Distribution Agreement

In presenting this dissertation as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for an advanced degree from Emory University, I hereby grant to Emory University and its agents the non-exclusive license to archive, make accessible, and display my dissertation in whole or in part in all forms of media, now and hereafter known, including display on the world wide web. I understand that I may select some access restrictions as a part of the online submission of this dissertation. I retain all ownership rights to the copyright of the dissertation. I also retain the right to use in future works (such as articles or books) all or part of this thesis or dissertation.

Signature:

_____ _____

Amy Hildreth Chen Date

Archival Bodies: Twentieth-Century British, Irish, and American Literary Collections

By

Amy Hildreth Chen
Doctor of Philosophy

English

Walter Kalaidjian, Ph.D.
Advisor

Geraldine Higgins, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Mark Sanders, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Accepted:

Lisa A. Tedesco, Ph.D.
Dean of the James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies

_____
Date

Archival Bodies: Twentieth-Century British, Irish, and American Literary Collections

By

Amy Hildreth Chen
M.A., Emory University, 2010
B.A., University of Iowa, 2006

Advisor: Walter Kalaidjian, Ph.D.

An abstract of
A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies of Emory University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in English
2013

Abstract

Archival Bodies: Twentieth-Century British, Irish, and American Literary Collections
By Amy Hildreth Chen

Authors endow their literary collections to academic archives in order to ensure their enduring legacy as writers. Archival institutions pledge not only to organize and preserve an author's papers, but also to promote the writers they acquire to future readers and scholars. While literary collections housed in academic libraries are a relatively contemporary, twentieth-century occurrence, it is only in more recent decades that authors began creating, selling, and monitoring the use of their own materials rather than choosing to have their papers preserved and disseminated after their death. By taking proactive steps to ensure their legacy, writers such as Ted Hughes, Seamus Heaney, and Lucille Clifton have begun to influence the development of literary criticism and the narration of literary history. My dissertation intervenes in two disciplines, showing that in archival studies, scholars focus on historical materials and miss the unique history of twentieth-century literary collections, while in literary criticism, researchers do not consider how their work in the archive is shaped by collection placement and management.

Archival Bodies: Twentieth-Century British, Irish, and American Literary Collections

By

Amy Hildreth Chen
M.A., Emory University, 2010
B.A., University of Iowa, 2006

Advisor: Walter Kalaidjian, Ph.D.

An dissertation of
A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies of Emory University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in English
2013

Acknowledgements

Dissertations are the product of years of work from a score of people. Mine is no different. While I labored to write this project, many others aided its development along the way. My advisors, colleagues, friends, and family all contributed their intellectual and emotional support. I wish to recognize each for their efforts.

My committee guided me as I imagined, researched, drafted, and revised the chapters that comprise this dissertation. I am grateful to my chair, Dr. Walter Kalaidjian, for his initial and sustained encouragement to pursue archival studies. I benefitted greatly from his advice, guidance, and deft letter writing that helped me to gain several scholarships and my dissertation completion fellowship. To Dr. Geraldine Higgins, I owe my interest in Irish studies and my trip to Ireland to attend two institutes in the summer of 2009. That summer, I had many adventures that inspired both my teaching and my writing, including witnessing the Twelfth of July in Belfast and Derry (not Londonderry!) and watching the crowning of a goat at Puck Fair in rural County Kerry. I appreciate Dr. Mark Sanders' generosity with his time. His extensive feedback on both the dissertation and academia in general proved invaluable. Dr. Sanders took me on as a student with little knowledge of who I was or what I was doing as an English student and I am thankful that he made the gamble. Dr. Margaret Mills Harper, visiting from Georgia State University, taught a seminar in Spring 2009 that introduced me to Lucille Clifton and many other writers who now form my personal canon of authors to enjoy and study. Dr. Harper helped me through the exam process prior to the composition of this dissertation. Her humane approach to academics has grounded my later years at Emory, even as she

moved abroad to work at the University of Limerick. Together, my committee's questions and comments deepened and enriched my project immeasurably.

My time as a research assistant with Professor Kevin Young also indelibly shaped this dissertation. Without the experience of helping to facilitate the acquisition of manuscript collections and rare books, I neither would have been able to write about the archive from an interdisciplinary perspective, nor would I have been able to appreciate the power of the archive on the teaching of literature and the development of literary criticism. I would also like to extend gratitude to my colleagues at the Manuscript, Archive and Rare Book Library (MARBL). Their interest and insights on how to best combine archival and literary studies propelled this project forward. Julie Delliquanti, now at the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, showed me power of exhibitions and personally demonstrated the amount of intellectual and creative work required to design, mount, and promote them. To the archivists at MARBL, including John Bence, Laura Carroll, Elizabeth Chace, and Christeene Fraser, thank you for your ideas, your conversations, and your many loaned books.

My writing group, Claire Clark and Shan Mukhtar, cheered me on through every draft and every life event that occurred while working on this dissertation as well as the many other projects I undertook throughout in graduate school. Their advice improved my arguments and my composition while their friendship grounded my years at Emory. I could not ask for a better "think tank."

My friendships with Tina Colvin, Lynn Huynh Griffin, and Janice Hassett Vick, nurtured over many coffees, lunches, drinks, dinners, and workouts, provided me with an interdisciplinary community at Emory. Tina's background in English, Lynn's in

Evolutionary Biology, and Janice's in Psychology helped me to think about what intellectual engagement looks like in the sciences and social sciences as well as in the humanities. Their questions prompted me to think about my research in new ways and forced me to articulate my work more coherently.

Finally, I must acknowledge my family. My in-laws, Alphonso, Julia, Michael, Jackson, and Jayme Chen, as well as Lily Ye, Irene Yang, and Grace Ju, welcomed me into their family during the writing of this dissertation, offering me generosity, hospitality, and many bountiful dinner tables. I owe to them the first word I learned in Mandarin: Xie xie. My aunt and uncle, Robyn Fivush and Rodger Hildreth, gave me their warm encouragement at difficult moments in my career planning, keeping me motivated to join the ranks of the "doctors." My parents, Rhonda and Bart Hildreth, listened, read, and commented on my drafts, aiding the development of this project from prospectus to final draft. I am indebted to my mother; whose sharp eyes caught many typos and whose example gave me the strength and the backbone to persevere. I would never have pursued a career in academia without my father, who remains my role model in what it means to be a scholar, teacher, and a person of character.

And lastly, my husband Muzel Chen's companionship, endless patience, and support made every point of my graduate career easier. I am a better scholar and, more importantly, a better person from his presence in my life.

Archival Bodies:

Twentieth-Century British, Irish, and American Literary Collections

Table of Contents

Introduction

In *Give Me Your Answer, Do!* (1997), Brian Friel dramatizes the process of literary acquisition. The narrative begins at the end of a week David Knight, a representative at an unnamed Texas university, spent at Tom and Daisy Connolly's home in rural Ballybeg, Ireland sorting through manuscripts and ephemera in order to judge if his institution should offer Tom Connolly a place in his archive. Tensions mount: Knight already acquired the papers of Connolly's friend, the more commercially successful Irish author, Gerret Fitzgerald. Deep in debt, the Connollys believe that the money from the sale of Tom Connolly's papers could save the family from poverty and provide better care for their daughter, who lives in an asylum for the mentally ill. At the start of the play, Connolly begins to dream:

> Well, when I go home this afternoon, David Knight is going to give me his answer. He's going to take me aside and put his arm around my shoulder and he is going to say to me, 'Your papers, Tom, are beyond price. Well done, thou good and faithful servant. Please let me reward that excellence and that faithfulness with the ransom of a king.'[1]

Connolly imagines that the money he obtains from the sale of his archive will be compensation for his years of service to literature and a balm to his self-esteem, damaged by years of writer's block and low royalties. Most significantly, Connolly's fantasy reveals that he envisions David, the curator told to 'Deliver Ireland'[2], as the true adjudicator of his talent.

In Tom Connolly's mind, acquisitions decisions by special collections libraries determine literary merit, rather than the reviews of literary critics or the number of books the public purchases. Success comes not when a book is published, but once the papers

---

[1] Brian Friel, *Give Me Your Answer, Do!* (New York: Dramatists Play Service, Inc., 2000), 10.
[2] Ibid., 61.

that document the creative process are sold to a foreign research institution. Daisy Connolly quickly grasps that Knight trades in artist's lives, not just manuscripts; she reassures her husband that his archive is significant as "almost forty years of your life went into it" while Tom Connelly agonizes over David's evaluation of his papers as "just substantial."[3] Because Knight may choose not to offer to purchase the papers, an idea that tortures Tom, Daisy chastises him for not sweetening the sale by offering two previously unpublished manuscripts, tempting items for a university seeking to enhance its status among researchers who prefer to find new material upon which to base their research.[4] But the prospect of acquisition is equally haunting, for it would grant Tom a place "laid out"[5] in Texas like a corpse beside the other "minority writer[s]" – or is it "minority taste? Significant minority writer? Major minor writer? For God's sake never minor major writer?"[6]

Reviews of *Give Me Your Answer, Do!* describe the play as piquing the audience's interest "more in what it says about Friel at this point in his career than what goes on onstage."[7] Friel's likely opinion of the literary manuscripts trade comes in Daisy's final monologue:

> we were both deluded. […] to sell for an affirmation, that would be so wrong for him and so wrong for his work. Because that uncertainty is necessary. He must life with that uncertainty, that necessary uncertainty. Because there can be no verdicts, no answers. Indeed there must be no verdicts. Because being alive is the postponement of verdicts, isn't it? Because verdicts are provided only when it's all over, all concluded.[8]

---

[3] Ibid., 14.
[4] Ibid., 14-8.
[5] Ibid., 38.
[6] Ibid., 39.
[7] Karen Fricker, "Give Me Your Answer, Do!" *Variety*, last modified April 25, 1999, http://www.variety.com/review/VE1117914034/?refCatId=33.
[8] Ibid., 64-5.

Friel, ventriloquizing his beliefs through Daisy, fears acquisition during an author's lifetime nullifies creativity rather than encouraging it. The "verdict" and "answer" of whether or not a writer can establish a place in the literary canon comes preemptively. But Friel shows himself to believe, like Tom Connolly, that the special collections institution is the most important adjudicator of literature today. Friel's reticence toward the special collections institution emerges not from a critique of the idea of acquisitions, but rather from the archive's ability to initiate acquisition while a writer is still alive. Friel does not dispute an archive's value as an institution of literary research or as a significant – if not the most significant – judge of an author's career.

This dissertation examines the problem confronting Tom Connelly and his alter ego, Brian Friel: why would a living author endow his or her literary collection? And what does the choice of institution and the circumstances under which they bestow their papers reveal about a writer's career, art, and how he or she wishes to be perceived in the future?

The answer is that authors endow their literary collections to academic archives in order to ensure their enduring legacy as writers by embracing, rather than avoiding the "verdict" of acquisition because archival institutions pledge not only to organize and preserve an author's papers, but also to promote the writers they acquire to future readers and scholars. While literary collections housed in academic libraries are a relatively contemporary, twentieth century occurrence, it is only in more recent decades that authors began creating, selling, and monitoring the use of their own materials rather than choosing, as Friel prefers, to have their papers preserved and possibly disseminated after their death. Although literary collections usually are available to be viewed by the general

public, they generally are valued for their ability to facilitate literary criticism. Therefore, by taking proactive steps to ensure their legacy, collectively writers are beginning to influence the development of literary criticism and the narration of literary history.

Reading literary collections for signs of how authors are shaping their own reception requires interdisciplinary methods. Biographical criticism helps to analyze the trajectory of an author's career, the literature he or she produces, and the relationships that facilitate a particular institution's acquisition of their literary collection. But understanding the archival body, the author once he or she is "laid out" in the archive, requires recognizing the unique history, methodology, values, and goals of the archive the author selected. Therefore, reviewing the history of archival theory and studying the way in which the archive works in practice demonstrates how authors use institutions to preserve their papers while promoting their artistic legacy.

Each writer who places his or her materials in the archive creates a literary collection comprised of their collected papers. How these literary collections are used in the archive demonstrates the reach of their archival body. Archival bodies generate research, contribute to the development of exhibits, and set a precedent for the acquisition of other literary collections. As literary collections are supposed to contribute to a "living library,"[9] these libraries cannot exist without transforming literary collections into

---

[9] A "living library" is a term that indicates a library is still growing through additions to its collections. For example, the Raymond Danowski poetry library is considered a living library. I use this term here to suggest not that the literary collections themselves are "living" – although some are due to the additions that come in when writers are still living – but rather that academic special collections only thrive when they consistently serve as a research destination. "Raymond Danowski Poetry Library," Collection Overview, *Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library*, accessed May 18, 2012, http://marbl.library.emory.edu/collection-overview/raymond-danowski-poetry-library.

archival bodies. Therefore, in order to fully capture the significance of each writer's literary collection to its housing institution, the contents of an author's literary collection must be discussed alongside its function as an archival body.

Examining the literature that comprises each literary collection is necessary, for an archive would not have acquired an author's papers if their work were not of a high artistic standard. Exploring the arc of a writer's career and the development of their writing style illustrates their significance to an archive. Moreover, a writer's work also reveals the unique personal and artistic motivations that brought them to the archive. In order to see these motivations, it is necessary to focus on the genres of material that highlight a writer's interest in their legacy. For example, dedicated poems, doggerel, and elegies situate poets among their peers and demonstrate their relationships to archival representatives. While letters and other documents within a literary collection can also show a writer's interest in the archive, an author's creative work most effectively identifies their motivations because it demonstrates the way in which they imagine their legacy artistically.

I. Methodology

Interpreting both an author's writing within their literary collection and assessing their archival body requires an interdisciplinary methodology that relies on biographical criticism as well as archival theory. Biographical criticism shows how a writer's life and personal relationships influenced the creation of their art and therefore steered their decision regarding where to place their papers. Archival theory, comprised of writings by

practicing archivists,[10] literary theorists,[11] as well as scholars interested in postcolonial history,[12] anchors discussions of the archive by defining the variety of audiences invested in depictions of the archive. Practicing archivists, who work in archives, describe the history of their profession; mark the emergence of the literary collection as a genre of material within archives; make connections between literary collections and historical collections; and suggest the possibilities provoked by the inclusion of born digital

---

[10] Archive science's texts follow the two primary monographs that established and codified their field: *The Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives* (1898), also known as the "Dutch Manual," written by Sam Muller, J.A. Feith, and R. Fruin and Sir Hilary Jenkinson's *A Manual of Archival Administration* (1922).

[11] Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida are the two primary theorists of the archive. Foucault's works on the subject include: "Michel Foucault. Of Other Spaces (1967), Heterotropias.," Trans. Jay Miskowiec, accessed March 10, 2011, http://foucault.info/documents/heteroTopia/foucault.heteroTopia.en.html; "The Historical a-priori and the archive," *The Archeology of Knowledge*, Trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Harper and Row, 1969) and *Discipline and Punish* trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon, 1977). Derrida's writings include: *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); *Copy, Archive, Signature: A Conversation on Photography*, Trans. Jeff Fort, Ed. Gerhard Richter (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010) and *Geneses, Geneaologies, Genres and Genius: The Secrets of the Archive* trans. Beverly Bie Brahic (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003). Also see: Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, Trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Boston: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002). John Ridener offers an excellent overview to archival theory in his *From Polders to Postmodernism: A Concise History of Archival Theory* (Duluth, MN: Litwin Books, 2009).

[12] Seminal works which offer a postcolonial perspective on the archive include: Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979); Thomas Richards, *The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire* (London: Verso, 1993); Deborah Cherry, *Painting Women: Victorian Women Artists, Britain 1850-1900* (London: Routledge, 1993); Nupur Chaudhuri, Sherri J. Katz, Mary Elizabeth Perry, eds. *Contesting the Archives: Finding Women in the Sources,* Forward Antoinette Burton (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 2010); Gayatri Spivak, "The Rani of Simur: An Essay in Reading the Archives," *History and Theory* 24, no. 3 (October 1985), 247-272; *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History*, Ed. Antionette Burton (Durham, NC: Duke University Press Books, 2006); *Refiguring the Archive*, Ed. Carolyn Hamilton (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 2002); and Suzanne Keen, *Romances of the Archive in Contemporary British Fiction* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003).

material in traditionally paper-based collections.[13] Postcolonial scholars place literary collections in a comparative historical context with other types of archival material by demonstrating the way in which political power shapes how someone appears and even who can appear in institutional records.

Literary theorists, who consider the intellectual history behind the concept of the archive and examine its effect on society, now have generated so much material on the since the publication of Jacques Derrida's *Archive Fever* (1998)[14], that their net interest in the archive is now described as the humanity's "archival turn." However, Michel Foucault, an earlier theorist, provides the focus for this project by reiterating the oddness of concept of the comprehensive archive. Archivists do not shy away from collections policies that seek to acquire all items of a particular description. In fact, this goal is the focus of most contemporary institutions. Friel lambasts this ambition when David Knight tells Tom Connolly that he must "deliver every single goddamned name on their goddamn Irish list."[15] Foucault agrees with Knight's suspicion of this ideal by arguing that the archive, like a museum or library, is a heterotropia: an "immobile" place of "indefinitely accumulating time" intended to remove resources from their historical and cultural contexts in order to attempt to create institutions which follow modernity's

---

[13] Born digital is a term that refers to documents and other files which were created among computing environments. Recent scholarship suggests the significance of software and hardware on compositional practices. See, for example, Matt Kirschenbaum, *Mechanisms: New Media and the Forensic Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008).

[14] The archival turn is discussed in Randolph C. Head's article "Historical Research on Archives and Disciplinary Cultures: an interdisciplinary wave," *Archival Science* 10, no. 1 (November 2010), 1. The turn primarily is credited to the publication of Jacques Derrida's *Archive Fever* (cited above).

[15] Brian Friel, *Give Me Your Answer, Do!* (New York: Dramatists Play Service, Inc., 2000), 61.

ambition of creating a complete set of knowledge in one location, rather than allowing smaller collections to be generated which only reflect a single individual's intent.[16] As contemporary special collections libraries exemplify this urge, Foucault critiques such institutions by demonstrating that their goals are predicated in an intellectual trend that began at the end of the nineteenth century. While Foucault focuses on the early development of archives, libraries, and museums in order to argue that the urge toward completeness is a symptom of modernity, this project illustrates the reasons behind the shift in later modernity from individual, local, and even regional collections to national or international-level institutions. However, literary collections cannot be understood properly within the intellectual history of the creation of archives if the histories behind individual literary collections are not first examined.[17] For this reason, while archival theory is not frequently used in the chapters themselves order to reiterate the project's focus on the development and placement of specific literary collections rather than the use of contemporary literary collections as a whole, it is a critical component that grounds the project in the ongoing interdisciplinary conversation on archives.

Combining literary analysis with an interest in the archive allows each chapter to function as an "archival story" by providing the history behind the acquisition of literary

---

[16] Michel Foucault. Of Other Spaces (1967), Heterotropias.," Trans. Jay Miskowiec, accessed March 10, 2011, http://foucault.info/documents/heteroTopia/foucault.heteroTopia.en.html.

[17] The archival turn is discussed in Randolph C. Head's article "Historical Research on Archives and Disciplinary Cultures: an interdisciplinary wave," *Archival Science* 10, no. 1 (November 2010), 1. The turn primarily is credited to the publication of Jacques Derrida's *Archive Fever* (cited above).

collections.[18] For simplicity, three literary collections have been selected which all came to the Emory University Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library at Woodruff Library in pivotal decade of 1997 to 2006, an era that reflects the expansion of the university's special collections and the acquisition of the Raymond Danowski Poetry Library. The authors selected – English poet Ted Hughes, acquired in 1997; Irish poet Seamus Heaney who endowed his archive in 2003; and American poet Lucille Clifton who placed her papers at Emory in 2006 – represent three different subject areas in the library not only due to their differing nationalities, but also because each of these authors is a foundational acquisition.

These archival stories are significant because each literary collection's status as a foundational acquisition represents a turning point in the history of Emory's archive. Foundational acquisitions lead to the purchase of additional, complementary literary collections due to the prestige the original collection confers on their housing institution. The acquisition of the papers and library of Ted Hughes, the Poet Laureate of Britain from 1984 until 1998, led to a series of acquisitions of the papers of his close family and close friends.[19] As Ted Hughes's material contains work by his first wife, Pulitzer Prize winner Sylvia Plath, Emory has become a focus for Plath research. Ted Hughes's friendship with Seamus Heaney was not the primary or even secondary reason for Heaney's decision to place his work at Emory; however, Hughes's presence at the

---

[18] The term "archival story" comes from Antoinette Burton's edited collection *Archival Stories: Facts, Fiction, and the Writing of History* (Winston-Salem, NC: Duke University Press, 2006).

[19] These collections include family members Gerald Hughes, Frieda Hughes and Olwyn Hughes; friends Peter Redgrove, W.S. and Dido Merwin, Lucas Meyers, Edna Wholey, János Csokits, Daniel Weissbort, Seamus Heaney; and significant others including Emma Tennant and Assia Wevill.

archive nevertheless contributed to Heaney's sense of Emory's dedication to literature and its ability to represent and promote the work of their authors.

Seamus Heaney's acquisition completed rather than began a series of collections, but his residence at Emory lead to the acquisition of up and coming Irish authors. Heaney's peers in the Belfast Group, Derek Mahon and Michael Longley, came to Emory 1991 and 1992 respectively and Heaney's acquisition finished this set of Belfast Group papers. However, Heaney's reputation as a Nobel Prize laureate did continue the snowball effect begun by Mahon and Longley. Now, Irish poets of later generations first must weigh the formative presence of their Belfast Group predecessors at Emory before they consider other archives that would like to house their work.[20] For this reason, it is a nationalist statement for Irish authors to choose to keep their papers in Ireland rather than placing them in the United States at Emory, the archive known as "an Irish village."[21] Heaney himself had to negotiate the decision to join the "Irish village" or to keep his papers in his homeland. By splitting his collection between Emory and the National Library of Ireland, he satisfied both urges, albeit at the price of having his materials divided across different institutions, countries, and continents.

Seamus Heaney's connection to Emory faculty and alumni also led to the acquisition of some of their materials as complementary collections to his own. Heaney's friendship to Professor Ronald Schuchard led Schuchard to create a separate literary collection for papers relating to their correspondence at Emory. Heaney's bibliographer,

---

[20] Those collections by poets in the following generations of Irish literature include: Medbh McGuckian, Ciaran Carson, Joan McBreen, Rita Ann Higgins, Frank Ormsby, Seamus Deane, and Eamon Grennan.

[21] Laura Diamond, "Emory gets poet's papers," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, June 14, 2010, accessed May 17, 2012, http://www.ajc.com/news/dekalb/emory-gets-poets-papers-548668.html.

Rand Brandes, a professor of English and a former Emory graduate student, also chose to house his papers relating to the cataloging of Heaney's work at Emory.

Lucille Clifton's papers, the most recent addition to the Manuscript, Archive, and Rare Book Library, have yet to demonstrate to what extent they will be a foundational acquisition. But it would not be a reach to imagine how Clifton's reputation as the Poet Laureate of Maryland from 1979-1985, the first author to have two books nominated for a Pulitzer in 1998, and a National Book Award winner in 2000, would contribute to additional acquisitions, specifically within the field of late twentieth century African American poetry. As Clifton mentored other African American writers through her role as an elder of Cave Canem and was friends with significant Black Arts Movement writers, authors from these two milieus may choose to place their work at Emory in the future.

For this reason, Ted Hughes, Seamus Heaney, and Lucille Clifton's archival stories are important not only because they add to the literary research surrounding these authors, but also because they help to illustrate the broader movement of creative writers and their papers across national and international boarders in the postmodern period. None of these authors attended Emory, lived in Atlanta, Georgia, or even had significant, personal ties to the American South. For this reason, these writers' choice to place their work at Emory is not obvious. Focusing on the individual reasons each author selected Emory shows the different circumstances at play for each writer, reflecting his or her personal motivations. Closely examining these poets' literature and their biography generates a picture of why each writer chose to house their papers at Emory.

II. Findings

Each archival story offers two theses: a new critical approach to the author's literature and the way in which that writer's archival body broadens and challenges conceptions of the archive as an institution. To discuss the literary findings first, Ted Hughes's final volume of poetry, *Birthday Letters* (1998), functions as a parallel to his literary collection as both were created at the same time. Secondly, Seamus Heaney's poetry is influenced by his close relationships to literary critics such as Philip Hobsbaum, Thomas Flanagan, and Helen Vendler as well as Richard Ellmann, Ronald Schuchard, and William Chace. These relationships are seen most clearly in the doggerel and occasional writing only present in his literary collection. Finally, Lucille Clifton's mentorship of generations of African American poets includes creative writer Kevin Young, who is also the curator of literary collections at Emory University's Manuscript, Archive, and Rare Book Library. Clifton and Young share an affinity for the elegy, which commemorates individuals after their death. Young's role as a caretaker of Clifton's archival body continues his investment in the elegy.

Both *Birthday Letters* and Ted Hughes's literary collection highlight Hughes's struggle with his celebrity status and illuminate how privacy concerns shaped the way in which he wrote. Hughes first considered and then rejected the help of Australian academic Ann Skea when creating his literary collection. By choosing to sort through his papers independently, Hughes's organization of his literary collection influenced the composition of his *Birthday Letters* poems. *Birthday Letters* is an intervention into both the biographical criticism that arose in the wake of Sylvia Plath's suicide and the success of the confessional verse that made her reputation. Writing about Plath in a manner that often borrows the themes, imagery, and even diction of *Ariel* enabled Hughes to create

autobiographical poetry that expanded the meaning of confessional verse. *Birthday Letters* demonstrates how Hughes's newly found confessional mode recontextualizes Plath's work by incorporating it into his own. In the process, Hughes changes the perspective future Plath readers can take, as now he cannot be read only as how he is portrayed in Plath's writing.

Seamus Heaney's occasional writing – poems and doggerel written for specific occasions – illustrates the significance of his social ties to Emory's faculty, which led to the acquisition of his papers. As these poems are mostly unpublished, the genre of this writing contributes to how Heaney's connections to literary critics have been mostly overlooked in favor of research on his relationships with other creative writers, namely the Belfast Group. Although his published poetry dedicated to literary critics is significant, Heaney's occasional poetry shows how casual writing displays close social connections more readily than poems intended to be art.

Lucille Clifton's work and the writing of Kevin Young, the curator of literary collections and the Raymond Danowski Poetry Library, both demonstrate an enduring interest in the power of elegies, commemorative poems written after their subject's death. By illustrating the range of ways elegy is employed in the work of both poets, I argue that elegies – like literary collections – preserve and promote the subject that they memorialize. As Kevin Young is both a creative writer and a curator, his elegies are not only seen in his writing, but also contribute to his role as a steward of Clifton's authorial legacy.

Ted Hughes, Seamus Heaney, and Lucille Clifton's archival bodies also suggest new perspectives on the role of literary collections within archival institutions. These

perspectives are drawn from the literary conclusions generated by each chapter. Ted Hughes, for example, suggests the need to understand the history behind a literary collection because that history shapes the regulations surrounding its use. Seamus Heaney's papers require recognizing the limitations of using a literary collection created by a living author. Lucille Clifton's necessitates considering how to represent the ongoing activities of a curator who is currently in the process of shaping her legacy.

Ted Hughes placed his papers at Emory because he needed the funds from the sale of his literary collection to facilitate a divorce from his second wife, Carol Hughes.[22] Problematically for him, Hughes died before he was able to complete the divorce, which allowed the rights to his literary collection to remain in his wife's name. At stake in this conversation is an accurate depiction of the creation of the literary celebrity in the twentieth century, the way in which intellectual property does or does not cover literary collections as well as published works, and the role of copyright holders in the archive.

Creating an archive story for Ted Hughes resulted in a realization that any conversation regarding the use of archives for academic research requires identifying how the structure of the archive shapes and even curtails what can be said. Research in the archives is predicated on the understanding that what is found is free to be used as long as copyright is protected. The problem is that those that work in the archive do not need to be versed in copyright and intellectual property regulations because the archivists and reference librarians who work at an institution ensure a researcher's compliance. However, researchers comply without actively considering how these regulations shape their work. Copyright and intellectual property regulations are felt as more a hindrance on

---

[22] "Her Husband; Diane Middlebrook Notes from Olwyn Hughes," Olwyn Hughes papers, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

a researcher's workflow rather than a subject of research unto itself. After all, the archival user is in pursuit of the other types of information contained in the archive. For example, a researcher using the Ted Hughes literary collection is likely to be more interested in the drafts of his poetry than the reason why those poetry drafts cannot be photographed. Therefore, an archive's rules are only perceived when they intervene in the progress of research. The structure of the archive is ignored because an archive user's topic of research is rarely the regulations surrounding the archive. Furthermore, because archival users are not empowered to discuss or change the terms of the collection they are using because they are not trained to consider this information and the reasons for certain rules are frequently not made public to protect the subject of the literary collection. For this reason, it is critical to contemporary archival studies to address these regulations and policies, the reasons they come into being, and their effect in order to see how they shape the research process and its outcomes.

Without a discussion of the role of intellectual property and related concerns in the administration and use of literary collections, literary scholars cannot appreciate the way in which these issues shape the direction of their work; archivists cannot recognize fully the impact of these measures on their patrons; and writers themselves cannot consider the way in which the function of the university – to share information – inherently contradicts the business model of protecting information in order to maintain exclusivity. These archive stories, while written as narratives, are intended to reveal the myriad complexities of the literary collection as a form. Reading the archive, not just the contents of the archive, is no different than reading any other piece of information where issues of authorship, place of publication, form, and content all come into consideration.

These concerns particularly came into play in Ted Hughes's literary collection, but they also surfaced in Seamus Heaney's and Lucille Clifton's papers.

Seamus Heaney's literary collection also posed additional problems, as it was incomplete. Heaney's only literary collection at the start of research on the second chapter consisted of the writing and correspondence he placed at the Emory Manuscript, Archive, and Rare Book Library. After the conclusion of the composition of the chapter, however, Heaney announced that he would place additional papers from his working life as a poet at the National Library of Ireland.[23] As the National Library's holdings mainly consist of Heaney's literature and his Emory collection largely includes his personal correspondence, this research topic naturally is suited more to the material at Emory than the work available in Ireland. The project was begun with the hunch that the bulk of his poetry drafts would go to an Irish institution, as his Emory collection had been intended to focus on his connections with Emory faculty members. Heaney's statement validated this premise.

While the problem of working on the archives of living authors is not a focus of the dissertation as a whole or the chapter on Heaney specifically, the situation whereby living authors continue to interact with collecting institutions even after the endowment of their literary collection demonstrates the need to consider how they may act in the future. Literary collections made by living authors, after all, may only consist of the material they choose or the papers they have created up until the date of their acquisition.

---

[23] Carl O'Brien, "Heaney hands notes to National Library," *Irish Times*, December 21, 2011, accessed May 17, 2012, http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/breaking/2011/1221/breaking30.html.

Identifying the types of materials that are not present for research is as critical as the proper use of what papers are available.

Furthermore, the fact that Seamus Heaney is still living means that researchers can choose to write to him if they wish to see material he has restricted out of privacy concerns. I decided while working on Heaney's archive story, however, to avoid this approach. Instead of choosing to contact Heaney in order to request special research permissions that could inform the chapter, I decided to work with the materials which would be provided to the average archival user that did not know or did not take the time to request additional permissions. This position reflected an interest in the way in which the archive's construction shapes the type of research that can be produced.

The concern about how appropriately to handle both living authors became even more significant when I began to research and compose Lucille Clifton's archive story. Once I realized there was little evidence in the literary collection documenting Clifton's decision to choose to place her collection at Emory instead of at Duke University, I needed to turn to what I knew she did value – the work of its curator, Kevin Young. As Kevin Young is currently a curator at Emory as well as a creative writer in his own right, I delved into his work to investigate what made Young's curatorship an asset when Clifton was in the process of considering where to place her papers. As I was Kevin Young's research assistant throughout the composition of this dissertation, I decided to keep my writing process separate from my role as a research assistant to Kevin Young in order to allow myself to create independent conclusions. I do not believe I could discuss Lucille Clifton's literary collection without also including Kevin Young, for Young served not only as the curator who acquired her literary collection, but he is also the

caretaker of her archival body. Tracing a history of a mutually beneficial relationship predicated on a history of creative respect required spending more time discussing Young's work than was required when considering the relationships between Heaney and the literary critics who aided the development of his career. Additionally, it was important to demonstrate how curators create the archival body through their acquisition, promotion, and use of literary collections. The inclusion of Kevin Young in Lucille Clifton's archive story reflects the day-to-day working environment of an archive.

Archival Bodies: Twentieth-Century British, Irish, and American Literary Collections speaks to two audiences – literary scholars and those interested in archives as an institution –through the double theses of each chapter's archive story. A literary focus is necessary to emphasize the significance of the art within these collections, to demonstrate the importance of reading the literature as a way of recording an author's motivations, and to show how authors are becoming more aware of how institutional policies and regulations can help them shape the production of research and, in turn, their own literary legacy. Literary collections also offer new perspectives to those studying the history, use, and significance of archives and academic special collections by illustrating how they are a unique type of record within the archive and highlighting the potential contribution of literary studies to archival studies.

III. Conclusion

Each archive story analyzes an author's motivations for endowing their literary collection. Just as Tom Connolly alternatively solicited and then distained the acquisitions process, reviling it as "five days of smiling and groveling and scrutinizing,"[24]

[24] Friel, *Give Me Your Answer, Do!,* 16.

each writer's experience, the institution they chose to house their papers, how their decisions are reflected in their work, and the conditions under which their papers are given demonstrates how an author wishes to be seen in the future. Ted Hughes, Seamus Heaney, and Lucille Clifton allowed "the agent" of the Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library at Emory to "touch," "feel," "sniff," and "weigh" their archival body in order to allow the archive to bolster their literary legacy in their own lifetime.[25]

[25] Ibid., 17.

Chapter One

Finding the "Insane Chance":[1] Ted Hughes's Archival Intervention

Ted Hughes's tenure as Britain's Poet Laureate from 1984 to 1998 positions him as England's representative poet at the end of the twentieth century. However, his career was indelibly marked by his relationship to the United States. Hughes's 1956 marriage to Sylvia Plath introduced him to American cultural values, which he felt was driven by a predilection for self-revelation; but what he did not realize was that this taste for the personal also cultivated in Americans a keen interest in celebrities, and that following Plath's suicide in 1963, he would become the target of both interest and condemnation for many years afterward. By developing a poetics that privileged flora and fauna over human society, Hughes attempted to distance himself from an increasingly hostile public. In 1998, however, he altered his approach two important ways: he published the autobiographical text *Birthday Letters* and opened his literary collection at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. This double archival intervention favorably reoriented American public opinion and led to a career reevaluation of his work by scholars. Furthermore, in both the book and manuscript collection, Hughes reconstituted Plath as part of his own archive.

I. The "Hughes Problem":[2] The making of a literary celebrity

Ted Hughes first came to the United States as Sylvia Plath's husband. For the remainder of his career, his reputation in the United States would be marked by this relationship. Following Plath's suicide in 1962, the reclusive Hughes began to lead two

---

[1] Ted Hughes, *Letters of Ted Hughes*, ed. Christopher Reid (London: Faber and Faber, 2007), 240.
[2] Sandie Byrne, ed., *The Poetry of Ted Hughes* (Duxford, Cambridge: Icon Books, 2000), 61.

lives: one private, the other public. The public Hughes, a celebrity constructed by the popular success of Plath's posthumous volume *Ariel* (1965), would be vilified. American popular opinion refused to recognize the complexity of the marriage. American critics discussed Hughes's literary stewardship of Plath rather than considering Hughes's work. For this reason, Hughes's career in the United States was characterized by Plath's archive: her works as well as the numerous studies, biographies, and critical discussions that emerged as Plath became canonized as the 'Marilyn Monroe of the literati.'[3] At the end of his career in the 1990s, Hughes began to consider privately how he could reconstruct his legacy by returning to the autobiographical subject matter he found so distasteful when he first arrived in the United States. *Birthday Letters* (1998) was the result of Hughes's return to autobiography. Although *Birthday Letters* was written over a longer span of time than the few years it took Hughes to audit his personal papers for the archive, Hughes's memory work in the volume cannot be seen as an independent exercise from his simultaneous employment of sorting through the documents and items which found their way into the archive. The origin of Hughes's creative sparks were the memories and images suggested by his own artifacts, examined afresh for consideration as part of the Emory archive. In this way, Hughes sought to use his own literary celebrity to reorient both public opinion and academic discussion.

In a prescient letter to W.S. Merwin dated June 9, 1988, Ted Hughes recounted that since Sylvia Plath's suicide on February 11, 1963, "I've had a sort of double existence – one as typecast in the Plath drama, one trying to ghost along somewhere close

---

[3] Jacqueline Rose, *The Haunting of Sylvia Plath* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 26.

to the life I might have had." He then complains, "dogs in the street seem to have more ideas about me than I have. It's served one purpose – made my literary life, especially the U.S. territories, enemy country."[4] Hughes's assertion that the United States fundamentally opposed him indicates a striking cultural indictment, one magnified by the role the United States played in facilitating his earliest success in 1957 as the original publishing site for his first volume *The Hawk in the Rain.* Following Plath's death, however, Hughes felt the country became antagonistic toward him as Plath's literary success intertwined with her biography to produce a celebrity master narrative. This narrative, which relied on portraying Plath as a victimized poet who produced a groundbreaking volume immediately prior to her suicide, needed Hughes to fill the role of the villain. Recognizing the inflexibility of this position, Hughes feared the damage to his reputation would be permanent. He complained the "Plath drama […] has gradually infiltrated the collegiate generations with its genetic bits and pieces, till now everybody under 40 carries all the assumptions as hereditary law." Therefore, what made the United States "enemy territory" was neither its inherent opposition to Hughes's writing, nor Plath's artistic success, but rather the importance of the narrative of their marriage to American culture. For this reason, Hughes felt from relatively early in his career that American culture was anathema to both himself and his writing.

After their marriage, Plath and Hughes lived mostly in Massachusetts from June 1957 until December 1959. There, they taught, traveled, and mingled with American writers. While enjoying his introduction to the "new world," Hughes diagnosed America

---

[4] Hughes, *Letters of Ted Hughes*, 545.

as suffering from an innate superficiality.[5] Although at first his dislike for the United States was mediated by his interest in the comparative sins of each country and his awareness that "American is about as insufferable as England, but there are possibly more compensations," as Hughes's residence lengthened, so did his list of complaints.[6] In a letter he wrote to his brother Gerald and his sister-in-law Joan Hughes in June 1957, he explained: "The great sin in America is 'not-to-be-able-to-mix' […] So everybody's in everybody else's arms, and all burstingly happy & well-adjusted so far as their facial expressions go."[7] Hughes returned to dwell on the theme in a letter to his parents sent the same month: "The American middle-aged couple - as most of them were - is generally of this pattern: […] the wife is the sociable side of the combine, and the husband the silent deep-thinking battery of power."[8] Contrasting the expected British affect of "a tightly controlled English smile" against the wattage of the "superhumanly friendly smile" both reiterates the masking involved in conventional social interactions in the United States and the cultural expectations of strictly gendered behavior. Hughes returned to the theme in October in a letter to his sister Olwyn. By this point, Hughes had begun to feel more comfortable in his Northhampton, Massachusetts home. He felt his happier mood resulted from beginning "to meet one or two likeable people & establish relationships with natural features" rather than merely existing as a character in "a stony picture in a travel brochure." Although "natural features" can simply mean the rhythms of seeing and getting to know new acquaintances, his previous letters suggest that real relationships

---

[5] Diane Middlebrook, *Her Husband* (New York: Viking, 2003), 26-7.
[6] Hughes, *Letters of Ted Hughes,* 166; "Letter to Daniel Weissbort," Ted Hughes Papers, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.
[7] Hughes, *Letters of Ted Hughes*, 103.
[8] "Letter to William and Edith Hughes," June 1957, Ted Hughes Papers, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

also require natural [facial] features unmarked by signs of excessive cordiality. Although this letter begins to show an encouraging progress in Hughes's perception of America, he nevertheless continued by saying that the process of acclimating was like a "huge feat of digestion."

Hughes sensed that the superficiality that permeated America was cultural alienation resulting largely from living within family units rather than belonging to a locality, community, or even to a private imagination. For this reason, he asserted that the country would be susceptible to the allure of autobiography, the "only subject matter really left."[9] His startling insight that autobiography is a genre emerging from an imaginative poverty, and that the United States as a whole suffered from a lack of depth due to its social standards, now reads prophetically according to contemporary studies of celebrity. As celebrity is a byproduct of public fascination with strangers' autobiographies, a voyeuristic interest in a few celebrities' lives is often a substitution or compensation for relationships with neighbors as well as oneself. While celebrity is not a twentieth-century phenomenon, its contemporary incarnation began following World War I as increasingly urban populations found pleasure in the new media of radio and film which "restore[d] immediacy and intimacy to human narrative at just the moment when mass modernity made everything in city life seem so anonymous and fragmentary."[10] For this reason, the advent of celebrity culture is tied to the rise of the individual as a "centre of modern ethics."[11] Identifying with, judging, and distinguishing oneself from celebrities became a substitute for social life. The simulated intimacy of

---

[9] Hughes, *Letters of Ted Hughes*, 140.
[10] Fred Inglis, *A Short History of Celebrity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 10-11.
[11] Ibid., 30.

celebrity satisfied a public need for community while sustaining the economic conditions that undergird the basis of that desire. So Hughes's condemnation of Americans' lack of a "private imagination" suggests not only that he noticed a national dearth of introspection, but also that he believed that Americans preferred the easy rewards of popular culture to cultivating personal ties. Hughes saw reading autobiographies and autobiographically inflected writing such as Robert Lowell's confessional verse as a symptomatic behavior of those who lacked a community. In hindsight, this lack of community and interest in autobiography also foreshadows the burgeoning American celebrity culture that developed following World War II.[12]

Hughes's observation of midcentury American popular culture is also predicated on the United States' relative affluence in contrast to England. This affluence was presumed to be culturally endemic. For example, Hughes's friends taunted the infatuated Hughes with the rhyme "I'd rather have my Ted as he used to be/ Than Sylvia Plath and her rich mommy."[13] Lucas Meyers, one of the friends who participated in the chant, later explained to Plath's biographer that the basis of their ridicule was their perception at the time that all Americans were wealthy. Plath's family was not, but their appearance suggested otherwise and, as if in agreement, Plath's biographers often note her penchant for preppy dressing and bleached blonde hair at this period in her life. Behind the commentary on her appearance, however, lies a striking assertion that these personal

---

[12] Faye Hammill argues that literary celebrity is an underserved area within celebrity studies as a whole. Although Hammill concentrates on women writers like Dorothy Parker and Anita Loos, I suggest here that Lowell's broad audience, critical success, Boston Brahmin background, and relationships with writers such as Elizabeth Bishop and Anne Sexton, as well as Sylvia Plath, makes him an equally viable candidate.

[13] Diane Middlebrook, *Her Husband* (New York: Viking, 2003), 30.

choices in dress and grooming are markers of nationality. Meyers stated that far worse than Plath's appearance was her desire to publish commercially, well established by the time Plath arrived in England.

Plath's late teenage and college years were marked by a dogged desire to see her work in print: her first publication was "And Summer Will Not Come Again" in *Seventeen* in August 1950, "Den of Lions" was published in May 1951, also in *Seventeen*, and August 1952 saw Plath's "Sunday at the Mintons" in *Mademoiselle*. "Initiation," which merited second place in *Seventeen*'s short story contest in January 1953, kept up Plath's yearly publication record.[14] From 1954 through 1961, Plath continued to submit her work, but to a wider variety of periodicals. She eventually placed work in the *Smith Review* and *Smith Alumnae Quarterly* as well as *Granta*, *Gemini*, and the *London Magazine*.[15] Hughes felt Plath's persistent desire to market her writing was another attribute of American "bourgeois values." Seen as coexisting traits, American wealth and preoccupation with money came to a head with Plath's determination to get her verse as well as Hughes's into print.

