Editors list and #11 on the Modern Library Readers' list would be colored purple to reflect its higher ranked position on the Editor's list.

most similar lists lies a collection of 15 works that belong to all four. These include the usual suspects, such as *Ulysses*, *The Great Gatsby* and *The Catcher in the Rye*, but also some mild surprises (at least to us), including Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* and Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* (1957). If we take these four lists as measures of canonical prestige, then these works are the *most* canonical, at least according to the logic of the lists we 'found.' (**Figure 3**).

There is one work, however, that appears on all five lists, displaced from this central cluster because it is also attached to the *Publishers Weekly* list and is therefore pulled, in the network, down, toward the southeast. This work, the most central work in our corpus, is none other than John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* (**Figure 4**).

Following the formula of prestige and popularity above, it seems to occupy a privileged position on both axes: the only book in our corpus that is both deeply respected as an important

Figure 3: Close-up of central node cluster: all nodes belong to all of the lists except for the *Publishers Weekly* list.
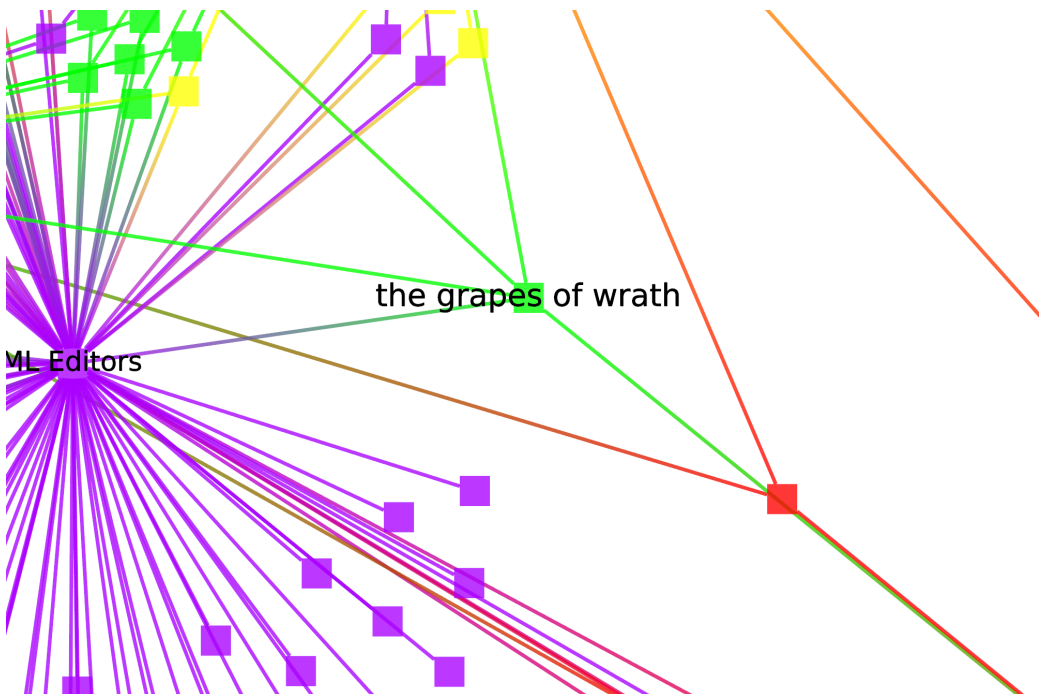
Figure 4: Detail of force-directed network showing central position and neighborhood of Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* (in green).

critical, and to some degree experimental, work and popular (and perhaps approachable) enough to be a number one bestseller. Its connectivity demonstrates the ultimate compatibility of our combined corpora and, we think, the power of the method that we've employed.

Yet a closer look at the individual titles in our corpus reveals some troubling, if unsurprising, general trends. Both the gender and ethnic breakdown of the lists reflects the gender and ethnic imbalances that are endemic to both canonical and popular literature. For instance, of the 352 works in our corpus, only 55 (15 percent) are by female authors (**Figure 5**).

Similarly, while there are sixteen distinct self-reported ethnicities and/or ancestries represented in our corpus, most of these are variations on white ethnicities, including British, European American, European Canadian, German, Irish, German, Spanish and Irish. Non-white authors, including those of African, Indian, Asian or Latino descent are only represented by 17 books in our corpus—a mere 5% (**Figure 6**).

Cumulative 20th-Century Corpus

Gender
Female: 55
Male: 297

Modern Library Editors List

Gender
Female: 9
Male: 91

McCaffery Experimental Fiction List

Gender
Female: 12
Male: 87

Publishers Weekly Bestsellers

Gender
Female: 15
Male: 79
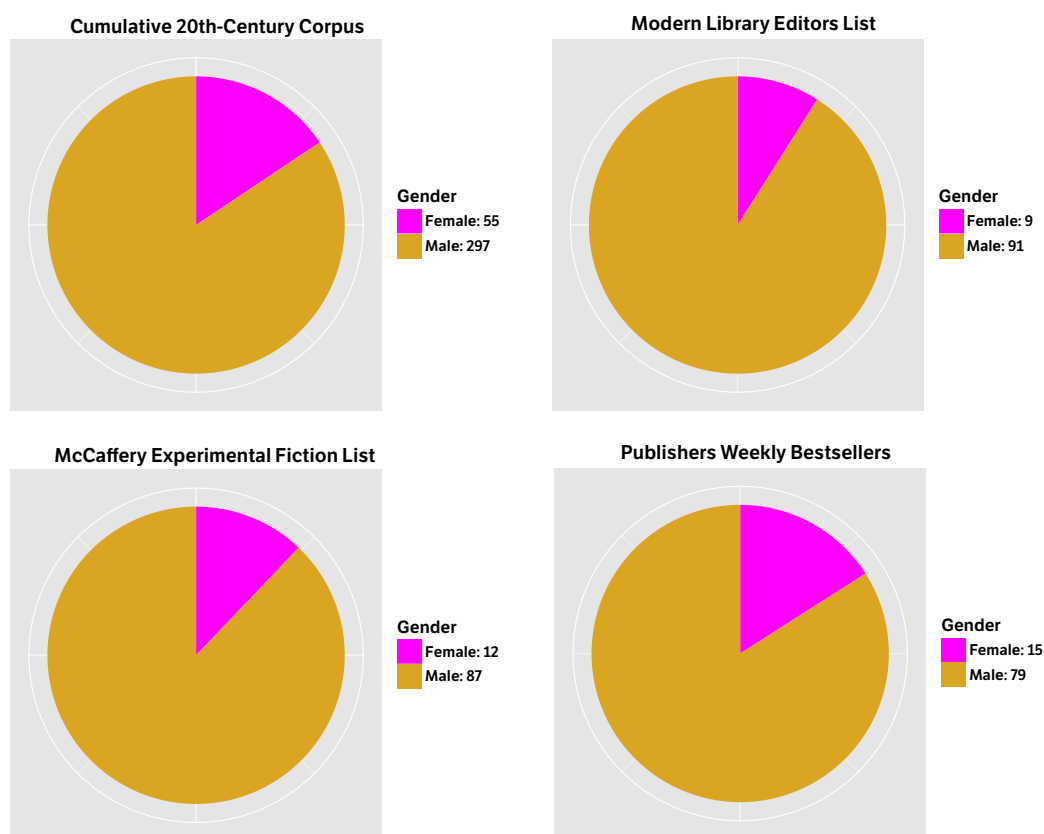
Figure 5: Gender proportions of original corpus list, showing the percentage of male and female authors in the cumulative set of texts in all five lists, the Modern Library Editor's list, McCaffery's Experimental Fiction list and the *Publishers Weekly* Bestseller list.

