Grant Proposal to Arizona Humanities Council

"Antislavery Literature Project: Voices of Slavery"

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[and]

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August 2005

1. **Summary**. The project will create three interpretive digital videos relating to the literature and history of slavery in the United States. These videos, featuring professional actors, will be filmed at Arizona State University and streamed from the Antislavery Literature Project website operated in conjunction with the English Server at Iowa State University. The 15-20 minute video programs, accompanied by annotated texts, will include readings from the antebellum poetry of African American writer Frances Ellen Watkins Harper; Juan Manzano's slave narrative, in a bilingual Spanish and English rendition; and texts of the Harpers Ferry raid, featuring John Brown, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Henry David Thoreau.

2. **Public Benefit**. The public will benefit from this project because new interpretive performances of the experiences of slavery, from a variety of social perspectives, will be made available for free via the Internet. This project will provide packaged multimedia and annotated teaching texts to secondary and higher educational institutions searching for fresh vehicles to teach about slavery. Students will encounter a range of expressive responses to slavery, including poetry, autobiography, prose essays, and public rhetoric. The primary educational goal is to aid students in understanding that conflict over slavery was multi-faceted, multi-racial and multi-lingual, points that are especially important in Arizona's diverse society. Secondary educational goals include engagement with visualized personalities of slavery; providing a framework to discuss the origins of civil conflict and questions of obedience to law; and better comprehension of the intersections between history and

literature. The public benefit of this project lies in its benefit to public education.

3.   **Humanities Content**. This project involves scholarship in both literature and history, together with dramatic performance and humanities computing. It will dramatize important nineteenth-century texts from contrasting narrative traditions. The emphasis of the proposal design lies in performative interpretation of humanistic texts in order to enlighten audiences concerning their existence and expressive power. It calls on a broad set of narrative voices – a free black woman and social activist, a Cuban slave, a condemned man, and two famous intellectuals – to illustrate the breadth of humanistic traditions. Finally, and crucially, it employs the new discipline of humanities computing to reinterpret and make these literary and historical humanities available to new and broader audiences.

4.   **Personnel**.

∞   Joe Lockard – Project director – Assistant professor of English at Arizona State University. Specialist in early American literature, African American literature, and the literature of slavery. Also specializes in Internet cultural studies. Ph.D. in English from University of California, Berkeley.

∞   Geoff Sauer – Co-PI, Internet server-side services – Assistant professor of New Media, English Department, Iowa State University, and director, Center for New Media. Ph.D. in English from Carnegie Mellon University.

∞   Tim McCarthy – History consultant – Lecturer in Literature and History at Harvard University. Completing doctorate in History at Columbia University; in fall 2005 defending a dissertation on abolitionist print culture, under supervision of Prof. Eric Foner.

∞   Bruce Matsunaga – Video Producer – Multimedia specialist for ASU English department and doctoral candidate in English.

∞   Four professional actors, including one bilingual English-Spanish actor.

5.   **Organizational Readiness**. The Antislavery Literature Project is a non-profit that has been in existence since 2002 with the purpose of creating free, non-commercial public access to the literature of slavery via electronic publishing. It is located at http://antislavery.eserver.org/ and currently has an average of approximately 300 visitors daily. During the last six months, with the aid of a grant from Arizona State University's Institute for Humanities Research, the Project has digitized over 40 texts from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, constituting more than 5,000 online text pages. Many of these texts have been annotated to aid contemporary readers; others remain as prooftexts. The Project is currently seeking to expand its interpretive work through streaming digital video and has produced one pilot video of Boston King's *Narrative* (1797), selections of which are read by Professor Neal Lester. The video has been packaged with an annotated complete text of the *Narrative*, prepared by Project associate Elizabeth McNeil. See [URL]

The Project functions in cooperation with the English Server, located at Iowa State University. The English Server, a non-profit established in 1990, is the largest non-commercial electronic publisher in the world and currently has some 1.25 million visitors per month. The Server provides the Project with open-source plone publishing technology and server-side technical assistance. The Server can stream video in both RealPlayer and Quicktime, and operates a separate server for its video gallery and Lectures on Demand [http://eserver.org/lectures/] collection.

6.   **Marketing and Public Relations**. See Appendix 1.

7.   **Schedule of Activities**. See Appendix 2.

8.   **Budget**. See attachment.

9.   **Evaluation**. The Antislavery Literature Project website has a Summary.net statistical package with graphic presentations and a full range of analytic tools. Regular reports will be downloaded and continuing statistical reports on readership/viewership will be provided. The reports will measure site use at one month, three months, and six months.

Appendix 1: Marketing and Public Relations

Prepared by Kisten LaRue, ASU English Department Outreach Coordinator

        The target audience will be Arizona educators and the mode of advertising will be nearly solely Internet-based. Marketing will be phased to coordinate with the release of each video. The Project has extensive contacts and associated listserv access with the following educational organizations across the state of Arizona:

    i.   Arizona English Teachers Association (AETA)

        1. Will advertise in AETA's print mediums: the quarterly newsletter, *Connections*, and the organization's journal, the *Arizona English Bulletin*.

        2. Arizona State University colleague James Blasingame, Jr. will provide access to the AETA listserv membership.

        3. AETA will provide a website link to the Antislavery Literature Project "Voices" Project on its resources page. http://www.asu.edu/aeta/

    ii. Arizona Department of Education (ADE)

        1. Using the extensive "School Search" database provided online by the ADE (http://www.ade.state.az.us/edd/default.asp), the Project will market via email to school administrators in every Arizona district.

iii. Arizona State University (ASU)

    1. Current ASU English Education student teachers, students completing requirements immediately prior to student teaching, and former English Education student teachers will be informed about the Project via email.

    2. Utilizing ASU's extensive on-campus email network, ASU English Department faculty and History Department faculty will each receive a message about the Project.

iv. Northern Arizona University (NAU)

    1. With permission from administrators, Project Director will utilize NAU's extensive on-campus email network to send a message to each NAU English Department faculty and History Department faculty member.

v. University of Arizona (U of A)

    1. With permission from administrators, Project Director will utilize U of A's extensive on-campus email network to send a message to each U of A English Department and History Department faculty member.

vi. Arizona Council for the Social Studies (ACSS)

    1. Project Director will coordinate with ACSS (http://www.azsocialstudies.org/) to send an email

announcement to members and constituents about the Project.

vii. H-Net

    1. Project will be advertised via postings on H-Net Slavery (http://www.h-net.org/~slavery/) and H-Net National Coalition for History (http://www.h-net.org/~nch/), together with H-Afro-Am, H-Amstdy, H-Caribbean, H-CivWar, H-High-S, and H-OEH.

Appendix 2: Schedule of Activities

The three videos and their accompanying annotated texts will be released at one-month intervals during early 2006, as follows:

Activity

January 30, 2006:	Frances Ellen Watkins Harper video
February 28, 2006:	Juan Manzano video
March 31, 2006:	Harpers Ferry video

Audience

There are no current data upon which to base an accurate estimate of online audiences for each video, either upon release or over the website history. We tentatively estimate several thousand downloads for each video during 2006.