In midcentury England, publishing was a secondary concern, especially publishing for mass audiences. England, one of the capitals of modernism, was slow to move from the earlier model of literary production characterized by the relatively limited circulation for avant-garde "little magazines" and the popularity of coterie artistic

---

[14] The "Initiation" author blurb highlights Plath's persistence: "Sylvia Plath, reviewing her long friendship with us, says '...at fifteen and sixteen, I got rejection slips! Then, my first acceptance at the appropriate age of seventeen. Now the swan song in the form of a second prize!" A moral here, we think, for all contributors.' From "*Seventeen* (January 1953), 65," Ted Hughes Papers, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

[15] "Plath Printed Materials," Ted Hughes Papers, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

communities. While financial interests no doubt weighed on earlier writers, the modernist model of artistic production was to live cheaply if necessary[16] or from funds provided by family inheritance.[17] Undergirding the value of monetary independence is preference for the sentimental ideal of the author as a "solitary creative genius whose work goes unrecognized by the mainstream." The "model of the author as part of a corporate publisher's marketing strategy" not only offended the ideals and values of Hughes and his friends, but also signaled a clash between competing modernist and postmodernist conditions of cultural production.[18]

The growing prominence of consumer capitalism, backed by the social milieu of increasingly isolated and alienated individuals that supported the development of a commodity economy, began to change the shape of American publishing. While these attributes would eventually apply to England as well, the United States demonstrated these symptoms earlier due to the nation's prosperity following World War II. But what the English found most disturbing was not just "ever-increasing penetration of capitalism into our day-to-day existence," but how commodity-based capitalism manages to "obliterate the classically Marxist distinction between the economic and the cultural."[19] As art began to be consumed for its "sign function" – its symbolic significance as part of a lifestyle, rather than its intrinsic value – it became code for the classification system

---

[16] A famous example can be found in *A Moveable Feast* when Earnest Hemingway attempts to live cheaply in Paris during the 1920s.
[17] Gertrude Stein's financial situation is discussed in the chapter titled "Gertrude Stein's Money" in Loren Glass's *Authors Inc*. Harry and Caresse Crosby of the Black Sun Press, a fine arts publishing house based in 1920s Paris, funded their projects with shares of stock from J.P. Morgan, as discussed in Geoffrey Wolff's *Black Sun*.
[18] Glass, *Authors Inc.*, 6.
[19] Hans Bertens, *The Idea of the Postmodern: A History* (London: Routledge, 1995), 10.

denoting the status of individuals.[20] The result is that the products of "high culture," the artistic and literary work that previously challenged middlebrow taste and existed without popular support, began to lose its unique cachet as it assimilated into a broader system that valued the symbolic function of art as a connotation of elite culture rather than for its ability to produce knowledge or aesthetic appreciation.

Postmodernism also began to shift artistic standards. A common distinction between modernist and postmodernist writing is postmodernism's emphasis on lisible (readerly) qualities instead of scriptable (writerly) values.[21] Capitulation to mass markets required art to become more approachable. Works that catered to popular tastes were rewarded with greater sales. Traditional modernist writers whose reputations extended into the postmodernist period, and who produced both accessible and formally difficult texts, began to see that the interest generated from their less-challenging books did not create demand for their more difficult works.[22] Thus Hughes's and his friends' discomfort with Plath's investment in the popular press is symptomatic of their disdain for the commodification of art and the lowering of artistic standards. Throughout Hughes's life, he continued to reiterate that Plath's greatest fault was her misplaced ambition to publish in magazines and her willingness to tailor her work in order to fit the popular market.

Seeking publication for financial benefit through an aggressive submission schedule and a focus on the popular press reinforced Plath's cultural distance from her

---

[20] Ibid., 146.
[21] David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1990), 43.
[22] Loren Glass characterizes *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* (1933) as accessible in contrast to the challenging *Tender Buttons* (1914) and *The Making of Americans* (1925). Glass, *Authors Inc.*, 116.

contemporaries in England. Although Hughes benefitted from Plath's practicality and was thrilled when W. H. Auden, Stephen Spender, and Marianne Moore awarded *Hawk in the Rain* (1957) the New York Poetry Center First Publication Award, he nevertheless persisted in his belief that the marketing of writing was a compromising act. Thus, although Plath's business acumen benefitted Hughes as well as her own career, it problematically signaled her position within American consumer capitalism, the troubling economic signifier of postmodernism. This attitude persisted throughout Hughes's life, situating him beside like-minded modernists rather than his fellow writers in the postmodern period.[23]

Hughes's friends may have indulged in collegiate humor at Plath's expense, but their critique of her commercial ambitions was an increasingly valid observation. Midcentury theoretical texts began to recognize the profligate nature of American consumerism. One critique from a Continental perspective is found in Guy Debord's *Society of the Spectacle* (1967). Debord's manifesto contends that the desire for leisure facilitates the need to work even more in order to enjoy a commodity-enriched leisure. More so, it is not commodities themselves that are consumed, but the spectacle or desire that sells the commodities. In turn, this allows items to become interchangeable, perpetuating consumers' dissatisfaction and stabilizing the system as greater levels of

---

[23] The pivotal example of Hughes's modernist attitude toward publishing was when Hughes co-founded the fine art Rainbow Press with his sister Olwyn Hughes in 1970 following Plath's death. The Rainbow Press finds its peers not in the increasingly commercially driven houses of midcentury England and America, but rather in the family owned presses instrumental in literary modernism, such as Elizabeth and Lily Yeats's Dun Emer Press, which published from 1902 until 1908; Harry and Caresse Crosby's Black Sun Press, which ran from 1927 through 1933; and Virginia and Leonard Woolf's Hogarth Press established in 1917.

isolation and empty consumption are perpetuated. Although Debord's book never targeted the United States directly as it preferred to critique Western development as a whole, the way in which Debord describes the economic basis of society in the middle of the twentieth century and his particular accuracy in describing the rise of celebrity as endemic to this type of system is strikingly relevant to the characteristics of American life that Hughes began to recognize during his time in the United States.

Hughes's critique of the superficiality of Americans and his insight that autobiography was an American genre adds a personal impression to Debord's theoretical account. As Hughes considered how American social norms led to a preference for the genre of autobiography, Hughes's insight demonstrates how literature emerges from popular tastes. What Hughes could not know at the time was exactly how correct he would become. The predilection for autobiography he noticed in Americans would, in a few short decades, become intensely voyeuristic in a switch that would move society from enjoying narratives that exposed the inner workings of private lives to desiring them actively. The desire for access to the private lives of others became commodified in the production of celebrities, or individuals who become consumer products as "spectacular representations of living human beings."[24] Although literary celebrities are less frequently recognized in popular culture, they are celebrities nevertheless due to their similar cultural and economic function.

Ted Hughes and Sylvia Plath are among the few examples of literary celebrity from the mid-twentieth century. While many famous writers such as Ernest Hemingway also captured national and international attention through their combination of literary

---

[24] Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, trans. Ken Knabb (London: Rebel Press, 2006), 29.

prowess and biographical interest,[25] Hughes and Plath's celebrity is unique as it is based not on either writer as an individual, but on their fame as a married couple. As the biographical facts of their life together eventually consolidated into a cultural narrative of failed romance, the story of their relationship began to be recognized more than their work. Plath's writing, from the posthumous *Ariel* to her collected letters and journals, as well as her earlier poetry volumes, benefited from the critical attention netted by her martyrology. Unlike Hughes, the critical acclaim that Plath received occurred posthumously so it is difficult to distinguish between her literary audience and the audience generated by the cultural narrative of her suicide. Hughes, on the other hand, enjoyed early acclaim, but suffered from condemnation and a drop in readership following Plath's death. In a letter to Theo and Ann Davidow Goodman written on May 8, 1963, Hughes already recognized the effect of Plath's death. He confided, "That's the end of my life. The rest is posthumous."[26]

Therefore, Ted Hughes's celebrity status was generated by the narrative of Plath's deat, which included his affair with Assia Wevill, combined with the vivid imagery of *Ariel*. *Ariel*'s role in shaping Hughes' authorial and biographical persona is an overlooked attribute of the collection in Plath scholarship, although it is occasionally mentioned in Hughes scholarship. For example, Janet Malcolm notes that "part of the 'Hughes problem' in the United States stems from the fact that Hughes entered the

---

[25] In fact, Loren Glass argues that "the hyper masculine public posturing of authors such as London, Hemingway, and Norman Mailer can be understood as a symptomatic response to the feminized, and feminizing, literary marketplace" (18). Hemingway is the subject of *Ernest Hemingway: The Papers of a Writer*, a book on his literary collection by Bernard Oldsey, the closest parallel to the treatment I give Ted Hughes in this chapter.

[26] Stephen C. Enniss and Karen V. Kukil, "No Other Appetite: Sylvia Plath, Ted Hughes, and the Blood Jet of Poetry" (New York: The Grolier Club, 2005), x.

American imagination, and became embedded there, as the 'bastard' Plath reviled in 'Daddy."[27] Michael Benton, who does not write on Plath, nevertheless describes how literature is able to create a spectator even though spectatorship is commonly understood to be a characteristic of either the visual or auditory senses:

> There are features of this onlooking which are familiar to readers of literature: the evocation of landscape at a particular moment in poem or story, the creation of atmosphere through the texture of the language, an implicit or explicit narrative, intertextual references [...] the construction of the viewer/reader as part of the creative act of making the work of art.

He continues by stating that it is not surprising that what is now called spectator theory is present in both arts and literature "as a way of accounting for what viewers and readers experience" even though the means of apprehension are different. While literature may not offer a concrete object, Benton argues it grants a virtual one "through the interplay of the text with the reader's mind."[28] Benton does not, however, anticipate the problem when the author, rather than the text, is the subject of observation.

When a person rather than a work becomes the subject of spectacle, a celebrity is born. Debord explains that once this occurs, "real life is materially invaded by the contemplation of the spectacle, and ends up absorbing it and aligning itself with it."[29] As life becomes aligned with the spectacle through the imposition of spectatorship, "the unity of that life can no longer be recovered. Fragmented views of reality regroup themselves into a new unity as a separate pseudo-world that can only be looked at."[30]

---

[27] Hughes, *Poetry of Ted Hughes*, 61.
[28] Michael Benton, *Studies in the spectator role: Literature, painting and pedagogy* (London: Routledge, 2000), 2.
[29] Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, 8.
[30] Ibid., 7.

Once the spectacle comes into being, it remains perpetually separate from everyday life, stubbornly present and resistant to modification. Although real lives constantly change, once a spectator receives an impression, the impression is cemented. Those who are subjugated to spectacle can no longer return to their lives as non-celebrities. Their previous life ceases to exist to the broader audience as celebrities are held in stasis from the moment of impression. This is why Debord describes the lives of those observed as "fragmented" and fractured. Instead of the spectacle serving the subject, the subject begins to serve the spectacle. The reorientation of life from reality to spectacle marks the completion of commodification, a process Hughes recognized when he described Plath's death as making his own as posthumous. In other words, a celebrity is an individual that is no longer a person, but rather the subject of spectacle.

While Ted Hughes shared Plath's status as a literary celebrity, he was not the only one to suffer the implications of her spectacle. Aurelia, Sylvia's mother, also began to recognize American predilection for simplistic narratives as well as its propensity to commodify individuals. Aurelia took longer to recognize the condemnation she would be subjected to as she initially supported the decision to publish *Ariel* in the United States. By the early 1980s, however, she agreed with Hughes's conclusion that this was a mistake. In a letter to Olwyn Hughes, Ted's sister, on September 2, 1982, Aurelia wrote: "It seems she is now everybody's property – that of the media and its unknowing critics, even "the Plath estate."[31] Aurelia shared Hughes's stigma in the cultural narrative of Plath's suicide, although to a lesser extent. At this time, Hughes had begun to be the subject of critical approbation. A primary theme of the approbation was the argument that

[31] Hughes, *Letters of Ted Hughes*, 256.

Hughes mishandled his role as the steward of Plath's estate. An article Marjorie Perloff titled "The Two Ariels: The (Re)Making of the Sylvia Plath Canon" (1984) was the primary piece on this topic, and in it, Perloff argued Hughes changed the order and number of poems in *Ariel*.[32] While Aurelia did not receive criticism for her treatment of Plath's papers as Hughes did, she nevertheless was condemned due to the fictionalized portrait of herself as a poor mother in *The Bell Jar* (1963). Aurelia released *Letters Home* (1975) to counter the image created of her in Plath's novel,[33] but her reputation was not rehabilitated, as the artificial tone of Plath's letters did little to prove that Plath's relationship with her mother had been a positive one. Furthermore, *Letters Home* resulted in greater damage to Hughes's reputation. In order to protect Hughes, Olwyn urged him to reiterate how he had allowed Aurelia to have the copyright so that Aurelia could correct Plath's damaging portrait of her.[34] In the process, Olwyn hoped that Hughes would be seen as a caretaker to the family's reputation as a whole rather than defending merely himself. This effort, however, largely failed and Hughes continued to remain silent as he recognized that any attempts to correct what had become a cultural juggernaut would likely be futile.

Following Plath's death, Hughes concentrated on the animal and landscape poems that would define the majority of his oeuvre: *Lupercal* (1960), *Wodwo* (1967), *Crow: From the Life and the Songs of the Crow* (1970), *Cave Birds* (1975), *Gaudete* (1977), *Remains of Elmet* (1979), *Moortown* (1979), *River* (1983), *Flowers and Insects* (1986),

---

[32] Majorie Perloff, *Poetic License: Essays in Modernist and Postmodernist Lyric* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1990), 175-98.
[33] Walter Clemens, "A Poet's Rage for Perfection," *Newsweek*, May 3, 1982, Olwyn Hughes Papers, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.
[34] Feinstein, *Life of a Poet*, 184.

and *Wolfwatching* (1989). Castigated critically for his brutal depictions of predation and farm life, as well as his intentionally "super-ugly"[35] verse style, Hughes nevertheless persisted in creating volumes that ignored human emotions in order to value and imagine the broader natural world. Or, as Terry Gifford observed, in Hughes's poetry, "culture is nature."[36]

Hughes's friend Seamus Heaney, the Nobel Prize-winning Irish poet, described his work as depicting "a primeval landscape where stones cry and horizons endure, where the elements inhabit the mind with a religious force."[37] One of Hughes's most consistent advocates, Heaney reminds his readers in the 1970s that Hughes's imagination is that of pre-modern England, not the familiar, genteel England found in the works of Geoffrey Hill or Philip Larkin. When human society does enter these collections, if modern, it is perverse; if ancient, it is otherworldly and barely recognizable. For this reason, Heaney argues

> Hughes's sensibility is pagan in the original sense: he is a hunter of the pagus, a heath-dweller, a heathen; he moves by instinct in the thickets beyond the urbs; he is neither urban nor urbane. His poetry is as redolent of the lair as it is of the library. The very titles of his books are casts made into the outback of our animal recognitions.[38]

Hughes and Heaney's friendship is one of the late twentieth century's best examples of collaboration and companionship between poets, but it is interesting that the critics who celebrated Heaney's own career did not support Heaney's defense of Hughes's aesthetics.

---

[35] Ibid., 160.
[36] Terry Gifford, "The Ecology of Ted Hughes: Wolfwatching – The Final Poetic Statement," *Fixed Stars Govern a Life: Transforming Poetics and Memory with Emory's Ted Hughes Archive*, ed. Ronald Schuchard, Emory Across Academe 6 (Academic Exchange, 2006), 37.
[37] Seamus Heaney, "Now and in England," *Critical Inquiry* 3 (Spring 1977), 472.
[38] Ibid., 474.

Despite consistent and well-publicized interventions on his friend's behalf, Heaney's opinion would remain in the minority among late twentieth century Hughes commentary.

The majority of reviews of Hughes's mid-career poetry were negative, often due to Hughes's penchant for violent imagery. Hughes's second volume *Lupercal* (1960), received generally more positive reviews than his later work. *Lupercal* was even described in the *Times Literary Supplement* as a volume "startlingly better than his first,"[39] nevertheless had its "contemplation of violence" described as monotonous in *The Listener*,[40]and Hughes's "boisterous effects" derided as "often achieved at the expense of the poetry." *Crow: From the Life and the Songs of the Crow* (1970), was the critical turning point. Reviewers thought it demonstrated the culmination of Hughes's earlier vision from *The Hawk in the Rain* through *Wodwo* and this perception did not serve Hughes well. Richard Holmes in *The Times* described "the violence in Hughes's poetry has grown arm and arm with his popular reputation into the shape of impressive and almost proverbial proportions. *Crow*, his latest piece, is […] the most gory and agonized sequence to date." Holmes continued, stating the volume "fills me with doubts and unease" as in *Crow*, in contrast to *Wodwo* and *Lupercal*, "the violence is both more extreme and more carefully located."[41] An article published on January 8, 1971 in the *Times Literary Supplement* by Peter Dale describes *Crow* as "bursts of Gothickry" with a catalog method of composition that turns into a formula that "depends on a mechanical, drugging repetition" without "rhythmic subtlety," "pondered or incisive line-breaks" and,

---

[39] "The Renewing Voice," *The Times Literary Supplement* (April 15, 1960), Ted Hughes Papers, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.
[40] "Review of *Lupercal*." *The Listener,* July 28, 1960, Ted Hughes Papers, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.
[41] Richard Holmes. *The Times,* December 1970, Ted Hughes Papers, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

as a capstone, the judgment that "much of the language hardly bears examining."[42] Patrick Cosgrave, in a review of *British Poetry since 1945* edited by Edward Lucie-Smith, describes Hughes's work from this period as without judgment, emotion, or perception, and concludes that Hughes is a "bully-boy."[43] Thomas Lask, although moderate compared to Cosgrave, nevertheless describes in the *New York Times* that "there is little that is attractive in the bleak, wasteland vistas this Yorkshire-born English poet conjures up or in the dehumanized cruel nature that rules them."[44]

Cave Birds (1975) was also reviewed negatively, although Hughes's mythic sensibitility was beginning to be recognized for its Jungian interest in the collective unconscious. For example, Aiden Coen in a 1979 review of *Cave Birds* published in *Books and Issues* remarked, "Ted Hughes suff[ers] from a fit of whispering in the dark, damned corners, about veins, spiders, skulls, intestines, graves, beasts, and other great archetypes of our collectively fragmented unconscious,"[45] while Peter Porter describes *Cave Birds* as less offensive than *Crow* due to its "redemptive" tone and relative optimism, although it suffers from casual and improvisational language.[46] *Gaudete*

---

[42] Peter Dale, *The Times Literary Supplement* (January 8, 1971), 30, Ted Hughes Papers, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.
[43] Patrick Cosgrave, "Contemporary Poetry: Two Views," *The Spectator* (March 6, 1971), 320. The word bully returned in an evaluation of *Flowers and Insects*: "On the evidence of this little volume's retreat into noisy prettiness (all those exclamation marks! so much huffing and puffing and general flower-bullying to find what are meant to look like postures of joy!) it may be touch and go." From Robert Nye, "Review of *Flowers and Insects*," *Times* (January 8, 1987), Ted Hughes Papers, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.
[44] Thomas Lask, "The Old Heaven, The Old Earth," *New York Times* (March 18, 1973), Ted Hughes Papers, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.
[45] Aiden Coen, "Ars Poetica," *Books and Issues* 1.1 (1979), 18, Ted Hughes Papers, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.
[46] This review is a torn fragment with nothing but the author's name noted.

(1977) and *Remains of Elmet* (1979), however, suffered the same strong condemnation *Crow* received. *Gaudete* was described as a "ridiculous hodge-podge"[47] and a "degeneraton,"[48] while *Remains of Elmet* suffered from "muscle-bound galvanism" and an "excessive use of pathetic fallacy."[49]*Moortown* (1979) managed to escape another evaluation of its violence by its emphasis on realistic portrayals of farm life. Although the visceral descriptions could have been "repellent," they also "gripped your heart, and your intestines, like a vice from the first page."[50] Hughes's aesthetics, according to reviewers, continued to be questionable, for "when at less than his best Hughes tends to sound like a cross between Savonarola and Edward Gorey."[51] In general, however, assessments of *Moortown* generally conceded the power of Hughes's farm portraits.

Throughout Hughes's career a generation of prominent scholars also evaluated Hughes as a second-rate poet in the long shadow of Plath's achievement when not critiquing his personality outright. Marjorie Perloff's article "The Two Ariels: The (Re)Making of the Sylvia Plath Canon" (1984) argued that Hughes altered Plath's intended order of poems in *Ariel* for his own benefit.[52] Helen Vendler, Harvard professor and former Modern Language Association president, critiqued Hughes in "Raptures and

---

Peter Porter, Ted Hughes Papers, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

[47] Martin Dodsworth. "Return of the Iron Man." *Guardian Books* (May 19, 1977), Ted Hughes Papers, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

[48] Peter Conrad, "In the Safari Park," *The New Statesman* (May 27, 1977), Ted Hughes Papers, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

[49] Peter Porter, "Landscape with Poems," *The Observer* (July 15, 1979), Ted Hughes Papers, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

[50] John Carey, "Grunts and Groans," *The Sunday Times* (December 9, 1979), Ted Hughes Papers, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

[51] "Short Reviews," *Atlantic Monthly* (June 1980), 92, Ted Hughes Papers, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

[52] Majorie Perloff, *Poetic License: Essays in Modernist and Postmodernist Lyric* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1990), 175-98.

Rendings," a review of *River* (1983) published in the December 31, 1984 issue of *New Yorker*. In it, Vendler writes Hughes's poems "shade too easily into a form of sadism." Concerned with Hughes's perspective as "the giant who watches over the cranefly," Vendler argues, "it is not his frustration at his own helplessness that the poem illuminates but, rather, the triumph of biological knowledge." She continues the theme by noting Hughes's "relentlessly selective gaze," his interest in "naming and ornamenting disaster," and "his Celtic, even Scandinavian gloom."[53] Taking note of his voyeuristic aesthetic and the presumptuous tone of his work, Vendler recoils not just from Hughes's subject matter but also from his persona. Vendler's most recent book, *Last Looks, Last Books* (2010), dedicates a chapter to Sylvia Plath without once mentioning Hughes.[54] Although the choice to omit Hughes from a discussion of Plath is a practical choice that allows more room to concentrate on *Ariel* rather than the circumstances of her death, the omission is notable from a historically ambivalent critic who preferred Plath and Hughes's friend Seamus Heaney to Hughes himself.

The topic of Jacqueline Rose's *The Haunting of Sylvia Plath* (1991) is ostensively Plath and not Hughes. The book, however, foregrounds the Hughes's attempts to intervene in the composition of Rose's text and Rose frames the book in the preface and first chapter as a contested account which subjected Rose herself to many comments, letters of overt condemnation and even a threatened lawsuit.[55] For this reason, the preface describes the book's objective as considering "writing – its own process, the way it has

---

[53] Helen Vendler, "Raptures and Readings," *The New Yorker* (December 31, 1984), 66-70.
[54] Helen Vendler, *Last Looks, Last Books: Stevens, Plath, Lowell, Bishop, Merrill* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2010), n.p.
[55] Rose, *Haunting of Sylvia Plath*, 19.

been edited, presented and read" and argues that the monograph is "not a biography" because "factual, lived existence is often an arbitration between "competing and often incompatible versions of what took place."[56] By removing herself from a discussion of history and factuality, Rose nevertheless argues in her third chapter "The Archive" that Hughes twists facts and hides them under his own pretensions to knowing the truth. For example, Rose notes that Hughes also "advised Stevenson [the author of *Bitter Fame*] and her informants 'to stick to observed fact." Rose suggests that the larger issue is how much Hughes owns Plath's narrative as the literary executor of her estate.[57] She returns to this theme at the end of the chapter, concluding, "the problem is the way that [his] reading naturalizes itself into the process of editing, where it appears as a transcendent aesthetic judgment."[58] Through this emphasis, Hughes-as-editor, rather than Hughes-as-author, became of dominant concern.

For this reason, scholars who advocated Hughes's importance in the canon of twentieth century poetry were forced to remind readers that Hughes was an endangered author, particularly in the United States. Leonard Scigaj comments that the early 1990s,

> Five of [Hughes's] six volumes of adult poetry since Crow (1970-1) are not available, for Harper-Collins and Viking-Penguin have decided not to offer second printings. At this moment, the only post-Crow volume available in the U.S. is the recent Wolfwatching (both cloth and paper from Farrar, Straus, and Giroux).[59]

Raphael Ingelbrien, another proponent of Hughes, concentrated instead on the undervaluation of Hughes's influence on Seamus Heaney. Helen Vendler, Heaney's

---

[56] Ibid., ix.
[57] Ibid., 67.
[58] Ibid., 103.
[59] Scigaj, *Critical Essays on Hughes,* 3.

advocate, was, as said, a noted supporter of both Heaney and Plath. In Ingelbrien's article "Mapping the Misreadings: Ted Hughes, Seamus Heaney, and Nationhood," Ingelbrien argues that in the 1970s Hughes "became an influence in the Bloomian sense of the word: Heaney identified a key problem in Hughes's poetics and solved it through a creative misreading." Furthermore, he contends that Heaney's critically acclaimed volumes *Wintering Out* (1972) and *North* (1975) are "largely misreadings of Hughes's tentative myths of Englishness."[60]

Hughes's letters also trace the many indignities he suffered from a hostile public. In one letter to Anne Stevenson in the fall of 1986, he asks Stevenson to consider the situation from his wife Carol's perspective:

> You'll be able to imagine, Anne, my wife's role as a shadow curator (and prisoner) of Sylvia's mausoleum -- besieged in what she regards as her own home, where she's lived for 16 years (and where Sylvia lived for 14 months) by the Plath cultists and all the righteous photo-fit animosities that come with them.[61]

Olwyn, in a series of undated notes in response to a proof of Diane Middlebrook's biography *Her Husband*, also reminded Middlebrook that Hughes suffered "the disappearance over the years of books, papers etc." by people who entered his home as a friend and was forced to "keep all [of his] possessions - photographs, precious books, letters, papers one is working on, or intending to work on, - locked away."[62] Although

---

[60] Raphael Ingelbrien, "Decolonizing Ireland/England? Yeats, Seamus Heaney and Ted Hughes." *W.B. Yeats and Postcolonialism*, ed. Deborah Fleming (West Cornwall, CT: Locus Hill Press, 2001), 628.
[61] Hughes, *Letters of Ted Hughes*, 516.
[62] "Her Husband; Diane Middlebrook Notes from Olwyn Hughes," 12, Olwyn Hughes Papers, Ted Hughes Papers, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

Hughes was willing to accept public condemnation of his private behavior, the pilfering of his personal possessions demonstrated the full extent of the public's hostility.

Hughes's alienation was relieved once he became the Poet Laureate in 1984, a position that while seemingly at odds with his reclusive personality, brought society back into his work with the commissioning of *Rain-Charm for the Duchy* (1992).[63] Although reviled as the "zoo laureate,"[64] Hughes enjoyed the position. In general, Hughes's unpeopled imagination from the time after Plath's death through the Poet Laureateship is a reaction against the overt social judgments he found in his everyday life. The Poet Laureate position would be the first change in popular judgment of Hughes, a precursor to the sea change in critical and popular reception of Hughes's work inspired by the climatic 1998 double release of *Birthday Letters* and the opening of his literary collection at Emory University.

Birthday Letters altered popular opinion by satisfying the reading public's desire for Hughes's perspective. Additionally, the archival aesthetic of *Birthday Letters*, seen in how Hughes gathered together his memories of marriage alongside his commentary on Plath's writing, his later experiences, and even his own views on the broader cultural implications of their partnership, would allow him to find a narrative format that both challenged his readers to reframe the context of their knowledge previously seen only through Plath's work. Although composing *Birthday Letters* allowed Hughes to release

---

[63] This overview ignores Hughes's long career in children's writing, translation and edited volumes. Each of these genres deserves more space than merited here. Hughes's translations and edited volumes are symptomatic of his cultivation of other writers' careers, a generous aspect of his personality that should be given more consideration.

[64] Leonard M. Scigaj, *Ted Hughes* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1991), 28.

the weight of his personal history, it also absorbed Plath's archive in order recontextualize it within Hughes's own.

II. Providing "A tourist guide to the mausoleum":[65] The Popular Success of Birthday Letters' archival aesthetic

By negotiating Americans' predilection for autobiography, Hughes began to receive the public and scholarly attention that could alter decades of disregard. Although doing so capitulated to the very cultural processes he disliked, recognizing the advantages of doing it was a realistic assessment of the entrenchment of spectacle-based society. As early as March 9, 1965, Hughes had written to Richard Murphy saying, "what an insane chance, to have private family struggles turned into best-selling literatures of despair & martyrdom, probably a permanent cultural treasure."[66] Although his tone is bitingly sarcastic, Hughes' letter indicates how swiftly the cultural commodification of his biography had begun. The complaint that what was private had become a "cultural treasure" as well as a "best-selling literature" not only reiterates the popularity of the narrative of the doomed marriage of two poets, but also the persistence of the story. Hughes had yet to recognize the value of contributing to this bathos and although many suggested he should put forth his perspective, Hughes did not become interested in the idea until the 1990s.

Following the publication of *Bitter Fame*, Anne Stevenson's 1989 biography of Sylvia Plath, Olwyn wrote to Hughes on October 2, 1990:

> Clearly just now, after the BITTER FAME rumpus and weary to death of all the feminist nastiness, its tempting

---

[65] Ted Hughes, "Sylvia Plath/Publishing Sylvia Plath," Olwyn Hughes Papers, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.
[66] Hughes, *Letters of Ted Hughes*, 240.

> just to walk away from it and trust to fate. But really why should one be pushed into possibly untenable positions because of all that rubbish? I do wish you'd […] let me know what you think.[67]

Olwyn, while asserting that Hughes could not leave his legacy to hostile critics and biographers, did not yet assert that Hughes should write his own account to contrast Stvenson's. Olwyn presumes that the feminist arguments against Hughes are inflected by a vindictiveness that will eventually lessen. Her resistance to Hughes articulating a defense on his own behalf is couched in her disregard for the validity of the concerns presented in Plath's name as well as her belief that any engagement will rebound and further implicate Hughes in "untenable positions." Olwyn's vision of the consequences of speaking suggests that she did not feel the 1990s had moved sufficiently past what she considered the mire of feminism to be able to accept a new evaluation of Hughes.

On the other hand, Thom Gunn, an Anglo-American poet and Hughes's friend, suggested Hughes should publish his version of the tale. In a letter dated April 14, 1991, Gunn, who labeled the controversy "all the posthumous nonsense," advised Hughes that American culture was changing: "it does strike me that there is less sheer nonsense – both naive and sophisticated – about her over here nowadays than there was." Gunn does not name feminism as a culprit in Hughes's condemnation, but rather indirectly indicts a popular culture that seeks celebrities to fulfill public desire. In fact, Gunn recognized that this attribute of American culture could be used in Hughes's favor as the release of a book would generate "extreme interest." Gunn also felt that "the 1990s would probably

---

[67] "Letters from Olwyn Hughes to Ted Hughes 5/64-7/94," October 4, 1990, Olwyn Hughes Papers, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

be exactly the right time – 30 years after – to publish such a book."[68] Although Hughes would not follow Gunn's advice for seven years, the idea registered. Releasing *Birthday Letters* would be a personal intervention in the largely American cultural narrative of his life and career. Furthermore, this intervention would be archival. Returning to the well-worn story and piecing together an alternative perspective from memories, old papers, and textual analyses of Plath's work would allow Hughes to begin to rescript the cultural narrative of his life and career.

Howls and Whispers (1998), a rare, limited edition book published by artist Leonard Baskin's Gehenna Press in Rockport, Maine, is a selection of eleven poems from *Birthday Letters*.[69] Published prior to the release of *Birthday Letters*, *Howls and Whispers* signals the weight of the cultural narrative of Plath and Hughes's marriage. In two poems, "Paris 1954" and "The Minotaur 2," Hughes depicts Plath as a disembodied scream and himself as the minotaur, a mythic Greek monster.[70] These characterizations demonstrate Plath's ghoulish haunting of Hughes's life following the reception of her work as well as how American popular memory dehumanized Hughes in order to canonize Plath as a feminist martyr. In "Paris 1954," the depth of his dispossession from his own autobiography is striking: his alienation is represented first by the bifurcation of personal pronouns referring to himself and continues through a variety of predatory images

---

[68] Thom Gunn, "Letter from Thom Gunn to Ted Hughes," April 14, 1991, Olwyn Hughes Papers, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.
[69] Stephen Enniss, "Seamus Heaney and the Arrival of the Belfast Poets," *The Growth of Emory's Modern Irish Collection*, ed. Ronald Schuchard, Gazette of the Grolier Club, New Series 50 (1999), 62.
[70] The importance of the minotaur as Hughes's chosen avatar is reiterated in David Berry's "Ted Hughes and the Minotaur Complex," *The Modern Language Review* 97.3 (July 2002), 539-552. Berry begins by reminding readers Hughes's final publication was a translation of the play *Phedre* (1998) and continues to note that the minotaur first appears in Hughes's poetry in the poem "The Bull Moses" from *Lupercal* (1960).

representing Plath. While Hughes watches himself as a young man blithely enjoying wine and cheese, he also sees Plath as a disembodied scream and then a scream that takes the shape of a panther:

> that will find his soul and tear it from him
> And eat it, and take its place
> Lying like the gatekeeper of Hell
> Between him and the Creator,
> Watching him with eyes that never sleep,
> Opening its mouth only to scream.[71]

Portraying Plath as a scream is a significant choice: not only does it indicate the ghoulish quality of Plath's posthumous reception, it transforms Hughes's personal terror into a modernist icon. Edvard Munch's series of expressionist paintings titled "The Scream" (1893-1910) portrays a ghostly figure in front of a red horizon in mid-shriek. The power of the image is its ability to capture an action of horror while refraining from depicting its precipitating cause. Likewise, Hughes's poem, which begins *Howls and Whispers*, does not attempt to show the reasons why a scream has taken "the likeness of a girl." Furthermore, it does not present the girlish avatar immediately, instead allowing the scream to prowl the first three stanzas without indicating its physical characteristics. Munch's figure, although it resembles a human, is devoid of identifying attributes: It is presented without hair, facial idiosyncrasies, and its head closely resembles a skill. The effect on the viewer is to insinuate that the scream has taken on a human figure, but that this figure is tenuous. As Hughes portrays Plath consistently as a scream throughout the volume, his technique resembles Munch's. Readers begin to see Plath not as a woman or as an author, but as a disembodied cry that possesses different forms.

---

[71] Hughes, *Collected Poems*, ed. Paul Keegan (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2003), 1173, lines 24-30.

Hughes employs the minotaur to reiterate the monstrosity of his public image following Plath's death. *Howls and Whispers* does not contain a poem titled "Minotaur 1," so "Paris 1954" is the predecessor to "Minotaur 2" as both employ the metaphor that Plath's celebrity has made Hughes into an archetypal monster. In "Paris 1954," Hughes reiterates how Plath's public reception relies on an artificial demonization. In lines 19-22, he illustrates that the scream – a disembodied portrait of Plath – "will lock him up in a labyrinth/ Made of ordinary streets/ As if he were the minotaur." The telling phrase is "as if" – Hughes refuses prosopopoeia. He only resembles a minotaur because he is incarcerated. Notably, the incarceration is not physical. While Hughes is free to roam the "ordinary streets" of his life, he nevertheless remains in the labyrinth created by her publicity. Hughes's imprisonment is not literal even in its poetic representation. His monstrosity is a projection. In "The Minotaur 2," Hughes continues this theme. In lines 10-3, he says "you" went " to the very centre,/ Where the Minotaur, which was waiting to kill you,/ Killed you."[72] Repeating the word kill allows Hughes to emphasize the myth's fated outcome. The predetermined climax occurs, but the reader now contemplates the minotaur rather than the victim, reflecting the volume's investment in Hughes's perspective. Furthermore, the "you" who seeks out the monster becomes the true aggressor. The young man who now fully inhabits his role merely performs its role, killing in defensive self-preservation. The horror is transferred from the death of the protagonist to the predictability of mythic narratives, which victimize both actors equally.

---

[72] Ted Hughes, *Collected Poems*, ed. Paul Keegan (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003), 1173 and 1178.

While *Howls and Whispers* limits its minotaur poems to "Paris 1954" and "The Minotaur 2," a poem titled "The Minotaur" is found in *Birthday Letters*.[73] This poem's use of the minotaur is more subtle, limiting the description of the monster to lines 22-4, the last lines of the poem: "the horned, bellowing/ Grave of your risen father –/ And your own corpse in it." Plath and Hughes's children, following Plath's death, "echo/like tunnels in a labyrinth" in lines 19-20. Instead of applying the minotaur imagery to Hughes alone, "The Minotaur" finds the now-familiar monster in the guise of Plath's father who cannibalizes his own daughter. Displacing the minotaur onto Otto Plath reiterates the way in which Sylvia Plath's writing frequently alternates between or collapses the two men together. By limiting the minotaur metaphor to himself and Otto Plath, Hughes reinforces the masculinity of the monster as well as its carnivorous appetite for Sylvia, a female victim devoured by minotaur's patriarchal reach. Strikingly, "The Minotaur" places the monstrosity of the poem onto Otto Plath but suggests that its true home is in Plath herself, who possesses a goblin "deep in the cave of [her] ear."[74]

Hughes continued to favor mythic allusions and imagery in *Birthday Letters* as a technique to imagine events foreclosed by Plath's suicide. As in *Howls and Whispers*, mythic references reiterate the predetermined conclusions of those who are exposed to the cultural narrative of Hughes and Plath's marriage. For example, in "A Picture of Otto," Hughes places himself in the role of Orpheus opposite to Plath's Eurydice:

> I understand – you never could have released her [your ghost]
> This underworld, my friend, is her heart's home.
> nseparable, here we must remain,

[73] Ibid., 1120.
[74] Ibid., 1121, Line 14.

> Everything forgiven and in common –
> Not that I see her behind you, where I face you[75]

By combining autobiography with Orpheus's loss of Eurydice, Hughes mourns the inevitable conclusion of Plath's artistic endeavors through prosopopeia. Hughes suggests that his role was constrained, "a whole myth too late" to alter the circumstances of their lives. By disowning the effect of his adultery on Plath and displacing her distress to her father, Hughes argues that Plath was damaged prior to his relationship with her and, thus, that her suicide was an inevitable conclusion. He reiterates his innocence by emphasizing his inability to see Otto, and arguing any attempt he could make to rehabilitate her emotions would be belated as "this underworld […] is her heart's home." Furthermore, instead of depicting Orpheus's inevitable return to the earth, Hughes's version keeps the lovers together in the underworld in order to recast his inability to move beyond the Plath narrative. These choices, alongside the myth's uncanny correspondence to Hughes's life, helps him to attempt rehabilitate his reputation by providing readers with an archetype that more sympathetically portrays Hughes's role.

Here, Hughes also engages with what Derrida considers the visor effect of the archive, which Derrida defines as the specter that "can see without being seen," "who finds himself confirmed and repeated in the very protest one claims to oppose to him" as well as being the one who is able "to speak in him before him."[76] Derrida notes that this phantom cannot respond or does not respond, either because he already responded; because he was "in a position to have, always, already responded" (the phantom is atemporal); because as a phantom, he is dead; and finally, because as a phantom he

---

[75] Ibid., 1167.
[76] Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 61.

performs the role of an analyst and, for that reason, he refuses to speak.[77] The simultaneous foreclosure of possibility of being able to speak with the specter without the loss of the desire to be able to speak suggests Hughes's predicament.

While Otto is Plath's father, his continuous presence in Plath's adult life enlarges his biographical reality in a way that complicates one's ability to see Otto as separate from either Hughes or Plath. Otto, who became in Plath's work a character that embodied patriarchy, exerts such a strongly felt menace that his death actually magnifies his influence it. Otto becomes a spectral figure in Plath's life, haunting her writing and her marriage as Plath increasingly sees Otto as interchangeable with Hughes himself. Hughes illustrates the predicament this places him in when he imagines Otto's reaction in lines seven and eight "to find[ing] yourself so tangled with me –/ Rising from your coffin, a big shock."[78] Hughes, in turn, is not able to address Otto, who finds Hughes in his "family vault,"[79] nor is he able to comfort Plath by engaging with the shadow Otto's death cast over Plath's childhood. The way Otto becomes an internalized aspect of Plath to the degree that when Hughes turns to look at Plath, he sees only Otto, transcends even the biographical facts of their father-daughter relationship. Hughes comes to see Otto's hold over Plath as mythic: an unshakable destiny with a mysterious origin and a future that will last as long as "your daughter's words can stir a candle."[80] Hughes, however, does not neglect that Otto's legacy is also biological: "Your portrait, here, could be my son's portrait." The most unsettling aspect of "A Picture of Otto," however, is Hughes's recognition that Otto's spectral quality has possessed them all as they remain together in

---

[77] Ibid., 62.
[78] Hughes, *Collected Poems*, 1167.
[79] Ibid., 1167, Line 11.
[80] Ibid., 1167, Line 14.

the underworld with "Everything forgiven and in common."[81] Releasing his own individuality and succumbing to the myth demonstrates how the archive – here the genetic archive of inheritance, the cultural archive of myth, and the material archive of Plath's poetry which can continue to be read from volumes which will outlast the bodies of the family members depicted – not only haunts Hughes, but possesses him. The archive speaks, like Derrida describes, from a position that will always co-opt Hughes's own articulation.

Ryan Hibbet notes the tendency of cultures to victimize those they identify as celebrities when he writes of Hughes, "the myth maker has become the myth – and his own laggard participation in the conversation throws into question the autonomy of his creative work."[82] Hibbet argues that Hughes's inability to shape or control the way he is portrayed signals a larger creative failure. Hibbet suggests that Hughes's passivity, exemplified by his obstinate resistance to human society in his earlier work, has allowed his audience to transform him from a writer into a subject. Hughes's later attempt in *Howls and Whispers* and *Birthday Letters* to return to the role of myth-maker, while an active attempt to construct a new persona, nevertheless reveals his dependence on the narratives of others. Hughes recognized this later in life when he wrote that the "rigorously impersonal" aspect of earlier writing damaged his development as a whole. Impersonality, rather than Hughes's status quo, was a defense mechanism against what he called in the epilogue poems to *Gaudete*, "the blinding metropolis of cameras."[83] By the

---

[81] Ibid., 1167, Line 21.
[82] Ryan Hibbet, "Imagining Ted Hughes: Authorship, Authenticity, and the Symbolic Work of Collected Poems," *Twentieth Century Literature* 51, no. 4 (Winter 2005), 418.
[83] Hughes, *Collected Poems,* 87.

time Hughes was able to tackle the myth, his reticence forced him to engage in a revisionary project.

Sarah Churchwell notes that Hughes, in publishing *Birthday Letters*, was still "protesting against the process of reception itself, against the feedback loop in which he was participating.[84] Furthermore, the volume's need to respond to a variety of audiences makes the book more indicative of the range of "cultural disputes over public and private, celebrity, and gender, from Anita Hill and Clarence Thomas to the death of Princess Diana" found in the 1990s than any purely literary volume.[85] But by indulging the public with the private, Hughes was able to titillate his audience with a first-person account, tracing his life with Sylvia Plath across 78 poems, from their first meeting until after her death, including both the minutia and the pivotal events of their lives. Readers of *Birthday Letters* follow the story chronologically in a climatic series, as "Fulbright Scholars" leads to "St Botolph's." A few poems later, the marriage occurs in "A Pink Wool Knitted Dress," and the lovers depart for Spain in "You Hated Spain." Such poems as "Freedom of Speech," which imagines Plath on her sixtieth birthday surrounded by "your court of brilliant minds"[86] portrays Hughes as a devoted husband to the still-living Plath.

The narrative provided by *Birthday Letters* forms a secondary archive to the literary collection held at Emory University as the material objects held among the papers

---

[84] Sarah Churchwell, "Secrets and Lies: Plath, Privacy, Publication, and Ted Hughes's Birthday Letters," *Contemporary Literature* 42, no. 1 (Spring 2001), 118.
[85] Ibid., 104.
[86] Hughes, *Collected Poems*, 1166.

of the literary collection can be paired against the poems of the volume.[87] For example, among the Emory holdings (box 180, file folder 16) is Hughes's marriage certificate to Sylvia Plath.[88] The certificate provides physical evidence of the event "before anything had smudged anything" in "A Pink Wool Knitted Dress."[89] Even in this poem, one of the few in the volume that does not explicitly struggle with the consequences of Hughes's decision to marry Plath, a few portents loom. First, Plath must "wrestle to contain [her] flames"[90] and flames, alongside the scream, are two images Hughes frequently uses to represent Plath. Her eyes are offered up to Hughes as if they were "shaken in a dice cup,"[91] a reference to the gamble the "U.S. Foreign Affairs"[92] marriage represents. Additionally, Plath's mother, who acts "all bridesmaids and all guests,"[93] represents the reversal of marital fortune: the couple that marries in secret is fated to live a public marriage. The marriage certificate, now held in the Emory archive within a city that neither poet ever resided in, available to be viewed by any researcher willing to provide identification, reiterates the ironic outcome to the secret ceremony.

Hughes's American social security card (box 180, file folder 14) and a permit to exit and re-enter the United States (box 180, file folder 11) reminds readers of Hughes and Plath's time in North America, a two-year period described in poems such as "9 Willow Street" and "The Literary Life." "9 Willow Street," which traces their early life in

---

87 This concept is explored in relation to Hughes's *Collected Poems* in Ryan Hibbet's article "Imagining Ted Hughes: Authorship, Authenticity, and the Symbolic Work of Collected Poems," *Twentieth Century Literature* 51, no. 4 (Winter 2005), 414-36.
88 The box and file folders are identified within the text in order call attention to the physical presence of these objects in the archive.
89 Hughes, *Collected Poems*, "A Pink Wool Knitted Dress," 1064, Line 2.
90 Ibid., 1065, Lines 50, 53.
91 Ibid., 1065, Line 54.
92 Ibid., 1065, Line 26.
93 Ibid., 1065, Line 27.

Boston alongside the couple's attempts to work, ends on an episode where Hughes attempts to help a fallen and disoriented bat. In order to lift the bat back onto a tree, Hughes allows the bat to bite him. Only afterward does he realize that bats may carry rabies in the United States. In retrospect, Hughes asks himself "How could Fate/ stage a scenario so symbolic?"[94] The symbolism is not only that the United States proved to be a poisonous environment for the pair, but also that Plath herself bit Hughes at their first meeting, and also proved to be deadly.