Cumulative 20th-Century Corpus

Modern Library Editors List

Ethnicity
NonWhite: 17
White: 335

Ethnicity
NonWhite: 6
White: 94

McCaffery Experimental Fiction List

Ethnicity
NonWhite: 8
White: 91
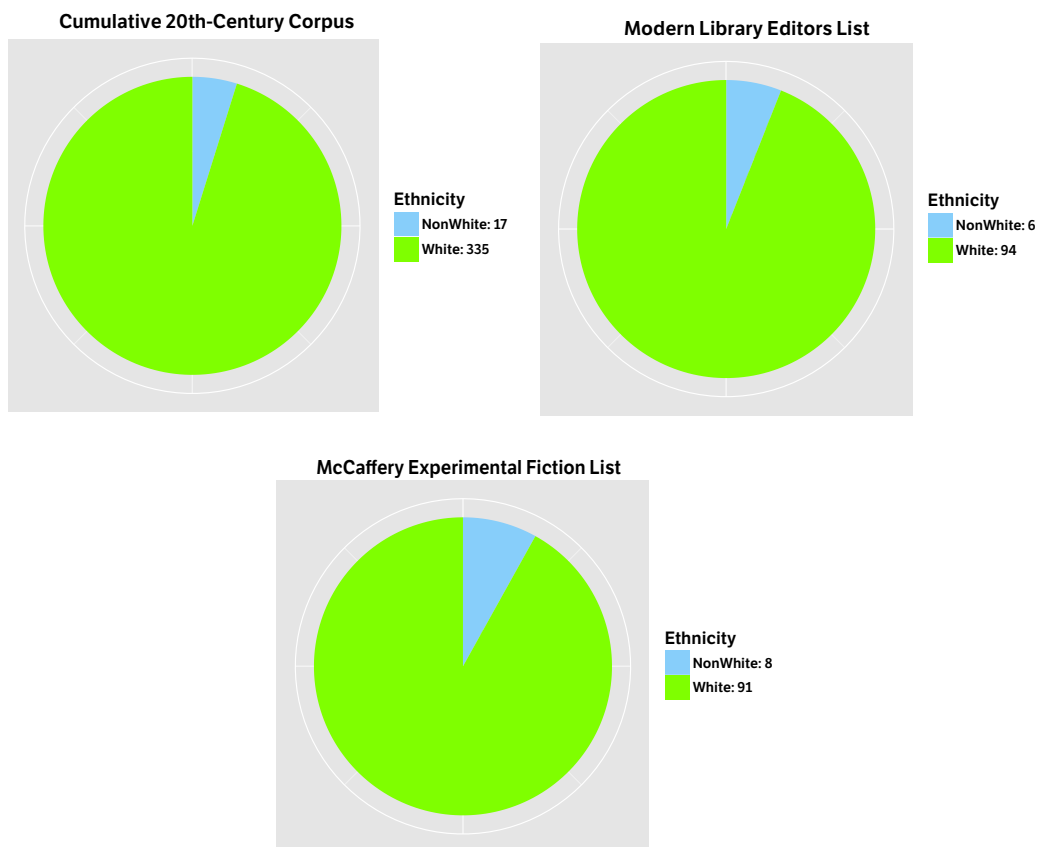
Figure 6: Ethnicity proportions of original corpus lists; showing the raw numbers of self-identified white and non-white authors in the cumulative set of texts in all five lists, the Modern Library Editor's list, and McCaffery's Experimental Fiction list. The disparities highlighted here are distributed throughout each of our lists, albeit somewhat unequally. The Modern Library Board's list, the most canonical of our samples, contains only 9 female authors and 6 authors of non-white descent. More surprising, perhaps, given its self-consciously insurgent quality, is the demographic homogeneity in McCaffery's experimental fiction list: he includes only 12 female authors and 8 non-white authors. That is, his list is less representative of female authorship than our corpus as a whole (12 vs. 15 percent) and its representation of non-white authors is barely larger (8 vs. 5 percent).

4. Reflections of Inequality

Ingesting what was called, above, the low-hanging fruit of evidence of literary esteem, the 20th-Century Corpus 1.0 was fated to reflect the various social inequalities embedded in its components. Whatever progressive critical value it might have would only come as it were after the fact, in testifying to, and indeed putting numbers on those inequalities and differences.

On May 6th, 2013, when some of the processes and results above were presented in a general meeting of the Literary Lab, Ramon Saldívar and Paula Moya asked: *what about these*

inequalities, in particular the stark disparities of gender and race in the numbers of authors contributing to the corpus? *Is it necessary to remain passive in relation to this evidence*? Would it make sense to add, for instance, a list of the top 100 works of African American literature to the corpus?

It seemed an intriguing idea, even if the answer was yes and no. Yes, in the sense that in principle any set of data might be interestingly added—or at least compared— to that of the Corpus, which after all "remembers" from whence its components are derived. That said, it seemed more consistent with the principle of its development to do something somewhat different than that, but in a kindred spirit. How about if we asked, for instance, specialists in ethnic or feminist literatures for a list not of the best works of ethnic fiction, but of the best works of 20th-century fiction *as such*? This would make their acts of judgment logically consistent with the presumed universalism that had guided the making of the extant lists, which are after all (at least in principle) not lists of the best novels by white men, but by anyone. In asking different bodies of expertise to judge this question, we could at least assume that works by (in this case) writers of color would be less likely to be left out for reasons of ignorance of their existence, or prejudicial disregard of their interest. This would also give us a logically equivalent basis for comparing any such list to our existing corpus as a whole.

To move from the "found" to the "made" (commissioned) list would obviously entail a large step, not least in the organizational labor it would require from us, and in the many individual expenditures of time and effort we would be asking of our judges. More abstractly, there seemed to be large implications for the status of the Corpus as evidence: it is one thing to decide that the machinations of author cults are cultural historical data one can work with, quite another to engage in one's own machinations! And yet, again, given the transparency of the enterprise, the potential payoff seemed larger than the risk. In theory, incorporating more and more sources of authority into the larger collective judgment of universal literary worth, one might achieve a sort of subtraction-by-addition of biases in aesthetic appraisal. To the extent that the whole resulting from such a multiplication of sources of judgment continued to look anything like our found lists, that could be taken as evidence of the objective historical inequalities of access to the means of literary production: literacy, schooling, social capital, free time, etc. This would do nothing for the presumably many mute, inglorious Miltons whose masterpieces never had a chance to come into being, but it would at least be a step in the right direction.

After some consultation with other members of the Lab, we arrived at an initial set of three authoritative bodies who would be asked to contribute new lists of the 100 Best Novels of the 20th Century.

1. The Editorial Board of the journal MELUS (Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States)
2. The Members of the Postcolonial Studies Association
3. The Editorial Board of the Feminist Press

If this project was successful, the new-to-the-corpus works appearing on the lists generated by these bodies could eventually be digitized and added to a later iteration of the Corpus. In September of 2013 a query letter was sent to 299 total individuals explaining our aspirations for the corpus and for their participation in its making. We asked each one to send us their list of 40 works (the estimated number needed from any one person to collectively generate a list of 100, given the average overlap among our existing "found" lists). It was not by any means necessary that all or even a majority of invitees respond positively to our request, but the more the merrier. We also asked invitees to let us know if they did not plan to participate.

As of November 2013 we had received 25 responses from members of the Postcolonial Studies Association (23 positive and 2 refusals), 4 responses from the MELUS editorial board (2 positive and 2 negative), and 4 from the editorial board of the Feminist Press (1 positive and 3 negative). Not a great response rate, but then it was an email out of the blue. Looking at the responses, we had the means to generate at least one new list for the corpus, to wit, the (unofficial) Postcolonial Studies Association List of 100 Best Novels in English of the 20th Century (**Table 1**).

Expanded to include the Postcolonial Studies list, the representation of the corpus as a differentiated network looks similar to the previous version, although the new list has displaced McCaffery's list as the opposing pole to the Publisher's Weekly list (**Figure 7**).

