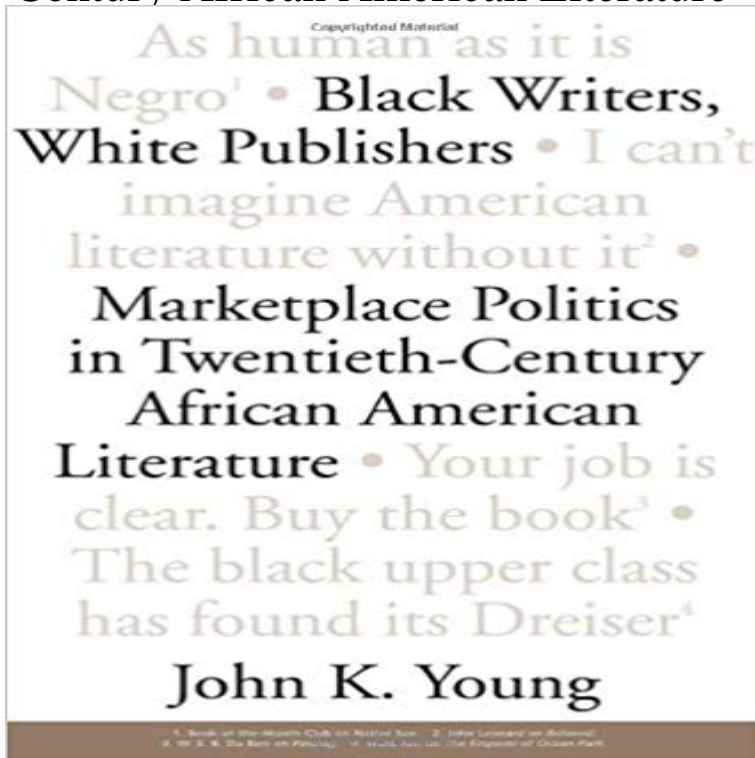


Black Writers, White Publishers: Marketplace Politics in Twentieth-Century African American Literature



Jean Toomers Cane was advertised as a book about Negroes by a Negro, despite his request not to promote the book along such racial lines. Nella Larsen switched the title of her second novel from *Nig* to *Passing*, because an editor felt the original title might be too inflammatory. In order to publish his first novel as a Book-of-the-Month Club main selection Richard Wright deleted a scene in *Native Son* depicting Bigger Thomas masturbating. Toni Morrison changed the last word of *Beloved* at her editors request and switched the title of *Paradise* from *War* to allay her publishers marketing concerns. Although many editors place demands on their authors, these examples invite special scholarly attention given the power imbalance between white editors and publishers and African American authors. *Black Writers, White Publishers: Marketplace Politics in Twentieth-Century African American Literature* examines the complex negotiations behind the production of African American literature. In chapters on Larsen's *Passing*, Ishmael Reeds *Mumbo Jumbo*, Gwendolyn Brooks *Children Coming Home*, Morrison's Oprah's Book Club selections, and Ralph Ellison's *Juneteenth*, John K. Young presents the first book-length application of editorial theory to African American literature. Focusing on the manuscripts, drafts, book covers, colophons, and advertisements that trace book production, Young expands upon the concept of socialized authorship and demonstrates how the study of publishing history and practice and African American literary criticism enrich each other.

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Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, **Black Writers, White Publishers: Marketplace Politics in Twentieth** Black Writers, White Publishers: Marketplace Politics in Twentieth-Century African American Literature examines the complex negotiations behind the production **Black Writers, White Publishers: Marketplace Politics - 2006**, English, Book edition: Black writers, white publishers : marketplace politics in twentieth-century African American literature / John K. Young. Young, John **Black Writers, White Publishers: Marketplace Politics in Twentieth** **Black Writers, White Publishers: Marketplace Politics in Twentieth** Black Writers, White Publishers: Marketplace Politics in Twentieth-Century African American Literature examines the complex negotiations behind the **Marketplace Politics in Twentieth-Century African American Literature** Black Writers, White Publishers: Marketplace Politics in Twentieth- Century African American Literature. John K. Young. Copyright Date: 2006. Published by: **Black Writers, White Publishers: Marketplace Politics in Twentieth** Mar 21, 2006 Black Writers, White Publishers has 3 ratings and 1 review. Publishers: Marketplace Politics in Twentieth-Century African American Literature. **Black Writers, White Publishers: Marketplace Politics in Twentieth** Marketplace Politics in Twentieth-century African American Literature John Kevin Young. The University Press of Mississippi is a **Black Writers, White Publishers: Marketplace Politics in Twentieth** **Black writers, white publishers : marketplace politics in twentieth** Black Writers, White Publishers: Marketplace Politics in Twentieth-Century African American Literature examines the complex negotiations behind the **Black Writers, White Publishers: Marketplace Politics in Twentieth** Lisa A. Long. John K. Young. Black Writers, White Publishers: Marketplace Politics in Twentieth-Century African American Literature. 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