Hughes further explores Plath's personality in an episode titled "Astringency," which provokes Hughes to recall how "You and me, standing on America"[95] threw stones into the Charles River. There, Plath imagined the circular ripples as lariats – an indication of how she saw "censors," "snares," and "constrictor[s]" in all possible activities.[96] While the archive can neither document Plath's behavior nor her fears, it does provide evidence for her daily life with Hughes – another theme of Hughes's volume.

Plath's British driver's license (box 180, file folder 20) and American passport (box 180, file folder 22) help depict Hughes and Plath's residence in England, an account of which can be found beginning with the poem titled "Error," which introduces Devon country life as a "stripping off/ [of] Your American royalty."[97] The poignancy of Plath's driver's license is tied to Hughes's whimsical memory that Plath found the black paint of English cars depressing, wondering "Was black paint cheaper? Why/ Were English cars all black – to hide the filth?/ or to stay respectable […] Every vehicle a hearse."[98] In

---

[94] Ibid., 1090, Lines 99-100.
[95] Ibid., 1094, Line 29.
[96] Ibid., 1094, Lines 36-7 and 41.
[97] Ibid., 1121, Lines 9-10.
[98] Ibid., 1143, Lines 19-22.

contrast, Hughes felt American vehicles had a "merry-go-round palette."[99] The cultural clash between Hughes and Plath, charted over the early sections of *Birthday Letters,* reiterates the different perspective each partner brought to the marriage. Although the driver's license is not central to literature in terms of its immediate, informative value since it does not contain the information scholars are trained to examine, this item as well as others previously listed (and those unmentioned) nevertheless play a critical role in a researcher's experience of this literary collection.

Hughes was cognizant of the archive even when he composed *Birthday Letters*. One poem, "The Literary Life," refers to it explicitly. The poem explores Plath's relationship to Marianne Moore and the difficulties Plath faced in finding literary recognition. In contrast to Hughes whose *Hawk in the Rain* won the New York Poetry Center First Publication Award under the auspices of Moore, who was one of the competition's judges, Plath receives a quick dismissal from the prominent older poet. In an example of marital solidarity, the flames that Hughes uses to represent Plath become Hughes's own: "And she, Marianne, tight, brisk […] Slid into the second or third circle/ Of my Inferno."[100] Hughes prompts readers to view the letter in which Moore overlooks Plath in line 21:"(Whoever has her letter has her exact words.)."[101] By 1998 when the poem was published, Hughes had already sold Plath's archive to Smith College and knew that the letter would remain with those materials. His oblique reference, instead of relaying the factual location of the letter, reiterates to his readers that the material basis for his story exists. As the artifact validates Hughes's account, Hughes uses the item

---

[99] Ibid., 1143, Line 36.
[100] Ibid., 1091, Lines 31, 33-4.
[101] Ibid., 1090, Line 21.

instead to create imaginative space for his recollections. His emphasis on "her exact words" recognizes that "The Literary Life" is a composition of memory, and thus necessarily inexact and subjective. By privileging his ability to inhabit the space of memory rather than fact, Hughes displaces onto the archive the work of validating his explanation.

The archived items gain imaginative power through their poetic representation. While the narrative style of *Birthday Letters* discusses these objects without the need for their physical presence, researchers who meet the items after reading the volume become newly attuned to what Philip Larkin described as the "magical value" of manuscripts.[102] The power of the poetry to contextualize materials found in the archive provides visitors with the sense that they are touching artifacts of history, a sensation often described as the "archival encounter." This archival encounter is mediated by "a powerful element of voyeurism,"[103] whereby a casual observer can take account of private materials through the mediation of the institution. At the heart of the encounter is a sense of awe that transcends the informative value of the object: the archive becomes a space of intersection between author and reader, or subject and interrogator. As Lynne Huffer observed in *Mad for Foucault* (2009), the user of an archive makes sense of the papers he or she reads by "erotic, courageous listening" which allows a researcher to hear the voices of those preserved in the documents and objects housed there.[104] One type of listening that occurs in the archive is cross-referencing.

---

[102] Dana Gioia, "The Hand of the Poet: The Magical Value of Manuscripts," *The Hudson Review* 49, no. 1 (Spring 1996), 12.
[103] Ibid., 28.
[104] Lynne Huffer, *Mad for Foucault,* 249.

Cross-referencing is the responsibility of users of the archive to compare accounts and generate their own interpretations as they navigate parataxically between texts and narratives. Cross-referencing should be a familiar sensation for the readers of *Birthday Letters*, as *Birthday Letters* also engages directly with Sylvia Plath's *Ariel* and *The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath* and *Letters Home*. For example, readers of *Birthday Letters* come across the poem "The Bee God," which describes Plath and Hughes's attempt to raise bees at Court Green, their house in Devon, England. The poem begins "When you wanted bees I never dreamed/ It meant your Daddy had come up out of the well."[105] Those familiar with *Ariel* recall the reference not only to Plath's famous "Daddy" poem that plays on her father's German heritage by describing him as "not God but a swastika,"[106] but also her bee sequence: "The Bee Meeting," "The Arrival of the Bee Box," "Stings," and "The Swarm." Hughes's account of being stung by the bees in Devon – "That outsider tangled, struggled, stung –/ Marking the target./ And I was flung like a headshot jackrabbit"[107] – suggests, among other lines, Plath's "Stings big as drawing pins!"[108] Additionally, those who wish to read an account of the beekeeping from Plath's diary can check the entry from June 7, 1962 titled "Charlie Pollard & The Beekeepers" which illustrates a Devon beekeeper's association meeting.[109] The bees, a problem in the marriage, are not included in Plath's *Letters Home*.[110] By positioning

---

[105] Hughes, 1140, Lines 1-2.
[106] Sylvia Plath, "Daddy," *Ariel* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1999), 57, Line 49.
[107] Hughes, *Collected Poems*, 1141, Lines 31-33.
[108] Plath, *Ariel*, 74, Line 56.
[109] Sylvia Plath, *The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath 1950-1962*, ed. Karen V. Kukil (New York: Anchor Books), 656.
[110] Sylvia Plath, *Letters Home by Sylvia Plath: Correspondence 1950-1963*, ed. Aurelia Schober Plath (New York: Harper Perennial, 1992).

readers in this manner, Hughes is asking his audience to generate their own account, while also allowing them to revel in their familiarity with the narrative.

More importantly, the parataxis of *Birthday Letters* allowed Hughes to regain control over the story of their marriage. By reading outward from *Birthday Letters*, Hughes's audience can see the way in which incidents are highlighted or expunged in Plath's writings according to her target readers. Events that appear almost totemic in their importance in *Ariel* become commonplace in the *Journals* and omitted from *Letters Home*. Autobiography is thus revealed to be constructed, if not outright manipulated. In writing his own version, Hughes creates the potential for new readers to come first to his work and then to Plath's, a reversal of previous generations of readers who viewed Hughes through the lens of Plath's canon.

Seeing Hughes's poetry in dialogue with Plath's writing, however, reveals Hughes's continued creative partnership with Plath. Plath readers may not recognize the extent to which Hughes's work was predicated on Plath's presence in his life. For as Hughes wrote to his brother Gerald's family in May 1957, "Marriage is my medium. Also my luck thrives on it, and my productions."[111] Although Hughes's private life detoured from Plath following their separation and her suicide, readers of *Birthday Letters* can sense Hughes's continued dependence on their early partnership.

Hughes incorporates Plath's style into *Birthday Letters* through using similar phrasing as well as occasionally adhering to Plath's more formalist stanzas. Poems that respond directly to Path's own writing are even more likely to mimic her aesthetic. To continue from the prior example of "The Bee God," Hughes's poem mimics Plath's

---

[111] Hughes, *Letters of Ted Hughes,* 97.

"Daddy" by also using a first person perspective along with the repetitive use of the word "you." Derrida notes, "the scene for prosopopeia" is where the secret is "not of a mask or talking face but someone who, knowing how to keep silence, and being silenced […] knows how to keep a secret."[112] Both Hughes and Plath attempt to speak through prosopopeia to a you who refuses to converse once being addressed. While Plath addresses her father and indirectly Hughes, Hughes addresses Plath directly and her poem indirectly. By capitalizing "Daddy," Hughes is indicating that he is writing in response to both his memory and the poem. His inability to separate his private memory from the public poem reiterates the mediated quality of the verse. Hughes uses unrhymed couplets in his poem while Plath often preferred quintets. Using couplets, however, replicates Plath's symptomatic control. "Suttee" and "Being Christlike," the poems immediately prior to and following "The Bee God" demonstrate Hughes's free verse style. The creative partnership implied by Hughes's use of Plath's vocabulary and phrasing in *Birthday Letters* reiterates their continued, posthumous collaboration. As in an archive, the volume invites readers to begin to consider the connections between previously unconnected texts. Furthermore, as literary collections are often especially adept at portraying the relationships between writers, *Birthday Letters* as an archival text is particularly successful in parataxis.

Birthday Letters also resembles a literary collection due to the method of its composition. The *Birthday Letter* poems "piled up" and were "stuffed in the sack" until they revealed themselves as a complete work, not incomparable to the way a manuscript series would look prior to acquisition, description, and organization. Elaine Feinstein

---

[112] Jacques Derrida, *Geneses, Genealogies, Genres, and Genius: The Secrets of the Archive*, trans. Beverly Bie Brahic (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 38.

speculates Hughes began writing poems for *Birthday Letters* as early as 1989 and that Hughes may have relied on a writing journal in order to supplement his memory, a journal she suggests may be held in the restricted contents of the Emory archive.[113] Regardless of whether or not Hughes used a journal and if that journal is available, albeit restricted, Feinstein's argument also imagines *Birthday Letters* as an alternative archive that organizes material from disparate sources and then opens its contents to a general public.

The idea that Hughes would need his archive to compose suggests that the volume is an aggregate product of memory, source materials, and poetic inspiration. In Gavin Drummond's article on Ted Hughes's memorization techniques, he suggests that Hughes was deeply invested in the process of remembering: he espoused memorization as an educational technique and encouraged his daughter to use visual imagery as an aid.[114] Hughes felt memorizing allowed a deeper knowledge of languages and literature, and memorizing the latter in particular allowed him to generate new interpretations over time. Drummond then reads a selection of Hughes's poems from *Birthday Letters* to show how Hughes used the same memorization method to remember his own history. His private memories, now source texts, were worked and reworked into successive poetic sequences:

Memory permeates *Birthday Letters*: the volume includes many elements of characteristically Hughesian memory, including poems probably inspired by

---

[113] Elaine Feinstein, *Ted Hughes: The Life of the Poet* (London: Weindenfeld and Nicolson, 2001), 232.

[114] Gavin Drummond. "Ted Hughes's Memory." *Fixed Stars Govern a Life: Transforming Poetry and Memory with Emory's Ted Hughes Archive.* ed. Ronald Schuchard, Emory Across Academe 6 (Academic Exchange, 2006), 26.

photographs, poems which try to recapture the messy details of the past, and poems whose structure seems at times arbitrary, determined more by the images within the poem (the poet's original imaginative, creative sparks) than by any narrative demands.[115]

Drummond's analysis collapses the distinction between poems that were "probably inspired" by material artifacts and poems that emerged from an internal bank of memories because it is nearly impossible to ascribe an origin to inspiration. Drummond acknowledges this difficulty by choosing largely to credit his "imaginative, creative sparks" as the source texts of Hughes's memory work, rather than investigating the possible material artifacts that could have triggered Hughes's recollections. Although the article was originally a paper given at a Hughes conference in Atlanta celebrating the release of the literary collection, and Drummond refers to researching the collection briefly,[116] Drummond does not consider how Hughes's process of preparing his literary collection coincided with the time period during which he composed *Birthday Letters*.

Exhausted by the project of inserting his perspective into the already well-established cultural narrative of his marriage to Plath, Hughes described the freedom of completing *Birthday Letters*, which he labored on for almost a decade, as a "sensation of the whole load of long preoccupation dropping away – separating itself and dropping away like a complete piece of fruit. […] I had huge quantities of little germinal notes – all suddenly obsolete."[117] Hughes's two depictions of his archive contrast against one

---

[115] Ibid., 33.
[116] Drummond refers to the archive through his comments on Hughes's handwriting, through the duplication of one of Hughes's notebook pages, and in the sentence: "Paul Keegan reminds us of "Hughes's 'tendency to engage simultaneously in different projects,' and only an hour or two in the poet's manuscripts at Emory will underscore that to the researcher" (33).
[117] Hughes, *Letters of Ted Hughes*, 704.

another: the naturalistic image of a "complete piece of fruit" competes against the artificiality of "little germinal notes." Hughes's relief following his intervention finds its metaphor in the pressure and burden of the story as a mass distorting his body. Critically, instead of viewing this mass as intrinsic, Hughes imagines it as an attachment that can be discarded once it is productively transformed. Long preoccupied with transformations as his previous volume, *Tales from Ovid* (1997) was a reinterpretation of Ovid's myths, Hughes manifests his interest through this description of his experience. His choice of a natural metaphor rather than a human one for the completed book reiterates both the generative function of the project as well as a metaphor for his desire to unburden himself from the weight of the archive. The description of "little germinal notes" does not indicate whether these notes were included as part of the archive or whether they were merely notations that alluded to the archive itself and therefore became unnecessary to keep following its completion. If Hughes is indicating the former explanation, these notes reiterate the fragmentary and ephemeral nature of the archive, while the latter suggests the work's completion allows him to discard the detritus that surrounds and facilitates the composition of a major project.

The effect of *Birthday Letters'* archival aesthetics was stunning: although poetry is generally not a profitable genre, the centrality of the Plath narrative to American culture propelled the volume to become Hughes's best selling book as well as one of the top poetry monographs of the year. In a 1998 review for *The Observer*, Paul Alexander – who, it should be noted, is a sympathetic Plath biographer as the author of *Rough Magic: A Biography of Sylvia Plath* (1991) who repeatedly insists in the review as well as his book that Plath is the greater poet – took time to note the trans-Atlantic interest generated

by the publication of *Birthday Letters*', commenting that "rarely has a book of poetry received such hype, meriting front-page articles in both *The New York Times* and *The Times of London*"[118] as well as a serialization of representative portions in *The Times*.[119] Keith Sagar concluded that this phenomena was due to hope that the volume would reveal new details on Hughes's relationship with Plath:

> *Birthday Letters* sold ten times more copies than any other Hughes book in its first year, not because it is ten times better as poetry but because there are ten times as many voyeurs as poetry-lovers among book-buyers, and a hundred times as many among newspaper editors.[120]

Although its poetic achievement is not necessarily higher than Hughes's previous works, the volume was awarded many accolades, among them the T.S. Eliot Prize for Poetry and the Whitbread Book of the Year. The fact that these awards also helped the book reach a larger reading public suggests that critical acclaim and popular demand are not necessarily independent. Robert McCrum, in a commentary on Hughes's posthumous reputation for *The Observer*, noted:

> Then, after a long period of quiescence, Hughes walked into his publishers one day with the poems known as *Birthday Letters*. Rarely has a single collection so transformed an already established writer's reputation. Hughes had finally bared his wounds and addressed the tragic complexities of the Sylvia question. Almost everyone was delighted. The literary sensation of 1998, *Birthday*

---

[118] Paul Alexander, "Ted Hughes Avoids the Subject In Birthday Letters," *The Observer*, April 5, 1998, accessed February 10, 2011, http://www.observer.com/node/40357.
[119] Mick Delap, "Life After Plath: Birthday Letters, by Ted Hughes," *Magma* 12 (Spring 1998), accessed February 10, 2011, http://www.poetrymagazines.org.uk/magazine/record.asp?id=3556.
[120] Keith Sagar, *The Laughter of Foxes: A Study of Ted Hughes* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), x.

> *Letters* became front-page news, a bestseller and, finally, an acclaimed prizewinner.[121]

The narrative of the long-awaited book finally revealed to an eager audience and quickly canonized by the literary establishment suggests the propulsive publicity the volume experienced. Erica Wagner, the poetry editor of *The Times*, concedes that it is unclear if it is the aesthetic quality of the volume's poetry or the book's status as an event in contemporary justifies its recognition: "I feel at the moment it is very difficult to get away from their overwhelming biographical interest and impact. It's nearly impossible just to judge them as if you were from Mars."[122] The interest offered by *Birthday Letters*' autobiographical contents is so strong as to effect even the literary establishment, an acknowledgement of the continuing importance of not only the cultural narrative of the Hughes-Plath marriage, but also of the continuing importance of celebrity in popular culture.[123]

The success of *Birthday Letters* hides its troubling perspective. The mediated quality of the poetry critiques readers' interest by reminding readers that their voyeurism has commodified both Plath and Hughes as literary celebrities. Occasionally, Hughes is more direct. In "The Table," Hughes writes, "And now your peanut-crunchers can

---

[121] Robert McCrum, "Ted Hughes: The Poet who is coming in from the cold," *The Observer* (May 9, 2010), accessed February 10, 2011, http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2010/may/09/ted-hughes-robert-mccrum.
[122] Delap, "Life After Plath," n.p.
[123] This does not intend to argue that *Birthday Letters* received uniformly positive evaluations. Although *Birthday Letters* did receive more positive publicity than Hughes's previous work, the volume was not recognized as such by all critics. Lynda Bundtzen recounts the negative responses to *Birthday Letters*, among them reviews placed in *New Republic*, *Newsweek*, and the *New Yorker* throughout 1998 that separated enthrallment with the narrative from a substantial evaluation of the poetry's strengths and weaknesses. From Lynda Bundtzman, "Mourning Eurydice: Ted Hughes as Orpheus in "Birthday Letters," *Journal of Modern Literature* 23.3-4 (Summer 2000), 455-69.

stare."[124] A revealing undated transcript titled "Sylvia Plath/Publishing Sylvia Plath," written prior to publishing *Birthday Letters*, explains Hughes's caustic tone. In the transcript, Hughes describes the "overwhelming temptation" to create "a tourist guide to the mausoleum."[125] Hughes, who often reverted to the language of tourism when depicting what he saw as American culture, here portrays his future readers as dilettantes interested largely in spectacle. Hughes's reticence to cater to this crowd was shared by Plath, whose poetry notably spotlights the role of Confessional verse in satisfying prurient mass tastes. Plath's "Lady Lazarus" is the forerunner to Hughes's "The Table." In her poem, Plath reveals herself in a post-mortem strip tease and taunts those who come to see her body with the question in line 12, "Do I terrify?" Despite her menace, Plath recognizes the thrill she offers in lines 26-7, for despite the menace, "The peanut-crunching crowd/ Shoves in to see."[126] Hughes's parataxical use of Plath's poem not only reiterates the uncanny prescience of Plath's vision of her literary reception following her death, but also his shared distaste for the audience which eagerly consumed the tale of their marriage.[127]

Hughes also shows that, for him, the Plath story is a "mausoleum" more invested in the circumstances of death than the conditions of life and that any writing on the topic is mere copywriting. As *Birthday Letters* can be read as a capitulation to this desire,

---

[124] Hughes, *Collected Poems*, 1133, Line 48.
[125] Ted Hughes. "Sylvia Plath/Publishing Sylvia Plath." Olwyn Hughes Papers, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.
[126] Plath, *Ariel*, 7.
[127] Margaret Miller notes that Hughes's sympathetic alignment with Plath reverses by the end of the volume. He begins to feel a companionship with the crowd as they possess his autobiography more than he does. From "In His Own Words: Ted Hughes on Sylvia Plath.," *The Yale Review of Books* 1.3 (Fall 1998), n.p. Accessed February 10, 2011, http://www.yale.edu/yrb/fall98/feature2.htm.

Hughes implicitly damns his readers for their interest. In a 1971 letter to Al Alvarez, Hughes criticizes those who, like Alvarez, were content to partake in the story: "for you she [Plath] is a topic for intellectual discussion, a poetic/existential phenomenon – basically it doesn't matter a damn to you what she did and you'd find any new details fascinating." By indicating that the reading public who shares this perspective with Alvarez is little better than a "mob" that carries "us around like a flea circus," Hughes suggests that the wide readership found for *Birthday Letters* acts merely out of superficial interest.[128] The cocktail party atmosphere that Hughes ascribes to the public's "intellectual discussion" of Plath mirrors his earlier parody of American dinner parties in the 1950s.

The critical and popular favor *Birthday Letters* enjoyed instigated a tidal wave of public interest in Ted Hughes and Sylvia Plath. Mercifully, the return of America's infatuation with the story of their marriage occurred after Hughes's death on October 28, 1998. In 2003, Hughes's *Collected Poems*, the film *Sylvia*, and Diane Middlebrook's biography *Her Husband* were released. *Sylvia* follows the predictable route of dramatizing the Plath-Hughes relationship by portraying Plath as a manic-depressive victimized by Hughes. In contrast, Middlebrook's biography was widely reviewed as the biography most sympathetic to Hughes and the *Collected Poems* offered not only Hughes's life's work to Americans as a single package, but also republished many of his out of print poems. *Birthday Letters*, by recounting the familiar tale from Hughes's perspective, not only capitalized on the ongoing interest in their marriage, but also bolstered the currency of their celebrity to a new generation of readers. Although Hughes

---

[128] Hughes, *Letters of Ted Hughes*, 325.

preferred to have the private dimension of his life unknown, his decision to engage with his audience also brought new interest to his non-autobiographically based work.

His literary collection, while also predicated on a public desire for autobiography, would reach a different constituency: the biographers and literary critics who Hughes most disdained. Hughes's courtship of scholars, after a lifetime of disregard beginning as early as his schooldays at Cambridge, was even more surprising than his decision to curry favor with the general audience targeted by *Birthday Letters*. Selling the literary collection, however, would allow him to gain financial freedom in order to pursue the life he wished to start following what would promise to be an expensive divorce from Carol.[129] Hughes had a history of selling papers for financial reasons, as he had previously sold Plath's papers to pay a tax bill and was unsentimental about doing so.[130] More importantly, however, was how his sale of the literary collection would begin to provide researchers with the resources needed to reconsider Hughes's status in twentieth century Anglophone poetics while it reconstituted Plath as part of Hughes's own archive.

III. "108,000 items in eighty-six boxes":[131] Courting Critics with the Literary Collection

Hughes recognized the utility of the literary collection as a means to direct scholarship. By opening his papers, Hughes encouraged the academic research he previously resisted; but by controlling what material was present in the archive, Hughes resisted commodification by literary critics. By opening his papers, Hughes encouraged

---

[129] This never came to pass as Hughes died prior to pursuing the divorce. "Her Husband; Diane Middlebrook Notes from Olwyn Hughes," 1 and 15, Olwyn Hughes Papers, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.
[130] Hughes, *Letters of Ted Hughes*, 450.
[131] Middlebrook, *Her Husband*, 269-70.

the academic research he formerly resisted. Emory's acquisition of Ted Hughes's archive is, alongside the publication of *Birthday Letters*, the event that allowed Hughes to recalibrate his literary legacy. Although the debut of the literary collection did not generate the same amount or type of publicity as *Birthday Letters*, the culmination of this two-sided motivation and the event through which Hughes altered his literary legacy. Although the debut of the literary collection did not generate the same amount or type of publicity as *Birthday Letters*, the literary collection supports a wide network of scholars who provide an academic correlative to the popular audience Hughes won through the success of his poetry collection.

On March 6, 1997, Ted wrote to his sister Olwyn Hughes: "Here's something for the bills. Sold the archive – to Emory. – successfully I think. […] Anyway, I'm off to Ireland for 2 or 3 weeks."[132] The casual nature of the note hides its importance among the series of actions Hughes took during the last years of his life. Olwyn, in a series of undated corrections to Diane Middlebrook's *Her Husband* (1998), provided an additional insight: "during the last 4 years of his life, his enormous output had a simple aim. He was determined to put the past that had overshadowed his life […] the sale of his archive was arranged well before he knew he was ill."[133] Olwyn's account repudiates the charge that Hughes sold his archive as a result of his approaching mortality. Instead, she illustrates the sale as an action designed to allow him to move forward into the new life he imagined. Far from sentimental, Hughes viewed the collection both as an asset to be

---

[132] Ted Hughes, "Letter from Ted Hughes to Olwyn Hughes," March 6, 1997, Olwyn Hughes Papers, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.
[133] Olwyn Hughes, "Undated Corrections to Middlebrook's Her Husband," Olwyn Hughes Papers, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

disposed of for financial benefit and a burden that, once removed, could free him to move beyond the controversies that had hounded him for so long.

Hughes first decided to sell his papers in the mid-1990s. As his biographer Diane Middlebrook recounts, he asked Ann Skea, a trusted scholar, to move to Devon to help sort and inventory his work. Hughes rescinded his offer shortly thereafter once he recognized the sensitive nature of much of the material. Working independently in order to preserve his privacy meant taking several years to complete the project. When Hughes finished the inventory, he contacted Emory University, which had begun acquiring Hughes manuscripts in 1985 and continued to invest in the author through the late 1980s. Stephen Enniss, then the director of Special Collections at Emory, flew to England to see the collection in person. Enniss and Hughes negotiated a successful sale and in March 1997, "the archive of Ted Hughes left Court Green for permanent residence in America – 108,000 items in eighty-six boxes weighing 2 1/2 tons, plus materials sealed in a trunk that is not to be opened until the year 2023." Middlebrook emphasizes the size of the archive in order to demonstrate how committed Hughes was to his privacy. Organizing his archive himself was a way to ensure "only he would ever know what had been excluded from the record he was arranging for posterity."[134] Notably, Middlebrook's final description of Ted Hughes at the end of is the life is her analysis of a photograph of Hughes checking over his papers at home prior to the Emory sale.

The visible satisfaction Hughes derived from controlling the content of his archive is consistent with his behavior as an author historically hostile to biographers and critics. The previously discussed negative reviews, alongside the criticism he faced from

---

[134] Middlebrook, *Her Husband,* 269-70.

Jacqueline Rose, Helen Vendler, Marjorie Perloff and others undoubtedly added to his opinions on literary scholarship, his perspective was formed much earlier. When Hughes attended Pembroke College at Cambridge University as an undergraduate, he originally intended to specialize in English literature but changed to archeology and anthropology following a visionary dream. In the dream, a fox placed a bloodied paw on his book and told him he was being tortured. Hughes interpreted the dream as a signal to stop torturing himself by writing literary criticism and to restore his imagination by shifting to another field.[135] The incident was so important to Hughes that his poem about it, "The Thought-Fox," became one of his best-reviewed poems from his first book, *The The Hawk in the Rain*. The poem continued to be chosen by Hughes in readings throughout his life and a recording of Hughes reading the poem was used to conclude a memorial service in his honor at the 92nd Street Y in New York City.[136]

In a 1971 letter to Al Alvarez, Hughes explored his discomfort toward literary criticism in more detail:

> The mechanical so-called objectivity of higher Lit. Cric. is unscrupulous enough in the cynically low opinion it has of the real power of words & in the way it cannot be bothered to distinguish between remarks made on paper and their consequences in real life -- and most of that one can't do anything about, it is all part of the brutalized righteousness of journalism, but your view is wider and I'm expecting you to be open to some appeal.[137]

Here, Hughes collapses the distinction between literary criticism and journalism by alleging that both ignore the human consequences of their words and that literary

---

[135] Feinstein, *Life of the Poet*, 29-30.
[136] "A Tribute to Ted Hughes," September/October 1999, Olwyn Hughes Papers, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.
[137] Hughes, *Letters of Ted Hughes*, 322.

criticism, like journalism, suffers from a "righteousness" that accords itself the justification to make evaluations of both author and text. Notably, Hughes does not particularize – he neither mentions a specific scholar or journalist who has hurt him, nor does he suggest what type of "remarks made on paper" he feels have been mistaken. The phrase leaves open the possibility that these remarks could be anything from transcribed interviews, to letters, poetry, or other creative or personal writings. The source of his anger is the "mechanical so-called objectivity" of literary critics or rather the language criticism is couched in.[138] An example of this type of language can be seen in the pamphlet of an exhibition of Sylvia Plath and Ted Hughes papers held in 2005 at The Grolier Club in New York titled "No Other Appetite: Sylvia Plath, Ted Hughes, and the Blood Jet of Poetry." In the introduction to the exhibit pamphlet, Ronald Schuchard argued:

> [W]e have finally reached the necessary distance from their legendary personal lives to return to their rich creative lives with the disinterested objectivity of scholarship. With the full accessibility of both their archives at Emory and Smith, the critical void will begin to fill and the legend will be rewritten.[139]

Schuchard claims that Hughes and Plath's autobiography has prevented critical evaluations of their work. With the passing of time, and the death of both authors, "the necessary distance" has been achieved so that "disinterested objectivity" can return to the foreground of scholarship. Furthermore, Schuchard sees the turn from autobiographically influenced criticism to objective scholarship as pivoting on the new material provided by

---

[138] Ibid., 322.

[139] Ronald Schuchard, ed. "Fixed Stars Govern a Life: Transforming Poetics and Memory with Emory's Ted Hughes Archive," *Emory Across Academe* 6 (Academic Exchange, 2006), 7.

the literary collections housed at Emory University and Smith College. The irony of these two statements placed side by side is that Hughes sees the criticism that has already been written about him prior to 1971 as subjectively influenced although objectively stated. Granted, Hughes's letter was written before the latter half of his career could occur and, with it, his development both away from Plath's legacy as well as his abrupt return to her influence in *Birthday Letters*, but the argument stands that Hughes feels literary criticism can never be objective. He believes that literary criticism merely distances itself from the repercussions of its analysis by arguing away the true influence it has over its subjects by claiming objectivity. Schuchard, by admitting previous criticism was unduly influenced, nevertheless reinstates the ideal of objective scholarship by summoning the power of the archive to reinforce appropriate critical boundaries.

What is overlooked in Schuchard's statement is that archives are first and foremost a place that exemplifies the power of biography. The biography does not even need to be that of the subject being examined, but rather a researcher's own history. As the archival encounter is predicated on the delight the user of the archive has when he or she meets the subject of study through the medium of the literary collection, this delight is partially due to the user's feeling of physical, rather than intellectual, proximity to the subject. The value of this proximity is reinforced by the process of evaluating the worth of literary archives, as documents which bear the marks of original owners are valued more highly than those which do not contain the owner's physical traces. The perception that researchers can use what their subjects once owned, and see the marks of their existence on documents, is a thrilling aspect of what can otherwise be a tedious process even for the most dedicated of scholars.

The importance of the intimacy of the archival encounter is a consistent theme in the field of archival studies. Lynne Huffer explores her experience working with the Foucault papers in *Mad For Foucault* in order to demonstrate how spending time among his documents has allowed her to overcome previous misgivings towards Foucault.[140] Derrida remembers the Freud archives in *Archive Fever* and emerges from his mediation on Freud with the revelation that the archives are not only a place of where contact occurs between the user and the subject, but also a space in which one speaks to oneself, in that "intimacy even more private than the family, [that is the intimacy that can be found] between oneself and oneself."[141] As archives allow researchers to confront their own investment in research, whether it is through the often expensive and time-consuming demands of traveling to the archive in the first place, or merely the excitement of finally accessing the physical marks of their subject, archival stories are a critical yet often untold aspect of scholarship. Although archival studies celebrates these stories, research which emerges from archival use frequently restricts the experience of research to brief introductory comments or acknowledgements.

The theoretical language that has emerged to describe the archive is a place where these stories have begun to influence scholarship itself. In *Mad For Foucault*, Huffer emphasizes the importance of the word "encounter" to illustrate the physical sensation of proximity users have to their subjects.[142] Huffer also states that Foucault's theory of the archive "desubjectivizes" the subject – in this case, the researcher. In other words, the archive does not buttress a researcher's knowledge, but rather dislocates him or her from

---

[140] Huffer, *Mad for Foucault,* iv.
[141] Derrida, *Archive Fever,* 90.
[142] Huffer, *Mad for Foucault,* 39.

previously held conceptions. Instead of bolstering a sense of knowledge or truth, the archive puts into question a researcher's ability to ever understand historical events, for "Foucault's dedialectizing approach to the archive will not yield a sublated truth about the past."[143] For this reason, Huffer says that lives investigated in archival research "become open to transformation though the fiction-making practice of histoire."[144] Although scholars would be reticent to admit their work is "fiction-making," interpretation necessarily constructs an understanding of the subject predicated on the problem of incomplete knowledge. The "desubjectivization" that users of the archive experience is no more than what literary critics regularly ignore: that is, the distance between interpretation and fact. By reiterating that the archive, a place of fact, nevertheless is predicated on a user's interpretive abilities, Huffer reminds her readers that objectivity is not possible. Rather, the archive's function is to give its subjects "room to speak" and that those who visit must listen. The erotic power of listening is a way to "think differently," to practice curiosity and attention to the other as a means of combating simplified understandings of truth and knowledge.[145]

Hughes, by placing his archive at Emory, was aware that the archive would have the power to help scholars reevaluate his work as well as his personality. For example, file folder 8 of box 149 includes a collection of notes and photographs taken from Plath's gravesite while file folder 11 of the same box includes drafts of a letter written to the *Independent* defending himself during the controversy which emerged when Plath's tombstone – which named Plath as "Sylvia Plath Hughes" – was defaced four times when

---

[143] Ibid., 117-8.
[144] Ibid., 194.
[145] Ibid., 269-75.

Hughes's name was chiseled from the marker.[146] In this letter in response to Ronald Hayman, dated April 19, 1989, Hughes describes his many attempts to adorn Plath's grave including placing items that recalled their life together such as river stones and daffodil bulbs. Hughes recounts that he cannot keep anything at the site due to the destructive nature of Plath's visitors and that repeated attempts to replace her defaced marker have failed as vandalism continued. The letter is heavily marked, and its many versions testify to Hughes's emotional and immediate response to the initial article in the *Independent*. If the letter's physical state – its notations, edits, and many drafts – is not convincing, the folder of preserved photographs and notes reminds users that Hughes visited the grave frequently and kept the offerings placed there even as he defended the slow progress of repairing her marker. By preserving the offerings left to his wife, Hughes did not insert only his own perspective into his literary collection. Instead, he maintained the multiple voices of the readers who came to love Plath through her writing. Her fans speak in the archive beside his own, reminding researchers that Hughes valued Plath's audience. For this reason, information gained through the archive can be transposed into objective criticism; it nevertheless was obtained through the means of autobiographical knowledge.

Similarly, archives reveal the depth of connections and relationships that objective scholarship uses but frequently chooses not to explore in order to emphasize the literary results that emerge from such pairings. While a scholarly account of Ted Hughes and Seamus Heaney's friendship should consider their joint editing of *The Rattle Bag* (1985) and *The School Bag* (1997) anthologies, as well as Heaney's role as Hughes's

---

[146] Jacqueline Rose gives an extensive overview of the events and how the controversy was written about in the media during April 1989.

apologist, such a narrative would be deepened by the fact that Hughes and Heaney frequently visited one another. Hughes taught Heaney to fish, while Heaney brought Hughes the companionship and supportive working relationship he failed to find in Philip Larkin or his other British contemporaries.[147] Once the restricted correspondence between Heaney and Hughes is opened, these letters will undoubtedly deepen the current understanding of their personal and working relationship. As those who have done archival research know, not all of the information gleaned from their letters will be relevant. Nevertheless, the ability of extraneous detail to enrich a researcher's perspective cannot be overlooked.

For this reason, Hughes's decision to censor his archive was a decision predicated on his belief that objective scholarship is not possible. Placing his literary collection at Emory allowed Hughes to have the inevitable subjectivity of literary criticism work on his behalf. In the intimate space of the archive, users come to know a Hughes whose papers often counter his image. The fact that this perspective is not unmediated needs to be present in contemporary accounts of Hughes's life and career. Middlebrook is the first author to acknowledge the way in which Hughes's literary collection was created and her choice to end her biography of Hughes on a description of a photograph of archival surveillance represents her position as a critic whose composition is dependent on access to her subject. By foregrounding how Hughes has restricted her possible analysis, Middlebrook allows her readers to recognize the inevitable limitations of her biography and admits that Hughes's jurisdiction over his archival material has inevitably shaped the outcome of her scholarship. Future scholars must, like Middlebrook, consider how

---

[147] Philip Larkin, "Letter from Philip Larkin," November 8, 1982, Ted Hughes Papers, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

Hughes's oversight may have influenced their conclusions. Furthermore, a more rigorous recognition of the way in which universities provide access to literary collections and benefit from their holdings is needed.

Hughes did not live long enough to enjoy the financial rewards of the Emory sale, but placing his papers at the university nevertheless benefitted him by allowing researchers to begin to reconsider Hughes as a man, an author, as well as Sylvia Plath's editor and caretaker. Prior to the opening of Hughes's literary collection, researchers seeking insight into Hughes's life and work was available only through Hughes's literature, his few published public statements, the decisions he made regarding the Plath estate and the Plath archive at Smith. This resulted in Hughes's identity being constrained to his role of Plath's husband, either through comparisons of their work, his executorship of her estate, or through a biographical evaluations of his role in Plath's suicide. By establishing his own literary collection, Hughes not only created an additional necessary site for scholars to visit, but also allowed them to see Hughes for himself through his letters, drafts, and memorabilia. As Hughes believed literary criticism is subjective by nature, his archive puts this perspective into practice. By omitting material he did not want in the archive, Hughes attempted to restrict the scholarship that he did not wish to occur. The critical renaissance that is currently occurring in Hughes studies is a result of the power of the literary collection to generate scholarship, yet this scholarship has not begun to systematically address Hughes's role in creating his own literary collection.[148] Similarly, as *Birthday Letters* is an archivally composed and inspired volume, the book as

[148] This conclusion, as with the chapter as a whole, only considers Ted Hughes's literary collection at Emory University. Subsequent studies should consider the creation of the Plath archives at Smith and Indiana University as well as Hughes's materials housed in the British Library.

an archive unto itself which corrects passive consumption by asking readers to search, examine, record, and interpret as well as recalibrates readers' perspectives by forcibly inserting them into a familiar narrative from Hughes's alternate viewpoint, similar to how the literary collection reorients researchers.

Both *Birthday Letters* and the manuscript collection are predicated on the power of celebrities in the late twentieth century. As one of the few literary celebrities in the United States by merit of his marriage to Sylvia Plath as well as his extensive career and Poet Laureateship in Britain, Hughes's biography is familiar to a wide audience. Investigating the way in which Hughes came to harness the power of his biography to stimulate a reevaluation of his life and work demonstrates that Hughes only came to the archival aesthetic of *Birthday Letters* and the decision to release his papers after a long period of resistance. For this reason, the dual release of *Birthday Letters* and the literary collection at Emory in 1998 recalibrated not only Hughes's career and his public and scholarly reputation, but also signaled Hughes's own reevaluation of his approach to the controversies that characterized his life. By opening himself to readers and researchers, Hughes recognized he could begin to be understood not on the power of a cultural narrative, but from his own perspective, a perspective tied the power of the archive.

Chapter Two

"The Gallery of the Tongue"[1]: Seamus Heaney's Literary Critics

Seamus Heaney endowed his literary collection to Emory University in 2003 to honor of the presidency of William Chace. Recent studies of Heaney's work overlook the value of this gift. Dennis O'Driscoll's *Stepping Stones: Interviews with Seamus Heaney* (2008), for example, provides a comprehensive chronology of Heaney's life and career, but does not mention the literary collection at all. Omitting the details of archival gifts deprives scholars of an awareness of archival collections and prevents researchers from considering the reasons for and implications of archival endowments.

Seamus Heaney's endowment of his literary collection to Emory University was unexpected; he had to ask Emory to strike the word "surprise" from their announcement to the press.[2] Heaney does have ties to Emory: he served as an Ellmann Lecturer in 1988 and a Commencement speaker in 2003, but placing his literary collection at his alma mater, Queen's University Belfast, or universities where he has held named positions such as Harvard University (Boylston Professor of Rhetoric and Oratory) and Oxford University (Professor of Poetry) would appear to have been more intuitive choices.

---

[1] Seamus Heaney, "The Wool Trade," *Wintering Out* (London, Faber and Faber, 1972), 37.

[2] Seamus Heaney, in a letter to Stephen Enniss, would ask Enniss to drop the word "surprise" from a press release announcing the placement of Heaney's literary collection at Emory. He continued by writing, "Now all of a sudden I realize I'd better write to people in Harvard and Queen's. Perhaps I should prepare some kind of statement that Marie [Heaney] might quote from if she gets follow-up questions, and that might also be given to the publicity people in Fabers and FSG. Then it too could be sent to Queen's and Houghton – it would be rough for them to read the news first in the press." Letter to Stephen Ennis 20 Sept. 2003, "Emory University Visit, September 2003, Seamus Heaney Papers, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

Investigating Heaney's connections to the faculty of these universities demonstrates not only why Heaney gave his collection Emory instead, but also outlines how academics at each institution shaped the progress of his career.

At Queen's, Heaney met Philip Hobsbaum, a lecturer who began the creative writing group that strengthened his "poetry muscles."[3] Hobsbaum's background in the tradition of English literature and his practice of practical criticism began to teach Heaney on how to revise, submit, and publicize his work. Hobsbaum also connected Heaney to the community of creative writers in Belfast. After leaving Belfast, Heaney spent the academic year of 1970-1971 at the University of California, Berkeley, where he met Thomas Flanagan, a specialist in Irish history and literature. Flanagan emphasized "Hiberno-centricism," which moved Heaney away from the tradition of English literature he learned during his university studies at Queen's. From 1979 until 1996, Heaney lived for one semester of every year at Harvard University. At Harvard, he deepened his friendship with Helen Vendler, whose aesthetics and mode of criticism were similar to Hobsbaum's. Vendler's compositional help and supportive reviews spurred the momentum of Heaney's career. During his time at Harvard, he became a Professor of Poetry at Oxford University and won the Nobel Prize for Literature. Heaney took Vendler with him to attend the Nobel award ceremony, which indicates both her personal and professional importance to Heaney. Heaney began to visit Emory University in 1981, returning frequently to read and partake in the hospitality offered by the Irish literary critics William Chace, Richard Ellmann, and Ronald Schuchard. When Ellmann died, Heaney became the inaugural speaker of the lecture series Schuchard created to honor

---

[3] Dennis O'Driscoll, *Stepping Stones: Interviews with Seamus Heaney* (London: Faber and Faber, 2008), 75.

Ellmann's legacy. When Chace retired from Emory's presidency in 2003, Heaney endowed his literary collection out of respect for his achievements and out of the recognition that his own legacy was already secure.

Heaney's decision to place his collection at Emory partially is rooted in the type of scholarship Ellmann, Schuchard, and Chace practice. These three scholars use biographical criticism, a type of practical criticism that uses knowledge of a writer's personal circumstances to animate close readings of literature. Biographical criticism is predicated on archival research, a methodology these critics promoted at Emory through their own scholarship as well as in their work for the university. When Emory received the Robert and George Woodruff endowment in 1978, Ellmann and Schuchard advocated that the university to expand their archival holdings by investing in Irish literary collections. Emory acquired the literary collections of Heaney's peers from the Hobsbaum workshop in the early 1990s: Derek Mahon's papers were acquired in 1991 and Michael Longley's followed in 1992. As the President of Emory University from 1994 until 2003, Chace supported expanding the university's Irish literary collections. During his tenure, Paul Muldoon and Medbh McGuckian's archives were brought to the university. When Seamus Heaney endowed his literary collection in recognition of Chace's presidency, he was following in the stead of his fellow Irish authors, but Emory's commitment to Irish literature, demonstrated through the university's collections policy, was established in recognition of the value of the role of biographical criticism within literary studies.

Heaney's endowment acknowledges that scholarship following in the tradition of Ellmann, Schuchard and Chace's biographical criticism requires literary collections for

their research. Heaney is supporting the development of this style of scholarship by granting access to his papers. By placing his materials at Emory instead of at Queen's, Berkeley, Oxford, or Harvard, he is recognizing the importance of their type of critical methodology as much as the critics who he sought to honor. Heaney's ties to institutions other than Emory may have contributed to his aesthetic development, but these connections remained enriching at a personal level and offered Heaney the ability to endow his works to a tradition of Irish literary scholarship.

I. Queen's University, 1962-1969

During his time as a lecturer at Queen's University, Philip Hobsbaum established a writing workshop in Belfast that practiced practical criticism. The mode of criticism, rather than its aesthetics, became the hallmark of the group. When Heaney joined the workshop at the start of his career, Hobsbaum mentored him alongside his peers, Michael Longley and Derek Mahon. Hobsbaum was more crucial to Heaney's creative development than to Longley or Mahon's because Longley and Mahon had met previously at Trinity University in Dublin and had already been introduced to the creative writers active in Belfast. Hobsbaum was also more important to Heaney than to Longley or Mahon because Hobsbaum preferred Heaney's work to theirs as it better fit Hobsbaum's aesthetic preferences. Because Longley and Mahon relied less on Hobsbaum and because Hobsbaum did not endorse their aesthetic, Longley and Mahon do not emphasize today the workshop's role at the start of their respective careers. Heaney, on the other hand, admits that the group was a seminal experience. The contrast between Heaney's experience and Longley and Mahon's demonstrates why Heaney became more amenable to academics and increasingly preferred developing relationships with scholars

rather than other poets. Heaney and Hobsbaum's relationship provides the precedent for Heaney's later friendships with literary critics in the United States.