That is, the Postcolonial list has less in common with the popular list than any other list in our corpus, suggesting that it, as a list deliberately solicited from literary scholars whose field of study necessitates recovery work, stands at an even farther remove from the axis of popularity than those populated by works of more traditionally recognized prestige. Only one work is shared between the new Postcolonial Studies list and the *Publishers Weekly* list and it is,
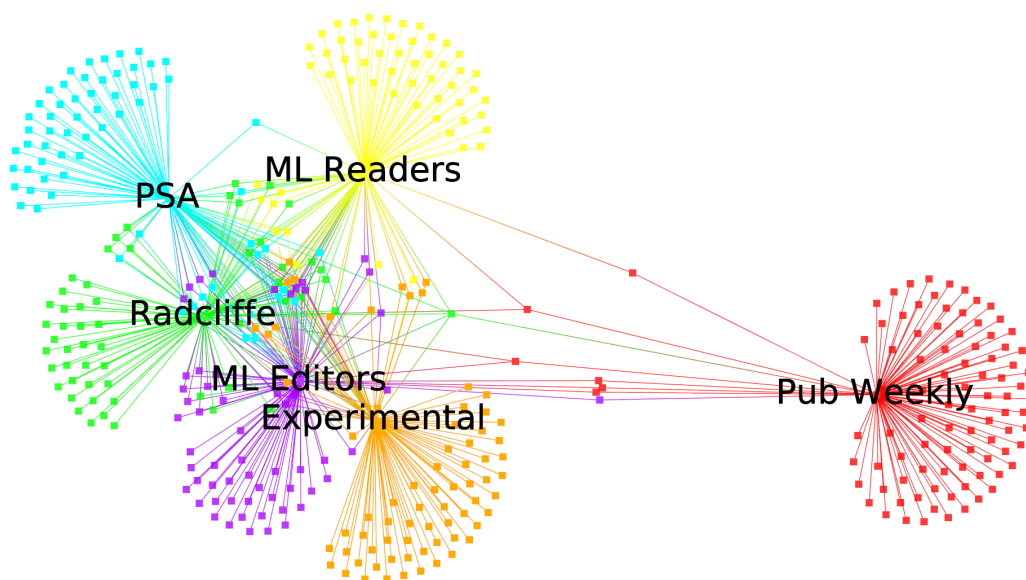

Figure 7: Revised force-directed network of texts including data from Postcolonial Studies Association list (in blue).

Table 1: Ranked list of texts compiled from responses from members of the Postcolonial Studies Association. As all of the contributors offered their own lists of the 40 best novels, we compiled the list of 100 by looking at those books that were most often listed by the participants. In this process, we ranked each book by how many individual lists it appears on and the rank it received on each of these lists. Each book, therefore, received a score based on these two metrics and, for our final list, we compiled the books with top 100 scores, in order.

Title	Author	Date	Rank	Title	Author	Date	Rank	Title	Author	Date	Rank
Things Fall Apart	Chinua Achebe	1958	1	A Grain Of Wheat	Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o	1967	35	A Farewell To Arms	Ernest Hemingway	1929	68
Midnight's Children	Salman Rushdie	1981	2	The Sound And The Fury	William Faulkner	1929	36	Brideshead Revisited	Evelyn Waugh	1945	69
1984	George Orwell	1949	3	Lord Of The Flies	William Golding	1954	37	The Blind Assassin	Margaret Atwood	2000	70
To The Lighthouse	Virginia Woolf	1927	4	White Teeth	Zadie Smith	2000	38	Crossing The River	Caryl Phillips	1993	71
Ulysses	James Joyce	1922	5	Their Eyes Were Watching God	Zora Neale Hurston	1937	39	The House Of Mirth	Edith Wharton	1905	72
A Passage To India	E. M. Forster	1924	6	Sophie's Choice	William Styron	1979	40	All About H Hatterr	G. V. Desani	1948	73
Heart Of Darkness	Joseph Conrad	1902	7	The French Lieutenant's Woman	John Fowles	1969	41	The Famished Road	Ben Okri	1991	74
Slaughterhouse Five	Kurt Vonnegut	1969	8	Darkness At Noon	Arthur Koestler	1940	42	My Antonia	Willa Cather	1918	75
Lolita	Vladimir Nabokov	1955	9	Invisible Man	Ralph Ellison	1952	43	The Good Soldier	Ford Madox Ford	1915	76
To Kill A Mockingbird	Harper Lee	1960	10	Possession	A. S. Byatt	1990	44	The Quiet American	Graham Greene	1955	77
The Great Gatsby	F. Scott Fitzgerald	1925	11	Oscar And Lucinda	Peter Carey	1988	45	Pale Fire	Vladimir Nabokov	1962	78
Mrs. Dalloway	Virginia Woolf	1925	12	Disgrace	J. M. Coetzee	1999	46	Money	Martin Amis	1984	79
The Lonely Londoners	Sam Selvon	1959	13	The Satanic Verses	Salman Rushdie	1988	47	Murphy	Samuel Beckett	1938	80
A Portrait Of The Artist As A Young Man	James Joyce	1916	14	One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest	Ken Kesey	1962	48	Portnoy's Complaint	Philip Roth	1969	81
A Clockwork Orange	Anthony Burgess	1962	15	The Life And Death Of Harriet Frean	May Sinclair	1922	49	Of Human Bondage	W. Somerset Maugham	1915	82
Wide Sargasso Sea	Jean Rhys	1966	16	The Secret Agent	Joseph Conrad	1907	50	Coolie	Mulk Raj Anand	1936	83
The Grapes Of Wrath	John Steinbeck	1939	17	Light In August	William Faulkner	1932	51	The Return Of The Soldier	Rebecca West	1918	84
The Remains Of The Day	Kazuo Ishiguro	1989	18	Catch-22	Joseph Heller	1961	52	One Hundred Years Of Solitude	Gabriel García Márquez	1967	85
A Suitable Boy	Vikram Seth	1993	19	Brick Lane	Monica Ali	2003	53	Age Of Iron	J. M. Coetzee	1990	86
Brave New World	Aldous Huxley	1932	20	Absalom, Absalom!	William Faulkner	1936	54	Cuckold	Kiran Nagarkar	1997	87
A Fine Balance	Rohinton Mistry	1995	21	Waiting For The Barbarians	J. M. Coetzee	1980	55	The Chess Players	Munshi Premchand	1924	88
The English Patient	Michael Ondaatje	1992	22	Baumgartner's Bombay	Anita Desai	1988	56	Good Morning Midnight	Jean Rhys	1939	89
Animal Farm	George Orwell	1945	23	Annie John	Jamaica Kincaid	1985	57	Untouchable	Mulk Raj Anand	1935	90
Beloved	Toni Morrison	1986	24	Never Let Me Go	Kazuo Ishiguro	2005	58	Vile Bodies	Evelyn Waugh	1930	91
The Golden Notebook	Doris Lessing	1962	25	For Whom The Bell Tolls	Ernest Hemingway	1940	59	On The Road	Jack Kerouac	1957	92
The Handmaid's Tale	Margaret Atwood	1985	26	The God Of Small Things	Arundhati Roy	1997	60	Kiss Of The Spider Woman	Manuel Puig	1976	93
Howards End	E. M. Forster	1910	27	The Map Of Love	Ahdaf Soueif	1999	61	Goodbye To Berlin	Christopher Isherwood	1939	94
Sons And Lovers	D. H. Lawrence	1913	28	The Buddha Of Suburbia	Hanif Kureishi	1990	62	The Magus	John Fowles	1966	95
A House For Mr Biswas	V. S. Naipaul	1961	29	Do Androids Dream Of Electric Sheep	Philip K. Dick	1982	63	Nervous Conditions	Tsitsi Dangarembga	1988	96
Of Mice And Men	John Steinbeck	1937	30	The Siege Of Krishnapur	J. G. Farrell	1973	64	The Palace Of The Peacock	Wilson Harris	1960	97
Women In Love	D. H. Lawrence	1921	31	Foe	J. M. Coetzee	1986	65	Rebecca	Daphne Du Maurier	1938	98
Life And Times Of Michael K	J. M. Coetzee	1983	32	The Catcher In The Rye	J. D. Salinger	1951	66	The Autobiography Of My Mother	Jamaica Kincaid	1996	99
The Color Purple	Alice Walker	1982	33	Justine	Lawrence Durell	1957	67	Cat's Eye	Margaret Atwood	1988	100
The Bone People	Keri Hulme	1985	34								

again, *The Grapes of Wrath*, making it the only text shared among all six groups. Clearly, it occupies a unique place within the matrix of 20th-century fiction and its placement in our corpus may warrant further study.

With two notable exceptions, this new list, compiled as it was by scholars of literature, resembles those from our initial corpus compiled by cultural professionals or pre-professionals, particularly the Modern Library Board's List and the Radcliffe List. 52 out of the 100 titles on the Postcolonial Studies Association list are shared with other lists in the corpus, speaking to, if anything, and contrary to the fearful fulminations of conservatives in the Canon Wars, a broad consensus among professional readers as to the "best" texts. One sees the clear presence of a more traditional canon even in this new list (which, recall, was explicitly described to the participants as a corrective to the gender and ethnicity imbalance in our original lists) suggesting a recognition on the part of these progressive scholars that historical inequalities of access to the means of literary production have had effects on the formation of the canon over and above the difficulty of recovering other, better works that might take the place of consecrated classics. Even given this canonical bias, however, the attention of the PSA list seems, to a greater extent than our original lists, concentrated on canonical female authors (**Figure 8**).

Where disagreement between the individual participant's lists becomes visible, it is primarily in their selection of distinctly non-canonical works, partly reflecting the individual interests of each participant, but also, perhaps, the relative newness and thus volatility of the alternative canon(s).

With this said, the new list clearly reflects a commitment to diversity absent in our previous corpus modules. The top two texts on the list, Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) and Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981), are both by authors who only appeared sporadically on our previous lists (Achebe appears as #70 on the Radcliffe List). The gender breakdown of the final, compiled list of the Postcolonial Studies Association is 26 Female authors to 73 Males. However, it is in the ancestry breakdown that we can see the greatest shift: fully one third of the new texts are by non-white authors, a percentage dramatically higher than in our original corpus (**Figure 9**).

On the whole, including the Postcolonial Studies Association in our corpus moved the needle slightly on our percentage of female authors (from 15% to 17%) and more so on the measure of ethnic diversity, with 10% now representing non-white heritage as opposed to the mere 5% of the earlier cumulative corpus.
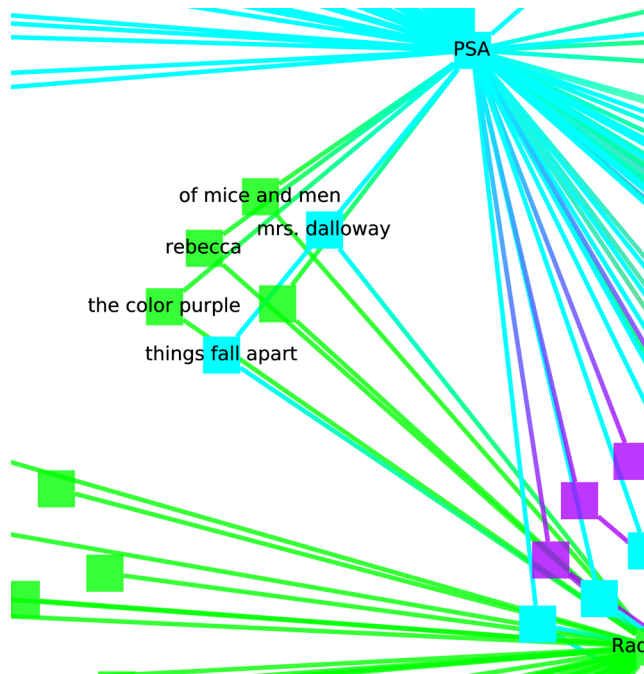
Figure 8: Texts that are shared only by the new Postcolonial Studies Association list and the Radcliffe List, including Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (1982), Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca* (1938) and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925). Here there is a higher proportion of female authored texts than in either list alone.
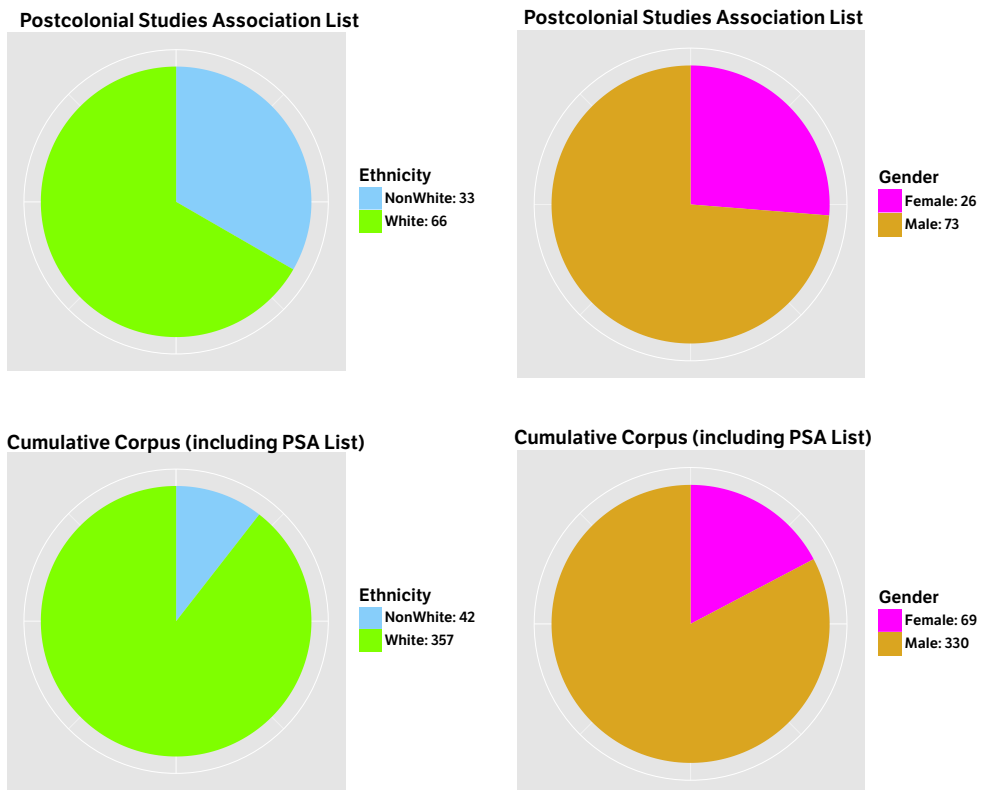
Figure 9: Ethnicity and Gender proportions of Postcolonial Studies Association List and new combined corpus list with Postcolonial Studies association added.

5. Conclusion: Ranking and Resistance

An unintended consequence of our mass solicitation for "best of" lists was our receipt of a number of eloquent refusals to participate in such an enterprise, and some interesting meditations on the meaning of such lists from those who did. Of the 29 responses we received to our request, 7 respondents declined our invitation. Moreover, to the extent that it doesn't simply represent a lack of interest in our project, or a lack of sufficient discretionary time to focus on it, the 270 people that we reached out to who chose not to respond at all may serve as a signal of a tacit suspicion of our work.

Our approach to this project does seem to carry with it concerns beyond what is typical of a digital humanities study. To the potential pitfalls of sampling, representativeness and quantifying in general, we have added the problems of ranking and valuation. While some of our respondents openly refused to participate in the ranking process, others told us that they had ranked their texts in an arbitrary manner, according to a set of criteria explicitly designed to be non-hierarchical. One respondent eloquently described the act of ranking as compromising her professional ethics. As she wrote: "My entire career has been devoted to destroying canons of literature rather than generating lists of 'top novels.' [...] I cannot consent to label some works as 'best works' while implicitly leaving others out of that category. I certainly cannot consent to rank works in order from 1 through 40."[13]

Such an objection both speaks to the obvious problems inherent in the activity of ranking works of fiction and, implicitly, to the practice of quantification itself (of which ranking is a member). Objections to the quantitative side of the digital humanities, many of which have come from scholars engaged in politically conscious fields such as postcolonial studies or gender studies, have focused on the ways in which reducing texts to sets of frequencies drains them of their socio-political or cultural work.[14] Certainly this has been true for many early studies in the digital humanities, and such objections continue to militate against any overconfidence in our attempt to build a representative, or at least workable, 20th-century corpus. And then to engage so directly, even if critically, with the crassly invidious enterprise of ranking would only seem to make the problem worse.