Philip Hobsbaum became interested in writing workshops while enrolled as an undergraduate at Cambridge University. While at Cambridge, F.R. Leavis taught Hobsbaum that criticism's role is to evaluate literature and instructed him on the methodology of practical criticism. Leavis, whose first monograph *New Bearings in English Poetry* (1932) was on the achievements of major modernist poets such as T.S. Eliot, Gerald Manly Hopkins, Ezra Pound, and W.B. Yeats, compared their works favorably to those found in the Victorian era. Leavis is credited with a role in canonizing these modernist writers, similar to how Hobsbaum would later be regarded as the critic who identified many of England, Ireland, and Scotland's most acclaimed midcentury writers.[4]

As a proponent of practical criticism,[5] Leavis adapted I.A. Richards' experiment to give students poems without any identifying information in an attempt to make them concentrate on the language before them and nothing else.[6] By applying Richards' ideas to popular culture, Leavis intended to teach students how to analyze their surroundings in

---

[4] In England, Hobsbaum's group included Edward Lucie-Smith and Ted Hughes. In Ireland, Seamus Heaney, Michael Longley, and Derek Mahon participated as well as Bernard MacLaverty. The Scottish members were Alasdair Gray, James Kelman, Liz Lochhead, and Jeff Torrington.

[5] Practical criticism is considered a theoretical forefather to New Criticism, which espouses looking at form and language independent of context for the purpose of preserving socially conservative aesthetics, but it is not synonymous. Unlike New Criticism, practical criticism is not associated with a political orientation and, as Leavis showed, it can be used to critique popular media. Practical criticism has been assimilated into contemporary literary studies as a pedagogical technique and is not considered a stand-alone philosophy of criticism.

[6] "Introduction to Practical Criticism," *University of Cambridge Virtual Classroom*, accessed July 26, 2011, http://www.english.cam.ac.uk/vclass/pracrit.htm.

order to appreciate literature over the products of mass culture. In Hobsbaum's hands, practical criticism became a workshop methodology.

In "The Group: An Experiment in Criticism," Hobsbaum recounts that the first writing workshop he participated in was based on Tony Davis and Neil Morris's idea in November 1952 to "improve the standard of verse-speaking at the university." Once the group had acquired Hobsbaum himself as a member, plus Roy Hazell, Ben Driver, David Jones, Rodney Banister and Peter Redgrove, the meetings reoriented to focus on creative writing. Hobsbaum became the chairman of the workshop, which involved typing up the "sheets" of work under consideration for each meeting.[7] As an additional project, Redgrove and Banister began *Delta*, a literary magazine. Hobsbaum replaced Banister as a *Delta* editor by its third issue and would become the sole editor once Redgrove left Cambridge without a degree in 1954.[8]

In 1955, following the completion of his studies at Cambridge, Hobsbaum moved to London. There, he began a group like the one he had chaired at Cambridge.[9] Martin Bell, Edward Lucie-Smith, and Ted Hughes often participated. The critical approach of these meetings was an attention to maintaining clarity rather than indulging in private symbolism and preserving a "high degree of concentration on detail."[10] While Hobsbaum does not credit Leavis with aiding his interest in creating creative writing groups, his workshop pedagogy follows the precepts of practical criticism by concentrating on the

---

[7] Philip Hobsbaum, "The Group: An Experiment in Criticism," *The Yearbook of English Studies* 17 (1987), 76.
[8] Ibid., 75-6.
[9] Hobsbaum recalls that this is when Ted Hughes sent a few of Plath's poems to him, but Hobsbaum admitted, "I didn't like them very much." Hobsbaum, "The Group," 76-7.
[10] Ibid., 79.

effect of the mechanics of the poem. In the provided examples of group discussions, Hobsbaum gives the full text of the poem discussed and then the conversation. The first conversation is between Peter Porter, Martin Bell, and Hobsbaum himself commenting on George MacBeth's "Poem in a Metre of Ernest Dowson."[11] The participants note their responses to the piece and then begin to identify the parts of the poem that appear awkward. Porter notes "it's the little summing-ups at the end of each stanza which I find uncomfortable," while Hobsbaum identifies what has occurred in each scene in order to explain how the poem's intent is generated by its form.[12] The conversation concludes on the weakness of repeating the word "locked," which while immediately appealing to the group members as a strong strategy to express weariness, is later seen to be a "fundamental fallacy." In Hobsbaum's view, "if you feel like this, you might go and retire to a distant place, but you wouldn't write a play, would you?"[13] Hobsbaum employed practical criticism by directing attention to both the word choice and formal structure of the poem. He would apply the same technique to all materials presented within the workshop. Additionally, Hobsbaum's decision to not only record and transcribe these sessions, but also to include an example transcript in his explanatory article about the history of the gatherings demonstrates Hobsbaum's commitment to his methodology.

By 1959, the London workshop dispersed. Hobsbaum decided to earn a Ph.D at Sheffield University under William Empson, a so-called "Cambridge Critic" with I.A.

---

[11] Ibid., 79-82.
[12] Ibid., 81.
[13] Ibid., 82.

Richards and F.R Leavis.[14] Empson studied under I.A. Richards while at Cambridge before Empson was expelled from the university for sexual misconduct, which prevented him from receiving his M.A. in 1932.[15] Empson's criticism displayed Richards and Leavis's influence.[16] Empson's first and most prominent work was *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, which analyzed ambiguous language in poetry and was published when Empson was only 24. In *Seven Types*, Empson forgoes Leavis's dictate to consider value first. Instead, he examined poetry with the assumption that "you think the poem is worth the trouble before you choose to go into it carefully, and you know more about what it is worth when you have done so."[17] Empson credited Robert Graves to justify his study, for "critics have long been allowed to say that a poem may be something inspired which meant more than the poet knew,"[18] although he does refer to Richards as his advisor during the composition of the book.[19] While Empson would be an influential forefather to the New Critics like Richards and Leavis, Empson's work avoids the conclusions drawn by New Critics. Empson himself suggested that New Criticism was a "campaign to make poetry as dull as possible."[20] Under Empson, Hobsbaum learned to emphasize how close

---

[14] Edward Lucie-Smith would continue the group, but his version would be larger and more socially oriented than Hobsbaum's. When Oxford University Press requested an anthology of writings collected from their meetings, Hobsbaum and Lucie-Smith were able to edit a volume from the history of both eras of the group, titled the *Group Anthology* (1963). Lucie-Smith's workshop would end in 1965. Ibid., 84-5.

[15] "William Empson," *The Poetry Archive*, accessed July 26, 2011, http://www.poetryarchive.org/poetryarchive/singlePoet.do?poetId=7502.

[16] "F.R. Leavis," *Encyclopaedia Brittanica*, *Encyclopaedia Brittanica Online*, Accessed July 26, 2011, http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/334127/FR-Leavis.

[17] William Empson, *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (London: New Directions, 1947), xiii.

[18] Ibid., xiv.

[19] Ibid., viii.

[20] William Empson, *Essays on Renaissance Literature: Volume 1 Donne and the New Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 122.

attention to the vocabulary and formal structure of a poem can generate a plurality of interpretive meanings.

Hobsbaum moved to teach as a lecturer at Queen's University Belfast in 1962. He began the workshop in Belfast during July of that year. Michael Longley and Seamus Heaney were the primary attendants, although Derek Mahon participated once. Other members of the workshop included Hobsbaum, Heaney, and Longley's wives as well as "James Simmons, Bernard MacLaverty, Norman Dugdale, Norman Buller, Iris Bull, Jack Pakenham, Hugh Bredin, Michael Mitchell, Michael Allen, John Harvey, Maurice Gallagher, Lynette McCroskery, Marilyn Stronge, Dan McGee, Robert Sullivan, and Rex Mitchell."[21] Among these writers, it was Longley, Heaney, and Mahon who became the most prominent. Heather Clark recounted in *The Ulster Renaissance* (2006), "at the time of the first workshop, none of these men had published a book. By the end of the decade, they were among the foremost Irish poets of their generation."[22]

Several names were attributed to the three poets associated with the Hobsbaum workshop. Heaney joked that they were regarded as the "tight-assed trio,"[23] but scholars called them either the Ulster Renaissance[24] or the Belfast Group.[25] The Ulster Renaissance, now the generally accepted term, refers both to the geo-political location of their origin and the sense that Irish writing came to be globally recognized in the twentieth century. Ulster is the northernmost province of the four traditional regions

---

[21] Heather Clark, *The Ulster Renaissance: Poetry in Belfast 1962-1972* (Oxford: Oxford Univeristy Press, 2006), 55.
[22] Ibid., 1.
[23] Dennis O'Driscoll, *Stepping Stones,* 106.
[24] Heather Clark's *The Ulster Renaissance* (2006) takes this term as its title.
[25] Richard Rankin Russell's *Poetry and Peace: Michael Longley, Seamus Heaney, and Northern Ireland* (2010) chooses to describe Heaney and Longley's affiliation with this term.

(Ulster, Munster, Leinster, and Connacht) of Ireland, but exceeds the boundaries laid by the treaty that led to the partition of the country in 1921. Ulster, as a more general geographic term, includes writers from outside Belfast, while the specificity implied by Belfast limits the coterie to the city and specifically to the individuals who attended the Hobsbaum workshop. Likewise, the word Renaissance implies a generational awareness, while Group reiterates that the poets were peers.

Whether the workshop is called the Ulster Renaissance or the Belfast group, the poets who participated in Hobsbaum's gatherings later declined to describe themselves as a poetic coterie. Seamus Heaney generally follows the consensus by the writers that their workshop was not a formal group, but Heaney does admit on occasion that it felt like one. Due to the later strength of his reputation, he was also the writer who had the least prestige to lose by suggesting he needed the help of his fellow poets as well as the guidance of a scholar.

Heaney does not consistently emphasize that his start in creative writing was the result of his participation in a group headed by a literary critic. *Preoccupations: Selected Prose 1968-1978* (1981), a collection of non-fiction, contains "Belfast," an essay that describes the workshop from Heaney's perspective. Heaney writes, "when Hobsbaum arrived in Belfast, he moved disparate elements into a single action," but he also says "a lot of people of a generally literary bent were islanded about the place but they in no way constituted an archipelago."[26] One way to read Heaney's commentary is to see that Belfast had a number of talented individuals who under Hobsbaum became mature poets together. Another interpretation is that Heaney resists the notion that individual authors

[26] Seamus Heaney, "Belfast," *Preoccupations: Selected Prose, 1968-78* (New York: The Noonday Press, 1980), 28-9.

ever come together. Heaney's choice of metaphor emphasizes the distinction between poets located near one another and poets who happen to be affiliated. As islands and archipelagos are distinct geographical entities, writers who live in the same location and writers who are members of a literary coterie only appear to be similar. In Heaney's description from this essay, the Hobsbaum workshop is merely a place of hospitality and encouragement, and his affection for Philip Hobsbaum and his wife is the sort "of special gratitude we reserve for those who have led us toward confidence in ourselves."[27]

"Belfast" is predated by an interview published in *Ploughshares* with James Randall in 1979. In this interview, Heaney explores his perspective on Hobsbaum's workshop in more detail:

> Philip Hobsbaum was really the one who gave me the trust in what I was doing and urged me to send poems out – and it's easy to forget how callow and unknowing you are about these things in the beginning. From a literary point of view, Derek and Michael were more sophisticated about what to do. They had read Louis MacNeice, they had met MacNeice, and they had met other poets. I had never met anybody.[28]

In contrast to his formal reflection collected into *Preoccupations*, this interview demonstrates how Heaney felt both as Philip Hobsbaum's student and Derek Mahon and Michael Longley's peer. In contrast to Longley and Mahon, Heaney's relative lack of experience made his participation in Hobsbaum's workshop seminal. Hobsbaum gave him the trust to be confident in his work and motivated him to publish. As Longley and Mahon had already envisioned themselves as part of a literati, reading and mingling with other writers, Heaney's dependence on Hobsbaum's guidance, as well as the taste and

---

[27] Ibid., 29.
[28] James Randall and Seamus Heaney, "An Interview with Seamus Heaney," *Ploughshares* 5.3 (1979), 14-5.

experience of his fellow group members provides a reason for why he would come to emphasize the workshop more than his peers later in life. For Longley and Mahon, Hobsbaum's workshop was a continuation of their current actions. For Heaney, Hobsbaum's group began to expose him to the rigors of writing as a professional. Heaney's recollection that at the time he "had never met anybody" is a self-conscious reflection on his own inexperience and the degree to which Hobsbaum's initiative, combined with Longley and Mahon's examples, were instructive to Heaney. In the same interview, Heaney also recalled that he "met Longley and Mahon in 1962-64, and that's four or five years before things started. I think it was as simple as this: we were a first draft of young writers."[29] A "first draft" of writers suggests that Longley, Mahon, and Heaney were writers with potential, but that participation in the Hobsbaum's poetry workshop allowed them to develop. Heaney is also crediting Hobsbaum with the fruition of their collective talents rather than identifying the poets themselves as creating their critical success. Complimenting Hobsbaum's ability to direct literary history is a formal recognition of his power as a critic.

In an interview with Frank Kinahan published in Spring 1982 in *Critical Inquiry*, Kinahan remarks that Heaney once called "the older poet John Hewitt and then younger writers like James Simmons, Michael Longley, Derek Mahon, and Paul Muldoon" a "very necessary and self-sustaining group."[30] While Heaney responds immediately that "we certainly don't see ourselves as a school" and that it was the learning process he was referring to rather than a shared aesthetics, Heaney continues to emphasize Hobsbaum's

---

[29] Ibid., 9.
[30] Frank Kinahan and Seamus Heaney, "An Interview with Seamus Heaney," *Critical Inquiry* 8.3 (Spring 1982), 407.

role over the collective power of the members of the Belfast Group by stating, "A lot of the people hated it [the Hobsbaum meetings]; I mean, there were always quarrels about it. But Hobsbaum was […] a great publicist" and he was also a teacher who "made the *Belfast Telegraph* believe that they had a literary movement on their hands. […] And then we all got books published here and there; and there was your movement."[31] In the interview, Heaney recognizes that participation in the Hobsbaum group and the timing of the start of their publishing careers is enough for scholars to consider them a group in literary history.

The question of whether or not the Hobsbaum workshop is a poetic movement is not what troubles Heaney. His concern stems from what he describes as "the wrong habits of mind" in his essay "Canticles to the Earth on Theodore Roethke," also collected in *Preoccupations*. In his essay, Heaney argues that it is for the "lecturer and anthologist" to be "concerned with generations, with shifting fashions of style" and "although at least one spirit of the age will probably be discernible in a poet's work, he should not turn his brain into a butterfly net in pursuit of it."[32] Instead of disparaging the idea of the Belfast Group or Ulster Renaissance, Heaney suggests it is simply not his professional realm to discuss it. His responsibility is to write rather than to subjugate his work to a broader analysis of the confluences of artistic, social, and political history. By diagnosing that poor writers overly concern themselves with such legacies, Heaney instructs that the pursuit of such interests is a "butterfly net" better suited to those in the academic professions. Primarily associating with critics, rather than with his fellow poets, allows Heaney to distance himself from concerns about his personal legacy or his role within

---

[31] Ibid., 408.
[32] Seamus Heaney, *Preoccupations,* 190.

Irish literature as a whole as he is less likely to be exposed to the writing of his contemporaries. At the same time, Heaney's friendship with scholars charged with diagnosing "the spirit of the age" ensures that it is more likely that he will be remembered within their accounts.

Furthermore, the Kinahan interview demonstrates that Heaney recognized that Hobsbaum's skills as a teacher and publicist went hand in hand. Hobsbaum not only taught the members of the workshop, but also taught the public to receive the workshop. It was Hobsbaum's intervention that led the *Telegraph* to endorse the writers and to see them as a coterie. Hobsbaum's achievement doubles; he recognized potential writers and knew which methods were needed to make them into public figures.

Edna Longley, Michael Longley's wife and a literary critic, argued that the poets who met under Philip Hobsbaum's tutelage should not be considered poetic coterie. Longley attempted to discredit the idea that the Hobsbaum meetings constituted a formal group. She observed, "Hobsbaum's own practice and theory were largely irrelevant."[33] If anything, Longley said, Hobsbaum only brought "poets together (Heaney, Longley, Simmons)" and "poetry and criticism together," as well as re-establishing "the coterie-habit to Belfast."[34] Longley argued that Hobsbaum's habit of "bringing together" writers is not sufficient leadership to constitute a group based on her understanding of a coterie, one that requires that the leader institute a cohesive aesthetic that members adhere to in their work.

---

[33] Ibid., 12.
[34] Ibid., 12.

Hobsbaum's practice, however, did not intend to create a certain style. Its intention was to engage in a "reciprocal process of criticism."[35] The mode of analyzing poetry and the participation of all who committed to attending meetings mattered, not a consistency in their published work. Longley's misunderstanding of Hobsbaum's group is derived from movements like Imagism, which were created to instigate an aesthetic shift. In the case of Imagism, Ezra Pound, Richard Aldington, and H.D. wanted to orient poetry toward free verse and the "direct treatment of the 'thing'" in 1912.[36] Hobsbaum, unlike the Imagists, felt that the practice of criticism was enough. Longley's judgment overlooks the fact that a poetic coterie can be driven by literary analysis even more than the creation of original verse. She mistakenly believes that poetic coteries should adhere to a stylistic standard, a concept that is more suitable to modernist than postmodernist writers.

Edna Longley also fails to see that Hobsbaum did have a strong aesthetic preference. Hobsbaum's criticism, although written after the period in which the Belfast Group met, emphasizes his desire to see formalist poetry written out of the tradition of English literature. In *Tradition and Experiment in English Poetry* (1979), Hobsbaum followed the history of poetry from Piers Plowman through the "American Tradition" and concluded with a chapter on "The Poetry of Barbarism" which considered the work of Peter Redgrove, Francis Berry, Galway Kinnell, and Patrick Kavanagh. His preferences are rooted in the way he was taught. Hobsbaum quotes his former professor F.R. Leavis in his preface:

---

[35] Hobsbaum, "The Group," 86.
[36] Glenn Hughes, *Imagism & the Imagists: A Study in Modern Poetry* (New York: Biblo and Tannen, 1972), 26.

> some damage was done to English verse by too close an imitation in the 1930s to the American idiom as evidenced by such poets as Eliot and Pound. The claim put forward is that the central line of English poetry – the tradition, so to speak – is earthy, alliterative, colloquial, with a strong regard for structure and the claims of plot.[37]

Hobsbaum preferred a type of verse that he felt continued the English tradition as Leavis defined it. His dependence on Leavis's judgment is reiterated also in his choice of epigraphs. Leavis's epigraph, like the preface quotation, considered the implication of the tradition in writing. It argued, "in dealing with individual poets the critic, whether explicitly or not, is dealing with tradition, for they live in it. And it is in them that tradition lives."[38] By evaluating contemporary poetry by the way it built on and expanded the tradition, Hobsbaum expressed his preference for works that kept alive what he felt was the English tradition.

In Heaney's first volume, *Death of a Naturalist* (1966), Heaney announced the beginning of his poetic career with a poem that refers to tradition. In "Digging," Heaney witnesses the labor of past generations and imagines how he can adapt his capabilities to their work. The poem illustrates the efforts of Heaney's father, celebrating his labors with "by God, the old man could handle a spade./ Just like his old man."[39] In contrast, Heaney finds "I've no spade to follow men like them,"[40] but concludes that he can dig with the "squat pen."[41] He concedes that he cannot continue their physical labor. He continues their legacy instead through his intellectual work, which parallels their struggle with the

---

[37] Philip Hobsbaum, *Tradition and Experiment in English Poetry* (London: The Macmillan Press, 1979), xii.
[38] Ibid., n.p.
[39] Seamus Heaney, "Digging," *Death of a Naturalist* (London: Faber and Faber, 1966), 13, Lines 15-6.
[40] Ibid., Line 28.
[41] Ibid., Line 31.

land by being just as rooted in the earth. Heaney participates in "heaving sods" by the type of vocabulary he uses and his preference for imagery from the landscape of Northern Ireland.[42] He also digs by "going down and down" in language through his investigation of the etymology of English.[43]

Notably, Heaney did not leave Belfast until he achieved substantial success with the collections written while working with Hobsbaum. When Heaney gave his personal reasons for his departure in 1972, after his year abroad at the University of California, Berkeley, he said he felt Belfast was the location of the movement, which had served its purpose in his career and was now beginning to limit him. In his conversation with Randall, Heaney explained, "I found that my life, most of my time, was being spent in classrooms, with friends, at various social events, and I didn't feel that my work was sufficiently the center of my life." Now the published author of *Death of a Naturalist* and *Door into the Dark* (1969) and about to publish his third volume, *Wintering Out* (1972), Heaney felt that the exposure to other writers, while once needed, had become restrictive. Conversely, his exposure to scholars fed his work rather than restricted it. Heaney would go first to Glanmore Cottage in County Wicklow, Ireland, but he would soon spend half of every year in the United States at Harvard University. By accepting the university position at the University of California, Berkeley and then at Harvard, Heaney would meet scholars who would both guide his intellectual development while reaffirming his aesthetics. As these academics shared a similar educational background with Philip Hobsbaum, they would also see merit in Heaney's work. In turn, Heaney's experience as Hobsbaum's protégé would give Heaney to see scholars as both potential educators and

---

[42] Ibid., Line 22.
[43] Ibid., Line 23.

critical champions.

II. University of California, Berkeley, 1970-1971

Seamus Heaney first came to the United States to teach at Berkeley during the academic year of 1970 to 1971. Berkeley, the "crown jewel" of the University of California system, was known for its tumultuous history and its progressive politics. Despite the cultural climate, Heaney's time in California did not result in an immersion in American culture and poetic forms. Undoubtedly, he did see enough of California's protests to compare the conditions he saw in the United States to the needs of his own community in Northern Ireland, but his career was shaped more by meeting Thomas Flanagan, who would broaden Heney's knowledge of Irish literature and history, than his exposure to the American milieu. For in the midst of social and political upheaval in California, Flanagan remained fixated on the turmoil of Ireland's colonization. The irony that an American critic would validate the significance of the Irish tradition to Heaney is a theme that would continue in Heaney's career as he progressed from Berkeley to Harvard and Emory.

Heaney experienced an immediate culture shock when he arrived in California. Berkeley was a "releasing thing," a place of "protests and consciousness-raising."[44] During the academic year of 1964 to 1965, Berkeley survived the "largest-scale war between students and administration ever seen in the United States" over the right to preserve freedom of speech on campus. The battle that ensued between the university bureaucracy and the students of the Free Speech Movement (FSM) became "the scene of the largest-scale victory ever won in such a battle by students."[45] Five years later, debates

[44] Randall, "An Interview," 19.
[45] Hal Draper, *Berkeley: The New Student Revolt* (New York: Grove Press, 1965): 13.

continued as university members considered whether the function of the university was research and teaching or "social change through political action."[46]

Berkeley was also challenging aesthetically. American poetry from the West Coast still was dominated by legacy of the San Francisco Renaissance, which began with the now-mythic October 13, 1955 reading at the Six Gallery. Allen Ginsberg, Michael McClure, Gary Snyder, Philip Whalen, and Philip Lamantia participated while Kenneth Rexroth presided and Jack Kerouac sat in the audience.[47] Although Heaney arrived over a decade later, Heaney still felt their influence. Heaney said, "when I came from Belfast in the early 70's to Berkeley, I came as a writer of thin cross-legged quatrains and narrow little knitting-needle forms into Beatsville, into the big open howl of the Ginsbergian."[48] Heaney found that coming to America was "to encounter the other, to put the screws on my own aesthetic."[49] Heaney critiqued "the American cadence" for "run[ning] to the end of the page" and "tend[ing] to be fluid and spread," whereas Heaney found "my predisposition and my prejudice is toward poetry that contains and practices force within a confined area."[50] In other words, the poetry that sought to "provide an alternative to the rhetorically dense metaphysical lyric advocated by the New Critics" was too open, too relaxed, and too free from structure to be appealing to Heaney.[51] The "historically aware, hard-bitten" quality he found in Eastern European poetry seemed more attractive for their

---

[46] C. Michael Otten, *University Authority and the Student: The Berkeley Experience* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 3.
[47] Michael Davidson, *The San Francisco Renaissance: Poetry and Community at Mid-Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 3.
[48] Rand Brandes and Seamus Heaney, "Interview with Seamus Heaney," *Salmagundi* 80 (Fall 1988), 16.
[49] Ibid., 16-7.
[50] Ibid., 17.
[51] Davidson, *The San Francisco Renaissance*, 17.

work provided a "precaution against the ahistorical, hedonistic" writing he found in the United States.[52] While Heaney's feeling that American writing of the late 1950s through the early 1970s was ignorant of history and "hedonistic" – his euphemism for being too narrowly focused on the personal – the West Coast poetry he encountered was neither. Rather, it was antagonistic to values such as lyricism and formalism that Heaney had learned to assimilate while at Queens.[53]

Although Heaney disliked the American penchant for long lines, James Randall found that "in the poems of *Wintering Out*, in the little quatrain shapes, there are signs of that loosening, the California spirit, a more relaxed movement to the verse. It isn't as tightly strung."[54] The first poem of *Wintering Out*, "Fodder," exemplifies the contrast between Heaney's earlier style and the American influences he found at Berkeley. "Fodder," about pulling hay to "bed the stall," is comprised of five of the "cross-legged quatrains" Heaney describes and three sentences.[55] The first sentence of "Fodder" makes up less than the first quatrain, while the second sentence spreads out over four stanzas. The third is exactly the length of the final quatrain, which balances the previous short and long sentences and highlights the effect of the long sentence which literally pulls the words down the page to mimic the physical sensation of drawing straw from a stack of hay.

Heaney provides an additional example of how California affected his writing when he states, "the first poem I wrote when I came to California is the last poem in the

---

[52] O'Driscoll, *Stepping Stones*, 114-5.
[53] Dana Gioia, *California Poetry: From the Gold Rush to the Present* (Berkeley: Heydey Books, 2004), 76.
[54] Randall, "An Interview," 19.
[55] Seamus Heaney, *Wintering Out* (London: Faber and Faber, 1972), 13.

book, a strange poem about weightlessness and drifting. This was just after the first moon shots."[56] The poem he refers to, "Westering," has "in California" italicized underneath the title, but the poem itself does not refer to either California or Berkeley directly. Instead, it says:

> Summer had been a free fall,
> Ending there,
> The empty amphitheatre
> Of the west.[57]

The emptiness of the western landscape of the United States and the ugliness of the moon, which is "the color of frogskin" and has "enlarged pores" is contrasted against a scene of Good Friday in Donegal complete with drawn shop blinds and cars and bikes resting silently during worship.[58] Heaney recounts that the "roads unreeled, unreeled," leaving Heaney "six thousand miles away" from Donegal. In the poem, Heaney cannot give a purpose for his travels or represent his new surroundings. Instead, finding himself literally alienated, he returns to the astral imagery that began the poem and projects the familiarity of Christ into the picture of the moon. What "Christ [is] weighing by his hands" is left unsaid, but as *Wintering Out* depicts the emerging Troubles in Ireland, Christ likely is considering the violence unfolding in Northern Ireland. Heaney refers to this violence in "The Tollund Man." In "The Tollund Man" Heaney finds himself "lost/ unhappy and at home" in the "old man-killing parishes."[59] The unsettling notion of hostility as a comfortable reminder of home is what propels the collection. *North* returns repeatedly to images of domestic and fraternal violence. The strangeness of America,

---

[56] Randall, "Interview with Seamus Heaney," 20.
[57] Heaney, "Westering," *Wintering Out*, 79, Lines 13-6.
[58] Ibid., 79-80, Lines 3-4 and 16-20.
[59] Heaney, "The Tollund Man," *Wintering Out*, 48, Lines 42-44.

which is seen as otherworldly in *Wintering Out*, cannot be fully digested into Heaney's poetics even though the United States experienced its own significant struggles during the period Heaney visited.

I argue though that Thomas Flanagan is the secondary reason Heaney did not absorb more American influences, after Heaney's own acknowledged distaste for the West Coast aesthetic. Flanagan reflected Heaney's interests in Irish literature and history, but brought an additional scholarly knowledge base to Heaney's lived experience.

Born in Connecticut on November 5, 1923, Flanagan attended high school with Truman Capote, graduated from Amherst College in 1945, and received both his master's degree in 1948 and doctoral degree in 1959 from Columbia. His advisor at Columbia was Lionel Trilling. The dissertation he wrote under Trilling became *The Irish Novelists, 1800-1850* (1959). In 1960, Flanagan began teaching at Berkeley. Flanagan stayed at Berkeley until 1978 when he moved to the State University of New York at Stonybrook, where he retired in 1996. Although a tenured full professor, Flanagan became known more for his creative writing than his literary criticism. He published three acclaimed historical novels, *The Year of the French* (1979), *The Tenants of Time* (1988), and *The End of the Hunt* (1994).[60]

Flanagan's interest in Ireland was personal. All four of his grandparents were from County Fermanagh. Around the time that he moved to Berkeley, Flanagan began traveling to Ireland every summer.[61] Once while visiting Ireland, Flanagan traveled with

---

[60] Thomas Flanagan, "Biographical Note," Thomas Flanagan (AC 1945) Papers 1866-2002, Amherst College Archives and Special Collections, http://asteria.fivecolleges.edu/findaids/amherst/ma171_bioghist.html.
[61] Neil Genzlinger, "Thomas Flanaghan, 78, Author of Trilogy about Ireland," *New York Times*, March 29, 2002, accessed July 29, 2011,

Seamus and Marie Heaney to see a bog he had decided to feature in *The Year of the French*, which depicted Ireland's 1798 rebellion. Secretive about his fiction because he felt his professional identity was predicated on his criticism rather than his creative work, he wrote fondly of the trip and Heaney's support in "Evening Drive to Ballinamuck," published in the spring 1996 issue of *Harvard Review*.[62] Heaney would later be asked if McCarthy, the "poet character" in the book, was based on him. Heaney did not confirm or deny that he was the basis of the character. Instead, he said that Flanagan was a sort of "literary foster father" who "reoriented [Heaney's] thinking" toward Irish history and literature from the "English literature terminals" of his education.[63] It was Flanagan's "sardonic Hibernocentric thinking" that aided Heaney's perception of himself "as a 'Northern poet' more in relation to the wound and the work of Ireland as a whole."[64] While Heaney did not answer the original question posed to him, his response illuminates Flanagan's effect on Heaney as well as Heaney's own educational background that prioritized England's literature and history over Ireland's.

Flanagan also altered Heaney's theoretical orientation. Heaney states that Flanagan "was the opposite of the New Critic kind of critic I was used to. Historical and political and biographical contexts always concerned him, and his talk was full of quotations."[65] Heaney's remark shows that Hobsbaum generally conducted himself practitioner of practical criticism, more concerned with the techniques of poetry than its

---

http://www.nytimes.com/2002/03/29/us/thomas-flanagan-78-author-of-trilogy-about-ireland.html.

[62] Thomas Flanagan, "Evening Drive to Ballinamuck," *Harvard Review* 10 (Spring 1996), 48-9.

[63] O'Driscoll, *Stepping Stones*, 142.

[64] Ibid., 143.

[65] Ibid., 143.

subjects or contexts. While Heaney conflates New Criticism and practical criticism, he does not make this mistake later when he discusses Helen Vendler.

Heaney's comment about Flanagan therefore shows that Flanagan's mode of inquiry was distinctive in contrast to Hobsbaum's. Hobsbaum's orientation fit the context of the workshop, which was dedicated to strengthening the compositional skills of its members. Flanaghan, on the other hand, was concerned primarily with educating his students on Irish literature and explaining the social and political landscapes of the country, a topic he mastered. Flanaghan's approach was closer to the biographical criticism Heaney would encounter in Richard Ellmann, Ronald Schuchard, and William Chace's work, for Flanaghan considered the context in which the poems were written as well as the qualities of the prose. Heaney reported Flanagan "seemed to have knowledge of every historical site in Ireland," which enriched both his instruction and his writing.[66] Flanagan's pedagogy represented the depth of scholarly knowledge that Heaney would respect in each of the influential critics he met. Additionally, Heaney recalled that Flanagan "had been a personal friend of Frank O'Connor, he had been at college with Truman Capote," a description that evokes his own assessment of himself as "not knowing anybody" around the time he joined Hobsbaum's workshop.[67]

Heaney's gratitude to Flanagan can be seen in "Traditions, " a poem from *Wintering Out* dedicated to the scholar. In "Traditions," Heaney discusses the colonization of Ireland, particularly through the way in which Elizabethan English overthrew the Irish language and is preserved symptomatically in Ireland's idiomatic

---

[66] Ibid., 143.
[67] Ibid., 143. Heaney erroneously states that Flanagan went to college rather than high school with Truman Capote.

English today. The poem parallels the themes of Flanagan's *The Year of the French* as it revisits the periods in which England gradually established political and linguistic control over Ireland. Written in three sections, the first section imagines "custom" […] "beds us down into/ the British isles."[68] The second suggests that despite colonization, the Irish are supposed to be proud of their "Elizabethan English." Heaney provides examples of how "some cherished archaisms" have made their way into commonplace speech.[69] The conclusion alludes to Irish Captain Macmorris, a character from Shakespeare's *Henry V*. In *Henry V*, Captain Macmorris asks Welsh Captain Fluellen, "What ish my nation." The question demonstrates the underlying disunity within the military as well as within the British nation at large. It also shows how Irish nationalism has been corrupted during the early stages of English colonization.[70] Heaney concludes the poem with Joyce's Bloom answering, "I was born here. Ireland," to the question posed by Shakespeare's Macmorris.[71] Bloom's reply is a confident affirmation of Irish nationalism.

Heaney said that Flanagan was what made "my time by the Pacific [at Berkeley] an education."[72] Flanagan's role as the professor who introduced Heaney to Irish literature demonstrates how Heaney became indebted to American scholars. As Heaney would later develop a friendship with another of Flanagan's students, William Chace, Flanagan as a scholar provides a litmus test for how Irish Studies in the United States

---

[68] Heaney, "Traditions," *Wintering Out*, 31, Lines 9, 11-2.
[69] Ibid., 31, Line 14, 19.
[70] Timothy M. Foran, "What 'ish' Macmorris? A Study of the Loss of Identity created by Colonialism in *Henry V*," *VMI Undergraduate Research Shakespeare Conference*, November 12, 2005, accessed July 20, 2011.
[71] Heaney, *Wintering Out*, 32, Lines 32-36.
[72] O'Driscoll, *Stepping Stones*, 143.

generated a close-knit group of students and faculty that artists had access to once they began to participate in the academic system.

Heaney would return to Ireland for the period of 1971-1979. In 1979, Heaney would begin a series of positions at Harvard. Heaney's eventual promotion to the Boylston Professor of Rhetoric and Oratory, combined with faculty member Helen Vendler's mentorship, would raise Heaney's global status even higher, eventually earning him a Professorship of Poetry at Oxford University from 1989 to 1994 and a Nobel Prize for Literature in 1995.

III. Harvard University, 1979-2007

In the spring of 1979, after eight years in Ireland following his year at Berkeley, Heaney began as a guest lecturer in the English department at Harvard. He came to Harvard after Robert Lowell's death in 1977 and Elizabeth Bishop's retirement that same year.[73] Heaney's association with Harvard University would prove to be Heaney's most significant institutional affiliation. He spent more time there as a faculty member than at any other university and, at Harvard, his career would enter its most successful stage. It would be Harvard that Heaney would disappoint when he decided to place his literary collection at Emory University.

In the spring of 1982, Heaney began a three-year contract at Harvard that required him to be present for one term annually;[74] in 1984, Heaney was given the title of Boylston Professor of Rhetoric and Oratory. The Boylston Professorship had been created to give John Adams a university position when he returned from Washington, but in the latter portion of the twentieth century, the Professorship was awarded traditionally

---

[73] Ibid., 265.
[74] Ibid., 265.

to creative writers. Previous Boylston Professors included Archibald MacLeish and Robert Fitzgerald.[75] As one of the most prestigious positions at Harvard, the Boylston Professorship committed Heaney to campus life every spring. The Boylston Professorship was a significant advance in Heaney's career, but its indirect benefit was that it facilitated his affiliation with Helen Vendler. Once Vendler was granted a half-year appointment at Harvard in 1981 and then a full-time position in 1984, Heaney and Vendler began to see each other more frequently.[76]

Seamus Heaney and Helen Vendler were prior acquaintances. They met at the Yeats Summer School in Sligo, Ireland in 1975 when Heaney was in town to read the drafts of poems that were to be published as part of *North* and Vendler was teaching the annual weeklong course she had begun in 1972. Vendler was in the audience when Heaney read. Her instant appreciation for the poems led her to develop a friendship with Heaney. Later, Heaney would recall that the two "met, OK, because she liked my poems" but that her "avidity" was something he expected to find "only from a fellow poet, maybe only from a rival poet. She has intensity, intelligence, perfect pitch -- a uniquely gifted listener-in to poems."[77] The coincidence was mutually beneficial. Heaney became a close personal friend, a colleague, and then a subject of one of Vendler's books. Heaney benefitted by becoming Vendler's most acclaimed subject.

To give an example of how Helen Vendler influenced Heaney's reception, Vendler thought *North* was "one of the crucial poetic interventions of the twentieth century, ranking with Prufrock and *Harmonium* and *North of Boston* in its key role in the

---

[75] Ibid., 270.
[76] Ibid., 347.
[77] Ibid., 347.

history of modern poetry,"[78] while Heaney's peers in Ireland, Paul Muldoon and Edna Longley, disliked the volume. While perhaps reflecting the American tendency to embrace Heaney while his Irish peers held him at arms-length, reactions to *North* provide a litmus test for the strength of Heaney's later relationships. Those who celebrated the volume became closer to Heaney later in his career, while those who met it with ambivalence or criticism distanced themselves from him in their later years. For example, his Belfast Group peers disliked the collection. Muldoon said it was Heaney's "least persuasive collection,"[79] and Longley thought "one can hardly resist the suspicion that *North* itself, as a work of art, has succumbed" to the idea of becoming a "myth" or "an institution." Furthermore, Longley argues that Heaney is allowing himself in this volume to become "a mythmaker, an anthropologist of ritual killing, an apologist," and, most damningly, a "laureate of violence," a reputation which has since dogged Heaney throughout his career.[80]

Helen Vendler's assessment proved to be the one held today by most literary critics, although many early reviewers also recognized Heaney's achievement. William Bedford wrote in the literary magazine *Delta*, "With the publication of *North*, Heaney has given us both the most explicit formulation of his concern with language and the richest fulfillment of that concern"[81] and saw that Heaney sought to "give true meaning and value, in language, to chaotic experience." Bedford does note that Heaney's desire to

---

[78] Helen Vendler, *Seamus Heaney* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 3.
[79] "Seamus Heaney: Teacher's Notes," Paul Muldoon Papers, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.
[80] Edna Longley, "Escaped from the Massacre?" review of *North* by Seamus Heaney, *The Honest Ulsterman* 50 (Autumn 1975), 183.
[81] William Bedford, "To Set the Darkness Echoing" review of *North* by Seamus Heaney, *Delta* 56 (1977), 2.

avoid "the risks of rhetoric" has cost him "much of the passion Yeats managed to sustain in his own political poems," but Roger Conover in *Èire-Ireland* noted that "Heaney's poems do much more than concentrate experience into compelling poetic speech: they send precise messages to unidentified bog objects and determine their nature by reading the signals which come back." Therefore, the "aural, tactical, and olfactory responses to the objects he finds buried" are described by in poems that take their cue from "the world of bioacoustics, pheromones, and kinesthesia."[82] Conover's review suggests that Heaney does not engage with rhetoric and contemporary mass media, but develops instead from a sensory investigation of the landscape. The perception that Heaney's poetry is rooted in landscape and personal experience is a way to imagine his work outside of its political and social contexts, a perspective shared by Helen Vendler.

Vendler favored Heaney's poetry because it fit her intellectual agenda, which emphasized the importance of formal structures and the independence of art from social and political circumstance. A self-described "aesthetic critic," defined "in opposition to interpretative and ideological criticism," Vendler believed that topicality limits art.[83] In an interview for the *Paris Review*, Vendler explained, "as Wilde said, something is well-written or ill-written, that is all" and that the social value of a poem is rooted in its "integration of experience and language." Responding to a question that asked if she felt her style of literary analysis was anachronistic, Vendler instead described the merits of

---

[82] Roger Conover, review of *North* by Seamus Heaney, *Èire-Ireland* 11.2 (Summer 1976), 142.
[83] Frank McMahon, "Ambiguous Gifts: Seamus Heaney's Oxford Professorship of Poetry," *Oxford Art Journal* 13.2 (1990), 3-10.

"close reading," a term she admitted she disliked.[84] Vendler said that close reading was like "someone who goes inside a room and describes the architecture." Despite her preference for an alternative term, Vendler's reliance on close reading over social, political, or theoretical approaches constrained her to analyses of the formal structures and effects of poems, which has led Vendler to favor lyric poetry over alternative modes of verse.

Vendler discusses the lyric form in *The Given and The Made: Recent American Poets* (1995), originally given as the T.S. Eliot Memorial Lectures at the University of Kent in 1993. She defines the lyric in her introduction as

> still pre-eminently the non-social genre: though normative narrative and normative drama require at least two characters and are therefore ineluctably social, normative lyric requires not a character but a voice, one engaged in solitary meditation.[85]

The lyric is predicated on the fact that does not engage with society and its form prevents any interaction other than those that are imagined or recollected. Furthermore, the one consciousness represented in the lyric is inherently abstract because it does not think in a conventional manner.[86] The lyric poem is not active because it is overheard passively rather than articulated during the action of thinking. Vendler asserts for this reason that the "purpose of lyric, as a genre, is to represent an inner life" of reflection on "its own processes of thought and feeling."[87] Lyric poetry is not only at odds with representing

---

[84] Henri Cole and Helen Vendler, "The Art of Criticism No. 3," *Paris Review* 141, Winter 1996, accessed July 20, 2011, http://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/1324/the-art-of-criticism-no-3-helen-vendler.
[85] Helen Vendler, *The Given and the Made: Recent American Poets* (London: Faber and Faber, 1995), x.
[86] Ibid., x.
[87] Ibid., xi.

social life, but also by this definition it is inherently averse to thinking socially. Oriented inwardly, lyrics become the ideal mode to represent the complexities of language and form. Vendler highlights this attribute when she says to the *Paris Review* in narrative or dramatic poetry "the poetry has to play a subordinate role to the principle structure that animates the genre." In contrast, in lyric poetry, the poetry itself "is the structural end" rather than the mechanism by which a story is told.[88] The structure of poetry is comprised of language and form.

Vendler believes that the majority of contemporary scholarship overlooks the importance of poetic structure. Many of her books are tasked with remedying existing gaps in scholarship on the forms used by modernist authors. *On Extended Wings: Wallace Stevens' Longer Poems* (1969) is an investigation of Stevens' long poetry, which Vendler notes is often ignored in favor of Stevens' short lyrics. In the preface to the more recent *Our Secret Discipline: Yeats and Lyric Form* (2010), she conceded that "to undertake a book that was taxonomically focused on Yeats's lyric styles was not entirely what I wanted to do […] but it was what I thought needed to be done."[89] She describes her method of analysis as putting "myself here in the position of the writer of the poems, attempting to track his hand and mind as he writes." Vendler views her responsibility is to chart the architecture of the poet's inner world. For this reason, Vendler's concerns are limited to the relationship between thought and expression, which does not leave room

[88] Cole, "The Art of Criticism," n.p.
[89] Ibid., xiv.

for "Yeats's ideological or aesthetic positions."[90] After all, as Vendler argues, form "is the chief factor that distinguishes one poem from another."[91]

Since Vendler asserted that language and form are the chief attributes of all poetry and not just the lyric, a poet like Seamus Heaney whose verse is largely lyrical and is often rooted in a rigorous attention to etymology fits her critical requirements perfectly. For this reason, in Frank McMahon's estimation, it is Heaney's "commitment to the transcendent values of art, and to the individual voice of the poet" that "seem to align him with his Harvard colleague."[92] But Helen Vendler and Seamus Heaney's alignment, as McMahon would put it, can be seen even when Vendler is not discussing Heaney's work. Their shared intellectual interests can be seen in the paratexts to *Our Secret Discipline.* The monograph is dedicated to "Seamus Heaney and Marie Heaney, friends that have been friends indeed."[93] Heaney also earns two additional mentions in her acknowledgements. The first recalls Heaney's judgment on Yeats[94] and the second thanks Heaney and his wife Marie for their "decades of kindness, hospitality, companionship, and conversation in Ireland, England, and the United States."[95]

Frank McMahon believes that Vendler's analytical orientation has made her a "critical neo-conservative."[96] Mary Kaiser agrees, but believes Vendler hides her proclivities by reorienting theoretical language to fit her style of criticism. Kaiser explains that when Vendler emphasizes the "material body" of the text, the aspects of a

---

90 Ibid., xiv.
91 Ibid., 4.
92 Frank McMahon, "Ambiguous Gifts," 8.
93 Helen Vendler, *Our Secret Discipline: Yeats and Lyric Form* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), n.p.
94 Ibid., x.
95 Ibid., xii.
96 Ibid., 8.

text that are "constituted by its rhythm, its grammar, its lineation, or other such features," Vendler situates "her criticism not in the context of an outdated approach" [New Criticism], but rather in "the discourse of current literary theory, where the materiality of literature and of its production has become the focus of much recent discussion."[97] Vendler reorients the interest in materiality and production into explaining how a poet creates an effect by using draft analyses to explore the nuances poetic form.