That said, it seems to us that it would be a mistake to dismiss the import of quantification and ranking altogether. To begin with, our attention to measurements of relative esteem in the making of the corpus arguably only makes explicit something that otherwise happens im-

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13 Quoted with permission.

14 Many of the critiques of Digital Humanities along the basis of either gender or ethnicity implicitly, or explicitly, address the lack of post-colonial or feminist Digital Humanities studies through the underrepresentation of females and minorities among Digital Humanities scholars. See, for example, Tara McPherson's "Why Are the Digital Humanities So White? Or Thinking the Histories of Race and Computation." Todd Presner has also addressed the problematic relationship between Digital Humanities and Critical Theory in his presentation "Critical Theory and the Mangle of Digital Humanities (http://www.toddpresner.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Presner_2012_DH_FINAL.pdf [Accessed 10/19/2014]). Finally, a key source for this debate has been the online 'Postcolonialist Digital Humanities" blog which ignited a controversy when they posed this same question to their members: http://dhpoco.org/blog/2013/05/10/open-thread-the-digital-humanities-as-a-historical-refuge-from-raceclassgendersexualitydisability/ [Accessed 10/19/2014].

plicitly. Without denying that certain literary scholars would happily disown any real interest in the aesthetic merit (let alone "greatness") of the works they study, their implicit claim for the interest of these works is not necessarily entirely divorceable from the question of aesthetic judgment.[15] And for most literary scholars this equivocation isn't even necessary: they take for granted that their analyses amount to a sophisticated form of aesthetic appreciation. The selection of one's objects of study is obviously an immensely complex act, informed by myriad overlapping freedoms and necessities, but it retains an invidious character, an implicit judgment of relative worth. Our attention to ranking thus gives us potential analytic purchase on the realities of status and canonicity informing the work that scholars do. That will be even more the powerfully the case if we can add another component to a future iteration of the corpus, one that finds a way of representing canonicity as measured by scholarly interest. This list would include the 100 novels most cited by literary scholars in some reasonably representative database (the MLA Bibliography?) and across some reasonable temporal span.

If our attention to ranking is at least somewhat defensible, the importance of quantification in general is, we believe, even more so, even to the extent that it entails an abstraction from the particularity and richness of individual texts and individual reading experiences: it is one important means by which we can actually document the social and other inequalities our corpus embodies. Indeed, although it would immediately present a host of methodological difficulties, we can a imagine a more satisfyingly diverse corpus than ours being derived, as it were, directly *from the numbers:* this one would begin with the quantitative demographic realities of the English-speaking 20th century and "populate" the corpus on that basis, including certain percentages of works by persons of various social descriptions. This would trade our analytical interest in collective judgments of aesthetic value for something substantially different: the presumed probative value of demographically sorted literary discourse for the ends of social knowledge. (But then which works *within* these groupings would one choose, and on what grounds? And how many different demographic categories would be deemed sufficient to make the corpus adequately representative? Would they—but how could they?—include distinctions of socio-economic class?) Certainly it would be fascinating to compare such a corpus to the one we have devised here: what systematic differences in form and theme might that comparison reveal—or not reveal? What difference does the question of aesthetic quality make in our efforts to understand, via literature, the evolving truths of the human condition? In the meantime, notwithstanding the alternative logic of its construction, a list composed on this basis might also be incorporated as one of the future components of the Corpus. The point of our modular approach, after all, is to leave the database open to future interventions of this kind.

As a basis for the study of 20th-century literary history, and still more for the study of 20th-century social reality, the corpus we have devised will necessarily be limited. Far from a problem unique to it in the larger enterprise of the digital humanities, this is something any 20th-

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15 See, for instance, Sianne Ngai, "Merely Interesting" *Critical Inquiry* Vol. 34, No. 4 (Summer 2008) pp. 777-817.

century corpus will share with the 18th- and 19th-century corpora that have preceded it, and with which scholars here and elsewhere have nonetheless done so much interesting work. So called "samples of convenience," collected based on what has already been digitized (and therefore, given the cost of digitization, storage and delivery of electronic page images, deemed valuable enough for preservation) are no doubt equally, if not more biased than the lists we have assembled here, despite their greater numbers. It is our hope that by taking a conscious and conscientious approach to building a 20th-century canon that we can begin a conversation about these pitfalls by openly acknowledging the problems of canonical bias, under-representation and the practice of sampling based on availability and convenience. Notwithstanding its inherent limitations, the Stanford Corpus of 20th-Century Fiction should enable us to see new things, ask new questions, propose new answers, and test what we think we already know against a more robustly analyzable version of the whole than we've ever had before.

Appendix 1: Modern Library Editors list of the best books of the 20th century

Book	Author	Date	Rank
Ulysses	James Joyce	1922	1
The Great Gatsby	F. Scott Fitzgerald	1925	2
A Portrait Of The Artist As A Young Man	James Joyce	1916	3
Lolita	Vladimir Nabokov	1955	4
Brave New World	Aldous Huxley	1932	5
The Sound And The Fury	William Faulkner	1929	6
Catch-22	Joseph Heller	1961	7
Darkness At Noon	Arthur Koestler	1940	8
Sons And Lovers	D. H. Lawrence	1913	9
The Grapes Of Wrath	John Steinbeck	1939	10
Under The Volcano	Malcolm Lowry	1949	11
The Way Of All Flesh	Samuel Butler	1903	12
1984	George Orwell	1949	13
I, Claudius	Robert Graves	1934	14
To The Lighthouse	Virginia Woolf	1927	15
An American Tragedy	Theodore Dreiser	1925	16
The Heart Is A Lonely Hunter	Carson McCullers	1940	17
Slaughterhouse-Five	Kurt Vonnegut	1969	18
Invisible Man	Ralph Ellison	1952	19
Native Son	Richard Wright	1940	20
Henderson The Rain King	Saul Bellow	1959	21
Appointment In Samarra	John O'Hara	1934	22
U.S.A. (Trilogy)	John Dos Passos	1932	23
Winesburg, Ohio	Sherwood Anderson	1919	24
A Passage To India	E. M. Forster	1924	25
The Wings Of The Dove	Henry James	1902	26
The Ambassadors	Henry James	1903	27
Tender Is The Night	F. Scott Fitzgerald	1934	28
The Studs Lonigan Trilogy	James T. Farrell	1933	29
The Good Soldier	Ford Madox Ford	1915	30
Animal Farm	George Orwell	1945	31
The Golden Bowl	Henry James	1904	32
Sister Carrie	Theodore Dreiser	1900	33
A Handful Of Dust	Evelyn Waugh	1934	34
As I Lay Dying	William Faulkner	1930	35
All The King's Men	Robert Penn Warren	1946	36
The Bridge Of San Luis Rey	Thornton Wilder	1989	37
Howards End	E. M. Forster	1910	38
Go Tell It On The Mountain	James Baldwin	1953	39
The Heart Of The Matter	Graham Greene	1948	40
The Lord Of The Flies	William Golding	1954	41
Deliverance	James Dickey	1970	42
A Dance To The Music Of Time (Series)	Anthony Powell	1963	43
Point Counter Point	Aldous Huxley	1928	44
The Sun Also Rises	Ernest Hemingway	1926	45
The Secret Agent	Joseph Conrad	1907	46
Nostromo	Joseph Conrad	1904	47
The Rainbow	D. H. Lawrence	1915	48
Women In Love	D. H. Lawrence	1921	49
Tropic Of Cancer	Henry Miller	1934	50
The Naked And The Dead	Norman Mailer	1948	51
Portnoy's Complaint	Philip Roth	1969	52
Pale Fire	Vladimir Nabokov	1962	53
Light In August	William Faulkner	1932	54
On The Road	Jack Kerouac	1957	55
The Maltese Falcon	Dashiell Hammett	1930	56
Parade's End	Ford Madox Ford	1925	57
The Age Of Innocence	Edith Wharton	1920	58
Zuleika Dobson	Max Beerbohm	1911	59
The Moviegoer	Walker Percy	1961	60
Death Comes For The Archbishop	Willa Cather	1927	61
From Here To Eternity	James Jones	1951	62
The Wapshot Chronicles	John Cheever	1957	63
The Catcher In The Rye	J. D. Salinger	1951	64
A Clockwork Orange	Anthony Burgess	1962	65
Of Human Bondage	W. Somerset Maugham	1915	66
Heart Of Darkness	Joseph Conrad	1902	67
Main Street	Sinclair Lewis	1921	68
The House Of Mirth	Edith Wharton	1905	69
The Alexandria Quartet	Lawrence Durell	1958	70
A High Wind In Jamaica	Richard Hughes	1929	71
A House For Mr Biswas	V. S. Naipaul	1961	72
The Day Of The Locust	Nathaniel West	1939	73
A Farewell To Arms	Ernest Hemingway	1929	74
Scoop	Evelyn Waugh	1938	75
The Prime Of Miss Jean Brodie	Muriel Spark	1961	76
Finnegans Wake	James Joyce	1941	77
Kim	Rudyard Kipling	1901	78
A Room With A View	E. M. Forster	1908	79
Brideshead Revisited	Evelyn Waugh	1945	80
The Adventures Of Augie March	Saul Bellow	1953	81
Angle Of Repose	Wallace Stegner	1971	82
A Bend In The River	V. S. Naipaul	1979	83
The Death Of The Heart	Elizabeth Bowen	1938	84
Lord Jim	Joseph Conrad	1900	85
Ragtime	E. L. Doctorow	1975	86
The Old Wives' Tale	Arnold Bennett	1908	87
The Call Of The Wild	Jack London	1903	88
Loving	Henry Green	1945	89
Midnight's Children	Salman Rushdie	1981	90
Tobacco Road	Erskine Caldwell	1932	91
Ironweed	William Kennedy	1983	92
The Magus	John Fowles	1966	93
Wide Sargasso Sea	Jean Rhys	1966	94
Under The Net	Iris Murdoch	1954	95
Sophie's Choice	William Styron	1979	96
The Sheltering Sky	Paul Bowles	1949	97
The Postman Always Rings Twice	James M. Cain	1934	98
The Ginger Man	J. P. Donleavy	1955	99
The Magnificent Ambersons	Booth Tarkington	1918	100

Appendix 2: Modern Library Readers list of the best books of the 20th century

Book	Author	Date	Rank
Atlas Shrugged	Ayn Rand	1957	1
The Fountainhead	Ayn Rand	1943	2
Battlefield Earth	L. Ron Hubbard	1982	3
The Lord Of The Rings	J. R. R. Tolkien	1942	4
To Kill A Mockingbird	Harper Lee	1960	5
1984	George Orwell	1949	6
Anthem	Ayn Rand	1938	7
We The Living	Ayn Rand	1936	8
Mission Earth	L. Ron Hubbard	1986	9
Fear	L. Ron Hubbard	1940	10
Ulysses	James Joyce	1922	11
Catch-22	Joseph Heller	1961	12
The Great Gatsby	F. Scott Fitzgerald	1925	13
Dune	Frank Herbert	1965	14
The Moon Is A Harsh Mistress	Robert Heinlein	1966	15
Stranger In A Strange Land	Robert Heinlein	1961	16
A Town Like Alice	Nevil Shute	1950	17
Brave New World	Aldous Huxley	1932	18
The Catcher In The Rye	J. D. Salinger	1951	19
Animal Farm	George Orwell	1945	20
Gravity's Rainbow	Thomas Pynchon	1973	21
The Grapes Of Wrath	John Steinbeck	1939	22
Slaughterhouse Five	Kurt Vonnegut	1969	23
Gone With The Wind	Margaret Mitchell	1936	24
The Lord Of The Flies	William Golding	1954	25
Shane	Jack Schaefer	1949	26
Trustee From The Toolroom	Nevil Shute	1960	27
A Prayer For Owen Meany	John Irving	1989	28
The Stand	Stephen King	1978	29
The French Lieutenant's Woman	John Fowles	1969	30
Beloved	Toni Morrison	1986	31
The Worm Ouroboros	E. R. Eddison	1922	32
The Sound And The Fury	William Faulkner	1929	33
Lolita	Vladimir Nabokov	1955	34
Moonheart	Charles de Lint	1984	35
Absalom, Absalom!	William Faulkner	1936	36
Of Human Bondage	W. Somerset Maugham	1915	37
Wise Blood	Flannery O'Connor	1952	38
Under The Volcano	Malcolm Lowry	1949	39
Fifth Business	Robertson Davies	1970	40
Someplace To Be Flying	Charles de Lint	1998	41
On The Road	Jack Kerouac	1957	42
Heart Of Darkness	Joseph Conrad	1902	43
Yarrow	Charles de Lint	1989	44
At The Mountains Of Madness	H. P. Lovecraft	1936	45
One Lonely Night	Mickey Spillane	1951	46
Memory And Dream	Charles de Lint	1994	47
To The Lighthouse	Virginia Woolf	1927	48
The Moviegoer	Walker Percy	1961	49
Trader	Charles de Lint	1997	50
The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy	Douglas Adams	1979	51
The Heart Is A Lonely Hunter	Carson McCullers	1940	52
The Handmaid's Tale	Margaret Atwood	1985	53
Blood Meridian	Cormac McCarthy	1965	54
A Clockwork Orange	Anthony Burgess	1962	55
On The Beach	Nevil Shute	1957	56
A Portrait Of The Artist As A Young Man	James Joyce	1916	57
Greenmantle	Charles de Lint	1988	58
Ender's Game	Orson Scott Card	1985	59
The Little Country	Charles de Lint	1991	60
The Recognitions	William Gaddis	1955	61
Starship Troopers	Robert Heinlein	1959	62
The Sun Also Rises	Ernest Hemingway	1926	63
The World According To Garp	John Irving	1978	64
Something Wicked This Way Comes	Ray Bradbury	1962	65
The Haunting Of Hill House	Shirley Jackson	1959	66
As I Lay Dying	William Faulkner	1930	67
Tropic Of Cancer	Henry Miller	1934	68
Invisible Man	Ralph Ellison	1952	69
The Wood Wife	Terri Windling	1996	70
The Magus	John Fowles	1966	71
The Door Into Summer	Robert Heinlein	1956	72
Zen And The Art Of Motorcycle Maintenance	Robert Pirsig	1974	73
I, Claudius	Robert Graves	1934	74
The Call Of The Wild	Jack London	1903	75
At Swim-Two-Birds	Flann O'Brien	1951	76
Farenheit 451	Ray Bradbury	1953	77
Arrowsmith	Sinclair Lewis	1925	78
Watership Down	Richard Adams	1972	79
Naked Lunch	William S. Burroughs	1959	80
The Hunt For Red October	Tom Clancy	1984	81
Guilty Pleasures	Laurell K. Hamilton	1993	82
The Puppet Masters	Robert Heinlein	1951	83
It	Stephen King	1986	84
V.	Thomas Pynchon	1963	85
Double Star	Robert Heinlein	1956	86
Citizen Of The Galaxy	Robert Heinlein	1957	87
Brideshead Revisited	Evelyn Waugh	1945	88
Light In August	William Faulkner	1932	89
One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest	Ken Kesey	1962	90
A Farewell To Arms	Ernest Hemingway	1929	91
The Sheltering Sky	Paul Bowles	1949	92
Sometimes A Great Notion	Ken Kesey	1964	93
My Antonia	Willa Cather	1918	94
Mulengro	Charles de Lint	1985	95
Suttree	Cormac McCarthy	1979	96
Mythago Wood	Robert Holdstock	1984	97
Illusions	Richard Bach	1977	98
The Cunning Man	Robertson Davies	1994	99
The Satanic Verses	Salman Rushdie	1988	100

Appendix 3: Radcliffe Publishing Program's list of the best books of the 20ᵗʰ century