Vendler discussed her use of "body" during her *Paris Review* interview. She explained that her interest in bodies is indeed a reaction to "critical language," but unlike Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick[98] and Judith Butler,[99] who she does not name, Vendler associates the body with the "contours" of poetry.[100] The body of the poem consists of the idiosyncratic identifiers that mark a poem as written by a particular poet, namely the poet's use of language and form. For her, the body does not always refer to a physical body, but rather "the many bodies in the physical universe are matched […] by the many bodies of the verbal universe."[101] Transposing literal bodies into metaphorical bodies ignores the complexities of physical representation, which Vendler blithely ignores. Matching critical terminology to her preferences helps Vendler to reiterate the

---

[97] Mary Kaiser, "Review of The Breaking of Style," *World Literature Today* 70.3 (Summer 1996), 700.
[98] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick is known for her work in queer theory, including *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (1985), *Epistemology of the Closet* (1990), *Tendencies* (1993), *Fat Art, Thin Art* (1994), *Navel Gazing: Queer Readings in Fiction* (1997), *A Dialogue on Love* (2000).
[99] Judith Butler is recognized for her contributions to feminist and queer theory. Her monographs include *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990), *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (1993), *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (1997), *Undoing Gender* (2004), and *Giving an Account of Oneself* (2005).
[100] Cole, "Art of Criticism," n.p.
[101] Ibid., n.p.

importance of her own perspective and indirectly emphasizes the greater power of poets who fit her taste.

Vendler does not mention her ability to aid poet's careers by her critical attention. In her book-length discussion of her protégé, *Seamus Heaney* (2000), Vendler devoted her afterward to *The Spirit Level* (1996). *The Spirit Level*, Heaney's first published volume following his 1995 Nobel, is dedicated to Vendler. In her monograph, Vendler neither mentions the dedication nor does she remind readers that she was invited to accompany Heaney to the Nobel ceremony. Her acknowledgements state only that she consulted Heaney for factual clarifications, but kept him ignorant of the text.[102] With this nod to her scholarly objectivity, Vendler is free to explore Heaney's career at length without discussing her own crucial role. Vendler's decision to avoid discussing her influence is rooted in her belief that "the canon is not made by anyone except other poets […] who remembers a single review of Shelley or Byron or Wallace Stevens?"[103]

Although Vendler's view of her work as a "self-seminar in contemporary poetry" is commendable for its humility, nevertheless it is arguably an intentional gesture to hide her influence.[104] While it may be true that reviewers and literary critics are not preserved in cultural memory the same way artists are, how an artist is received guarantees their visibility. Some writers, such as Heaney, benefit from strong critical support throughout their working lives. Others, like Zora Neale Hurston, require later artists and critics to serve as their champion.[105] Vendler, who was once cartooned in the *New York Times* with

---

[102] Vendler, *Seamus Heaney,* ix.
[103] Cole, "Art of Criticism," n.p.
[104] Ibid., n.p.
[105] Alice Walker, most known as the author of *The Color Purple* (1982), famously claimed Zora Neale Hurston as a literary influence and found her unmarked grave.

her head attached to a tank, dispatched the criticism that her influence has become overbearing by commenting that her reviews in the *New York Times* from 1978 through 1990 and in the *New Yorker* are "mostly appreciative" and so the idea that her pen is a "phallic howitzer" is misplaced.[106] Other critics, including Frank McMahon, have argued that Vendler is so important that she created "the revival of verse in conventional forms"[107] in the United States through her roles as a poetry reviewer, prominent Harvard professor, and Pulitzer Prize judge.[108]

Seamus Heaney is very aware of the problems inherent in poets intermingling too closely with reviewers and literary critics. He called the issue a "too perfect collusion."[109] In his interviews with Dennis O'Driscoll, Heaney admitted, "star critics and reviewers also have a considerable effect upon the development of an audience."[110] While acknowledging debt to Vendler for her "advocacy" in the same interview, Heaney avoided his own critique by arguing that his relationship with Vendler is more like one he would have with a "fellow poet."[111] Even though Vendler repeatedly asserted that she is not a writer, telling the *Paris Review* that she stopped writing poetry herself when she was 26 and acknowledging that poets have a far stronger grasp of language than she does,

---

Walker recorded her experience in "In Search of Zora Neale Hurston," published in *Ms.* magazine in March 1975.
[106] Ibid., n.p.
[107] McMahon, "Ambiguous Gifts," 8.
[108] "Helen Vendler," *Bedford, Freeman & Worth*, Our Authors, accessed July 29, 2011, http://www.bfwpub.com/catalog/Author/helenvendler.
[109] O'Driscoll, *Stepping Stones*, 347.
[110] Ibid., 276-7.
[111] Ibid., 347.

Heaney used the idea that Vendler is a writer to avoid the problem of too closely aligning himself with a critic.[112]

Heaney also stated that once Vendler's "favour had been bestowed," she became "as much a generating force as a critical champion."[113] Heaney suggested that as Vendler's aesthetic matches his, she is able to help Heaney with his own writing by providing both general feedback and more specific help. For this reason, Heaney explained that "sooner or later" he shows most of his works in progress to Vendler, due to her ability to give "practical criticism" that is "swift, intuitive, nuts-and-boltsy, the reaction of somebody who talks like a practitioner." He described that "what she writes in more formal and public accounts of individual books is different from what you get off the record" because Vendler is a writer "invigorated by her own language as much as by the language she reads." "Most of the time," Heaney says, he accepts her advice.[114] This revelation should lead to more detailed research on whether or not Vendler's comments on Heaney's poems can be considered a type of collaboration. Whether or not Vendler is a true collaborator on Heaney's work, she is a significant and consistent influence, to the degree that Heaney respects and usually follows her judgment.

Heaney defended his friendship with Vendler by suggesting that he misspoke when he acknowledging how their working relationship can seem like collusion. Heaney argued that "collusion" is too strong a word and said that he should have used the word "sympathy" in order to avoid the connotation that "there's something afoot that needs investigation." While collusion suggests that Heaney and Vendler work together to

---

[112] Cole, "Art of Criticism," n.p.
[113] O'Driscoll, *Stepping Stones*, 347-8.
[114] Ibid., 348.

support each other's careers simultaneously, sympathy emphasizes the friendship at the heart of their professional relationship.[115]

Heaney remained on the Harvard faculty until 2007. After he retired from the Boylston Professorship in 1996, he became the Ralph Waldo Emerson Poet-in-Residence in 1996, a position he held for the following eleven years.[116] Heaney's long institutional affiliation with Harvard, stretching from 1979 until 2007, a period of twenty-eight years, made it the most significant university of his career. Helen Vendler still teaches at Harvard, currently holding the Arthur Kingsley Porter University Professorship.

Although Heaney's time at Harvard was significant and his friendship with Vendler has proven to be a pivotal aspect of his career, Heaney did not place his literary collection at Harvard. In a "surprise" announcement, Heaney instead chose to house his collection at Emory[117] because Emory faculty demonstrated a commitment to Irish literary criticism, while Helen Vendler represented a solely personal connection.

IV. Emory University, 1981-present

Seamus Heaney placed his literary collection at Emory University to recognize the importance of American scholars of Irish literature. While Philip Hobsbaum at Queen's taught Heaney how to analyze poetry and distinguished him from among his Belfast peers, it was Thomas Flanagan at Berkeley who supported Heaney's "Hiberno-

---

[115] Heaney's friendship with Vendler may be a type of replacement for friendships with other creative writers threatened by Heaney's success. Heather Clark suggests in *The Ulster Renaissance* that Derek Mahon and Michael Longley resented Heaney's reputation which rose faster than their own. In contrast, Vendler and Heaney's sympathy for one another feeds on their interdependent, yet distinct roles.
[116] O'Driscoll, *Stepping Stones*, 269.
[117] Letter to Stephen Ennis 20 Sept. 2003, "Emory University Visit, September 2003," Seamus Heaney Papers, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

centricism" and Helen Vendler at Harvard who raised Heaney's already rising profile even higher. Hobsbaum, Flanagan, and Vendler's personal importance to Heaney cannot be overlooked. Collectively, they helped direct of Heaney's art and aided its positive reception. At Emory, Heaney found a trio of scholars whose collective dedication to Irish literature and Irish literary collections convinced him that Emory would be the best location for his papers. Through his choice, Heaney recognized his own stature and used it to help develop Emory's institutional commitment to Irish studies. By contributing his cultural capital to a growing collection of Irish archives, he realized he could reiterate the authority of those literary critics practiced biographical criticism as well as formally recognize his friendships with them.

Emory's investment in Irish literature is the legacy of three professors: Richard Ellmann, William Chace, and Ronald Schuchard. Richard Ellmann came to Emory late in his career on a half-time appointment. Splitting his years between fall semesters at Oxford University in England and his spring semesters at Emory, Ellmann encouraged Emory to begin investing in Irish literary collections by donating his own cache of materials on W.B. Yeats. Ellmann then convinced Emory's President James Laney to bid on Lady Gregory's papers in December 1978, beginning a collections policy that favored Irish writers.[118] Ronald Schuchard, who brought Ellmann to Emory initially for one speaking engagement and then facilitated Ellmann's appointment to the faculty, facilitated both the creation of the Ellmann Memorial Lectures after Ellmann died and became the faculty advisor to Emory's special collections. William Chace, Emory's President after Laney, continued Laney's interest in developing the special collections at

---

[118] Ronald Schuchard and Steven Enniss, "The Growth of Emory's Modern Irish Collection," *Gazette of The Grolier Club*: New Series 50 (1999), 37.

Emory. Together, Ellmann, Schuchard, and Chace's stewardship provided the institutional support structure for enhancing the Irish literary collections.

Richard Ellmann began his career as a critic by studying contemporary literature. "Looking back," his classmate Ellsworth Mason said, ""it is hard to realize that none of our mentors encouraged the reading of contemporary writing" even though "a list of masterwork appeared between 1939 and 1942 ranging from *Finnegan's Wake* to three of Eliot's four quartets, Hemingway, Moore, Pound, Yeats, Auden, [and] Faulkner."[119] Ellmann received a Bachelor's of Literature (B Litt) from Trinity University for his thesis on W.B. Yeats, "William Butler Yeats: The Fountain Years." Once he enrolled at Yale to acquire his doctorate, however, Ellmann had to put together a reading group to supplement for the lack of twentieth century coursework.[120] He eventually expanded his master's thesis into a dissertation titled "Triton Among the Streams: A Study of the Life and Writings of William Butler Yeats" (1947), the first dissertation in literature on a twentieth century subject at Yale. His classmate, Ellsworth Mason, followed Ellmann's lead and wrote his dissertation on James Joyce in 1948.[121]

Ellmann's prescient interest in contemporary writing developed into a career predicated on writing the biographies of modernism's – and Ireland's – most prominent authors. Ellmann, who "wasn't much of a man for minor poets," wrote *Yeats: The Man and the Masks* (1948, revised edition 1979); *James Joyce* (1959, revised edition 1982);

---

[119] Ellsworth Mason, "Ellmann's Road to Xanadu," *Omnium Gatherum: Essays for Richard Ellmann* (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1989), 4-5.
[120] Ibid., 10.
[121] Ibid., 5.

and *Oscar Wilde* (1987).[122] He also wrote a variety of supplementary volumes on these authors and their peers, including: *The Identity of Yeats* (1954), *Eminent Domain: Yeats among Wilde, Joyce, Pound, Eliot, and Auden* (1970), *Ulysses on the Liffey* (1972), *The Consciousness of Joyce* (1977), *Oscar Wilde at Oxford* (1984) and *Four Dubliners: Wilde, Yeats, Joyce, and Beckett* (1987).

Although Ellmann played a seminal part in the construction of the modernist canon as it stands today, Ellsworth Mason argued, "it is not true that he invented the 'Modern Tradition'." Instead, Mason states that Ellmann was interested in "the ultimate connections between an artist's life and work" rather than the New Critics' assumption that the literary text should be self-sufficient."[123] Ellmann's investment in archival research as a methodology was his abiding principle. His archival focus allowed him to dodge the ideological framework of New Criticism and avoid the theoretical turn of late twentieth century criticism.

From the 1940s through the early 1980s, literary materials were less likely found in academic libraries. Although Ellmann would later in life facilitate the transition of papers from private to institutional ownership, throughout his career Ellmann primarily worked with archival material still in private hands. This meant that Ellmann had to learn how to approach a writer's family members and friends as well as collectors who only occasionally were sympathetic to a scholar's needs. Ellmann's ability to convince sources

---

[122] John V. Kelleher, "With Dick in Dublin*," Omnium Gatherum: Essays for Richard Ellmann* (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1989), 20.
[123] Susan Dick, Declan Kiberd, Douglas McMillan, and Joseph Ronsley, eds., *Omnium Gatherum: Essays for Richard Ellmann* (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1989), xiii.

to share their materials was the basis of his success.[124] For example, while working on his biography of Yeats, Ellmann was granted access from George Yeats to 50,000 manuscript items.[125] Without these items Ellmann's work would have been severely constricted.

When Ellmann set to work on James Joyce's biography and edited the second and third volumes of his correspondence in the 1950s and 1960s, a decade after pursuing Yeats, Ellmann encountered a more daunting task. Joyce's archive was not centrally located like Yeats's because Joyce's wife Nora had died in 1951, a year prior to the start of Ellmann's research. In the intervening time, her belongings were dispersed in a sale. The serendipity of locating materials after this sale allowed Ellmann several opportunities where he could "monopolize sources for his own ends," but it also meant that he had to tolerate "others' control of documents."[126]

To explain Ellmann's charisma, William Brockman recounts that Ellmann "customarily opened his letters with cordial greetings, proceeded in engagingly persuasive but deferential tones to discuss the matter at hand, and closed his letters with snippets of informal news."[127] Because Ellmann was able to access such a wide range of material through "machinations of financial interest, intellectual monopoly, and family privacy," he "was able to construct the 'dignity and high dedication' of his subject."[128]

Brockman's interest in Ellmann's tactics is functionally a material critique of the

---

[124] William S. Brockman, "Learning to be James Joyce's Contemporary? Richard Ellmann's Discovery and Transformation of Joyce's Letters and Manuscripts," *Journal of Modern Literature* (Winter 1998-9), 254.
[125] Richard Ellmann, *W.B. Yeats: The Man and the Masks* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1979), 10.
[126] Brockman, "James Joyce's Contemporary," 253.
[127] Ibid., 254.
[128] Ibid., 263.

basis of the archive and of archival research. Ellmann carefully exploited personal relationships for professional gain. His letters were a means by which to obtain access to the materials he needed for his books and his success as a scholar dependent on his ability to coax primary sources from their owners. A hint of Ellmann's dependence on gaining access through the relationships he developed with relatives and friends of authors as well as collectors can be found in his acknowledgements. The acknowledgment section from his final volume, *Oscar Wilde*, mentions the use of a variety of libraries and private collections and even recalls how Wilde's papers were dispersed at a bankruptcy sale.[129]

Ronald Schuchard was the faculty member who recruited Richard Ellmann to Emory. Schuchard recounts that he was able to bring Ellmann to Emory through David Farmer, who was a friend and former classmate of Schuchard's as well as the then-Assistant Director of the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin. Farmer called Schuchard on September 28, 1976, "confiding" that Ellmann was in Atlanta for one day to visit his son and would be available if Schuchard wanted him to give a lecture at Emory.[130] Schuchard contacted Ellmann and asked him to visit Emory. Ellmann agreed to speak the following day. Schuchard remembers that in order to drum up attendance at Ellmann's lecture "Oscar Wilde: A Late Victorian Love Affair" with less than a day's notice, "phone lines buzzed all evening" and "flyers flew the next morning."[131] Schuchard recounts that it was following this lecture that Dean Palms decided to solicit Ellmann for Emory's faculty.

---

[129] Richard Ellmann, *Oscar Wilde* (London: Vintage, 1988), xi.
[130] Ronald Schuchard, "Richard Ellmann at Emory," Gary S. Hauk and Sally Wolff King, eds., *Where Courageous Inquiry Leads: The Emerging Life of Emory University* (Atlanta, GA: Emory University Press, 2010), 338.
[131] Ibid., 338.

Ellmann began his first visiting appointment at Emory in April 1978 and immediately began to advocate that Emory invest in its special collections. That same year, Robert and George Woodruff gave Emory Coca-Cola stock then valued at $105 million. As President James T. Laney had "helped negotiate the purchase of the Hartford Theological Library in the mid-1970s, an acquisition that made the Pitts Theology Library second in holdings only to those of Union Seminary in New York" Ellmann "suggested to Laney […] that the Woodruff Library must also be developed" following the Woodruff endowment. In order to encourage Laney, in 1978, Ellmann donated his collection of W.B. Yeats material.[132] In 1979, Schuchard recounted that Ellmann told Ted Johnson, the director of Emory's libraries and Marella Walker, the director of collection management, that Lady Gregory's papers and her collection of Yeats's work would be auctioned at Sotheby's in July and December of that year.[133] Laney approved bidding, both Schuchard and Ellmann submitted a list of preferences, and Emory "came away from both auctions with the lion's share of books, manuscripts, letters and other materials by Yeats and Lady Gregory."[134] Ellmann's Yeats collection, side-by-side with Lady Gregory's, established Emory's investment in its special collections as well as its policy of acquiring Irish materials. Furthermore, Ellmann's help in developing Emory's archive was an extension of his own investment in archival research.

Ronald Schuchard recruited Richard Ellmann to Emory because of Ellmann's international prominence as a scholar, but their interests also dovetailed. Both scholars primarily work on major modernist authors, employ biographical criticism, and eschew

---

[132] Ibid., 340.
[133] Ibid., 339-340.
[134] Ibid., 340.

theory for a methodological focus on the archive. Schuchard's research focuses on T.S. Eliot and W.B Yeats. His most recent books include *Eliot's Dark Angel: Intersections of Life and Art* (1999) and *The Last Minstrels*: *Yeats and the Revival of the Bardic Arts* (2008). Schuchard also has edited a collection of Eliot's Turnball Lectures titled *The Varieties of Metaphysical Poetry* (1994) and the *Collected Letters of W.B. Yeats*. He is the current Director of the T.S. Eliot International Summer School hosted by the Institute of English studies at the University of London and was the former director of the Yeats International Summer School, where Seamus Heaney met Helen Vendler.

In the preface to *Eliot's Dark Angel*, Schuchard creates an apologia for the biographical critic, the type of criticism both he and Ellmann use. Schuchard says that "trac[ing] the transfiguration of life into art" is a necessity and avoiding such work "makes criticism […] less humanistic and arresting than it might be."[135] In attending to the life, "the critic becomes a type of cartographer, constructing not a single map but a layered atlas of artistic and intellectual life, gradually erasing from terra incognita the grotesque emblems of reductive criticism."[136] The move away from biographical criticism, Schuchard laments, "emptied the literary archives" and made literature "the legitimate wellspring of political concerns and cultural bias."[137] Although Schuchard does not mention Ellmann in his preface, his influence can be felt through the strength of Schuchard's critique of late-twentieth century modes of literary criticism. Although unnamed, Ellmann provides a counter-example to the type of critics and criticism Schuchard decries in this passage.

---

[135] Ronald Schuchard, *Eliot's Dark Angel* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1999), 21.
[136] Ibid., 22.
[137] Ibid., 21.

Schuchard's book on W.B. Yeats's performance tactics, *The Last Minstrels* (2008) does mention Ellmann. Schuchard uses Ellmann as an intellectual provocation, writing:

> even Richard Ellmann, the first chronicler of Yeats's intellectual biography, saw Yeats's essay as a tongue-in-cheek treatment of "a beguiling fancy." Ellmann, who had written "no one need wonder that shortly after writing the essay ["Speaking to the Psaltery"] he gave up the psaltery.[138]

Schuchard remarks that Ellmann set such a strong example that "subsequent biographers have followed Ellmann's lead."[139] This comment illustrates Ellmann's weight within Modernist criticism and gives an example of how Ellmann's work facilitated Schuchard's scholarship by the power of its omissions as much as what it chose to include.

Like Richard Ellmann and Ronald Schuchard, William Chace studied modernist literature both in his undergraduate and graduate education and chose to focus on major modernist authors during his career. Chace received his bachelor's degree in literature from Haverford College in 1961. In 1963, he was awarded his master's degree from the University of California Berkeley. He earned his doctoral degree from the same institution in 1968 with a dissertation on Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot. The dissertation became his first book, *The Political Identities of Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot* (1973). Chace taught at Stanford from 1968-1988, during which he transitioned his primary responsibilities from the faculty to administration. In 1988, he became the President of Wesleyan College and in 1994, he moved to become the President of Emory University. Throughout these presidencies, Chace taught courses on *Ulysses*, a practice that reiterates

---

[138] Ronald Schuchard, *The Last Minstrels: Yeats and the Revival of the Bardic Arts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), ix.
[139] Ibid., ix.

both his interest in Irish literature and his connection to Ellmann, the author of the seminal biography of James Joyce. But as Chace did his graduate work at Berkeley, his introduction to Irish literature came from Thomas Flanagan, who was a professor there when Chace was a graduate student.

Chace recounts that he took three courses in his first semester as a graduate student at Berkeley. The three classes were "good, poor, and useless."[140] Thomas Flanagan, the professor of his "good" class, Introduction to Bibliographical Study, became a close personal friend as well as professional contact.[141] Despite Chace's respect for Flanagan, his initial description of Flanagan is neither warm nor complementary. Chace notes that Flanagan was an "unlikely combination of "raconteur, ironist, formalist, and cynic," who, during class sessions, "awkwardly perched himself on a desk and spoke to us as if we were an audience of bumpkins such as Oscar Wilde might have encountered while on tour in backwoods America." Once, "he made a classmate quietly cry in her seat by asking her the same question over and over again, never satisfied by any response she could give." In his feedback, he responded with such "short remarks as if he were paying Western Union by the word, followed by a letter grade." Nevertheless, he became a constant presence in Chace's life from 1961 onward.[142]

Chace enrolled in a second class with Flanagan on W.B. Yeats. Notably, Chace recalls that during the class on Yeats, Flanagan reminded his students "literature does not arise from classrooms nor is its natural home to be found there." Flanagan taught, "as if

---

[140] William Chace, *One Hundred Semesters: My Adventures as a Student, Professor, and University President, and What I Learned Along the Way* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 58.
[141] Ibid., 62.
[142] Ibid., 63.

he were not a teacher but a writer, as someone in league with Yeats. A decade later he wrote three brilliant historical novels about nineteenth- and twentieth-century Ireland and proved his point."[143] Due to Flanagan's pedagogical power, Chace, like Heaney, fell under Flanagan's critical umbrella. Instead of attending a protest that turned into a riot in Berkeley, Chace found himself discussing Yeats.[144] Turning from the California milieu of the 1960s, Chace eventually wrote a dissertation on Eliot and Pound at the urging of his advisor, Lionel Trilling.[145] His dissertation eventually became a monograph titled *The Political Identities of Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot* (1973).

Chace dedicated his second volume to Lionel Trilling, his advisor at Berkeley. *Lionel Trilling: Criticism and Politics* (1983) was a testament to Trilling's personal mentorship and his broader impact in literary studies, although Trilling would "found no school" and "his thought has no system from which one can easily borrow either parts or techniques."[146] Chace felt that Trilling's "implicit message was that American literary culture had once witnessed a moment when books did carry moral meaning and did offer reflections of life amid even its most intricate configurations." Literary modernism allowed Trilling in the late 1930s to "see the world of politics as a lesser, mutable part of reality" and "seemed to be a magic want itself: it could suddenly dismiss the world of day-to-day existence, find it drab, and say of its social conventions that they were only illusory."[147] But what Chace realized was

> truth to tell, a cemetery marker. The kind of criticism he practiced,

---

[143] Ibid., 64.
[144] Ibid., 103.
[145] Ibid., 116.
[146] William Chace, *Lionel Trilling: Criticism and Politics* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980), 1.
[147] Ibid., 17.

> essay by essay and book after book, was dead. What I wrote, as homage, accepted that fact but sought nevertheless to claim the importance of his extraordinary career.[148]

Chace recognized that Trilling's separation of life from art was imposed, a type of reassuring fiction that would allow Trilling to value the importance and timelessness of modernism over works produced out of the fraught political climate of midcentury America. Chase said Trilling was "not entirely of his time, or of his place," and while the laudatory phrase speaks to Trilling's level of achievement and his universal appeal as a critic, it also reveals that Trilling imposed a separation between himself and his contemporaries.[149] Chace described Trilling as a man who is "ashamed" to have undertaken a study of Matthew Arnold during the 1930s, a time when "'everybody' was involved in radical politics in one degree or another,"[150]but Chace finds his work extraordinary because he upheld aesthetic standards that would not permit the "crude and formulaic work" of proletarian novels.[151] Chace's study of Trilling, therefore, not only identifies Trilling as an intellectual renegade for refusing to consider 1930s works and proletarian discuourse, but also celebrates him for it. Trilling, like Chace's other professor Thomas Flanagan, influenced Chace to value modernism as a period and biographical criticism as a mode of analysis over more contemporary work which would suggest political or theoretical modes of analysis.

Richard Ellmann, Ronald Schuchard, and William Chace together facilitated the study of Irish literature and the use of biographical criticism and archival research methods at Emory. Before Schuchard brought Ellmann to Emory, Emory's special

---

148 Ibid., *One Hundred Semesters,* 173.
149 Chace, *Lionel Trilling,* 19.
150 Ibid., 47.
151 Ibid., 48.

collections did not focus on Irish literature. Ellmann's donation of his materials regarding W.B. Yeats and his encouragement to use Emory's Woodruff endowment to bid on Lady Gregory's materials oriented Emory's collecting policy. Ronald Schuchard's role as the faculty advisor to special collections facilitated its ongoing investment in Irish writers and Chace's leadership as President authorized this interest. Without their combined focus, Emory would not have been able to attract Seamus Heaney. Heaney, however, was enticed not only by Emory's strength in Irish literary collections, but also by the personal relationships he developed with each of these scholars.

Ronald Schuchard described Heaney's first visit to Atlanta in "Richard Ellmann at Emory," an article about how Richard Ellmann came to be affiliated with the university. Schuchard writes that Ellmann

> enjoyed the increasing flow of writers who were coming to Emory, and in March 1981 He helped welcome Seamus Heaney for his first reading. My wife, Keith, and I held a party in honor of Heaney, the Ellmanns, and the classical scholar William Arrowsmith, all of whom were treated to sips of the finest South Carolina moonshine (Heaney thought it better than Irish poitin) to seal their new southern bonds.[152]

Once Ellmann self-diagnosed his fourth-stage Lou Gehrig's disease in 1987, Schuchard proposed to President Laney that Emory University should establish a lecture series in Ellmann's honor. The proposal was successful and Laney flew to England to tell Ellmann that Emory would begin a lecture series on his behalf. Ellmann nominated Seamus Heaney to be the inaugural speaker.[153] The Lectures began in April 1988.

The Ellmann Lectures consisted of three speeches, which were then collected into a book. Heaney's volume, *The Place of Writing* (1989), included a frontispiece

---

[152] Schuchard, "Richard Ellmann at Emory," 340.
[153] Ibid., 341; O'Driscoll, *Stepping Stones*, 249.

photograph of Richard Ellmann on the Hill of Howth in 1982.[154] The introduction, which Schuchard wrote, retells the story of the inception of the Ellmann Lectures and how Heaney came to be the first speaker for the series. It also commends Heaney for his theme of "re-membering" due to the occasion of the inauguration of the series. Heaney, in his Author's Note, mentions Schuchard and his wife, Keith, for their hospitality. Heaney says:

> their friendship had been the bonus of previous visits to Emory; during this one, their characteristic merriment, steadfastness and perfect intellectual pitch added the final seal of rightness to a gathering which Richard Ellmann would have recognized and approved.[155]

The dialogue between Schuchard's Introduction and Heaney's Author's Note contextualizes the social framework in which the Ellmann Lectures were inaugurated. The two pieces also demonstrate Heaney and Schuchard's recognition of the importance of documenting the way in which text is created.

Seamus Heaney's Ellmann Lectures included "The Place of Writing: W.B. Yeats and Thoor Ballylee," "The Pre-Natal Mountain: Vision and Irony in Recent Irish Poetry," and "Cornucopia and Empty Shell: Variations on a Theme from Ellmann." "The Place of Writing" examines the locations in which Hardy and Yeats centered their poetic imaginations in contrast to "houses which were […] machines for living in.'[156] "The Pre-Natal Mountain" addresses the distance between the "visionary prophetic"[157] or what

---

154 Schuchard, "Richard Ellmann at Emory," 341.
155 Seamus Heaney, "Author's Note," *The Place of Writing* (Atlanta: Scholar's Press, 1990), 17.
156 Seamus Heaney, "W.B. Yeats and Thoor Ballylee," *The Place of Writing* (Atlanta: Scholar's Press, 1990), 22.
157 Seamus Heaney, "The Pre-Natal Mountain: Vision and Irony in Recent Irish Poetry," *The Place of Writing* (Atlanta, Scholar's Press, 1990), 38.

Heaney describes as "raising the historical record to a different power"[158] and the contemporary conception of "art as a means to regress or affront public and historical conditions,"[159] while "Cornucopia and Empty Shell" pays tribute to Ellmann's recognition that art both is rooted in everyday life yet seeks to reach beyond its context.[160] Henry Hart discusses Ellmann's influence as it is seen in Heaney's essay "Cornucopia and Empty Shell: Variations on a Theme from Ellmann." "Cornucopia and Empty Shell" demonstrates Heaney's "indebtedness to Ellmann's flexible mode of inquiry" because Heaney is interested in the "need to raise historical circumstances to a symbolic power, the need to move personal force through an aesthetic distance," and especially the way Yeats and Joyce transfigured what could have been nationalist rhetoric (and sometimes was in Yeats's political writings and speeches) into judicious artifice."[161]

Seamus Heaney's respect for Richard Ellmann is documented prior to his Ellmann address. In February 1988, Heaney published "Above Respectability," a review of Ellmann's *Oscar Wilde*. In the review, Heaney eulogizes the recently deceased Ellmann: "There are two sadnesses here. One is legendary, involving the fall of a great man in his pride. The other is recent, involving the relatively early death of a great biographer shortly after he had put the finishing touches to this book."[162] Ellmann is, in Heaney's mind, "an intelligence at once vigilant and dignified."[163] Heaney applauds

---

158 Ibid., 36.
159 Ibid., 39.
160 Seamus Heaney, "Cornucopia and Empty Shell: Variations on a Theme from Ellmann," *The Place of Writing* (Atlanta: The Scholar's Press, 1990), 56.
161 Henry Hart, "Seamus Heaney's Places of Writing," *Contemporary Literature* 31.3 (Autumn 1990), 388.
162 Seamus Heaney, "Above Respectability," *The Atlantic Magazine* 261.2 (February 1988), 84.
163 Ibid., 85.

Ellmann's eye for detail, noting ""the details crowd and swim up like fry at feeding time on a trout farm" and finds that Ellmann "observe[s] Wilde as one observes a silence, making himself simultaneously active and passive, allowing the full level of Wilde's reality to brim in his consciousness."[164] Heaney foreshadows his archival gift when he gestures to the problems faced by Richard Ellmann during his research.[165] Heaney also notes that biography tends "toward triumphant despoliation," but Ellmann, while recounting the "less attractive elements" nevertheless restores the function of biography to be a "positive witness" to a life.[166]

Heaney also dedicated a poem to Richard Ellmann, just as he dedicated one to Thomas Flanagan. "The Sounds of Rain" is split into three sections, the first and last containing one sestet and the second section containing three. The first section finds Heaney on a verandah during a summer storm recalling the common phrases spoken to those who are bereaved. The second section alludes to Boris Pasternak and William Alfred's sense of the value of time at the end of their lives. Pasternak was the language poet who wrote the collection *My Sister Life* (1921), the novel *Doctor Zhivago* (1957), translated Shakespeare into Russian, and won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1958.[167] Alfred, Seamus Heaney's friend, was a Harvard professor of Early English literature known for his translation of Beowulf and his plays *Agamemnon* (1954), *Hogan's Goat*

---

[164] Ibid., 85-6.
[165] Jonathan Allison, 'Friendship's Garland' and the Manuscripts of Seamus Heaney's 'Fosterage'," *The Yearbook of English Studies* 35 (2005), 59.
[166] Heaney, "Above Respectability," 84.
[167] "Boris Pasternak," *Poets.org*, accessed July 29, 2011, http://www.poets.org/poet.php/prmPID/364.

(1965), and *The Curse of an Aching Heart* (1983).[168] The third stanza concludes with a reverie of how people can exceed themselves "as a flood gathers according to its laws"[169] or a "named name that overbrims itself."[170] As a tribute to Ellmann, the poem expresses Heaney's gratitude for Ellmann's life's work, his recognition of his legacy, and his imaginative sympathy for the period prior to death when time enters a "deepening."[171]

While Heaney's lectures, review, and poem explain Ellmann's effect on Heaney, Heaney's commencement address, "Holding Reality and Justice," given on May 27, 2003 explains his attraction to Emory at greater length. In his address, Heaney noted the high standard of all departments at Emory and specifically singled out the "excellent Department of English" for its "longstanding commitment to the study of Irish literature." Heaney states that it is this

> commitment [that] gives extra significance to my own return to Emory this morning. As does the fact that Emory houses one of the greatest literary archives. The holdings of the Robert W. Woodruff Library include the manuscripts and correspondence of some of the most significant poets of our time, and I am glad to say that in their Special Collections Irish poets and poetry have enjoyed a privileged status.[172]

By contextualizing his own visit to Emory with the presence of his countrymen and women, Heaney draws attention to the importance of literary collections. He also demonstrates the particular significance of Irish literature within the overall group of "some of the most important poets of our time." As Emory has demonstrated an

---

168 "William Alfred," Poets of Cambridge, U.S.A., *Harvard Square Library*, accessed July 29, 2011, http://www.harvardsquarelibrary.org/poets/alfred.php.
169 Seamus Heaney, "The Sounds of Rain," Qtd. in Roy Pattishall, "In Brief: Heaney Inaugurates Ellmann Lectures," Emory Magazine 64.3 (August 1988), 9, Line 28.
170 Ibid., Line 30.
171 Ibid., Line 23.
172 Seamus Heaney, "Holding Reality and Justice," *Emory Report* 55.32 (May 27, 2003), 2.

institutional commitment to Irish writers, Heaney has returned the favor by speaking to Emory's graduating class.

Heaney continues his address by explaining that in the years he has visited Emory, each time he has come he has had "some sort of heightened experience." For example, the most recent visit coincided with the appearance of the Hale-Bopp comet, which "sailed brilliantly and silently above the summer night while a group of us stood watching it, amazed and grateful, in the company of President Chace and his wife, JoAn."[173]

Although he does not mention it in his speech, Heaney wrote "At Lullwater" to mark the occasion.[174] The poem describes the beauty of Atlanta, depicting the night sky as "clear bouillon" and the curling tail of the Hale-Bopp comment as a "stilly greeny curl" like a "catskin brushing the turned cheek." There, Heaney stands with the Chases, "unalone with our own thoughts." Heaney's sense of awe toward nature and level of comfort with his companions reveals the intimacy of the occasion. In his Commencement address, Heaney explained, "our sense of wonder remained as innocent and as wide open as if we had been carried back among the astronomers and astrologers of ancient Babylon.[175]

A version of "At Lullwater" would later be published as a broadside titled "The Comet at Lullwater."[176] "The Comet at Lullwater" is dedicated to "Bill and JoAn Chace." The bottom of the broadside reads: "printed in honor of Dr. William M. Chace on the

---

[173] Ibid., 2.
[174] Seamus Heaney, "At Lullwater," Ronald Schuchard Papers, Manuscript and Rare Book Library, Emory University.
[175] Heaney, "Holding Reality and Justice," 2.
[176] Seamus Heaney, "The Comet at Lullwater," (Winona, MN: Sutton Hoo Press), n.p.

conclusion of his tenure as the eighteenth President of Emory University, and on the occasion of the acquisition of the Seamus Heaney papers." Illustrated with the poem on the right and Seamus Heaney's name surrounded by a blue comet and stars on the left, "The Comet at Lullwater" imagines the same scene depicted in "At Lullwater," but alters it slightly to focus on the relationship between those present rather than the spectacle itself. The first and second lines of "The Comet at Lullwater" show a group together, celebrating: "on top of the world, we'd raised our mint-sprigged bourbon/ Toasted, tasted, drunk and drunk again."[177] "At Lullwater" begins instead with a general description of the landscape: "clear bouillon of night sky, green-sprigged bourbon/ In the mint juleps, long dresses, lax laburnum."[178] The same pattern continues later. "Unalone with our own thoughts, we took/ The measure of our silence at the railing"[179] in "At Lullwater" becomes "We lined the railing,/ Silenced, solaced beyond expectation"[180] in "The Comet at Lullwater." While both lines emphasize the unity of the experience, "At Lullwater" emphasizes the sense of being individuals who together share the same night sky while "The Comet at Lullwater" depicts a unified group. Moving the congregation of people to the earlier line – "we lined the railing" instead of "unalone with our own thoughts" – not only changes the speaker from the lyric individual to a collective, but also demonstrates how the poem's emotional weight shifted.

Heaney continued to describe his connections to Emory in his speech by recalling that the first time he visited Emory, he spent the night with Ronald and Keith Schuchard after giving a poetry reading. A blind student performed W. B. Yeats's poems on the

---

[177] Ibid., Lines 1-2.
[178] Heaney, "At Lullwater," Lines 1-2.
[179] Ibid., 7-8.
[180] Heaney, "At Comet at Lullwater," Lines 5-6.

psaltery during the party given in Heaney's honor that night, "utter[ing] these poems in a high liturgical chant, as if he were a cantor singing the psalms or a widow lamenting a massacre." The student's skill, combined with his blindness, contributed to Heaney feeling as if he was listening to "a bard or soothsayer."[181]

Heaney's warm memories of his time at Emory are reciprocated by Schuchard's care in compiling his collection of materials related to Heaney's career.[182] Schuchard's papers include newspaper articles about Heaney's visits to Atlanta, Georgia, photographs, as well as miscellaneous items such as an invitation to an April 13, 1988 pig roast held in Seamus Heaney's honor,[183] the program from when Heaney received an honorary degree from Oxford University in England on June 25, 1997,[184] a copy of Heaney's 2003 Commencement speech, signed to Ronald and Keith Schuchard with "our heartiest welcomes on a historic day -- gandentes gaudemus -- Seamus 12 May 2003,"[185] and a ticket stub from Seamus Heaney's reading at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin, Ireland on March 14, 2001.[186]

Schuchard's papers also include poems Heaney dedicated to him. These poems are significant because they demonstrate Heaney's internalized sense of the importance both the friendship between the two men and Emory's place in within Heaney's life. "At Lullwater" and "The Comet at Lullwater" are examples of these types of poems. "The

---

[181] Heaney, "Holding Reality and Justice," 2.
[182] Ronald Schuchard's collection also includes 197 books, but for brevity, these items cannot be discussed here.
[183] Ronald Schuchard Papers, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.
[184] Ibid.
[185] Ibid.
[186] Ibid.

Birthplace" is another instance.[187] "The Birthplace" was sent to Schuchard with a photograph that pictured Heaney and Schuchard with William Morgan and Tom Flanagan. The photograph, taken on July 1982 at William Hardy's grave, provides the context to the poem. Divided into three sections, "The Birthplace" describes first describes Hardy's childhood home: "the deal table where he wrote, so small and plain," with "a single bed a dream of discipline" and "a flagged kitchen" clogged with "thick light" testifying to the "ghost life he carried."[188] Its second section recalls, "that day, we were like one/ of his troubled pairs" in a "deep lane that was sexual/ with ferns and butterflies." There, Heaney recounts "we made an episode/ of ourselves, unforgettable,/ unmentionable."[189] The third section returns to Heaney himself, who remembers that he once read Hardy "until first light" and then is astounded by hearing "roosters and dogs, the very same/ as if he had written them."[190] The poem includes a few corrections in ink. Dated April 25, 1983, it is signed to Schuchard "with memories of Melstock and Bodchampton." This poem is significant as it illustrates Heaney's connection to literature, a bond he shares with his friends who became literary critics.

Heaney often wrote doggerel for Schuchard. A leaflet titled "Prufrock and After" announcing the publication of T.S. Eliot's *The Varieties of Metaphysical Poetry*, a collection of the Clark and Turnball Lectures Eliot gave in 1926 and 1927 Schuchard edited, includes a photograph of a handwritten fax. On the fax is a verse Heaney sent for the occasion. It reads:

Dear Ron & Keith & Val : Soo-ee!

---

[187] Ibid..
[188] Ibid., "The Birthplace," 1, Lines 1-5.
[189] Ibid., Lines 1-2, 5-6, 10-2.
[190] Ibid., "The Birthplace," 2, Lines 36, 41-2.

> We wish we could be there with ye.
> In Dublin, though, we'll raise
> a glass
> With every learned lad and lass
> Assembled for your sake to-day
> To cry Clark Lecture Rule OK![191]

The "soo-ee!" is a reference to the pig roasts Schuchard held in his honor at his home in Atlanta. Keith Graham's account of the Ellmann lectures, published in the *Atlanta Constitution* on April 15, 1988, describes the "Georgia pig freshly hoisted from the barbecue pit" at the Schuchard family residence and Seamus Heaney, "that white-haired, rosy-cheeked lump of genius in the well-packed armadillo T-shirt" reciting "Ell-mann Lec-Tur-ers, be-ware,/ Before you venture South, prepare" during his 49th birthday celebration.[192] The article also recounts how Heaney indulged in a "rousing rendition of freshly minted doggerel that included a reference to himself 'behind treated like a hero as bluegrass fiddlers bow like Nero."[193]

Schuchard was not only the only recipient of doggerel. He solicited it from Heaney to celebrate other occasions. On April 7, 1994, Brandes noted in his journal that he and Heaney were "about to go get a pint," but

> as soon as we pulled away I mentioned that H. Vendler was probably getting ready to give her Ellmann Lectures. S. panicked, he said "we've got to go back" I said why? He said Ron had asked for a few lines of doggerel for Vendler and that he had forgotten to do it.[194]

---

[191] Seamus Heaney Papers, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.
[192] Keith Graham, ""Seamus Heaney's poetic pen conveys 'the good, the true'," *The Atlanta Journal Constitution* (April 15, 1988), 1E.
[193] Ibid., 1E.
[194] Journal with Lion and Crocodile Cover, April 7, 1994, Rand Brandes papers, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University. Brandes' literary collection is not processed. In the collection are three journals whose pages are not

Heaney's doggerel marked important moments in Schuchard and Vendler's careers. His willingness to provide poetry at these times illustrates how his occasional verse is an index of his friendship with these critics. Doggerel, however, cannot be found celebrating William Chace's achievements. Heaney's recognition of Chace's career instead came with the announcement of Heaney's endowment of his literary collection to Emory.

Seamus Heaney and William Chace's friendship began in 1975 at Berkeley University, when Heaney was a visiting lecturer and Chace was a graduate student.[195] Although neither has published information regarding their friendship, Heaney did recount how he came to his decision to endow his literary collection in his announcement. Heaney recalls,

> When Bill Chace drove with Marie and me late at night through the quiet dark of the Irish countryside, and the question of the papers came up, I felt a bit like a prodigal son, even perhaps like a dumb Cordelia, and Marie had to explain my silence by saying, he's always like that. […] But when I came here this summer for commencement, I came also to the decision that the conclusion of Professor Chace's tenure was the moment of truth, and that I should now lodge a substantial portion of my literary archive in the Woodruff Library […] They will now be a memorial to the work he has done to extend the university's resources and strength.[196]

Heaney's initial reticence and later decision are summarized briefly for the benefit of a listening audience, but what Heaney does explain is that Chace's resignation from the presidency provided an apt time in which to endow his collection. In the acquisition announcement press release, Chase acknowledges Heaney's earlier unease by stating, "no

---

numbered. For my citations, I will describe which the journal that the entry is located in by describing its cover and, if possible, the date provided.

[195] Chace, *One Hundred Semesters*, 328.