Rank	Book	Author	Date
1	The Great Gatsby	F. Scott Fitzgerald	1925
2	The Catcher In The Rye	J. D. Salinger	1951
3	The Grapes Of Wrath	John Steinbeck	1939
4	To Kill A Mockingbird	Harper Lee	1960
5	The Color Purple	Alice Walker	1982
6	Ulysses	James Joyce	1922
7	Beloved	Toni Morrison	1986
8	The Lord Of The Flies	William Golding	1954
9	1984	George Orwell	1949
10	The Sound And The Fury	William Faulkner	1929
11	Lolita	Vladimir Nabokov	1955
12	Of Mice And Men	John Steinbeck	1937
13	Charlotte's Web	E. B. White	1952
14	A Portrait Of The Artist As A Young Man	James Joyce	1916
15	Catch-22	Joseph Heller	1961
16	Brave New World	Aldous Huxley	1932
17	Animal Farm	George Orwell	1945
18	The Sun Also Rises	Ernest Hemingway	1926
19	As I Lay Dying	William Faulkner	1930
20	A Farewell To Arms	Ernest Hemingway	1929
21	Heart Of Darkness	Joseph Conrad	1902
22	Winnie-The-Pooh	A. A. Milne	1926
23	Their Eyes Were Watching God	Zora Neale Hurston	1937
24	Invisible Man	Ralph Ellison	1952
25	Song Of Solomon	Toni Morrison	1977
26	Gone With The Wind	Margaret Mitchell	1936
27	Native Son	Richard Wright	1940
28	One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest	Ken Kesey	1962
29	Slaughterhouse-Five	Kurt Vonnegut	1969
30	For Whom The Bell Tolls	Ernest Hemingway	1940
31	On The Road	Jack Kerouac	1957
32	The Old Man And The Sea	Ernest Hemingway	1951
33	The Call Of The Wild	Jack London	1903
34	To The Lighthouse	Virginia Woolf	1927
35	Portrait Of A Lady	Henry James	1881
36	Go Tell It On The Mountain	James Baldwin	1953
37	The World According To Garp	John Irving	1978
38	All The King's Men	Robert Penn Warren	1946
39	A Room With A View	E. M. Forster	1908
40	The Lord Of The Rings	J. R. R. Tolkien	1942
41	Schindler's List	Thomas Keneally	1982
42	The Age Of Innocence	Edith Wharton	1920
43	The Fountainhead	Ayn Rand	1943
44	Finnegans Wake	James Joyce	1941
45	The Jungle	Upton Sinclair	1906
46	Mrs. Dalloway	Virginia Woolf	1925
47	The Wonderful Wizard Of Oz	L. Frank Baum	1900
48	Lady Chatterley's Lover	D. H. Lawrence	1928
49	A Clockwork Orange	Anthony Burgess	1962
50	The Awakening	Kate Chopin	1899
51	My Antonia	Willa Cather	1918
52	Howards End	E. M. Forster	1910
53	In Cold Blood	Truman Capote	1966
54	Franny And Zooey	J. D. Salinger	1961
55	The Satanic Verses	Salman Rushdie	1988
56	Jazz	Toni Morrison	1992
57	Sophie's Choice	William Styron	1979
58	Absalom, Absalom!	William Faulkner	1936
59	A Passage To India	E. M. Forster	1924
60	Ethan Frome	Edith Wharton	1911
61	A Good Man Is Hard To Find	Flannery O'Connor	1953
62	Tender Is The Night	F. Scott Fitzgerald	1934
63	Orlando	Virginia Woolf	1928
64	Sons And Lovers	D. H. Lawrence	1913
65	Bonfire Of The Vanities	Thomas Wolfe	1929
66	Cat's Cradle	Kurt Vonnegut	1963
67	A Separate Peace	John Knowles	1959
68	Light In August	William Faulkner	1932
69	The Wings Of The Dove	Henry James	1902
70	Things Fall Apart	Chinua Achebe	1958
71	Rebecca	Daphne Du Maurier	1938
72	The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy	Douglas Adams	1979
73	Naked Lunch	William S. Burroughs	1959
74	Brideshead Revisited	Evelyn Waugh	1945
75	Women In Love	D. H. Lawrence	1921
76	Look Homeward, Angel	Thomas Wolfe	1928
77	In Our Time	Ernest Hemingway	1925
78	The Autobiography Of Alice B. Tokias	Gertrude Stein	1933
79	The Maltese Falcon	Dashiell Hammett	1930
80	The Naked And The Dead	Norman Mailer	1948
81	Wide Sargasso Sea	Jean Rhys	1966
82	White Noise	Don DeLillo	1985
83	O Pioneers!	Willa Cather	1913
84	Tropic Of Cancer	Henry Miller	1934
85	The War Of The Worlds	H. G. Wells	1898
86	Lord Jim	Joseph Conrad	1900
87	The Bostonians	Henry James	1886
88	An American Tragedy	Theodore Dreiser	1925
89	Death Comes For The Archbishop	Willa Cather	1927
90	The Wind In The Willows	Kenneth Grahame	1908
91	This Side Of Paradise	F. Scott Fitzgerald	1920
92	Atlas Shrugged	Ayn Rand	1957
93	The French Lieutenant's Woman	John Fowles	1969
94	Babbitt	Sinclair Lewis	1922
95	Kim	Rudyard Kipling	1901
96	The Beautiful And The Damned	F. Scott Fitzgerald	1922
97	Rabbit, Run	John Updike	1960
98	Where Angels Fear To Tread	E. M. Forster	1905
99	Main Street	Sinclair Lewis	1921
100	Midnight's Children	Salman Rushdie	1981

Appendix 4: Larry McCaffery's list of the best experimental fiction of the 20th century

Book	Author	Date	Rank
Pale Fire	Vladimir Nabokov	1962	1
Ulysses	James Joyce	1922	2
Gravity's Rainbow	Thomas Pynchon	1973	3
The Public Burning	Robert Coover	1977	4
The Sound And The Fury	William Faulkner	1929	5
Trilogy: Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnamable	Samuel Beckett	1956	6
The Making Of Americans	Gertrude Stein	1925	7
The Nova Trilogy: The Soft Machine, Nova Express, The Ticket That Exploded	William S. Burroughs	1964	8
Lolita	Vladimir Nabokov	1955	9
Finnegans Wake	James Joyce	1941	10
Take It Or Leave It	Raymond Federman	1975	11
Beloved	Toni Morrison	1986	12
Going Native	Stephen Wright	1994	13
Under The Volcano	Malcolm Lowry	1949	14
To The Lighthouse	Virginia Woolf	1927	15
In The Heart Of The Heart Of The Country	William H. Gass	1968	16
Jr	William Gaddis	1975	17
Invisible Man	Ralph Ellison	1952	18
Underworld	Don DeLillo	1997	19
The Sun Also Rises	Ernest Hemingway	1926	20
A Portrait Of The Artist As A Young Man	James Joyce	1916	21
The Great Gatsby	F. Scott Fitzgerald	1925	22
The Ambassadors	Henry James	1903	23
Women In Love	D. H. Lawrence	1921	24
60 Stories	Donald Barthelme	1981	25
The Rifles	William T. Vollmann	1993	26
The Recognitions	William Gaddis	1955	27
Heart Of Darkness	Joseph Conrad	1902	28
Catch-22	Joseph Heller	1961	29
Nineteen Eighty-Four	George Orwell	1949	30
Their Eyes Were Watching God	Zora Neale Hurston	1937	31
Absalom, Absalom!	William Faulkner	1936	32
Dhalgren	Samuel R. Delany	1975	33
The Grapes Of Wrath	John Steinbeck	1939	34
The Four Elements Tetralogy: The Stain, Entering Fire, The Fountains Of Neptune, The Jade Cabinet	Rikki Ducornet	1986	35
Cyberspace Trilogy: Neuromancer, Count Zero, Mona Lisa Overdrive	William Gibson	1986	36
Tropic Of Cancer	Henry Miller	1934	37
On The Road	Jack Kerouac	1957	38
Lookout Cartridge	Joseph McElroy	1974	39
Crash	J. G. Ballard	1973	40
Midnight's Children	Salman Rushdie	1981	41
The Sot-Weed Factor	John Barth	1960	42
Genoa	Paul Metcalf	1965	43
Brave New World	Aldous Huxley	1932	44
A Passage To India	E. M. Forster	1924	45
Double Or Nothing	Raymond Federman	1972	46
At Swim-Two-Birds	Flann O'Brien	1951	47
Blood Meridian	Cormac McCarthy	1965	48
The Cannibal	John Hawkes	1949	49
Native Son	Richard Wright	1940	50
The Day Of The Locust	Nathanael West	1939	51
Nightwood	Djuna Barnes	1937	52
Housekeeping	Marilynne Robinson	1980	53
Slaughterhouse Five	Kurt Vonnegut	1969	54
Libra	Don DeLillo	1986	55
Wise Blood	Flannery O'Connor	1952	56
Always Coming Home	Ursula K. Le Guin	1985	57
The Golden Notebook	Doris Lessing	1962	59
The Catcher In The Rye	J. D. Salinger	1951	60
Red Harvest	Dashiell Hammett	1929	61
What We Talk About When We Talk About Love	Raymond Carver	1981	62
Dubliners	James Joyce	1915	63
Cane	Jean Toomer	1925	64
The House Of Mirth	Edith Wharton	1905	65
Riddley Walker	Russell Hoban	1982	66
Checkerboard Trilogy: Go In Beauty, The Bronc People, Portrait Of The Artist With 26 Horses	William Eastlake	1958	67
The Franchiser	Stanley Elkin	1976	68
The New York Trilogy: City Of Glass, Ghosts, The Locked Room	Paul Auster	1986	69
Skinny Legs And All	Tom Robbins	1987	70
Infinite Jest	David Foster Wallace	1996	71
The Age Of Wire And String	Ben Marcus	1995	72
Tlooth	Harry Mathews	1966	73
Pricksongs And Descants	Robert Coover	1969	74
The Man In The High Castle	Phillip K. Dick	1962	75
American Psycho	Brett Easton Ellis	1991	76
The French Lieutenant's Woman	John Fowles	1969	77
The Book Of The New Sun Tetralogy	Gene Wolfe	1981	78
A Clockwork Orange	Anthony Burgess	1962	79
Albany Trilogy: Legs, Billy Phelan's Greatest Game, Ironweed	William Kennedy	1978	80
The Tunnel	William H. Gass	1995	81
Omensetter's Luck	William H. Gass	1966	82
The Sheltering Sky	Paul Bowles	1949	83
Darconville's Cat	Alexander Theroux	1981	84
Up	Ronald Sukenick	1968	85
Yellow Back Radio Broke-Down	Ishmael Reed	1969	86
Winesburg, Ohio	Sherwood Anderson	1919	87
You Bright And Risen Angels	William T. Vollmann	1987	88
The Naked And The Dead	Norman Mailer	1948	89
The Universal Baseball Association, Inc., J. Henry Waugh, Prop.	Robert Coover	1968	90
Creamy & Delicious	Steve Katz	1971	91
Waiting For The Barbarians	J. M. Coetzee	1980	92
More Than Human	Theodore Sturgeon	1951	93
Mulligan Stew	Gilbert Sorrentino	1979	94
Look Homeward, Angel	Thomas Wolfe	1928	95
An American Tragedy	Theodore Dreiser	1925	96
Easy Travels To Other Planets	Ted Mooney	1981	97
Tours Of The Black Clock	Steve Erickson	1989	98
In Memoriam To Identity	Kathy Acker	1990	99
Hogg	Samuel R. Delany	1996	100

Appendix 5: *Publishers Weekly's* bestselling books of the 20th century (by year)

Book	Author	Date
The Inside Of The Cup	Winston Churchill	1913
The Eyes Of The World	Harold Bell Wright	1914
The Turmoil	Booth Tarkington	1915
Seventeen	Booth Tarkington	1916
Mr. Britling Sees It Through	H. G. Wells	1917
The U. P. Trail	Zane Grey	1918
The Four Horsemen Of The Apocalypse	Vicente Blasco Ibáñez	1919
The Man Of The Forest	Zane Grey	1920
Main Street	Sinclair Lewis	1921
If Winter Comes	A. S. M. Hutchinson	1922
Black Oxen	Gertrude Atherton	1923
So Big	Edna Ferber	1924
Soundings	A. Hamilton Gibbs	1925
The Private Life Of Helen Of Troy	John Erskine	1926
Elmer Gantry	Sinclair Lewis	1927
The Bridge Of San Luis Rey	Thornton Wilder	1989
All Quiet On The Western Front	Erich Maria Remarque	1929
Cimarron	Edna Ferber	1930
The Good Earth	Pearl S. Buck	1931
Anthony Adverse	Hervey Allen	1934
Green Light	Lloyd C. Douglas	1935
Gone With The Wind	Margaret Mitchell	1936
Gone With The Wind	Margaret Mitchell	1936
The Yearling	Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings	1938
The Grapes Of Wrath	John Steinbeck	1939
How Green Was My Valley	Richard Llewellyn	1940
The Keys Of The Kingdom	A. J. Cronin	1941
The Song Of Bernadette	Franz Werfel	1942
Strange Fruit	Lillian Smith	1944
Forever Amber	Kathleen Winsor	1945
The King's General	Daphne du Maurier	1946
The Miracle Of The Bells	Russell Janney	1947
The Big Fisherman	Lloyd C. Douglas	1948
The Egyptian	Mika Waltari	1949
The Cardinal	Henry Morton Robinson	1950
From Here To Eternity	James Jones	1951
The Silver Chalice	Thomas B. Costain	1952
The Robe	Lloyd C. Douglas	1953
Not As A Stranger	Morton Thompson	1954
Marjorie Morningstar	Herman Wouk	1955
Don't Go Near The Water	William Brinkley	1956
By Love Possessed	James Gould Cozzens	1957
Doctor Zhivago	Boris Pasternak	1958
Exodus	Leon Uris	1959
Advise And Consent	Allen Drury	1960
The Agony And The Ecstasy	Irving Stone	1961
Ship Of Fools	Katherine Anne Porter	1962
The Shoes Of The Fisherman	Morris L. West	1963
The Spy Who Came In From The Cold	John le Carré	1964
The Source	James A. Michener	1965
Valley Of The Dolls	Jacqueline Susann	1966
The Arrangement	Elia Kazan	1967
Airport	Arthur Hailey	1968
Portnoy's Complaint	Philip Roth	1969
Love Story	Erich Segal	1970
Wheels	Arthur Hailey	1971
Johnathan Livingston Seagull	Richard Bach	1972
Johnathan Livingston Seagull	Richard Bach	1973
Centennial	James A. Michener	1974
Ragtime	E. L. Doctorow	1975
Trinity	Leon Uris	1976
The Silmarillion	J. R. R. Tolkien and Christopher Tolkien	1977
Chesapeake	James A. Michener	1978
The Matarese Circle	Robert Ludlum	1979
The Covenant	James A. Michener	1980
Noble House	James Clavell	1981
E.T., The Extraterrestrial	William Kotzwinkle	1982
Return Of The Jedi	James Kahn	1983
The Talisman	Stephen King and Peter Straub	1984
The Mammoth Hunters	Jean M. Auel	1985
It	Stephen King	1986
The Tommyknockers	Stephen King	1987
The Cardinal Of The Kremlin	Tom Clancy	1988
Clear And Present Danger	Tom Clancy	1989
The Plains Of Passage	Jean M. Auel	1990
Scarlett	Alexandra Ripley	1991
Dolores Clairborne	Stephen King	1992
The Bridges Of Madison County	Robert James Waller	1993
The Chamber	John Grisham	1994
The Rainmaker	John Grisham	1995
The Runaway Jury	John Grisham	1996
The Partner	John Grisham	1997
The Street Lawyer	John Grisham	1998
The Testament	John Grisham	1999