[196] Seamus Heaney, Announcement, "Emory University Visit, September 2003," Seamus Heaney Papers, Manuscript, Archivves, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

poet easily casts himself into the hands of others the record, intimate and telling, of his life's work."[197] He also reacts to Heaney's endowment in his memoir *One Hundred Semesters* (2006). There he describes September 23, 2003 as a "day of pleasure."[198] While Chace appreciated the personal aspect of the endowment, he also recognized the implication for Emory's libraries. Chase said that Heaney's "decision would help make the university a central location of materials relating to twentieth-century poetry"[199] was an acknowledgment of his policy as a president to develop "one of the strongest collections of twentieth-century literary material in the world."[200]

Heaney's life-long friendships with scholars and particularly his warm relationships with those at Emory should not imply that he is always comfortable within academia. The primary way Heaney's discomfort can be seen is in his sense of the uncanny, for he was aware that he had become a subject of study even early in his career. Heaney's initial success, combined with the rise in his reputation throughout his life, meant that he has become a type of literary celebrity unknown until recently. Referred to in the popular media as "Famous Seamus," Heaney often expressed discomfort about the volume of material written on him. In Rand Brandes' journals from his time as Heaney's bibliographer, Brandes notes in an entry dated Tuesday, October 12 that "S. also commented when we were stacking the theses written on him – that they had created a

---

[197] "Text of Proposed Press Release September 24, 2003 University Acquires Nobel Laureate Seamus Heaney Letters," "Emory University Visit, September 2003," Seamus Heaney Papers, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.
[198] Ibid., 327-8.
[199] Ibid., 328.
[200] Ibid., 324.

"textual self" and that the idea was weird."[201] The amount of secondary material on Heaney gives him the sense that he has been split. His "textual self" now has a separate life divorced from the presence of his body.[202]

Heaney's wariness also applies to academic institutions. In another entry dated October 28, [1993], Brandes recounts eating Indian food with Heaney in London after the two men shared drinks with Ron and Keith Schuchard. Over their food, Brandes and Heaney had a "blurry conversation about the 'sanctity' of Oxford. I remember saying that I couldn't feel an ounce of reverence for the institution. S was glad to hear that." Randes does note, "of course, he [Heaney] believes the Oxford chair is important, but the ritual must make him feel odd."[203] Heaney attempted to diminish the importance of the Oxford professorship and Oxford University in general in this conversation in a desire to further separate his social, private self from his public persona.

Heaney's interview with Kate O'Callaghan for *Irish America* provides an explanation for Heaney's sensibility. In the interview, Heaney explained that in Ireland there is a strong sense of collective identity in Ireland, an understanding that "people live [….] with common manners, with common idioms, with a style that we're all exactly the same and we're all unpretentious and we're all decent skins and we don't get above

---

[201] The journals are not dated by year, but Rand Brandes has identified these papers on my behalf. I would like to acknowledge his clarification and thank him for the fair use of his materials. Maroon Journal, "Tuesday 2. Oct. [1993]," Rand Brandes Papers, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

[202] Salman Rushdie feels similarly. He expressed his discomfort when he described going to see his literary collection, also at Emory, as "visiting himself."

[203] Maroon Journal, "10-28 [1993]," Rand Brandes Papers, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

ourselves."[204] Expressing a need for individuation and seeking personal achievements in particular is degenerated as a type of egotism. There is, as Heaney said, "a tremendous communal censor in Ireland, and he is sitting there with sharpened whips, and the minute a head raises itself above the common level, phrew... crack... go down again!"[205] Heaney acknowledged that this is a weakness of Irish society. He compliments America's ability to support individual accomplishments, saying that is "one of the great things about America. It permits you to leap into yourself without dragging you back into what you were supposed to be." Americans "don't attack you […] It's just a completely different style."[206] Brandes and Heaney's conversation can thus be read as an internalization of Irish norms that promote discomfort with prestige. Ultimately, however, Heaney feels that Americans can be too comfortable with themselves, for "the ego becomes so ravenous in these balmy conditions that the sense of we, the sense of first person plural, almost disappears. I find that the worst thing about this country is the greed of the first person singular."[207]

Heaney's discomfort with matters that require recognition of personal over collective needs can also be seen in how his sense of responsibility to critics can make him uncomfortable. In an entry dated Wednesday, December 8, Brandes wrote that he came across his own letters to Heaney while sorting through "more recent material." After noting the oddness of seeing his own correspondence at Heaney's home, Brandes remarked that Heaney "started throwing away as many [letters] as he was keeping. He

---

[204] Kate O'Callaghan, "Seamus Heaney – A Poet of the People," *Irish America Magazine* (May 1986), 29.
[205] Ibid., 29.
[206] Ibid., 20.
[207] Brandes, "An Interview," 29.

said I had given him a great sense of freedom since what I consider protecting his privacy he saw as letting people down."[208] Although the amount Heaney threw away would appear to be alarming, Brandes described, "90% of what he threw away was junk mail. He was still finding royalty checks and the such he hadn't cashed."[209] Brandes validated Heaney's need for privacy by reminding him of his rights as an individual rather than focusing on his role as a public figure.

Another of Brandes' journal entries from 1993 explored Heaney's mood during their sessions of sorting though Heaney's papers. Brandes remarked,

> The session was intense since this was the first time we had gone into the mss. & not simply moved them. There were moments when we laughed – when he read some funny lines he had removed from "Open Letter," they were also longish moments of silence as he studied the pages, there were also a few moments especially near the end after many hours when he felt as if he were "doing someone else's work." I had to ensure him that he was doing it for himself, and for his family -- which I truly believe -- "fuck the scholars," -- "fuck the librarians" was how I felt at times -- although obviously I have great sympathy for them and their obsessions.[210]

The entry is more telling of Brandes' emotions than it is of Heaney's. It is Brandes, not Heaney, who feels that the process requires an occasional reminder of its familial purpose so that Heaney does not linger on its relevance to academics and librarians. But Heaney's sense that he is "doing someone else's work" is similar to his impression that he has a "textual self" separate from his physical body. In both cases, Heaney experiences an uncanny reflection of himself as an author rather than a rounded individual. Brandes, by

---

[208] Journal with lion and crocodile cover, "Wednesday December 8," Rand Brandes Papers, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.
[209] Ibid., n.p.
[210] Maroon journal, n.d., Rand Brandes Papers, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

reiterating Heaney's responsibility to himself and his family over the pressures he feels to satisfy others, performs the role Heaney previously identified as uniquely American. In doing so, he comforts Heaney and helps him move forward with the process of sorting his papers.

Despite Seamus Heaney's discomfort with the publishing industry that has risen around him and his works, Heaney's decision to place his literary collection at Emory University to honor the presidency of William Chace demonstrates that Heaney has recognized the importance of scholars in both his personal and professional lives while also understanding that his status as a Nobel Laureate means that the significance of his literary collection at a particular archive will have a greater effect on that archive than it will on his own literary legacy. Enjoying a canonical status during his lifetime allows Heaney to choose to endow his papers to support the people and institutions he respects rather than considering only his personal needs as an author. The institution he chose to favor, Emory's Manuscript, Archive, and Rare Book Library, represents his investment in honoring William Chace, Ronald Schuchard, and Richard Ellmann's contributions to the criticism of Irish literature and culture.

William Chace, alongside Ronald Schuchard and Richard Ellmann, established a tradition of Irish scholarship at Emory. Their advocacy for the acquisition of Irish literary collections at Emory emphasizes the value of Irish letters and represents their collective investment in biographical criticism within the broader field of literary criticism. As archival research is the primary methodology of biographical criticism, Heaney's decision to place his papers at Emory in honor of their work is, in effect, an endowment to future critics of Irish literature that will now be able to mimic Ellmann, Schuchard and

Chace's research strategies. Additionally, the occasional verse and doggerel Heaney writes to honor these scholars' achievements highlights their affection for one another. The presence of these reciprocal relationships is the basis of Heaney's gift.

Although Heaney did not leave his literary collection to Harvard University, the University of California, Berkeley, or Queen's University Belfast, these institutions and their faculty have also guided Heaney's career. Philip Hobsbaum at Queen's taught Heaney the methods of practical criticism and introduced him to the Belfast literary scene while Thomas Flanagan at Berkeley immersed Heaney in the traditions of Irish literature and history. At Harvard, Heaney benefited from Helen Vendler's aesthetic guidance and public support. Together, the critics at these universities defined the phases of Heaney's career.

Seamus Heaney's choice to endow his papers on behalf of a literary critic is a testimony of the degree to which Heaney found "sympathy" with those who spend their careers tending to the texts and biographies of writers, but perhaps the best example of the strength of Heaney's feelings toward the scholars he associated with can be seen in the draft of his announcement regarding his literary collection. In it, he recounts the Bloomsday[211] morning in 1982 when he and his wife Marie were able "to welcome into the house of friendship, the house of the imagination and the Heaney house" William Chace, Thomas Flanagan, and Richard Ellmann. "For those few hours," Heaney said fondly, "our back yard was like the top slope of Parnassus."[212]

---

[211] Bloomsday is June 16, the day James Joyce's *Ulysses* takes place.
[212] Seamus Heaney, Announcement, "Emory University Visit, September 2003," Seamus Heaney Papers, Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

Chapter Three

Tracing an 'Inner History': Lucille Clifton and Kevin Young

When Lucille Clifton died on February 13, 2010, Kevin Young, the curator of literary collections and the Raymond Danowski Poetry Library at Emory University, took responsibility for Clifton's legacy as an author. Young's guardianship of Clifton's work includes the acquisition of Clifton's papers, his frequent exhibition of her work, and the promotion of her career, which most recently has led to his decision to edit her *Collected Poems* (forthcoming Fall 2012). These actions demonstrate that while curators shape the collecting policies of institutions, their personal preferences determine not only a writer's inclusion in an archive, but also how that writer is represented. As the promotion of a writer's papers dovetails with a management of their legacy, a curator's decision to collect and promote a writer becomes a significant contribution over time to a writer's prestige. Furthermore, curators who are also creative writers, like Kevin Young, shape the institutional collecting policies of their universities by facilitating the acquisition of writers affiliated with their own careers. Lucille Clifton, a major influence on Kevin Young's poetry, is thus preserved and promoted within the archive he manages.

The Clifton-Young relationship periodizes late twentieth century African American literature. Clifton, born in 1936, began her career amidst the milieu of the Black Arts (also called the Black Aesthetic) movement of the 1960s and 1970s: her first book, *Good Times*, was published in 1969. Kevin Young, born in 1970, spent his undergraduate years at Harvard participating in the Dark Room Collective, which he joined in 1991. Founded out of a desire to create a place for black writers in Cambridge, Massachusetts, the Dark Room Collective predicated its work on the ethos of the Black

Arts Movement, while also benefitting from the cultural cachet granted by its affiliation with Harvard and the surrounding Boston universities. Young's first book, *Most Way Home* (1998), published after Lucille Clifton chose it for the National Poetry Series Award, reflects the significance of Clifton's influence on later writers as well as Young's interest in reflecting on the work of his predecessors.

How Kevin Young became Lucille Clifton's protégé and eventually the caretaker of her work requires a historical analysis of the movements within African American poetry in the late twentieth century. The Black Arts Movement's agenda and aesthetic emerged at the same time that Clifton began her career. While unaware of the Black Arts Movement when Clifton began to publish, her poetic point of view parallels their interest in articulating the uniqueness and value of the African American perspective within American arts and letters. Significantly, the Black Arts Movement emphasized the independence of African American art from the white establishment. The Black Arts Movement paved the way for the Dark Room Collective, as its example allowed the latter to be founded, even though the Dark Room Collective often reinterpreted its principles. Both the Dark Room Collective and Lucille Clifton facilitated the start of Young's career as a creative writer. As Young's writing is invested heavily in elegies, a poetic form that memorializes the deceased, charting his interest in public, artist, and private elegies shows how his creative interest in commemoration dovetails his curatorial work. As curators attract writers to the archive by ensuring that their legacy will be preserved and promoted, Young's commitment to Lucille Clifton reiterates how literary collections are a site for mourning. Literary collections preserve the work of an author, memorializing their life, work, and impact on others, not unlike how elegies use poetry as a vehicle for

commemoration. Elegies designate which individuals personally or professionally are significant to an author, while the acquisition of literary collections demonstrate which artists the curator admires. In turn, paying attention to contexts surrounding elegies and acquisition teaches how curatorial initiatives shape not only which collections the archive includes, but also how curation can direct what research will take place.

I. The Black Arts Movement, the Dark Room Collective, and Kevin Young

Two movements primarily define the history of African American poetry in the twentieth century: the New Negro/Harlem Renaissance, which occurred in the 1920s and the Black Arts/Black Aesthetic Movement (BAM), which stretched through the 1960s and 1970s. The Black Arts Movement, the aesthetic sibling to the Black Power Movement, followed in the intellectual wake of Marcus Garvey and Malcolm X by advocating not a space for black voices within the European-American establishment, but rather a black aesthetic with a "separate symbolism, mythology, critique, and iconology"[1] that asserted the "equality, differentness – and sometimes superiority – of black and black American ways of doing and perceiving things."[2] The Black Arts Movement would generate the aesthetics of the era and would also continue to influence later generations of African-American writers who sought to make models "consistent with a black style" so that, "in doing so, we [African Americans] will be merely following the natural demands

---

[1] Michael Schartz, ed., *Visions of a Liberated Future: Black Arts Movement Writings Larry Neal: With Commentary by Amiri Baraka, Stanley Crouch, Charles Fuller, and Jayne Cortez* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1989), 62.
[2] Reginald Martin, *Ishmael Reed and the New Black Aesthetic Critics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988), 3.

of our culture."[3] Most significantly, the Black Arts Movement shaped the Dark Room Collective's directive and its constituency.

Sharan Strange and Thomas Sayers Ellis co-founded the Dark Room Collective in 1986 in Cambridge, Massachusetts at their shared three-story Victorian House located on 31 Inman Street. Strange and Ellis first met in the Harvard University Film Archive and, a few months later, Ellis moved into 31 Inman where Strange previously had lived with a few roommates.[4] The Dark Room Collective officially began at this house after James Baldwin's funeral in December 1987.[5] Named for the "small, dimply lit room in the house that once held a photographic enlarger but gradually began to accumulate books," the Dark Room Collective began by reading books together.[6] By arguing about authors' decisions and developing their "own tastes and literary vocabularies," they developed a community "of support and strength."[7] The group then decided to sponsor readings by African-American authors and support the creative ambitions of their own members by pairing the established authors with those at the beginning of their career in Sunday evening readings. In retrospect, the Dark Room Collective spectacularly achieved both of

---

[3] James T. Stewart, "The Development of the Black Revolutionary Artist." Amiri Baraka and Larry Neal, eds. *Black Fire: An Anthology of Afro-American Writing* (Baltimore, MD: Black Classics Press, 2007), 3.

[4] "Sharan lived in a three-story Victorian in Central Square with Aya deLeon, Jorge Otano, and Susan McPheeters and, when Susan moved out in February, I moved in and naturally one thing led to another." Charles H. Rowell and Thomas Sayers Ellis, "An Interview with Thomas Sayers Ellis," *Callaloo* 21.1 (Winter 1998), 90.

[5] Thomas Sayers Ellis, "T.A.P.O.A.F.O.M. II." *The Maverick Room* (St. Paul, MN: Graywolf Press, 2004), 68-9.

[6] Brian Reed, "The Dark Room Collective and Post-Soul Poetics," *African American Review* 41.4 (Winter 2007), 727-747.

[7] Thomas Sayers Ellis, "Interview," 91. Ellis continues, however, with a remark that ""Because anyone will tell you who's very honest about the Collective, though it sounds like the great perfect artistic community, many of us only did the writing thing together, only came together for those things and probably would not have hung out or been friends if not for that" (92).

its objectives: the reading series attracted many of the most important names in black literature "including Amiri Baraka, Sonia Sanchez, Thylias Moss, Samuel Delany, bell hooks, Alice Walker, John Edgar Wideman, Ntozake Shange, Derek Walcott, and Walter Moseley" and it launched the careers of several of the late twentieth century's most successful authors – Kevin Young among them.[8]

The Dark Room Collective's emphasis on creating a black audience in Cambridge to receive black writers and the desire to promote the careers of their own members is a legacy of the Black Arts Movement. The teachings of Malcolm X particularly facilitated and inspired the Black Arts Movement participants, according to Amiri Baraka:

> Remember, Malcolm X had been murdered & Most of us in the book were Malcolm's sons and daughters. And this was a period when "Revolution is The Main Trend In The World Today!" In fact, it was Malcolm's murder that sent many of these artists out of Greenwich Village & other similar integrated liberal arty "cool-out" zones up to Harlem & other black communities to take up what we felt now were our 'responsibility' in the Black Liberation Movement.[9]

Malcolm X's assassination triggered greater support for his brand of separatist black nationalism. By incorporating Malcolm X's political thoughts into their aesthetic

---

[8] The Dark Room Collective created a facebook page to promote its 2012 reunion tour in honor of its 25th anniversary. On this page, it summarizes the Collective's achievements: "The group has gone on to distinguished careers, winning literary achievements and awards, among them a Pulitzer Prize (Natasha Trethewey), a Whiting Foundation Award in Fiction and Poetry (John Keene), a Whiting Foundation Award in Poetry (Thomas Sayers Ellis; Tracy K. Smith; Major Jackson), a Guggenheim fellowship (Kevin Young), a James Laughlin Award (Tracy K. Smith), the Cave Canem Poetry Prize (Natasha Trethewey; Tracy K. Smith; Major Jackson), the Barnard Women Poets Prize (Sharan Strange; Tracy K. Smith), and many more." Since the note was written, Tracy K. Smith won the 2012 Pulitzer Prize for Poetry. *Dark Room Collective Reunion Tour: About Biography*, Facebook.com, accessed May 7, 2012, https://www.facebook.com/thedarkroomcollectivereuniontour/info.

[9] Amiri Baraka, "BLACK FIRE: A New Introduction," Amiri Baraka and Larry Neal, eds. *Black Fire: An Anthology of Afro-American Writing* (Baltimore, MD: Black Classics Press, 2007), xvii.

movement, the founders of the Black Arts Movement emphasized the need for African American artists and their duty to speak to and on behalf of African Americans in their work. Instead of courting white benefactors, mentors, and audiences, as many artists did during the Harlem Renaissance,[10] African American writers in the Black Arts Movement depended on supporting each other and decoupling African American art from a white patronage seen as both enervating and parasitical.

The Black Arts Movement officially began in 1965, when Amiri Baraka, alongside Larry Neal and Askia M. Toure, founded the Black Arts Reparatory Theater School (BARTS) in Harlem. The Black Arts Reparatory Theatre School sent "five trucks out across Harlem" six days a week under the auspices of a Black Arts flag created by William White. Each truck contained writers, artists, and musicians who visited the "vacant lots, playgrounds, [and] parks" of Harlem to enrich the lives of local residents. Although the initiative only lasted for one summer, the mandate to create art that was black in "form & content," "mass-oriented" and "explicitly intended to be revolutionary" generated an enduring aesthetic that favored free verse writing over Western forms and a focus on politics and African American life as a subject.[11]

While short-lived, the Black Arts Reparatory Theatre School's aesthetic continued to be promoted in other events and efforts. For example, the Second Fisk University Writer's Conference in 1967 inspired Gwendolyn Brooks, who was already one of

---

[10] A number of articles have been published on black writing and white patronage in the Harlem Renaissance, including Robert C. Hart's "Black-White Literary Relations in the Harlem Renaissance," *American Literature* 44.4 (Jan 1973), 612-28. Also see John K. Young's *Black Writers, White Publishers: Marketplace Politics in Twentieth Century African American Literature* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2006) for more information on white institutions and the Black Arts Movement.
[11] Baraka, "BLACK FIRE," xviii-xix.

America's most renowned poets and the first African American to be awarded a Pulitzer.[12] Brooks arrived at the conference with the perception she was "in some inscrutable and uncomfortable wonderland […] I had never been before in the general presence of such insouciance, such live firmness."[13] The conference changed her emotionally, physically, and creatively: she would travel to Africa twice, stop straightening her hair, assert her significance as an "essentially African" poet, and transfer publishers from the "white-owned Harper and Row to Dudley Randall's Broadside Press."[14] Furthermore, after the conference, a circle of writers now identified as some of the most significant to emerge from the Black Arts Movement formed around Gwendolyn Brooks, including Haki Madhubuti (Don L. Lee), Carolyn Rodgers, Sonia Sanchez, Mari Evans, Amiri Baraka, Nikki Giovanni, and Hoyt W. Fuller.[15] This circle includes the writers who have been now recognized as the primary figures of the Black Arts Movement.

In the spirit of gathering together the voices of these and other artists, Amiri Baraka and Larry Neal published *Black Fire*, an anthology of African-American writing in 1968 as a "statement, a declaration and a 'roster' to inspire 'recruitment'" for Black artists who sought to create politically revolutionary work.[16] By including a selection of essays, poetry, fiction, and drama – in that order – *Black Fire* sought to destroy "the

---

[12] Angela Jackson, "In Memorium: Gwendolyn Brooks (1917-2000)," *Callaloo* 23.4 (Autumn 2000), 1163.
[13] Annette Debo, "Signifying *Afrika*: Gwendolyn Brooks' Later Poetry," *Callaloo* 29.1 (Winter 2006), 168.
[14] Ibid., 168 and Raymond Malewitz, "'My Newish Voice": Rethinking Black Power in Gwendolyn Brooks' 'Whirlwind'," *Callaloo* 29.2 (Spring 2006), 532.
[15] Jackson, "In Memorium," 1168.
[16] Joanne V. Gabbin, ed. "Preface," *Furious Flower: African American Poetry from the Black Arts Movement to the Present* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2004), xxii.

white thing": "white ideas" and "white ways of looking at the world."[17] In the process, its art "addressed street songs and prison life (following Sterling Brown's *Southern Road* north), explored sexuality and feminism, and argued forcefully against war, oppression, and a literary presumption of whiteness."[18] Historically black colleges promoted the work of "the New Breed," not without controversy, while historically white universities where "white money" was interpreted by the Black Arts authors as synonymous with "white power"[19] nevertheless promoted their message to recruit and demonstrate solidarity with their African American students.[20] Between 1965 and 1975 – the primary years of the movement – "more than one hundred anthologies of Afro-American literature" were either "self-published, published by community centers, political institutions, cultural houses, black college student organizations, black movement presses, or produced by trade presses[21] while in academic criticism, the Black Arts Movement coalesced in the simultaneous publication in 1971 of Addison Gayle, Jr.'s *The Black Aesthetic*, Houston Baker, Jr.'s *Black Literature in America*, and Amiri Baraka's *Raise, Race, Rays, Raze: Essays since 1965*.[22]

However, this outpouring of art and racial pride had a problem: African-American writers of the era "were confronted with the wounding of their reputations" should their

---

[17] Schartz, *Visions of a Liberated Future*, 64.
[18] Kevin Young, "The Black Psychic Hotline, or/ The Future of American Writing," Kevin Young, ed., *Giant Steps: The New Generation of African American Writers* (New York, NY: Harper Perennial), 5.
[19] Larry Neal, "An Afterword: And the Shine Swam On," *Black Fire: An Anthology of Afro-American Writing*, Amiri Baraka and Larry Neal, eds. (Baltimore, MD: Black Classics Press, 2007), 642.
[20] Ibid., 638.
[21] Cheryl Clark, *"After Mecca": Women Poets and the Black Arts Movement* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005), 17-19.
[22] Reginald Martin, *Ishmael Reed and the New Black Aesthetic Critics*, 20 and 26.

aesthetics or their goals differ from the stated dictated of the Movement.[23] While the desire to speak only to a black population may have been an effective way to indicate the significance and independence of African-descended people, it nevertheless demonstrated a need for an empowering rhetorical position from which to speak rather than reflected a homogenous constituency. While considering this problem, Reginald Martin observed, "the black aesthetic says there is a black way of doing things, but it expresses those things in English, not Yoruba or Dahomey. It says that the oral tradition is at least as important as the written tradition, but it says so in Gutenberg's typeface."[24] As diaspora changed the language and culture of populations along with their geography, the Black Arts Movement ran aground when it attempted to pronounce a holistic perspective on behalf of all African Americans. Even in his afterword to *Black Fire*, Larry Neal recognized this limitation of the movement: "it has failed to evolve a workable ideology […] which can encompass many of the diverse ideological tendencies existent in the black community."[25] Neal recognized that first and foremost the Black Arts Movement and the Black Power Movement needed to articulate a theory of social change that could resolve deep ambivalence, if not hatred, for how America historically treated African-Americans. Simultaneously it also needed to believe, like Frederick Douglass, in "the promise of America."[26] Later generations of black writers such as those in the Dark Room Collective would look for ways to create and represent diversity within contemporary black communities and also respect the history and traditions of earlier generations of African Americans.

---

[23] Clark, *After Mecca*, 21.
[24] Martin, *Ismael Reed*, 11.
[25] Neal, "An Afterword," 640.
[26] Ibid., 641.

In this sense, contemporary authors follow the perspective of writers like Lucille Clifton who, while a peer and a friend to many of canonical Black Arts writers like Amiri Baraka and Sonia Sanchez, found herself outside their espoused aesthetic due to her interest in the personal lyric. Wanting to speak as an individual rather than on behalf of a collective, Clifton avoided what she felt essentialized African-American experience while demonstrating "how the struggle for civil rights was internal as well as external." Significantly, then, she found herself aligned with the general "waning of one kind of belief or insistence in what it means to be Black" in the years immediately following the crest of the Black Arts movement. The inclination to generate a poetics that "mix[ed] the personal with the public," verifying public art with the experience of private life, not only became a signature of Clifton's work, but of the Dark Room Collective.[27]

Living and writing after the apex of the Black Arts Movement, the Dark Room Collective as a group was born in the 1960s, "raised on the rhythms and harmonies of 1970's soul," and came "to maturity during the mid- to late 1980s, during the conservative presidencies of Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush." Now, the Dark Room Collective and their contemporaries are a cohort self-described as the "post-soul" generation. Influenced by the failure of desegregation to transform the United States,[28] in contrast to the Baby Boomers who have been accused of "too often fail[ing] to see the co-option" of their protests by popular culture,[29] they argue that they are more prone to evaluate critically the legacy of the Civil Rights.

---

[27] Charles H. Rowell and Terrence Hayes, "The Poet in the Enchanted Shoe Factory: An Interview of Terrance Hayes," *Callaloo* 27.4 (Autumn 2004), 1078-9.
[28] Brian Reed, "The Dark Room Collective and Post-Soul Poetics," 729.
[29] Young, "The Black Psychic Hotline," 5.

According to Brian Reed, "post-soul" writers can be divided into three waves. Rita Dove, Toi Derricotte, Yusef Komunyakaa, and Nathaniel Mackey are the most prominent members of the first wave; Elizabeth Alexander, Thylias Moss, Cornelius Eady, and Harryette Mullen are the most renowned of the second; while the third wave is most famous for the writers affiliated with and collectively known as the Dark Room Collective. While this periodization is inherently simplistic, as these authors coexist with one another and many more can be listed, nevertheless these writers suggest how the Black Arts aesthetic slowly evolved even as its central argument – that black art should be black in "form and content" – remained central to African American arts and letters.[30]

For example, the poet Elizabeth Alexander, now famous for her inaugural poem "Praise Song for the Day" written for Barack Obama's inauguration on January 20, 2009, was born in 1962. She is part of the "post-soul" generation, although she is older than most of the Dark Room Collective Members. Alexander spent a year in Boston while pursuing an M.A. from Boston University prior to the formation of the Dark Room Collective. She summarized how her race shaped her experience of this time in "Boston Year" by writing that in "My first week in Cambridge a car full of white boys/ tried to run me off the road, and spit through the window"[31] and

> Whenever I saw other colored people
> in bookshops, or museums, or cafeterias, I'd gasp,
> smile shyly, but they'd disappear before I spoke.
> What would I have said to them? Come with me? Take
> me home? Are you my mother? No.[32]

---

[30] Baraka, "BLACK FIRE," xviii-xix.
[31] Elizabeth Alexander, "Boston Year," *100 Best African American Poems*, Nikki Giovanni, ed. (Naperville, IL: sourcebooks mediaFusion, 2010), 106, Lines 1-2.
[32] Ibid., Lines 10-14.

Unable to articulate the solidarity she feels with "other colored people," Alexander's time in Boston is alienating. This portrait contrasts against her later depiction of the city in "The Dark Room: an invocation," which was published in *Callaloo*'s special section on the Dark Room Collective in 1993.

In "The Dark Room," Alexander portrays a Boston milieu that differs significantly from her prior experience. Instead of beginning immediately with a sense of being hunted by antagonistic "white boys,"[33] Alexander initiates her invocation with the centrality of "black poetry."[34] No longer "run off the road,"[35] Alexander now drives her sister to Cambridge in 1989 to listen to her "read/in a house" where there "was a room,/ The Dark Room."[36] Alexander no longer has to shyly imagine what she would say to the "other colored people,"[37] but rather can revel in "code-switch[ing]/ with the same fast dazzle" by engaging in talk that compares "divas" and knows "which commercials/ had black people in them/ from 1965 forward."[38] Exclaiming "Boston is no longer/Boston with you here,"[39] in the Dark Room Collective Alexander found a place in the city that could embrace her as an African American and a poet.

Alexander participated in the founding year of the Dark Room Collective's reading series, which was established to enrich the Collective's education as well as to establish a uniquely African-American space for arts and letters within the traditional milieu of Boston. In the second section of "A Loud Noise," "The Reading Series 1989-

---

[33] Ibid., Lines 1-2.
[34] Elizabeth Alexander, "The Dark Room: an invocation," *Callaloo* 16.3 (Summer 1993), 554, Line 1.
[35] Alexander, "Boston Year," 106, Line 2.
[36] Alexander, "The Dark Room," 554, Lines 7-12.
[37] Alexander, "Boston Year," 106, Line 10.
[38] Alexander, "The Dark Room," 554, Lines 18-24.
[39] Ibid., lines 29-30.

1994," Ellis describes this period:

> Clean house, lose friends – like Angry Sister X – forever. Someday pay. The price of not just one but many bus tickets. Whatever it cost, lose use of 187-1002, lose heat. Need grant. Whatever it takes to get writers to read -- promise travel, promise dinner, promise book sales and a packed living room of young hungry future noisemakers. Promise Cambridge, Black Cambridge, Central Square not Harvard Square. Ellen hung art. Our landlord hung us, lost house. Lights out the Banner said. Hiatus, dark.[40]

The "haitus, dark" refers to when the reading series moved from 31 Inman Street to the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston after the issues with the landlord at Inman Street forced the students to vacate. Thomas Sayers Ellis remarked that this move away from the house gave the Collective a more "business" persona,[41] but this change in attitude was what allowed the collective to bring

> to town some of the biggest names in contemporary African American literature, among them Toni Cade Cambara, Samuel Delany, Essex Hemphill, bell hooks, Randall Kenan, Terry McMillan, Ntozake Shange, Alice Walker, John Edgar Wideman, and Walter Moseley."[42]

The Collective was now "catch[ing] the eye of literary Cambridge, White Cambridge" and "everybody publishing something somewhere […] shine shine shine."[43]

Ellis also recounted a specific incident when Michael S. Harper came to read in 1993 and impressed on him the significance of the series. Harper "pok[ed] a very stiff finger in my chest and telling me that I had done a good job," but he also said "that it was time to quit and that he expected to see me in the John Hay Library every day when I got to Brown."[44] Harper emphasized that while the Collective's work was significant, it was

---

[40] Thomas Sayers Ellis, "A Loud Noise Followed by Many Louder Ones: The Dark Room Collective (1987-1998)," *The American Poetry Review* 27.2 (Mar/Apr 1998), 39.
[41] Reed, "The Dark Room Collective," 728.
[42] Ibid., 727-8.
[43] Ellis, "A Loud Noise," 39.
[44] Charles H. Rowell and Thomas Sayers Ellis, "An Interview," 91.

just as important – if not more so – to use the Collective as an opportunity to begin an individual career. For this reason, Ellis would later interpret the Collective as a "PMFA," a precursor to the later programs and fellowships that allowed members to move into the public sphere as independent artists. Once the Collective moved again, this time to the Boston Playwright's Theatre in 1994,[45] Ellis would memorialize this era by emphasizing the dwindling number of original members present. Sharan Strange, John Keene, Kevin Young, Trasi Johnson, Tisa Bryant had all left Boston, by this time making good on the need to have "many communities […] born from this one."[46]

Although the collective went through several iterations, beginning in a familial environment of a shared home and then progressively stepping into a public arena by hosting readings in community spaces, their consistent display of talent and their emphasis on creating a community empowered younger writers. Strange remarked that the Collective provided an opportunity to connect with other ambitious African American writers "at a time when European Americans still dominated most positions of authority in the US poetry establishment."[47] While at first it was the "activism of a community-based reading series for writers of color" it later became about "the sustaining practice of writing in community."[48] Tracy K. Smith, who most recently won a 2012 Pulitzer Prize for her collection *Life on Mars*, described this community as a "center of a tornado that was happening and eventually swept me up." She found herself "watching people like Michael S. Harper and Thylias Moss give these amazing readings and share the stage

---

[45] Ellis, "A Loud Noise," 39.
[46] Ibid., 39.
[47] Reed, "The Dark Room Collective," 726.
[48] Sharan Strange, "Of Beginnings, Journeys, and the Writer's Food: The Dark Room Collective," *Painted Bride Quarterly* 60 (1997), 39.

with people who were just a little older than myself, and who were taking their art very seriously," which allowed her to realize "I wanted to be doing that, too."[49] Although these readings established an audience for authors, for the young writers present it also reiterated their potential to establish themselves as artists by giving them the example and the connections to be successful and then establishing a close-knit group of peers available to workshop and push each other's writing forward. Kevin Young highlighted how the Collective helped each member to maintain a high level of artistic integrity and that the Collective's environment "provided an object lesson" in the need to be innovative, for "no one wanted to be the weak link in the chain! It was like joining a big band or something and cutting your chops that way, before you became a soloist or had your own gig."[50]

Even those who did not become part of the collective noticed its influence. Askold Melnyszuk recalled that when he first learned of the Collective in 1989, it seemed as if there were "cabals to which we (the outside world) were, and were not, invited." Eventually, he learned that it was a "commune of young black intellectuals, who'd set up their own literary center, apart from the rest of Cambridge." Notably, it was only then that Melnyszuk began to realize that the leading literary magazines and programs at the time predominantly were run by and for white writers."[51] Significantly, it would be *Callaloo* – an academic journal founded to give "Southern black writers" a place to publish as mainstream (white) periodicals and prominent Black Arts Movement journals

---

[49] Reed, "The Dark Room Collective," 728.
[50] Charles Henry Rowell and Kevin Young, "An Interview with Kevin Young," *Callaloo* 21.1 (Winter 1998), 50.
[51] Askold Melnyczuk, "A Costly Telegram to the Dark Room Collective." *Callaloo* 16.3 (Summer 1993), 513-4.

often excluded these authors – that first published the Dark Room Collective and catapulted their featured writers into national prominence.[52]

In 1993, *Callaloo* devoted a forty-three page special section to the Dark Room Collective, complete with "the kind of rhetoric usually reserved for chart-topping rappers and Hollywood celebrities."[53] The section included three photographs, an academic article titled "A Costly Telegram to the Dark Room Collective" by Askold Melnyczuk, and writing by John Keene, Natasha Trethewey, Trasi Johnson, Caryl Phillips, Thomas Sayers Ellis, Janice Lowe, Sharan Strange, and Kevin Young. In the process, however, *Callaloo* established the Dark Room Collective's canon of writers by the power of their selection. Ellis noted that the supplement was "both a blessing and a dagger," as many Collective participants were not included. As seniority in the group did not necessarily translate to publication, many long-time members left in frustration after their work was overlooked.[54]

Kevin Young, however, emerged from this issue as one of the stars of the Dark Room Collective. As an undergraduate at Harvard, Young studied with Lucie Brock-Boido and Seamus Heaney.[55] While both writers were formative influences on Young, the Dark Room Collective played the most significant role in Young's early development as a writer. Young met co-founders Ellis and Strange in 1991 and the duo exposed him to new authors and also introduced him to other young writers, which gave him "a way of feeling I had something to say and that I fit in – in the Cambridge scene which can be

---

[52] Kyle G. Dargen and Haryette Mullen, "Everything We Can Imagine: An Interview with Harryette Mullen," *Callaloo* 30.4 (Fall 2007), 1014.
[53] Melnyczuk, "A Costly Telegram," 513.
[54] Rowell and Ellis, "An Interview," 92.
[55] Robert Arnold, "About Kevin Young," *Ploughshares* 32.1 (Spring 2006), 187.

alienating and in the world of poetry and in the world of black poetry specifically."[56] Most helpful was the Collective's professional environment. Young admitted, "I certainly wouldn't have sent poems out as soon as I did if it hadn't been for the Collective. I don't think I would have started publishing, even though I needed to."[57] Propelled by the Collective, Kevin Young began to publish. He won a Stegner Fellowship, sponsored by Stanford University, the year after he completed his undergraduate degree. It was in San Francisco that rare books would begin to fascinate Young, an interest that would lead to his eventual position of curator of literary collections and the Raymond Danowski Poetry Library at Emory University. In turn, as a curator at the Manuscript, Archive and Rare Book Library, Young would advocate for Lucille Clifton's papers to come to Atlanta, Georgia.

II. Kevin Young and the Manuscript, Archive, and Rare Book Library

In 2005, Kevin Young became a curator of the Raymond Danowski Poetry Library, a "75,000-volume collection of rare and first editions of modern and contemporary" Anglophone poetry as well as manuscripts, literary journals, audiovisual materials, and broadsides which came to Emory University in 2004.[58] Its namesake, Raymond Danowski, created the collection over a period of twenty-five years and, before it was placed at Emory University, the library was considered the largest poetry collection in private hands.

---

[56] Rowell and Young, "An Interview,"50.
[57] Ibid., 50.
[58] "Raymond Danowski Poetry Library," *Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library Collection Overview*, accessed April 8, 2012, http://marbl.library.emory.edu/collection-overview/raymond-danowski-poetry-library.

As the curator of the Raymond Danowski Poetry Library and the curator of literary collections at the Manuscript, Archive, and Rare Book Library (MARBL), Young is a specialist who simultaneously works in the separate yet overlapping spheres of creative writing and the rare book world. His creative writing, which includes non-fiction, poetry, and editorial work, demonstrates the degree to which his career is invested in the preservation and promotion of others. Young's particular interest in the elegy reveals how a form usually restricted to celebrating a person's achievements and mourning his or her loss, in Young's hands, becomes a way in which to examine American culture. While a curator is first and foremost an expert who decides what should be acquired for a special collections department, a curator is also required to be a cultural critic who promotes the significance of the items he or she collects.

Kevin Young is known for his collage or "mix-and-match aesthetic," which is a postmodern style that has also become representative of his generation of writers. Young himself noted that the era of writers born after 1960 and following the end of the Black Arts Movement often take "the best floating lines from all over creation" and juxtapose them in new ways in order to create a "blues of [her] own,"[59] Brian Reed argues that Young is in particular is known for this attribute, however, as "few…share Young's penchant for a fast-moving, disorienting blend of collage, parody, pastiche, and signifying."[60]

Although this aesthetic is Young's most identifiable attribute as a writer, his most characteristic poetic mode is the elegy. Elegies, traditionally written in honor of a

---

[59] Kevin Young, *Blues Poems: Everyman's Library* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003), 85.
[60] Reed, "The Dark Room Collective," 737.

recently deceased person, can be intensely personal or "a broad feeling of loss and metaphysical sadness." Unlike similar forms such as odes, epitaphs, and eulogies, the elegy can be critical of its subject, is an extended piece, and is written in poetry rather than prose. Alternatively lamenting and then praising the deceased, and then turning to console the speaker, the elegy speaks to the stages of grief.[61] The elegy is not only a prominent type of poem within Young's oeuvre, but it is also symptomatically present in his work as a curator due to the role's investment in commemorating, preserving, and responding the legacy of his predecessors.

The title and topic of Young's most recent volume, *The Grey Album* (2012) immediately establishes the collage aesthetic Young is known for, as *The Grey Album* takes its name "from Danger Mouse's pioneering mash-up of Jay-Z's *The Black Album* and the Beatles' *The White Album*."[62] The volume's topic, "the blackness of blackness," is illustrated through a collage of figures and works significant to African American culture, art, and history. Beginning with the earliest eras of slavery in "Elsewhere," moving to modernism in "Strange Fruit," spending time with postmodernism in "Heaven is Negro," and discussing the contemporary era in "Cosmic Slop," Young ranges from Phillis Wheatley to Bob Kaufman, considering along the way his own family's history; the renaming (and one-named) stars;[63] and the music of the cakewalk, soul, blues, gangsta rap, and hip hop.

In *The Grey Album*, Young's collage aesthetic is used to fold different types of

---

[61] "Poetic Form: Elegy," Poets.org, Accessed September 13, 2012, http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/5778.
[62] Kevin Young, *The Grey Album: On the Blackness of Blackness* (Minneapolis, MN: Graywolf Press, 2012), back cover. I am acknowledged in this book for my role as Kevin Young's research assistant.
[63] Young, *The Grey Album*, 54.

histories together in order to elevate contemporary examples of artistic transgression by comparing them to classic examples of censored texts from earlier in the twentieth century. By using "the precedent-setting obscenity trials of *Ulysses* and *Howl*" to contextualize the arrest of 2 Live Crew and the FBI to threaten NWA for their anthem "Fuck Tha Police," Young demonstrates that history is recurring, if in surprising ways.[64] As James Joyce's masterwork and Allen Ginsberg's epic now have taken their relative positions in the canon of twentieth century literature, in retrospect the revulsion they inspired only cemented their status as classics. Young valorizes the 2 Live Crew and NWA by tying their struggle to articulate provocative human experience by highlighting – if even only anecdotally – their shared history with *Ulysses* and *Howl*.

The Gray Album, however, includes moments of elegy within its commentary on history and art. Young discusses the 1990s East Coast Rapper, the Notorious B.I.G. aka "Biggie" (Christopher Wallace), whose ability to represent street life in his lyrics made him incredibly popular. His album *Ready to Die* is credited with returning the focus of rap to the East Coast during a period of prominent West Coast artists. However, the baby featured on the album's cover art conveys the music's elegiac mode, because the infant represents the beginnings and trajectory of Biggie's life, rather than his current or future success. As Biggie would die at the age of 24 during a drive-by shooting on March 9, 1997 in Los Angeles, California, this album foreshadows his early death. Remarkably, fifteen days after the shooting, his record company released *Life after Death*, a double-disc set which had been recorded following a prior car accident. Although the title *Life after Death* had been chosen prior to Biggie's murder and reflected on the severity of the

---

[64] Ibid., 341.

accident which forced Biggie to use a cane, the two album titles placed together demonstrates how death became a constant frame of reference for the rapper, which doubtlessly reflected on his violent life, but also implies his early death was inevitable.

While Young does not spend much time on Biggie's lyrics, nor does he discuss Biggie's death or the circumstances of his murder, his enduring interest in Biggie reflects his recognition that Biggie's hip-hop is itself a type of blues – in fact, "the best blues I know."[65] Young's eulogy of Biggie, just one section of a chapter, is mournful yet celebratory approach, indicating not only his awareness of how the timing of death can defines Biggie's life, but that his death itself is "def in another form." Biggie's prescient posthumous album is a "manifesto of self that is expansive, multitudinous, and unapologetic," a showcase of pain on display.

Young's elegy of Biggie is a eulogy, a prose piece that summarizes, honors, and mourns the rapper while comforting his audience – his survivors. But Young's eulogies in *The Gray Album*, a book which begins with an epigraph and photograph of Sojourner Truth and ends with a meditation on the "poetry which is after the goodbye," is one of many among his canon of remembered artists. Young's elegiac project stretches throughout his career, most notably with *To Repel Ghosts*, a monograph length combination of elegy and ekphrasis dedicated to Jean-Michel Basquiat, a book he refers to in the conclusion of *The Gray Album*. Basquiat, the graffiti artist[66] turned abstract

---

[65] Ibid., 374.

[66] To what degree Basquiat can be considered a graffiti artist is contended. See Phoebe Hoban, "Basquiat: A Quick Killing in Art," *New York Times Books*, accessed April 24, 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/books/first/h/hoban-basquiat.html.

painter whose precipitous rise to fame in the 1980s paralleled his death at the age of 27[67] is "particularly maddening" for Young. In *The Gray Album*, Young writes that after he completed his book on Basquiat, Basquiat seemed to die again, withdrawing away from the poet after serving his role as subject.[68]

For Young, Basquiat's life and art become a synecdoche for the 1980s, representing not only the art scene at the time – which was tied as tied to street graffiti as it was to exclusive gallery shows – but also the decade's kaleidoscope of music, drugs, and politics. During an interview with Charles Rowell, Young discussed how he considered Basquiat's art and life a "lens to 20th-century black history and popular culture," which allowed him to "evoke everything from Jack Johnson to Mr. T" and helped him use these "connections to play off each other."[69] Here, Young understates his style, as the myriad "connections" he uses generates such a dense collage that his poems become palimpsests. His writing does not just generate new contexts by placing information side by side, but rather layers it in through levels of associations within each poem. In turn, each poem reaches toward other poems of the collection, creating a narrative of Basquait's life alongside a portrait of the era.

While Young uses a collage aesthetic to propel the intellectual project behind *To Repel Ghosts*, the volume is more a work of elegy than of ekphrasis. Engaging with Basquiat's art is significant aspect of the book, but the critical impetus behind each of the poems is how Young's admiration and respect for a fellow artist combines with a deep

---

[67] The book's title is taken from Basquiat's 1986 crayon on wood painting of the same name, now held in private collection. Jean-Michel Basquiat, "To Repels Ghosts," *Wikipaintings: an encyclopedia of paintings*, accessed April 24, 2012, http://www.wikipaintings.org/en/jean-michel-basquiat/to-repels-ghosts.
[68] Young, *The Grey Album*, 402-3.
[69] Rowell and Young, "An Interview," 49.

sense of personal loss after Basquiat's death. The most reproduced poem from the collection is "URGENT TELEGRAM TO JEAN-MICHEL BASQUIAT," an elegy written in first person, which imagines Young in the role of a close friend who worriedly contacts Basquiat when he fails to appear:

> HAVENT HEARD FROM YOU IN AGES STOP LOVE YOUR LATEST SHOW STOP THIS NO PHONE STUFF IS FOR BIRDS LIKE YOU STOP ONCE SHOUTED UP FROM STREET ONLY
>
> RAIN AND YOUR ASSISTANT ANSWERED STOP DO YOU STILL SLEEP LATE STOP DOES YOUR PAINT STILL COVER DOORS STOP FOUND A SAMO TAG COPYRIGHT HIGH
>
> ABOVE A STAIR STOP NOT SURE HOW YOU REACHED STOP YOU ALWAYS WERE A CLIMBER TOP COME DOWN SOME DAY AND SEE US AGAIN END[70]

In "URGENT TELEGRAM," Young interpolates himself into Basquait's life by alluding to a previous history of intimate friendship: "HAVEN'T HEARD FROM YOU IN AGES," "DO YOU STILL SLEEP LATE," "DOES YOUR PAINT STILL COVER/DOORS." He also reiterates his respect for Basquait's work: "LOVE YOUR/ LATEST SHOW," "FOUND A SAMO TAG," "NOT SURE HOW YOU REACHED […] YOU WERE ALWAYS A CLIMBER." The pathos of the poem is implicit in the awe Basquait's art and life inspires – Young cannot see not only how the tag was placed in a high and dangerous location, but Basquiat's ability to reach these areas is conflated with his personality. Basquiat is a "CLIMBER" both literally and metaphorically; he climbed a stairwell to place his tag in a location where it cannot be removed easily and climbed socially from working as a homeless graffiti artist to being recognized as one of the most prominent painters of the twentieth century. Basquiat's art does not forget the

---

[70] Kevin Young, *To Repel Ghosts: The Remix* (New York, NY: Knopf, 2005), 291.

danger of such a precipitous rise and neither does Young's poetry, which focuses on the theme suggested by Basquiat's piece "Charles the First," dedicated to Charlie Parker, on which Basquiat wrote "Most ~~Young~~ Kings Get Their Head Cut Off." Both Basquiat and Young are, in essence, "young kings" whose critical success came early. The closing of "URGENT TELEGRAM" – "COME DOWN/ SOME DAY AND SEE US AGAIN END" – reiterates Young's need for Basquiat as a fellow artist, confidant, and mentor.

The length, variety, and scope of *To Repel Ghosts* demonstrates that Young feels Basquiat's loss dearly because his death is not just the death of a master artist, but rather the death of a man who Young sees as an aesthetic parallel to himself, a confidant with whom he shares a similar perspective and sensibility. A pedantic list of their interests would include "music, particularly jazz and the blues; both the public and the elusive, underground history of art; the largely untold history of Black America; and the daunting gamut language runs, from the ivory tower to the mean streets."[71] But beyond this set of general categories is a shared investment in "social commentary, aesthetics as indicated by process, and art-business savvy"[72] and even what Amy Cappallezzo calls a "bodily intelligence" – a shared sense of what it means to be African-American men and "the collective understanding that a body acquires by what it endures."[73] Both Kevin Young and Jean-Michel Basquiat recognize the power of their subjectivity by using it to open an avenue to a wider cultural discourse. Young reveals his perspective as much through who

---

[71] John Yau, "Street Song: The Art of Jean-Michel Basquiat and The Poetry of Kevin Young," *TWO CENTS: Works on Paper by Jean-Michel Basquiat* (Miami, FL: Centre Gallery, Miami-Dade Community College, Wolfon Campus, 1995), 33-4.
[72] Olivia Cronk, "To Repel Ghosts: The Remix by Kevin Young," *Bookslut,* accessed April 24, 2012, http://www.bookslut.com/poetry/2005_11_007062.php
[73] Amy Cappallezzo, "Introduction," *TWO CENTS: Works on Paper by Jean-Michel Basquiat* (Miami, FL: Center Gallery, Miami-Dade Community College, 1995), 33-4.

and what he chooses to write about, rather than indulging in autobiographical or "confessional" verse. Basquait, aware that his rise made him a "young king," performed his identity by labeling himself a street kid rather than the middle-class child of a Queens accountant.

Inspired by Young's grief after the sudden loss of his father, *Dear Darkness* (2008) is elegiac in tone, even though not every poem within the volume is an elegy and most poems are not explicitly autobiographical. For example, in "Flash Flood Blues," Young writes an elegy that is personal without being autobiographical. Young writes:

> Whenever we pass
> on the street
>
> Death pretends
> not to know me
>
> Though the grapevine say
> he's my daddy.[74]

Characteristically, here Young uses wit as a stand-in for the type of sadness that can easily slide into pathos. The personification of death is both tongue-in-cheek and literal – as the state of death cannot be Young's father, yet his father is dead and therefore death, as a synecdoche, is his father. The personification of death also demonstrates Young's sense of being haunted or followed by death, for the way in which death has become a family member through its sheer familiarity. Although death has not killed him yet, Young's biological relationship to death – Death's his "daddy" – also implies his own mortality. Death's refusal to acknowledge his paternity demonstrates Young's relative youth and health, for he is not yet ready to be reunited with his father.

---

[74] Kevin Young, *Dear Darkness*, "Flash Flood Blues" (New York, NY: Knopf, 2008), 68, Lines 21-6.

While the subject of an elegy is the deceased person, Young's elegies often discuss food as food allows Young to combine the personal memories that make up his elegies with an awareness of the social customs which structure relationships and the mourning process. This interest allowed Young regain his poetic voice following the deep shock at his father's passing and lead to his participation in Southern Foodways Alliance, an association dedicated to practicing, preserving, and promoting the diverse aspects of Southern cuisine in the United States.[75] As food is used to provoke memory in his poetry, a technique famously used by Marcel Proust in *Remembrance of Things Past*, food becomes both a literal and metaphorical way to feed oneself during grief.

One example of such a poem is "Ode to the Buffalo." In it, Young folds memories of his father in with his love of buffalo meat and his respect for the animal's ability to survive near extinction in the prairies of the United States. One of the few food poems to explicitly mention his father, the poem begins: "My daddy left you/ cold, for me to find, when he died." Noting that the comfort of having something to eat, Young remarks that buffalo goes as well with casual as formal dining: "happy with a burger/ & fries," but just as comfortable with silverware. As a food, a buffalo provides enough sustenance for an extended period of mourning. But it is the buffalo's ability to survive that is the true focus of the poem – the buffalo is "shot at a trillion times," all the while taking "guff// of no one," and looking "giant/ yet fit."[76] The buffalo's persistent presence on the prairies of Kansas, where Young was raised and where his father's first funeral was held, speaks to the way in which survival occurs even under the toughest of circumstances. Additionally,

---

[75] "SFA Mission," *Southern Foodways Alliance*, accessed May 2, 2012, http://southernfoodways.org/about/mission.html.
[76] Young, "Ode to the Buffalo," *Dear Darkness*, 90-1.

the buffalo becomes a stand-in for Young's father, a man who is portrayed as able to withstand pressure while retaining his integrity.

"Ode to the Buffalo" is written in free verse with ten tercets and a concluding single line. Inset rhymes maintain the momentum of the poem and highlight themes – "eat" partners with "speaks," found eight lines and three stanzas later. "Survived" pairs with "mind." At the conclusion of the poem, in the last four stanzas, the final word of almost every line ends with the same suffix: "teenager," "eager," "burger," "whenever," "proper," and "tender." By echoing each other, these not-quite end rhymes link together Young's memories, creating an incantation that memorializes his father as well as the buffalo.

Kevin Young increasingly has begun to link his personal interest in the genre of elegy with a cultural awareness of the need to honor publically those who have passed and privately recognize the pain of mourning. In *The Art of Losing* (2010), an anthology of elegies also inspired by the death of his father, Young remarks:

> one key aspect of contemporary elegy is the desire to represent the experience, to re-experience it through language – to evoke, that is, and not just describe, the pain of passing. In doing so, these poems focus less on the often formal process of mourning and instead on the personal and often bewildering sense of grief.[77]

Here, Young begins to delineate the difference between personal and public elegies. While all elegies concern themselves with the death of a person or a group of people, personal elegies depict the act of mourning by recognizing the necessity of identifying and portraying the idiosyncratic ways grief manifests itself. Instead of focusing on commemoration – an element of public elegies that aspire to recall a person's

---

[77] Kevin Young, "Introduction," *The Art of Losing: Poems of Grief and Healing*, Kevin Young, ed. (New York, NY: Bloomsbury, 2010), xvi.

achievements and keep them central within a cultural or national consciousness – personal elegies maintain a focus on the individual mourner. The elegies within *The Gray Album* and *To Repel Ghosts* are public elegies, while those included in *Dear Darkness* and *The Art of Losing* are personal elegies. Personal elegies lack a "set form" and represent lived experience rather than abstract ideas.[78] This lack of form and avoidance of abstraction allows them to maintain their intimacy, as form can place a poem more in the register of commemoration than would be expected in an expression of grief. Similarly, the use of abstract language deemphasizes the individual in favor of a meditation on the universal experience of death. Most importantly, Young asserts that the elegies of *The Art of Losing* are written with the living in mind, because elegies provide a "comfort those left behind, if only as companions in grief."[79] By choosing to emphasize the living over the dead, these elegies reiterate their personal, rather than public focus. A public poem would be less concerned with comforting those left behind and more interested in depicting the lost individual as exemplary.

Although Young chose not to include poems written to public figures in *The Art of Losing*, noting examples of these types of poems were included in his previous anthologies *Blues Poems* (2003) and *Jazz Poems* (2006), he does suggest that some of the most significant examples of elegies fall into the category of public elegy. Young refers to W. H. Auden's elegy "In Memory of W.B. Yeats" as an example. A classic of the genre, "In Memory of W.B. Yeats" also demonstrates an additional subgenre of elegy: the elegy of an artist by another artist. Instead of public elegies that can record the social, political or historical significance of individuals, artist elegies focus on the appreciation

---

[78] Ibid., xvi.
[79] Ibid., xvii.

of one artist for another. While interested in an individual's significance within a wider public, like a public elegy, an artist's elegy uses poetic commemoration to explore the significance of artistic influence instead of focusing on social or political effects. Young's own *To Repel Ghosts* is a book-length example of the form, but discussing other types of elegies that he includes in his editorial projects gives a sense of the scope of his interest in this model of elegy.

Young's example of an artist elegy from *The Art of Losing*, W. H. Auden's "In Memory of W.B. Yeats," is divided into three sections. The first illustrates Yeats's passing, depicting how "it was his last afternoon as himself" before "the provinces of his body revolted" and the "squares of his mind [became] empty." Tracing how Yeats the man dies while his poems continue to live, Auden describes Yeats "becoming his admirers." In other words, in what has now become a famous statement, "the words of a dead man/ are modified in the guts of the living." Yeats's poems are now unfettered from their connection to a living writer. By existing in an ever-changing present, their context changes as their words remain the same. While Auden significantly demonstrates that this is the mark of a successful writer and a significant oeuvre, the pathos of the poem leads in the inevitable disconnect between writer and product. Although Auden perhaps sarcastically remarks in another much-quoted line from the second section of the poem that "poetry makes nothing happen," he does not insinuate that poetry is irrelevant. Rather, poetry remains marginal in the best sense: it remains beside the everyday "raw towns that we believe and die in," giving us an external sense of the universal that structures lives and gives them meaning. By concluding both the poem and third section

> In the deserts of the heart
> Let the healing fountain start,

> In the prison of his days
> Teach the free man how to praise

Auden emphasizes the need for elegies. In praise, "free men" recognize the gifts of those who predecease them and also learn how to heal their sense of personal grief. Auden, combining the personal account of Yeats's final hours with a meditation on the role of poetry in a workaday existence and concluding on the need for and merit of elegy, encapsulates the range of elegiac modes.

Another example of an artist elegy from *Blues Poems* written by Young himself is "Langston Hughes."[80] In the poem, Young names a few of Hughes's most well known titles and poems – *Shakespeare in Harlem* (1942) and "Theme for English B" – Young recounts the highlights of Hughes' career. By inhabiting the guise of a blues singer, a posture taken from Hughes' own writings, Young mourns the loss of the poet. He moves through the stages of grief, first asking "o come now/ and sang/ them weary blues," then suggesting "Preach on/kind sir/of death, if it please," and finally begging Hughes "Won't you send/ all heaven's news." Turning from a sense of absence to a recognition of loss, the poem initially suggests Hughes has only "quit town," but then recognizes that he has "'came a saint" upon his death. The repetition of the poet's name at the beginning and end of the poem not only establishes the rhythm of the poem, but also calls to the poet, addressing him in apostrophe. The repetition's plaintive effect demonstrates Young's reverence for Hughes as an artistic forbearer as well as his emotional connection to the Harlem Renaissance poet.

In his introduction as the editor of *The Best American Poetry 2011* (2011), Kevin Young commented on the resurgence of elegies as a contemporary poetic mode:

---

[80] Kevin Young, "Langston Hughes," *Blues Poems*, 169.

> Our age seems to be an elegiac one. Many of the best poems I came across were elegies – often not just for the dead, as in Erika Meitner's tremendous "Elegy with Construction Sounds, Water, Fish," but for the living, such as Natasha Trethewey's haunting "Elegy." For a while I thought it was just me -- after all, having recently edited *The Art of Losing*, a collection of contemporary elegies, I know the elegiac mode can come to be familiar and even comforting. But you can hear the elegiac mood not just in these pages, but on the airwaves and "interweb" too: gone seems to be the bright pop of the years just after the turn of the millennium; after nearly a decade of war in the Middle East, and yet more "limited war" as of this writing, it may be no surprise that even the dance music of our time has a hard-edged sound. Such an edge circles through our best music, which is to say, our lyric poetry.[81] (xxii)

In this excerpt, Young regards the elegy as tied not only to the personal losses inevitable in every life, but also to the historical moment of the current generation. Naming the "war in the Middle East," Young skirts the inevitable dating of this turn from the "bright pop of the years just after the turn of the millennium" to the disaster of September 11, 2001. Instead, Young focuses on the ongoing political nightmare of Iraq and Afghanistan as the "hard-edged sound" haunting American society and symptomatically coloring the edges of its art. Indirectly, he also argues that the trauma of 9-11, albeit unimaginable in scope and scale, does not define the current generation. Instead, 9-11 functions as a marker bifurcating the relatively optimistic and economically stable 1990s from the recession and war characterizing the following decade. Elegies, therefore, become a natural lyric mode that coalesces a poet's sense of personal loss with a collective awareness of the state of society.

Writers who compose elegies often also are driven to express their formal recognition of another's work by editing a "collected" or "selected" volume. Both writing an elegy in memory of a writer and editing the works of that author demonstrate an

---

[81] Kevin Young, ed., *The Best American Poetry 2011* (New York, NY: Scribner Poetry, 2011), xxii.

interest in and a respect for the achievements of another artist. While elegies suggest a briefer consideration, editing a collection reflects a longer-term commitment. For this reason, Young chooses to edit and introduce authors and artists who share his perspective – a generational mentality that is "unlike and yet prompted by the art of the generation before." To this date, Young has published one "selected" volume: John Berryman in 2004.[82]

Kevin Young's collection of Berryman's poems first is designed to demonstrate Berryman's lasting importance, which is the underlying motive of all anthologies (the "collecteds and selecteds") of an author's works. How significant an author is can be seen from how frequently he or she is taught, for if a poet falls outside the parameters of curricula, that poet is subject to being phased out of the canon slowly. For this reason, Young comments in his introduction that "unlike Whitman or Eliot," Berryman "has suffered for his epic impulse: the long, fragmentary form he practices and in some ways invented does not fit the way we are taught poetry today." Continuing, he asks hypothetically, "Who would rather take a week teaching Berryman's *Dream Songs* than an hour with the self-contained "For the Union Dead" by Robert Lowell or Elizabeth Bishop's "The Fish"?[83] This question is fraught, especially when it comes in the introduction of Berryman's own volume of poetry, because it reveals that Berryman is already at risk for being forgotten. Young addresses why Berryman is overlooked in order to attempt to change current pedagogical practices. In this way, he is curating

---

[82] Kevin Young has also published one "collected" volume: "won't you come celebrate with me." Lucille Clifton. *The Collected Poems of Lucille Clifton 1965-2010*. Ed. Kevin Young, Michael Glaser. Rochester, NY: BOA Editions, 2012.
[83] Kevin Young, ed. "Introduction," *John Berryman: Selected Poems* (American Poets Project: The Library of America, 2004), xvii.

Berryman by presenting his work, commenting on its significance, and teaching the way in which it can begin to be considered in the future.

While a curator is first and foremost an expert who decides what should be acquired for a special collections department, a curator is also required to be a cultural critic who can identify and promote the significance of the items he or she collects, skills in his case that are predicated on both his years combing the contents of book stores and his investment in the elegiac form. Young learned how to identify significant items when he lived in San Francisco from 1991 until 1994 on a Stegner Fellowship from Stanford University following his graduation from Harvard. In San Francisco, Young "used to go frequent the bookstores – there's a million bookstores in the Mission, some new but mostly used bookstores. Each had its own niche, and I used to just forage through them – I was a book addict basically and also an autodidact."[84] A first edition of Langston Hughes' *Ask Your Mama* and a first edition of *Native Son* were two particularly significant purchases. But even more than the success of finding a notable edition for his personal collection, Young realized it was the experience of being among "the physical tradition of books" and learning "the 1960s and Black Arts" from the physical artifacts of the era that inspired his later career.[85] In *Democratic Vistas*, the first exhibition Young created on behalf of the Raymond Danowski Poetry Library, Young presents the strengths of the collection.

---

[84] Ibid., 50.
[85] Ibid., 51.

Democratic Vistas preferred not to focus on "one particular school or kind of poetry" within the Library,[86] and instead chose to identify the Library's strengths in what Young calls "firsts" (literary debuts and first editions), author collections, "isms" (schools and movements in poetry), and small presses (including literary magazines).[87] Each area was given its own section, allowing Young the space to consider the range of material within the Danowski Poetry Library by thematically grouping the strengths of the collection. While firsts are individual items and are important due to their rarity, "isms" and small presses are often more significant when they can be seen from the perspective of their whole run. Young's ability to interchange the close analysis of one particular object with discussions of the impact of a particular publisher, press, or school of writing demonstrates his wide knowledge base within twentieth century Anglophone poetry. This skill is necessary in order to note as a curator both the rarity of items in the collection as well as their greater place and value within American art and culture.

Young also concentrates on the significance of first editions in his catalog, explaining that first editions are not merely the first printing of a given volume, but often include "the book before the book" – "the books poets either have repudiated or never reprinted, or books so rare that for practical purposes, they are unknown for a general readership" as well as "books written by poets under other names, or anonymously; issued in handwritten editions, or paid for out of pocket and long out of print; books all

---

[86] "Danowski Poetry Library Debuts at Emory," *Georgia Library Quarterly* 45.2 (Summer 2008), 24, accessed April 8, 2012, http://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1211&context=glq.

[87] Kevin Young, "Introduction," *Democratic Vistas: Exploring the Raymond Danowski Poetry Library* (Atlanta, GA: Emory Libraries, 2008), 3.

but lost in a fire; or those the poet later wished were burned."[88] By recognizing how a generalist audience's assumptions may not include the full potential of what "first edition" can imply, Young is teaching his readers and viewers to see the full significance of the books he displays.

One example of a first book is W.H. Auden's *Poems* (1928), a small, handset book not much larger than the palm of a hand printed at Oxford University by Auden's friend and fellow poet, Stephen Spender, while Auden was away in Berlin.[89] A particular favorite of Young's, *Poems* is featured in *Democratic Vistas* as well as shown frequently to visiting students and dignitaries.[90] What fascinates Young is not only that the verse demonstrates Auden's fragmented early style, but also that this copy includes "corrections in Spender's hand and once belonged to John Layard, an English anthropologist living in Berlin who served as an important philosophical sounding board to Auden," and that the book includes an equally-sized errata sheet. In the archive, the history of a particular edition of a book is just as significant as its content – if not more so, for the book records not only the author's development as a writer, but also his or her personal web of friendships, lovers, and colleagues. Through this particular copy of a rare first edition, Auden is connected to Stephen Spender, his friend and publisher, but also to John Layard and Chistopher Isherwood, to whom the book was dedicated. The book is an emblem of these relationships as an object, representing an era of British writers who supported one another during the early years of their careers. In his caption discussing *Poems*, Young seeds future academic work by pointing out the myriad connections one

---

[88] Ibid., 5.
[89] Young, "Firsts," *Democratic Vistas*, 15.
[90] I know Young's favorite books as I worked as his research assistant in the Manuscript, Archive, and Rare Book Library from 2010 through 2013.

volume represents. Instead of developing the full argument of what he implies in his commentary, Young allows his work to introduce others to the research potential offered by a single book – and then grants them the right to investigate. As every item exhibited in *Democratic Vistas* includes its own caption, Young researched and presented an extensive range of information on the books, people, and networks represented. These captions demonstrate the importance of each item, the significance of the Raymond Danowski Poetry Library as a whole, and latent research potential of the item and the collection.

As seen here, Kevin Young's writing includes nonfiction, poetry, anthologies, edited volumes of collected works, and exhibition catalogs. His range allows him to maintain a healthy output on his own behalf, while his scholarship and work as an editor permits him to foster, promote, and preserve the careers of others. Without his individual achievements, Young could not be an effective critic and curator. As Young's personal history demonstrates how relationships supported the development of his own career, these same relationships are now supporting his curatorial objectives. Although Young began his writing career under the auspices of the Dark Room Collective, it is Young's connection to Lucille Clifton that is one of his most significant relationships of all of those he has documented through his elegies and his work as an editor. While Young has not written a volume on Clifton in the style of *To Repel Ghosts* – an extended elegy for a fellow artist – he has chosen to maintain his connection to Clifton by managing the legacy of her career through his interest in and eventual acquisition of her papers as well as by curating exhibitions that feature her archival material and editing a collected volume of her poetry.

III. Kevin Young and Lucille Clifton

Lucille Clifton's career as an award-winning poet and children's book author made her papers a desirable addition to academic special collections libraries. Although courted by both Duke University and Emory University, Clifton chose Emory due to her relationship with Kevin Young, the poet whose manuscript she selected to win the National Poetry Series Award in 1998. Now the curator of literary collections and the Raymond Danowski Poetry Library at Emory, Young made Clifton one of the focuses of his career. Young's curation of Clifton's work is predicated on a recognition that a poet's work must be preserved for successive generations of readers and academics, similar to his recognition that elegies are a way in which to memorialize creatively those who are deceased. While Young's decision to edit Clifton's work keeps her writing contemporary for a wider audience, Emory's acquisition of her papers highlights how Young will be involved in how she will be studied in the future. As elegies reveal a respect for and personal sense of loss after another poet dies and editing shows a longer-term commitment to collecting, organizing, and presenting a poet's life's work, curating builds upon both of these activities by taking the sentiment one step further, as a curator is a type of historian. In the archive, Young becomes a caretaker of the legacy of an author's entire body of work, from earliest drafts to latest manuscripts.

After completing the Stegner Fellowship in San Francisco, Young entered Brown's M.F.A. program in poetry. Lucille Clifton's address book lists his Providence, Rhode Island address under the heading "Kevin Young (young poet)."[91] The timing of Young's address in Clifton's book is notable, for Clifton chose Kevin Young's first book,

---

[91] "Address Book," Lucille Clifton Collection, Manuscript, Archives and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

Most Way Home (1998), for the National Poetry Series Award.[92] Discussing her selection, Clifton noted that the volume created "an inner history which is compelling and authentic and American."[93]

Young's career reached maturity just as Clifton's hit its apex. After *Most Way Home*, Young published a succession of poetry volumes: *To Repel Ghosts* (2001), *Jelly Roll* (2003), *Black Maria* (2005), *To Repel Ghosts: Remix* (2005), *For the Confederate Dead* (2007), *Dear Darkness* (2008), *Ardency: A Chronicle of the Amistad Rebels* (2011). Lucille Clifton maintained a fast publishing pace as well, releasing *Blessing the Boats: New and Collected Poems* 1988-2000 (2000), which won the National Book Award, as well as *Mercy* (2004) and *Voices* (2008). These years marked Young's foray into the editorial and curatorial work that would establish his intellectual credibility and would lead him to become the caretaker of Clifton's growing legacy.

Born on June 27, 1936 and dying on February 13, 2010, Lucille Clifton wrote seriously throughout her life. She met her husband Fred Clifton through Ishmael Reed, one of her friends at Buffalo.[94] After marrying Clifton in 1958, she had six children between 1961 through 1967.[95] In an interview with Charles Rowell, the editor of *Callaloo*, Clifton humorously summarized this decade by saying, "Well, during the 1960s, I was pretty much pregnant."[96] But Clifton's fertility did not constrain her poetic production. After Robert Hayden saw her poems, he showed them to Carolyn Kizer, who

---

[92] Arnold, "About Kevin Young," 187.
[93] "Kevin Young: Biography," *Poetry Foundation,* accessed Apr. 8, 2012, http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/kevin-young.
[94] Hilary Holladay, *Wild Blessings: The Poetry of Lucille Clifton* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2004), 11.
[95] Ibid., 11.
[96] Charles H. Rowell and Lucille Clifton, "An Interview with Lucille Clifton," *Callaloo* 22.1 (Winter 1999), 66.

entered them without Clifton's knowledge into the YW-YMCA Poetry Center Discovery Award Competition. Clifton won, which netted her a Random House contract for what would become her first book, *Good Times* (1969). Clifton would go on to publish her first three books of poetry and her memoir at Random House, with Toni Morrison acting as her editor.[97] In "won't you come celebrate with me," Kevin Young's introduction to *The Collected Poems of Lucille Clifton*, Young writes that at the end of her career, Clifton was not just a "National Book Award winner, Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets, Fellow of the Academy of Arts and Sciences," but she also a "children's books author, mother, memoirist, Jeapordy champion, survivor, poet, national treasure."[98]

Clifton's early marriage, succession of pregnancies, and place of residence placed her outside the milieu of the Black Arts Movement. Clifton herself said that her writing "did not reflect" the Black Arts Movement as, at the time, "I didn't even know what that was."[99] Nevertheless, as "a black person," Clifton argued, "everything I write is a black thing."[100] One way to imagine what Clifton meant by stating that her poetry is a "black thing" is to consider Gwendolyn Brooks' broadside "A Capsule Course in Black Poetry Writing" (1975). In the broadside, Brooks provides the classic Black Arts Movement thesis that black life differs significantly from white life because it is "different in nuance, different in 'nitty gritty.' Different from birth. Different at death."[101] While Clifton therefore is not explicitly connected to the Black Arts Movement, R. Roderick Palmer commented that Clifton's themes often revolve around the difference of black

---

[97] Holladay, *Wild Blessings*, 12.
[98] Clifton, "won't you come celebrate with me," *The Collected Poems of Lucille Clifton 1965-2010*, Ed. Kevin Young and Michael Glaser (Rochester, NY: BOA Editions, 2012).
[99] Rowell and Clifton, "Interview," 65.
[100] Ibid., 66.
[101] Holladay, *Wild Blessings*, 11.

life.[102] Furthermore, Palmer argued the style that Clifton is known for – "the abbreviated word, the slashed word, the fused word, the small letter 'I', and the omission of capital letters and certain punctuation marks" – is a sign of not just poetically revolutionary, but politically revolutionary work as it engages in the stylistic markers that the Black Arts Movement writers used to distinguish themselves from white writers, audiences, and institutions.[103] By placing Clifton's themes and aesthetics closer to her contemporaries in the Black Arts Movement instead of reiterating her distance from their project, Palmer highlights the way in which she shared a generational mentality with other writers of her era even when she shied away from it officially, arguing that the Black Arts Movement could not claim "sole proprietorship of moral outrage."[104]

Lucille Clifton did admit the Black Arts Movement's significance by saying that it brought to "American literature a long missing part of itself."[105] Recent scholarship, however, has begun to note that it is Clifton's work that itself is a "long missing part" of the Black Arts Movement, which was dominated historically by men who sought to use their artwork as an aesthetic extension of Malcolm X's objectives. Clifton's interest in women's lives and domestic details, although political in its particular interest in ignored and overlooked experience, widens the scope of the Black Arts Movement by demonstrating how the social and political agendas it advanced needed to consider a wider constituency within the African-American community. Cheryl Clark, who focuses on the significance of African American women writers from this period, observed that

---

[102] R. Roderick Palmer, "The Poetry of Three Revolutionists: Don L. Lee, Sonia Sanchez, and Nikki Giovanni," *Modern Black Poets: A Collection of Critical Essays*, Donald B. Gibson, ed. (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1973), 146.
[103] Ibid., 146.
[104] Holladay, *Wild Blessings,* 21-3.
[105] Rowell and Clifton, "Interview," 67.

Clifton's work "plays at the margins of poor black women's lives." She selects Clifton's "miss rosie" as an example because 'miss rosie,' like [Gwendolyn] Brooks's 'Big Bessie,' is not the typical icon of black womanhood embraced by the devotees of black nationalism." This difference is due to the fact that "miss rosie is old in a time when youth is privileged, crazy in a time when 'an essential sanity' is being called for, and alone in a time when everybody is claiming a community."[106]

Originally published in *Good Times*, Clifton's first book, "miss rosie" recounts Clifton's solidarity with a woman who is far from the activist ideal. miss rosie, as Clark notes, is old, poor, and unable to even sort out her own mind – let alone influence others. Noted not for her zeal to transform African American life, miss rosie is significant only because she "used to be the best looking gal in Georgia." Clifton highlights her looks by making her title, the Georgia Rose, the only phrase or word capitalized in the poem. The former Georgia Rose, however, has long since turned into "a wet brown bag of a woman." The pathos of the poem is generated by Clifton's self-conscious recognition of her own voyeurism. She repeats the phrase "i watch you" three times. Nevertheless, this voyeurism is predicated on her solidarity with miss rosie's decline, which is seen when Clifton says, "I stand up/ through your destruction/ I stand up." Clifton's acknowledges here the myriad possible ways in which miss rosie's life destroyed her slowly.

In contrast, Clifton's poem about herself, "won't you celebrate with me" – from *Book of Light* (1993) and re-released as a broadside – recounts:

> come celebrate
> with me that everyday
> something has tried to kill me

---

[106] Cheryl Clark, *"After Mecca,"* 82.

and failed.[107]

In this poem, Clifton again acknowledges the difficulties of black womanhood. As with "miss rosie," Clifton recounts the injustices wrought on her while echoing the earlier poem's sentiment of indignation. In "won't you celebrate with me," however, Clifton witnesses her own challenges and, instead of testifying to a defeat, reiterates her own victory. Clifton not only is celebrating her own success, but also how she worked to facilitate the careers of younger creative writers. In addition to Kevin Young, she also influenced other poets through her role as an "elder" of Cave Canem.

Cornelius Eady and Toi Derricotte, both from the "post-soul" generation but slightly older than Kevin Young, established Cave Canem in 1996 a non-profit organization dedicated to "cultivating the artistic and professional growth of African American poets" by collecting "fifty-two poets each year in June to attend a one-week poetry retreat."[108] In an unpublished December 1990 interview with Charles Rowell, Eady begins to describe the motivations for Cave Canem, which he had yet to found. Eady felt that there needed to be an institution to preserve the spirit of African American poets who, as Rowell put it, "could be crushed" by the hostility of primarily white MFA programs and who needed a place "where you didn't have to apologize" and "didn't have to explain."[109]As an elder of Cave Canem, Eady and Derricotte earmarked Clifton not only as a significant figure in African American literature, but also emphasized her ability

---

[107] Lucille Clifton, "won't you celebrate with me," *Poetry Foundation: Poems and Poets*, accessed April 20, 2012, http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/181377.
[108] "About Cave Canem: Cave Canem Mission and History," *Cave Canem Poets*, accessed March 3, 2012, http://www.cavecanempoets.org/mission.
[109] Cornelius Eady, "Introduction," *Gathering Ground: A Reader: Celebrating Cave Canem's First Decade*, Toi Derricotte and Cornelius Eady, Eds. (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 1-2.

to be a role model and resource for younger writers. Elizabeth Alexander, a "teacher" at Cave Canem, in particular noted Clifton's ability to make "room for widely divergent spokes of black aesthetics, poetics, and identity." Clifton's poetry expands the Black Arts Movement's simplistic point of view by predicating her art not in what Alexander calls "either/or," but rather through the wider perspective of "and/but."[110]

Clifton's deceptively simple representations of the difficulties and rewards of African American life, and specifically the experiences of black women, contributed to her success as a poet. While falling outside the aesthetic of the Black Arts Movement, Clifton's innovative poetics, long career, and many honors contributed to the interest her papers generated in two universities: Duke and Emory. Duke, where Clifton briefly taught in the late 1990s, sought to acquire Clifton's literary collection and a letter from April 6, 2001 from Walter C. West, the Director of Collections Management at Duke, discusses Clifton's prior conversation with West as she considered their offer.[111] West wrote that he would like to visit Clifton to see "just what you have and would be interested in possibly placing here" and asserted:

> I do think your materials – personal and family papers, literary papers, books, and other things – would fit well here, and I can tell you that we would be honored to care for them and make them available to scholars, students, and your friends and relatives.

West also reflected that

> although we like to make materials as openly available as possible, we could discuss limiting access to some materials if you wish. I also might

---

[110] Elizabeth Alexander, "Introduction," *Gathering Ground: A Reader: Celebrating Cave Canem's First Decade*. Derricotte, Toi and Cornelius Eady, Eds. (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2006), 6.

[111] Hilary Holladay, "Black Names in White Space: Lucille Clifton's South," *The Southern Literary Journal* 34.2 (Spring 2002), 120.

> mention that you and your descendents could retain copyright even as physical ownership is transferred.[112]

This offer, combined with the reassurance that "we will deal fairly with you as far as payment is concerned," which is due to the fact that West apologized in the letter for giving "the impression that we would pay more readily for the papers of Richard Bausch or anyone else," intended to suggest to Clifton that Duke's offer was serious and that she would be treated fairly and respectfully in the ensuing negotiations.

The archives at Emory, however, do not contain publically available documents that describe Clifton's ensuing negotiations with Duke or how Emory began to compete with Duke to solicit Clifton's materials. The only other clue of the acquisition process is found in an email from Keith Nash, a Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library associate sent on September 13, 2006 and tipped into Clifton's 2006 date book.[113] The email reveals that Clifton had just committed to housing her papers at Emory around this date. Nash reports in his letter in the ensuing excitement, "your name has become a 'household word' at the archive."[114] This correspondence also includes details of the financial transaction that took place, but otherwise does not summarize the events that lead to the acquisition.

It is significant that Clifton felt she had found a fair price for her work and that Nash, as well as Emory as an institution, was attentive to speedily compensating Clifton for her papers. Although any author would find it important to obtain the best amount

---

[112] "2001 Date Book, Duke University Letter to Lucille Clifton from Walter C. West," Lucille Clifton Papers, Manuscript, Archives and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

[113] "Tipped in" is the archival terminology for a page placed into and then left in a book or other bound item.

[114] "Your archive 13 Sept. 2006," 2006 Datebook, Lucille Clifton Papers, Manuscript, Archives and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

possible as compensation for their life's work, Clifton in particular is aware of the value of her writing career. Throughout her daybooks and the papers tipped into them are examples of Clifton considering the state of her finances by adding up her monthly and annual earnings and expenditures. Money, a concern for most writers, was no doubt a legitimate need for Clifton – after all, she wrote extensively about the financial insecurity she survived throughout her life. The sale of her literary collection ensured Clifton's financial security as well as reiterated the value of her lifetime of work.

At Emory, Clifton not only found an archive that would compensate her for the value of her work, but also a curator who would become responsible for her legacy. Kevin Young's personal connection to Lucille Clifton lead to his enduring interest in her work, as well as his dedication to preserving, writing about, and exhibiting her writing. Clifton's literary collection was not an acquisition that just bolstered the holdings and prestige of the Emory as an institution, but rather her papers found a place where the curator would commit a substantial portion of his career to preserving the legacy of hers. Since Emory acquired Clifton's materials in 2006, Young edited both her collected poems and chose to use her writing in the majority of exhibitions he created.

In his introduction to Lucille Clifton's *Collected Poems*, Kevin Young reflects on the noteworthy attributes of Clifton's literary collection, ranging from her earliest writings to the *Book of Days*, her unpublished final project. In the process, he reveals how access to her papers allowed the *Collected Poems* to have a broader scope than what concentrating only on Clifton's published work would permit. By acquainting readers of the *Collected Poems* with the strengths of Clifton's literary collection, Young highlights his commitment to preserving full range of Clifton's work and therefore the fullest

possible interpretation of legacy as a writer. In doing so, Young also demonstrates the collection's research potential for scholars.

For example, Young notes when he has included early writings in the collected edition that are not represented in Clifton's published work and discusses what they reveal about her early development as a poet. In the section entitled "born into Babylon: early poems, 1965-1969," Young discusses his choice to read and include all the poems contained in a folder titled "Old Poems and Ones that May Not Be Poems at all and Maybe should be thrown away One Day" then called "Bad Poems."[115] Remarking that "these formerly unpublished poems seem to us – and one suspects, to a Clifton who saved them – "bad" only in that sense of the "terrible stories" they tell. They are terrific in both senses." He also notes that Clifton's composition seemed to require destruction, for "it appears at least early on, whenever a poem was finished, Clifton's practice was to destroy her drafts, letting the last version stand."[116] Nevertheless, he does not assert that these early poems are uniformly equal and high in quality. In contrast, he says that these pieces are often "true juvenilia" complete with "rhyme and inverted archaic phrasing" in contrast to "the fifty-some poems in the "Bad Poems" folder, which are rather clean, free from handwritten edits, may even prepared and addressed for submission to magazines."[117]

Young also uses Clifton's manuscripts to identify poems that were not published and that have not labeled with a date or project name. He notes, "an early carbon also indicates that *Good Times* was once known as "New Thing," proposed with "Illustrations

---

[115] Young, "won't you come celebrate," 4.
[116] Ibid., 5.
[117] Ibid., 6.

by Sidney, Fredrica, and Channing Clifton," three of her children"[118] and that a "set of proofs among her literary papers indicate the book was once termed 'Good News About the Earth and Other Heroes' before contracting to simply 'Good News' and then to its final form."[119] Dating poems is important as the manuscript copies, along with Clifton's plans for her books, demonstrates her editorial decisions regarding her own work. Researchers can not only deduce what Clifton left out of her published volumes as well as why she decided to include what she did. By including this information in his introduction, Young is situating the future of Clifton research by highlighting particularly rich areas of the archive to cover when formulating a project on the poet.

In an anecdote, Young discusses Clifton's late work, *The Book of Days*. Young recounts:

> My fellow editor, Michael Glaser, worked with Clifton at St. Mary's in Maryland for years; when she cleaned out her office after retiring in 2006, she threw away a number of things, including poems, many in her hand or with her clear edits -- all of which are now part of her archive (and reprinted here in "Last Poems & Drafts"). The typescript for "book of days" was among these discards, complete it seems, without any editorial markings or even her name. (This is not unusual: we can almost judge a poem as hers among her papers because it doesn't have her name.) As I mentioned, Clifton was perfectly capable of tossing away her own poems, even good ones; I myself rescued a few from the maw of the trash. Perhaps she felt there were often other copies on her computer? Fortunately for us Glaser resurrected "book of days" – a title Clifton's daughter Alexia recalls her working on – for the sequence is a wonder, a manuscript that seems quite complete, mournful yet mindful, concerned with birth, death, and that "what we will become/ waits in us like an ache."[120]

---

[118] Ibid., 10.
[119] Ibid., 11.
[120] Ibid., 27.

As Young mentions, the *Book of Days* meditates on birth, death, and Christianity over the course of twenty-two poems.[121] While these poems demand a longer evaluation than can be provided here, their richness is remarkable. Stoically, they evaluate the conditions of life from the unwavering perspective of a poet dedicated to telling the truth. The *Book of Days* does not minimize the impact of death, or seek to avoid a discussion of death by jumping directly into an imagination of an afterlife. Rather, Clifton's poems discuss what it means to die by concentrating on Clifton's increasing awareness of her own approaching mortality. "birth-day" fittingly begins the series with the beginning of a day that "arrives with all its clumsy blessings."[122] "mother-tongue: the land of nod" continues the manuscript with an acknowledgment that "true, this isn't paradise/ but we come at last to love it" and reminds readers that "each day/ something that loves us// tries to save us."[123] Occasionally, Clifton pleads on her own behalf: "all that I am asking is/ that you see me as something/ more than a common occurrence."[124]

---

[121] The *Book of Days* manuscript includes these poems in this order: "birth-day," "godspeak: out of paradise," "lucifer morning-star to man-kind after the fall: in the kind," "man-kind: in the image of," "angelspeak," "mother-tongue: the land of nod," "mother-tongue: to the child just born," "mother-tongue: after the child's death," "mother-tongue: after the flood," "the rainbow bears witness," "ninevah: waiting," "mother-tongue: babylon," "mother-tongue: to man-kind," "godspeak," "mother-tongue: we are dying," "mother-tongue: in the dream before she died," "sodom and gomorrah," "man-kind: over the jordan, into the promised land," "lucifer morning-star," "armageddon," "man-kind: digging a trench to hell," and "god speak: kingdom come." Lucille Clifton Papers, Manuscript, Archives and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

[122] "birth-day," Lucille Clifton Papers, Manuscript, Archives and Rare Book Library, Emory University, "Line 15.

[123] "mother-tongue: the land of nod," Lucille Clifton Papers, Manuscript, Archives and Rare Book Library, Emory University, Lines 1-2, 9-11.

[124] "mother-tongue: to mankind," Lucille Clifton Papers, Manuscript, Archives and Rare Book Library, Emory University, Line 103.

The most affecting of the sequences occur when Clifton considers her own death, elegizing not herself but the common, bittersweet recognition of one's own approaching morality. "mother-kind: we are dying," reflects on the way in which humanity copes with this knowledge:

> no failure in us
> that we can be hurt like this,
> that we can be torn.
>
> death is a small stone
> from the mountain we were born to.
>
> we put it in a pocket
> and carry it with us
> to help us find our way home.

In the poem, Clifton reassures her readers that mortality is universal, not the result of individual failure. By illustrating morality as just one part of human experience, Clifton shows that humans can thrive despite their inevitable decline. Furthermore, when this decline does come, the transformation allows individuals to find their way "home" to the place in which all humans originate. Transferring home from earth to a place that is neither heaven nor hell, but rather an alternate space prior to birth and returned to after death enables Clifton to acknowledge the difficulty of passing while asserting that this second place is where humanity belongs. Symbolizing the knowledge of mortality as a "small stone" allows Clifton to avoid aggrandizing death. By refusing to cloud death with rhetoric, it can be portrayed as both a struggle and a natural conclusion for each person. According to Clifton, acceptance is a state that is reached only after we learn how to "find our way home."

Another poem on mortality from the *Book of Days* manuscript is "mother-tongue: in a dream before she died," which uses a more overt religious reference, but does not allow it to foreclose the meaning of the poem:

> jesus was in the living room
> wearing her blue housecoat.
>
> he raised the blinds
> to let the morning in.
>
> then he went to the door
> and freed the parakeet.
>
> the last thing he did
> before he left was to turn
>
> all her fresh-baked bread
> back to stones.[125]

Jesus is uncapitalized which, while a trademark of Clifton's aesthetic, also familiarizes the deity. The speaker is surprised to find him in her home and wearing her clothing. The effect of the poem, which recounts Jesus visiting an older woman to escort her to death, is built upon the contrast between Jesus' task and his contentiousness of domestic details. While raising the blinds is a simple, everyday act, releasing the parakeet implies that the woman will not return. But it is when Jesus turns "all her fresh-baked bread/ back to stones," that Clifton reveals the reason for Jesus' visit. Stones, seen in the previous poem, are metaphors for death. By turning bread into stones, Jesus is altering a food that represents life in Christian symbolism.

In these poems, as well as others from the *Book of Days* manuscript, Clifton imagines death as it approaches her by finding the details that correspond to her own

---

[125] "mother-tongue: in a dream before she died," Lucille Clifton Papers, Manuscript, Archives and Rare Book Library, Emory University, Lines 1-10.

sense of cosmology. Clifton does not participate in the traditional elegiac mode of praising the achievements of the recently deceased, nor does she become overtly religious in a way that would transfer the meaning of death from an individual experience to dogma. Instead, Clifton focuses on the intimate, domestic, and humble details of passing. In “mother-kind: in a dream before she died,” Jesus wears a housecoat, just like the elderly woman he escorts. In the process, he both makes himself at home and humbles himself in order to make his host more comfortable with the transition. “mother-kind: we are dying” incorporates death into life by illustrating how a knowledge of mortality is like a stone all humanity has to carry throughout life. Ironically, it is by choosing not to portray death as an exceptional experience that Clifton heightens the emotional impact of her verse.

Young noted in his introduction that these poems were discarded, which he finds mysterious as he describes the collection as a “wonder,” a perfectly turned series ready for publication. Although Young notes that Clifton frequently discarded her work and had a good eye for which of her poems were good and which still needed improvement, the gesture to discard a complete set of poems, and ones that were so accomplished, is incomprehensible. Young suggests that these poems might also be left in her computer, which Emory also holds. He imagines that the computer is where perhaps researchers could find her edits or her final intentions for the collection.

Discarding a typed set of poems does not equate to Clifton wanting to completely abandon her work. She could have just decided to let go of a copy of the poems while knowing that the original drafts were stored in her computer to be printed out if necessary at another occasion. If Clifton did intend to discard these poems entirely, perhaps this is

due to the strangeness of the elegies of the collection because, in effect, Clifton uses these poems to elegize herself. Although she does not bolster her own prestige in her elegies, she does discuss her life and the process of her own transition from life into death. The autobiographical nature of the series is implied through Clifton's choice of titles. For example, "to the child just born" and "after the child's death" are both references to Clifton's loss of several of her own children. "we are dying" takes the personal pronoun "I" and changes it to a collective "we" in a gesture that, like death, transforms an individual experience into a universal event. The privacy of such accounts, while similar to the tone and content found in her previous collections, is heightened by the *Book of Day*'s prescient knowledge of Clifton's impending death.

Seen in this light, these poems are not a continuation of her creative writing, but rather were created in the vein of her automatic writing. Clifton practiced automatic writing in order to maintain contact with the family members who had already passed, including her mother and her husband. Likewise, the *Book of Days* contains reassuring messages from the afterworld sent to Clifton on earth. As Clifton's death approaches, these messages begin to hearten her in the face of her transformation – as she puts it – "back to stones." The archive, which both preserves these messages and invites researchers to experience Clifton's words written immediately prior to her death, asks archival users to develop an intimate connection to Clifton predicated on physical proximity to these material objects. The grief and love that motivate Clifton's automatic writing and form the subject of her poetry manuscript become tangible experiences while viewing these artifacts.

To support an interpretation of the *Book of Days* as a type of automatic writing rather than a traditional collection of poems, five drafts of the poem "why I continue talking with the dead" and a love letter written five years after the death of her husband, Fred Clifton, can be found in the same unprocessed box as the manuscript of the *Book of Days*.[126] Describing her communication with the dead as "cloudy conversations," Clifton imagines that "there shines yes/ a shaft vibrating of/ yes." The abstraction of an affirmative, glowing shaft of light suggests the presence of something like a god, without personifying him or her into a deity or a specific religious tradition. The conversations between herself and her husband, although they may be "cloudy," demonstrate Clifton's ongoing relationship to those who have passed and her continual emotional connection to those who predecease her, similar to the experience of archival users when reading and viewing these drafts.

As well as summarizing the history of Clifton's career, from her earliest drafts to her late collection, still in manuscript form, Young also notes the physical environment of Clifton's writing. In particular, he focuses on her habit of keeping annual planners, which Young calls "daybooks." The majority of these daybooks are preserved at Emory within the additions to her literary collection. Young describes them as "eight-by-eleven inch, month-by-month calendars" that

---

[126] The box I refer to, box 89, will change by the end of the summer of 2012 as processing is completed on the remainder of Clifton's collection. For this reason, it is significant to consider how collections appear when they first arrive at an archive in contrast to how they look when fully processed. The problem is that it is rare to be able to see the original order, as most archives do not allow unprocessed collections to be viewed by the public. Also, even if unprocessed collections can be seen, it is important to be skeptical about the significance of grouped items as these could have been grouped together by the person who boxed the collection rather than be a sign of the author's own intentions. Lucille Clifton Papers, Manuscript, Archives and Rare Book Library, Emory University,

> serve as a kind of portable desk, with work memos, invitations to read, and travel itineraries tucked in; they also include drafts of poems in progress and what appear to be reading copies of new poems. […] The title "book of days" seems all the more fitting given this practice."[127]

These daybooks present a variety of complications to archivists processing Clifton's literary collection. While Young is interested in the way in which they record Clifton's habit of placing all her paperwork into one central location, this practice is contrary to how papers are presented in the archive. Usually, literary collections are separated into subject areas by type of material. For example, letters with photographs are placed in two different locations. The only clue that a letter once had a photograph enclosed with it is a slip of paper noting the new location of the photograph. In the case of the daybooks, the amount of material makes it more difficult to document the range of papers tipped into the calendar. The range of items Young mentions in his summary – work memos, invitations, travel itineraries, drafts, and reading copies – all would be filed in different locations. As the daybooks have yet to be processed, visitors can still see them in this state. Soon, however, the daybooks will be incorporated into her literary collection and will most likely be divided to meet the precedent set by the processing of her earlier material. This change will alter how visitors experience Clifton's archive and possibly will change the conclusions they draw.

For example, if the papers are seen together, researchers can chart how her writing process unfolds. Does she seem to work only during certain parts of the day, month, or year? How busy was her reading schedule? Did she travel as much at the end of her life as she did five or ten years prior to her death? What institutions requested her to read and which did she accept? Did Clifton draft her poems on paper or did she

---

[127] Young, "won't you come celebrate," 28.

eventually transfer all of her composition to the computer? How many times did she edit her writing and what sorts of changes did she make? How Clifton's editing practices changed or stayed the same is significant in her development as a writer. Together, her daybooks can also be used to compare Clifton's habits to other writers who employ notebooks to help stimulate their creative process. These are only a few of the research questions that could be brought to bear on the daybooks as they existed originally.

Although the removal of the items placed in the daybooks may affect how researchers engage with Clifton's material, this practice is designed to preserve each item according to archival standards. When similar types of material are grouped together, it is easier to observe the needs of each item and to isolate problems to the original documents. For example, placing two pieces of paper together can eventually lead to the ink on one to bleed onto another – a process called "ghosting" that is mostly seen in books in which there is a photograph on the left hand side of the verso that begins to imprint its colors onto the right hand side. Stacking an assortment of papers together can cause inconsistent fading over time. While these are just a few of the possible complications of keeping Clifton's papers together as they were when she died, removing the items from the day books can alter the impressions and results of researchers. The choice between preservation and maintaining original order is not in the hands of the archival user. Rather the archivists at the Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library will determine the best practice to use when evaluating Clifton's archive. A researcher must know what has been done to a collection in order to imagine it in its original state and to infer what types of conclusions he or she could draw if they had access to how the papers were organized originally.

The daybooks are not the only complications within Clifton's archive. Young also notes in his introduction that there are gaps in Clifton's archival record due to her use of technology. Papers created on a computer, known to archivists as "born digital" material, must be identified, preserved, and exhibited in order for her archive to be complete. But presenting born digital work is not as simple as turning on her computer – instead, archivists must create simulations of her computer that can be accessed through contemporary technology. Simulations, the current solution to the problem of providing researchers access to born digital materials, are created in order to preserve the integrity of the artist's original machine while remaining accessible to update as technology changes. Simulations also allow archivists to control what information from a writer's computer can be displayed. Although simulations are not the ideal representation of an archive, for they alter the presentation of information without making these changes visible, they are currently the only technique to present born digital material to archival users. As Young notes, Clifton's born digital material has yet to be fully identified, evaluated, and made public. For this reason, there may be additional material such as "other poems – not to mention drafts of those poems we have here" yet to be found. But because Clifton's computers have not been fully audited, what will be found and the complexities surrounding how it can be presented for research is still unknown.

One place that archivists will need to look is in Clifton's email, as she began to use email to write her poems when she transitioned to composing on a computer. Writing in an empty email allowed her to avoid the auto-correction programmed into Microsoft Word, which changed her lowercase letters and standardized her spacing. Interestingly, Clifton's practice of writing in empty emails suggests the way in which her poems often

talk to absent people – similar to the way she framed her automatic writing and the poems in the *Book of Days*. Although the choice to write in emails was due to the formatting needs of her text, rather than an existential recognition of the potential correspondence between poems written to an absent or undefined recipient and composing in a medium dedicated to correspondence, the correlation does suggest the rich possibilities implicit in interpreting the use of technology.

Considering how Kevin Young uses Lucille Clifton's archive is just as important as considering what her archive holds as his exhibitions are designed to expand her audience as a writer and instigate interest in her papers. Since becoming a curator at the Manuscript, Archive, and Rare Book Library, Young has shown Clifton's work three separate times. To put that number into perspective, he has created, co-curated, or overseen the development of six exhibitions in total.[128] In 2008, he curated "Democatic Vistas," oversaw "My Dreams, My Works: Selections from the Library of Gwendolyn Brooks," and co-curated "Don't You Remember?: Children's Books by Poets." In 2011, he co-curated "The Art of Losing," an exhibition timed to coincide with his anthology of the same name and released "Shadows of the Sun: The Crosbys, The Black Sun Press, and the Lost Generation."[129]

In "Democratic Vistas," Clifton was earmarked as a featured poet of the Raymond Danwoski Poetry Library when seven of her books and three of her broadsides were

---

[128] Kevin Young, "curating," *Kevin Young: Official Web Site*, accessed May 7, 2012, http://www.kevinyoungpoetry.com/curating.html.

[129] I worked as a research assistant to develop "Shadows of the Sun," and curated the accompanying exhibit, "Postcards from Paris: Expatriate Life and Literature in the 1920s."

shown.[130] Clifton's book *Do You Remember?* (1973) was used as the title and title image in "Do You Remember?: Children's Books by Poets," which ran from fall 2008 to February 2009.[131] In 2012, arranged to coincide with the fall release of her *Collected Poems* and the Decatur Book Festival, Clifton received an exhibition dedicated solely to her work titled "Come Celebrate with Me: The Work of Lucille Clifton." This exhibition depicts the range of Clifton's writing, beginning with her earliest work and ending the late drafts of works such as the *Book of Days*. Clifton's children's books, a critical part of her literary output and so far ignored in the critical literature, were featured, as was her videowriter, an early piece of technology she used to compose during early to mid 1980s.[132]

Exhibitions are significant to an author's legacy because they allow a broader public to see an author's materials and because they demonstrate an institution's commitment to the particular author on display. As exhibitions can take anywhere from six months to over a year to prepare, on average, and then remain up for approximately the same duration of time, the institutional commitment to developing, mounting, and promoting an exhibition is significant.

Every exhibition that is created forecloses the opportunity to show other material or pushes alternative projects several years into the future. The Manuscript, Archive, and

---

[130] The books included were: *Good Times* (1969), *Good News about the Earth: New Poems* (1972), *Two-Headed Woman* (1980), and *Ten Oxherding Pictures* (1988). The broadsides exhibited were: *All of Us Are All of Us* (1974), *At the Cemetery, Walnut Grove Plantation, South Carolina, 1989* (1998), and *Aunt Jemima* (2006). Kevin Young, "Lucille Clifton," Libraries within the Library: Author Collections, *Democratic Vistas* (Atlanta, GA: Emory Libraries, 2008), 70-1.

[131] Kevin Young, "Curating," *Kevin Young: Official Website*, accessed April 30, 2012, http://kevinyoungpoetry.com/curating.html.

[132] I am listed as the co-curator of this exhibit.

Rare Book Library at Emory University, unlike peer institutions such as the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin or the Beinecke Library at Yale University, does not have its own building and shares its space with the General collection at the Woodruff Library. For this reason, exhibition space for archival galleries is limited to three locations: the Schatten Gallery, the entrance hallway to MARBL, and the main entrance to the library. The Schatten Gallery is used for the most significant exhibitions, which have included "Democratic Vistas" and "Shadows of the Sun," while smaller exhibitions are given the MARBL entrance on the tenth floor. Exhibitions shown in this space include "The Art of Losing," "My Dreams, My Works," and, in the fall of 2012, the as-yet-unnamed exhibit coinciding with Clifton's collected poems. "Do You Remember?" was shown at the main entrance. Clifton's books will have been shown in all three locations in Woodruff Library, revealing both Young's interest in showing Clifton within a variety of contexts and the degree to which Clifton is used as an example within different types of exhibitions. The fall 2012 exhibit will be given entirely to Clifton's work and will focus heavily on her literary collection, while in the past her books have been used to illustrate children's books and author's collections. The range of Clifton's material used in exhibitions demonstrates how both Kevin Young as a curator and MARBL as an institution are dedicated to promoting Lucille Clifton's career as a writer and her significance within the institution as a whole.

Young's attention to Lucille Clifton, seen through his editorial work and exhibitions dedicated her writing and biography, demonstrates his particular interest in preserving an author whose career inspired and intersected with his own. Their relationship demonstrates the long-term significance of mentorship on the careers of

young poets, as Clifton gave Young his first award. Additionally, Young and Clifton demonstrate that relationships made outside the archive shape the development of the archive as an institution. Without Young as a curator, the Manuscript, Archive, and Rare Book Library would have had a more difficult time attracting Clifton to lodge her papers at Emory University. Researchers who use Clifton's papers without realizing the circumstances which caused them to be housed at MARBL – in a city and state Clifton never lived in, at a university she where she neither attended nor taught – miss the significance of the untold "inner history" behind how these materials became available.

IV. Conclusion

Kevin Young has been committed to maintaining and developing Lucille Clifton's legacy as a writer. As a curator, Young not only shows items from her collection to the general public through his exhibitions, but he also directs readers to new material and researchers to the areas that are, in his mind, the most fruitful places to study. In the process, Young ensures that the Clifton's collection will be used to maintain her place in the canon of twentieth and twenty-first century American literature.

Kevin Young's career as the curator of literary collections and the Raymond Danowski Poetry Library is an extension of the elegiac impulse in his nonfiction and poetry. In his creative writing as in his curatorial work, Young records, preserves, and recreates the literary past for the appreciation and use of those in the present and the future. This investment in history and the particular respect for the caretaking of individual artists' legacies is characteristic of his generation of writers, most notably those within the Dark Room Collective. The Dark Room Collective continues the Black Arts Movement's investment in developing an audience for and insisting on the

significance of African American art. By using his writing aesthetic in his curatorial work, Young brings this Black Arts Movement focus forward. He suggests that in the archive, history is available to be used: it can generate new interpretations of the past, change how the present is seen, and alter how the future is imagined.

Conclusion

By choosing to focus on an international selection of authors who all chose the same special collections center, Emory University's Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library (MARBL) – the institution Brian Friel lampooned in *Give Me Your Answer, Do! (1997)* as requiring David Knight "to deliver every single goddamned name on their goddamn Irish list"[1] – the archive stories presented in this dissertation also demonstrate the power of an individual institution. Although this project is more concerned with an author's motivations for conferring his or her papers than the unique atmosphere that attracted each of them to Emory, future work should begin to consider the institutional histories of individual archives. A series of archival stories about the holdings of an archive are necessary to first show the unique circumstances of each acquisition, but as a whole, these archive stories can begin to tell a much larger story: the history of the rise of individual institutions, as well as the role of literary collections as an emerging force in twentieth century literary studies.

Literary collections remain a relatively small branch of many university archives. Many within these fields are unaware of the cultural importance of the development of these collections. For archivists, manuscript collections remain "one of the smallest and, arguably, the least well understood of the professional communities."[2] Although the rate of publication on archives have increased steadily as the profession has grown, the majority of books published on archival practice and theory concern themselves with

---

[1] Brian Friel, *Give Me Your Answer, Do!* (New York: Dramatists Play Service, Inc., 2000), 61.

[2] Anne J. Gililand-Swetland, "Enduring Paradigm, New Opportunities: The Value of Archival Perspective in the Digital Environment" (Washington, D.C.: Council on Library and Information Resources, February 2000), 2.

records management – the management of records relating to governments, businesses, or history – rather than materials related to literature. For example, writers such as Terry Cook and Hugh Taylor have published seminal accounts on this history and philosophy of archives, but neither concentrates on the role of literary collections. And while the journal *Archival Science* was established in 2001 after splitting from the more general publication *Archives and Museum Informatics*, which ran from 1987 through 1999, this conduit for peer-reviewed scholarship on the cultural ramifications of archival research and management has not published any articles covering literary collections in particular, and very few considering literary materials in general.[3]

Contemporary literary collections in the United States are products of a post-World War II phenomenon. Universities newly flush with the cash of corporate and private donations, and benefiting from increased enrollment created by the 1944 G.I. Bill, sought out manuscripts that would aid the developing reputation of their library systems. Aware that more-established universities – those located on the eastern seaboard of the United States and in England – were already heavily invested in early modern materials, schools such as the University of Texas at Austin sought to supplement their holdings in an unconventional way: by acquiring twentieth century manuscripts. By avoiding competition with other institutions and demarcating a mission in a burgeoning, yet affordable field, regional universities acquired the papers of the writers of the era.

Libraries did not simply begin to acquire manuscripts once they have the means and the mission to do so: archival objectives are controlled by the market of available materials and by firm precedents within the book-collecting world. Often, newly affluent

---

[3] Randolph C. Head. "Preface: Historical research on archives and knowledge cultures: an interdisciplinary wave." *Archival Science* 10.1, (November 2010), 2.

institutions were thought to spend their resources best by acquiring canonical material such as Shakespeare folios, a move Thomas F. Staley describes as an expectation of "a nouveau riche response from the outback."[4] In the middle of the twentieth century, however, the role of literary studies was undergoing a reevaluation: instead of primarily emphasizing the figures who shaped English literature, programs were beginning to acknowledge the importance of contemporary authors. Staley noted,

> It was natural that these expanding university libraries with burgeoning new graduate programs concentrated their rare book and manuscript buying in the area of the twentieth century, where materials were available, materials which were then not left to ripen but were quickly made available to dissertation students hungry for new topics. The number of dissertations being written on Joyce, Faulkner, and Hemingway had, in a few short years after World War II, surpassed the number written on Shakespeare, Milton, and Johnson. Living authors were being studied as their work was published. If a student used original materials, the stigma of writing a dissertation on a contemporary author was lessened.[5]

Ignoring the academic "stigma" of researching contemporary topics at the time, Staley's observation weaves the institutional environment of the 1950s together with the movements in literature and literary criticism. Post-war prosperity offered the means for the development of university collections and the consolidating reputations of writers from the earlier portion of the century offered an additional rationale for doing so. The modernists, now sufficiently established, were coming into the renaissance of their critical scholarship, while contemporary authors began to benefit from academic trends which emphasized, according to the dictates of New Criticism, the importance of primary materials. Although many writers derided the study of twentieth century literature (C.S. Lewis famously derided the practice by saying "the student who wants a tutor's

---

[4] Thomas F. Staley, "Literary Canons, Literary Studies, and Library Collections: A Retrospective On Collecting Twentieth-Century Writers," *Rare Books and Manuscripts Librarianship* 5.1 (1990), 16.
[5] Ibid., 13.

assistance in reading the works of his own contemporaries might as well ask for a nurse's assistance in blowing his own nose"[6]) these combined factors led to a growing field in contemporary literature. While contemporary literature prevented the "ripening" of the authors chosen as subjects, their study served the interests of the university system.

Resistance to the new province of university acquisitions was expressed in the private arena. An article in the *Times Literary Supplement* from June 30, 1961 equated the University of Texas at Austin's activities to a "bulldozing Moloch" and mourned the lost "underbidders."[7] John Carter portrayed The University of Buffalo in *Taste & Technique of Book Collection* (1969) as "writing round to every author they could think of"[8] while Yale's library, although an impressive spectacle, elicited the mournful thought that "the facts remain that the books belong to Yale and not to you."[9] Carter concluded his book with an epilogue reminding his rare book collector readers "whether he be an Englishman or an American, the most familiar, as they are the most menacing figures, are the professed rare book librarians."[10]Although this statement reads humorously now, it signals the sea change that began to be felt in the late 1960s and early 1970s and still reverberates in the literary world today.

Regional American universities were the first to recognize the potential value of acquiring contemporary manuscripts and their foresight allowed American institutions to establish a collecting tradition that favors them on an international market. They were often the first to approach authors for their papers and, when others expressed interest,

---

[6] Bernard Bergonzi, *Exploding English: Criticism, Theory, Culture (*Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 80.
[7] Staley, 19.
[8] Ibid., 11.
[9] Ibid., 13.
[10] Ibid., 13.

their institutional resources often signified a stronger commitment. The way in which these traditions began significantly differed from university to university. For example, Washington University in St. Louis "chose to build a collection of twentieth-century English and American literature" by canvassing their faculty for suggested "poets and novelists whose abilities they particularly respected and who they felt had a good change of being important in fifty years." Washington also chose to strike names already targeted by other institutions in order to uphold their policy of noncompetition. Through this method, the university was able to create a defined area of interest, which allowed them to be successful on the market.[11]

The Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas at Austin, now called the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, began its pursuit of contemporary materials in 1947. In order to build a world-class collection, Harry Huntt Ransom, a professor of English and the graduate school's assistant dean, worked with Fannie Ratchford, the curator of the Rare Books Collection. The two appealed to the public to remedy the relative weakness of the University's library, encouraging private donation rather than public support.[12] Austin's buyers were known for their aggressive pursuit of materials the university wanted to acquire. Funded by the endowment of the Permanent

---

[11] Faye Phillips, "Developing Collecting Policies for Manuscript Collections," *The American Archivist* 47.1 (Winter 1984), 34.
[12] Cathy Henderson, "The Birth of an Institution: The Humanities Research Center, 1956-1971," Ed. Megan Barnard, *Collecting the Imagination: The First Fifty Years of the Ransom Center* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007), 19.

University Fund (PUF) after the discovery of oil on university property, the PUF allowed Austin "to spend abundantly on collection materials."[13]

Brian Friel masked his critique of Emory by implying David Knight represented the Ransom Center, a canny way of highlighting the similarity between these two institutions. Emory's special collections, like those in Austin, were driven by the serendipity of financial opportunity. In Emory's case, it was the gift of $107 million ($316 million today)[14] from Robert Woodruff, former head of Coca-Cola Industries, which energized the university to consider how it could develop its educational mission. The expansion of the university's archives, while an important aspect of Emory's development, was only one aspect of the multiple ways "the gift" – as it came to be known – benefitted the institution. Ronald Schuchard noted that this pattern is the basis of many of America's most prestigious libraries, for the "chance convergence in historical moments of bold bibliophiles and bountiful resources" built not only the collections at Emory and Austin, but also the Huntington Library in San Marino, California and the Lilly Library at the University of Indiana Bloomington.[15]

Archives and literary collections in particular now contribute to the international status of American universities. Expanding American literary collections from historical European papers to primarily American materials constituted the first shift in acquisitions

---

[13] John B. Thomas, III, "Beginnings: The Rare Books Collection 1897-1955," Ed. Megan Barnard, *Collecting the Imagination: The First Fifty Years of the Ransom Center* (Austin, University of Texas Press, 2007), 3.
[14] "Woodruff Exhibition Opens at Emory's Library," *Emory University Robert W. Woodruff Library Press Release*. October 12, 2010, Accessed December 30, 2009, http://web.library.emory.edu/woodruff-exhibit.
[15] Ronald Schuchard, "Richard Ellmann and the arrival of Yeats and Lady Gregory," Ed. Ronald Schuchard and Stephen Enniss, "The Growth of Emory's Modern Irish Collection," *Gazette of The Grolier Club: New Series* 50 (1999), 35.

history. The second shift occurred when American universities began to seek the contemporary papers from other Anglophone nations in a drive to gain global visibility. Diversified holdings widened the range of potential visitors. Larger research constituencies increased the archives' international status while supplementing the prestige of the home university itself. As globalization progressed and nationality became more of a descriptor than a destiny, becoming a "world-class university" was a requirement of ambitious institutions. After all, American higher education cannot, and does not, cater merely to American students and scholars.[16] While the phenomenon of continental literary scholars specializing in American literature has been noted as a result of the increased opportunities given those who choose the United States as a field,[17] archives could not rely solely on the strength of American letters. Diversifying the writers acquired strengthened archival assets while increasing the population of potential patrons. Therefore, the American foresight in recent years to acquire many of the top authors of the English and Irish traditions made American institutions a global draw for researchers.

Furthermore, the push toward visible special collections centers on university campuses was also a symptom of the need to move American archives into global visibility. Although archives frequently needed their own buildings due to the spatial needs of extensive holdings, these centers also solidified the importance of archives within the university at large. For example, Yale University's Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, completed in 1963, is "one of the largest buildings in the world devoted entirely to rare books and manuscripts." As the Beinecke is architecturally

---

[16] David John Frank and Jay Gabler, *Reconstructing the University: Worldwide Shifts in Academia in the 20th century* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 18-9.
[17] Bergonzi, 72-3.

distinct from other buildings on campus due to its marble, modernist exterior, the Center is set apart in order to highlight its unique role within the university. The Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin, built in 1971, follows a similar aesthetic and mission.[18] Although several universities with distinguished collections do not have independent buildings, increasingly universities are recognizing the need to separate archives from library spaces. For example, Emory University, which currently has its Manuscripts and Rare Books Library on the tenth floor of the general Woodruff library, is planning to build a center like Austin's or Yale's to house its growing collections. Although the construction schedule of Emory's center has been postponed due to the recent economic downturn, the presence of these buildings or the desire to create them marks the universities' commitment to archival research, as archival research centers help a university showcase its literary collections to a global audience.

This dissertation seeks to understand the complex motivations of authors, rather than institutional missions or disciplinary trends. However, building on the archive stories presented here would create a greater awareness of the value and use of literary collections. Specifically, the rise of the contemporary literary collection is not merely the result of a single author or even the efforts of an individual institution, but rather a facet of twentieth century history literary history. The continued acquisition of literary collections is ensured by the value these collections offer. While this project identifies the value of literary collections to the authors who endow them in order to establish their literary legacy, in the future it will be necessary to recognize the significance of literary

---

[18] "About the Library Building: Online Tour," *Yale University Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library,* accessed December 30, 2010, http://www.library.yale.edu/beinecke/brblinfo/brblslides_tour.html.

collections to the institutions that house them. These archival bodies, “laid out” in special collections centers, contributed to the development of a transnational twenty-first century literary milieu and, in the process, they have begun to change the writing of literary and academic history.

Bibliography

I. Print Sources

Alexander, Elizabeth. "Boston Year." *100 Best African American Poems*. Edited by Nikki Giovanni. Naperville, IL: sourcebooks mediaFusion, 2010.

---. "The Dark Room: an invocation." *Callaloo* 16.3 (Summer 1993), 554-5.

---. "Introduction." *Gathering Ground: A Reader: Celebrating Cave Canem's First Decade*. Edited by Derricotte, Toi and Cornelius Eady. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2006.

Allison, Jonathan. 'Friendship's Garland' and the Manuscripts of Seamus Heaney's 'Fosterage'." *The Yearbook of English Studies* 35 (2005), 58-71.

Arnold, Robert. "About Kevin Young." *Ploughshares* 32.1 (Spring 2006), 186-190.

Baraka, Amiri. "BLACK FIRE: A New Introduction." Edited by Amiri Baraka and Larry Neal. *Black Fire: An Anthology of Afro-American Writing*. (Baltimore, MD: Black Classics Press, 2007), xvii-xx.

Bedford, William. "To Set the Darkness Echoing." Review of *North* by Seamus Heaney. *Delta* 56 (1977), 2-7.

Benjamin, Walter. *The Arcades Project*. Trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin. Boston: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002.

Benton, Michael. *Studies in the spectator role: Literature, painting and pedagogy*. London: Routledge, 2000.

Bergonzi, Bernard. *Exploding English: Criticism, Theory, Culture.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990.

Berry, David. “Ted Hughes and the Minotaur Complex.” *The Modern Language Review* 97.3 (July 2002), 539-552.

Bertens, Hans. *The Idea of the Postmodern: A History*. London: Routledge, 1995.

Bloom, Harold. *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry*. London: Oxford University Press, 1975.

Brandes, Rand and Seamus Heaney. “Interview with Seamus Heaney.” *Salmagundi* 80 (Fall 1988), 4-21.

Brockman, William S. “Learning to be James Joyce’s Contemporary? Richard Ellmann’s Discovery and Transformation of Joyce’s Letters and Manuscripts.” *Journal of Modern Literature* 22.2 (Winter 1998-9), 253-63.

Bundtzman, Lynda. “Mourning Eurydice: Ted Hughes as Orpheus in “Birthday Letters.” *Journal of Modern Literature* 23.3-4 (Summer 2000), 455-69.

Burton, Antionette. “Introduction,” *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History*. Ed. Antionette Burton. Durham, NC: Duke University Press Books, 2006.

Byrne, Sandie, ed. *The Poetry of Ted Hughes*. Duxford, Cambridge: Icon Books, 2000.

Cappallezzo, Amy. “Introduction,” *TWO CENTS: Works on Paper by Jean-Michel Basquiat* (Miami, FL: Center Gallery, Miami-Dade Community College, 1995), 33-4.

Chace, William. *Lionel Trilling: Criticism and Politics*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980.

--- . *One Hundred Semesters: My Adventures as a Student, Professor, and University President, and What I Learned Along the Way*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006.

Chaudhuri, Nupur, Sherri J. Katz, Mary Elizabeth Perry, eds. *Contesting the Archives: Finding Women in the Sources*. Forward Antoinette Burton. Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 2010.

Cherry, Deborah. *Painting Women: Victorian Women Artists, Britain 1850-1900*. London: Routledge, 1993.

Churchwell, Sarah. "Secrets and Lies: Plath, Privacy, Publication, and Ted Hughes's Birthday Letters." *Contemporary Literature* 42.1 (Spring 2001), 102-48.

Ciaran Carson Papers. Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library. Emory University.

Clark, Cheryl. *"After Mecca": Women Poets and the Black Arts Movement.* New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005.

Clark, Heather. *The Ulster Renaissance: Poetry in Belfast 1962-1972*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Clifton, Lucille, *good woman: poems and a memoir 1969-1980*. Rochester, NY: BOA Editions, Ltd., 1987.

Conover, Roger. Review of *North* by Seamus Heaney. *Èire-Ireland* 11.2 (Summer 1976), 142-6.

Dargen, Kyle G. and Haryette Mullen. "Everything We Can Imagine: An Interview with Harryette Mullen." *Callaloo* 30.4 (Fall 2007), 1014-6.

Davidson, Michael. *The San Francisco Renaissance: Poetry and Community at Mid-Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Debo, Annette. “Signifying *Afrika*: Gwendolyn Brooks’ Later Poetry.” *Callaloo* 29.1 (Winter 2006), 168-181.

Debord, Guy. *Society of the Spectacle*. Trans. Ken Knabb. London: Rebel Press, 2006.

Derek Mahon Papers. Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library. Emory University.

Derrida, Jacques. *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.

--- . *Copy, Archive, Signature: A Conversation on Photography*. Trans. Jeff Fort, Ed. Gerhard Richter. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010.

--- . *Geneses, Geneaologies, Genres and Genius: The Secrets of the Archive.* Trans. Beverly Bie Brahic. New York: Columbia University Press, 2003.

Dever, Maryanne, Sally Newman and Anne Vickery, eds. *The Intimate Archive: Journeys through Private Papers*. Canberra: The National Library of Australia, 2009.

Dick, Susan, Declan Kiberd, Douglas McMillan, and Joseph Ronsley, eds. *Omnium Gatherum: Essays for Richard Ellmann*. Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1989.

Donaghy, Michael and Paul Muldoon. “A Conversation with Paul Muldoon.” *Chicago Review* 35.1 (Autumn 1985), 76-85.

Draper, Hal. *Berkeley: The New Student Revolt*. New York: Grove Press, 1965.

Drummond, Gavin. “Ted Hughes’s Memory.” *Fixed Stars Govern a Life: Transforming Poetry and Memory with Emory’s Ted Hughes Archive*. Ed. Ronald Schuchard. *Emory Across Academe* 6 (Academic Exchange, 2006).

Eady, Cornelius. “Introduction.” *Gathering Ground: A Reader: Celebrating Cave Canem’s First Decade*. Ed. by Toi Derricotte and Cornelius Eady. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2006.

Ellis, Thomas Sayers. “A Loud Noise Followed by Many Louder Ones: The Dark Room Collective (1987-1998).” *The American Poetry Review* 27.2 (March/April 1998), 39.

---. “T.A.P.O.A.F.O.M. II.” *The Maverick Room*. St. Paul, MN: Graywolf Press, 2004.

Ellmann, Richard. *Oscar Wilde*. London: Vintage, 1988.

--- . *W.B. Yeats: The Man and the Masks*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1979.

Enniss, Stephen C. and Karen V. Kukil. “*No Other Appetite”: Sylvia Plath, Ted Hughes, and the Blood Jet of Poetry*. New York: The Grolier Club, 2005.

Empson, William. *Essays on Renaissance Literature: Volume 1 Donne and the New Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

--- . *Seven Types of Ambiguity*. London: New Directions, 1947.

Feinstein, Elaine. *Ted Hughes: The Life of a Poet*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2001.

Fish, Stanley. *Is There a Text in this Class?: The Authority of Interpretative Communities.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980.

Flanagan, Thomas. “Evening Drive to Ballinamuck.” *Harvard Review* 10 (Spring 1996), 48-9.

Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1977.

--- . “The Historical a-priori and the archive.” *The Archeology of Knowledge*. Trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith. New York: Harper and Row, 1969.

--- . “What is an Author?” *Language, Counter-memory, Practice*. Trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon. Ithaca, New York: Cornell UP, 1977.

Frank, David John and Jay Gabler. *Reconstructing the University: Worldwide Shifts in Academia in the 20th century*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006.

Friel, Brian. *Give Me Your Answer, Do!* New York: Dramatists Play Service, Inc., 2000.

Gabbin, Joanne V. Ed. "Preface." *Furious Flower: African American Poetry from the Black Arts Movement to the Present*. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2004.

Gililand-Swetland, Anne J, "Enduring Paradigm, New Opportunities: The Value of Archival Perspective in the Digital Environment." Washington, D.C.: Council on Library and Information Resources, February 2000.

Gioia, Dana. *California Poetry: From the Gold Rush to the Present*. Berkeley: Heydey Books, 2004.

--- . "The Hand of the Poet: The Magical Value of Manuscripts." *The Hudson Review* 49.1 (Spring 1996), 9-29.

Glass, Loren. *Authors Inc., Literary Celebrity in the Modern United States 1880-1980*. New York: New York University Press, 2004.

Graham, Keith. "Seamus Heaney's poetic pen conveys 'the good, the true.'" *The Atlanta Journal Constitution* (April 15, 1988), 1E.

Hall, Donald. *Poetry and Ambition*: *Essays 1982-1988*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1988.

Hamilton, Carolyn, Verne Harris and Graeme Reid, "Introduction," *Refiguring the Archive*, Ed. Carolyn Hamilton. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 2002.

Hammill, Faye. *Women, Celebrity, and Literary Culture Between the Wars*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007.

Hart, Henry. “Seamus Heaney’s Places of Writing.” *Contemporary Literature* 31.3 (Autumn 1990), 383-391.

Hart, Robert C. “Black-White Literary Relations in the Harlem Renaissance.” *American Literature* 44.4 (Jan 1973), 612-28.

Hauk, Gary S. and Sally Wolff King, eds. *Where Courageous Inquiry Leads: The Emerging Life of Emory University*. Atlanta, Emory University Press, 2010.

Harvey, David. *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1990.

Head, Randolph C. “Historical Research on Archives and Disciplinary Cultures: an interdisciplinary wave.” *Archival Science* 10.1 (November 2010).

Heaney, Seamus. “Above Respectability.” *The Atlantic Magazine* 261.2 (February 1988), 84-6.

--- . “The Comet at Lullwater.” Winona, MN: Sutton Hoo Press, n.p.

---. *Death of a Naturalist*. London: Faber and Faber, 1966.

--- . “Now and in England.” *Critical Inquiry* 3.1 (Spring 1977), 471-88.

---. *The Place of Writing*. Atlanta: Scholar’s Press, 1990.

--- . *Preoccupations: Selected Prose, 1968-78*. New York: The Noonday Press, 1980.

--- . “The Sounds of Rain,” Qtd. in Roy Pattishall. “In Brief: Heaney Inaugurates Ellmann Lectures.” *Emory Magazine* 64.3 (August 1988), 8-9.

--- . *Wintering Out*. London, Faber and Faber, 1972.

Henderson, Cathy. “The Birth of an Institution: The Humanities Research Center, 1956-1971.” Ed. Megan Barnard. *Collecting the Imagination: The First Fifty Years of the Ransom Center*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2007, 19-49.

Hemingway, Ernest. *A Moveable Feast*. New York: Scribner, 1996.

"Her Husband; Diane Middlebrook Notes from Olwyn Hughes." Olwyn Hughes Papers. Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library. Emory University.

Hibbett, Ryan. "Imagining Ted Hughes: Authorship, Authenticity, and the Symbolic Work of Collected Poems." *Twentieth Century Literature* 51.4 (Winter 2005), 414-36.

Hobsbaum, Philip. "The Group: An Experiment in Criticism." *The Yearbook of English Studies* 17 (1987), 75-88.

--- . *Tradition and Experiment in English Poetry*. London: The Macmillan Press, 1979.

Holladay, Hilary. "Black Names in White Space: Lucille Clifton's South." *The Southern Literary Journal* 34.2 (Spring 2002), 120-33.

--- . *Wild Blessings: The Poetry of Lucille Clifton*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2004.

Holland, Norman. *Five Readers Reading.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975.

Huffer, Lynne. *Mad For Foucault*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2009.

Hughes, Glenn. *Imagism & the Imagists: A Study in Modern Poetry*. New York: Biblo and Tannen, 1972.

Hughes, Ted. *Collected Poems*. Ed. Paul Keegan. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003.

--- . *Howls and Whispers.* Rockport, ME: Gehenna Press, 1998.

--- . *Letters of Ted Hughes*. Ed. Christopher Reid. London: Faber and Faber, 2007.

Ingelbien, Raphael. “Decolonizing Ireland/England? Yeats, Seamus Heaney and Ted Hughes.” Ed. Deborah Fleming. *W.B. Yeats and Postcolonialism*. West Cornwall, CT: Locus Hill Press, 2001.

--- . “Mapping the Misreadings: Ted Hughes, Seamus Heaney, and Nationhood.” *Contemporary Literature* 40.4 (Winter 1999), 627-58.

Inglis, Fred. *A Short History of Celebrity*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010.

Iser, Wolfgang. *The Act of Reading*: *A Theory of Aesthetic Response*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1979.

--- . *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett.* Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974.

Jackson, Angela. “In Memoriam: Gwendolyn Brooks (1917-2000).” *Callaloo* 23.4 (Autumn 2000): 1163-9.

Jenkinson, Sir Hilary. *A Manual of Archive Administration: Including the Problems of War Archive and Archive Making.* London: Clarendon Press, 1922.

Kaiser, Mary. “Review of The Breaking of Style.” *World Literature Today* 70.3 (Summer 1996): 699-700.

Keen, Suzanne. *Romances of the Archive in Contemporary British Fiction*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003.

Kelleher, John V. “With Dick in Dublin.” *Omnium Gatherum: Essays for Richard Ellmann*. Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1989.

Kinahan, Frank and Seamus Heaney. “An Interview with Seamus Heaney.” *Critical Inquiry* 8.3 (Spring 1982), 405-14.

Kirschenbaum, Matt G. *Mechanisms: New Media and the Forensic Imagination.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008.

Leavis, F.R. and Denys Thompson. *Culture and the Environment: The Training of Critical Awareness*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1933.

--- . *For Continuity*. Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1968.

Longley, Edna. "'Altering the past': Northern Irish Poetry and Modern Canons." *The Yearbook of English Studies* 35 (2005), 1-17.

--- ."Escaped from the Massacre?" review of *North* by Seamus Heaney, *The Honest Ulsterman* 50 (Autumn 1975), 183-189.

Lucille Clifton Collection. Manuscript, Archives and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

Malewitz, Raymond. "'My Newish Voice": Rethinking Black Power in Gwendolyn Brooks' 'Whirlwind'." *Callaloo* 29.2 (Spring 2006), 531-44.

Martin, Reginald. *Ishmael Reed and the New Black Aesthetic Critics*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988.

Mason, Ellsworth. "Ellmann's Road to Xanadu." *Omnium Gatherum: Essays for Richard Ellmann*. Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1989.

McCoy, Beth. "Race and the (Para)Textual Condition." *PMLA* 121.1 (January 2006), 156-180.

McMahon, Frank. "Ambiguous Gifts: Seamus Heaney's Oxford Professorship of Poetry." *Oxford Art Journal* 13.2 (1990): 3-10.

Melnyczuk, Askold. "A Costly Telegram to the Dark Room Collective." *Callaloo* 16.3 (Summer 1993), 513-4.

Michael Longley Papers. Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library. Emory University.

Middlebrook, Diane. *Her Husband*. New York: Viking, 2003.

Motion, Andrew and Blake Morrison, ed. *The Penguin Book of Contemporary British Poetry*. London: Penguin Books, 1982.

Muller, Sam, J.A. Feith and R. Fruin. *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*. Trans. Arhur H. Leavitt. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2003.

Neal, Larry. "An Afterword: And the Shine Swam On." *Black Fire: An Anthology of Afro-American Writing*. Ed. Amiri Baraka and Larry Neal. Baltimore, MD: Black Classics Press, 2007.

O'Brien, Eugene. *Seamus Heaney: Searches for Answers*. London: Pluto Press, 2003.

O'Callaghan, Kate. "Seamus Heaney – A Poet of the People." *Irish America Magazine* (May 1986), 29-30.

O'Connor, Mary. "Medbh McGuckian." Ed. Alexander G. Gonzalez. *Modern Irish Writers: a bio-critical sourcebook*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1997.

O'Donoghue, Bernard. *The Cambridge Companion to Seamus Heaney*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

O'Driscoll, Dennis. *Stepping Stones: Interviews with Seamus Heaney*. London: Faber and Faber, 2008.

Oldsey, Bernard. *Ernest Hemingway: The Papers of a Writer*. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1981.

Olwyn Hughes Papers. Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library. Emory University.

Otten, Michael C. *University Authority and the Student: The Berkeley Experience.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970.

Palmer, R. Roderick. "The Poetry of Three Revolutionists: Don L. Lee, Sonia Sanchez, and Nikki Giovanni." *Modern Black Poets: A Collection of Critical Essays.* Ed. Donald B. Gibson. New York: Prentice-Hall, 1973.

Paul Muldoon. Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Book Library. Emory University.

Perloff, Marjorie. *Poetic License: Essays in Modernist and Postmodernist Lyric.* Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1990.

Schuchard, Ronald. "Excavating the Imagination: Archival Research and the Digital Revolution." *Libraries & Culture* 37.1 (Winter 2002), 57-63.

Plath, Sylvia. *Ariel*. New York: Harper Perennial, 1999.

--- . *Letters Home by Sylvia Plath: Correspondence 1950-1963*. Ed. Aurelia Schober Plath. New York: Harper Perennial, 1992.

--- . *The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath 1950-1962*. Ed. Karen V. Kukil. New York: Anchor Books, 1999.

Rand Brandes Papers. Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library. Emory University.

Randall, James and Seamus Heaney. "An Interview with Seamus Heaney." *Ploughshares* 5.3 (1979), 7-22.

Richards, Thomas. *The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire.* London: Verso, 1993.

Ridener, John. *From Polders to Postmodernism: A Concise History of Archival Theory*. Duluth, MN: Litwin Books, 2009.

Reed, Brian. “The Dark Room Collective and Post-Soul Poetics,” *African American Review* 4.4 (Winter 2007), 727-747.

Roberts, Neil. *Ted Hughes: A Literary Life*. Basingstroke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

Ronald Schuchard Papers. Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library. Emory University.

Rose, Jacqueline. *The Haunting of Sylvia Plath*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992.

Rowell, Charles H. and Lucille Clifton, “An Interview with Lucille Clifton,” *Callaloo* 22.1 (Winter 1999), 66.

--- and Terrence Hayes. “The Poet in the Enchanted Shoe Factory: An Interview of Terrance Hayes.” *Callaloo* 27.4 (Autumn 2004), 1068-81.

--- and Thomas Sayers Ellis. “An Interview with Thomas Sayers Ellis.” *Callaloo* 21.1 (Winter 1998), 88-99.

--- and Kevin Young, “An Interview with Kevin Young,” *Callaloo* 21.1 (Winter 1998), 43-54.

Russell, Richard Rankin. *Poetry and Peace: Michael Longley, Seamus Heaney, and Northern Ireland*. South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010.

Sagar, Keith. *The Laughter of Foxes: A Study of Ted Hughes*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000.

Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1979.

Scigaj, Leonard M., ed. *Critical Essays on Ted Hughes*. New York: G.K. Hall & Co., 1992.

--- . *Ted Hughes*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1991.

Schartz, Michael, ed. *Visions of a Liberated Future: Black Arts Movement Writings Larry Neal: With Commentary by Amiri Baraka, Stanley Crouch, Charles Fuller, and Jayne Cortez*. New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1989.

Schuchard, Ronald, ed. "Fixed Stars Govern a Life: Transforming Poetics and Memory with Emory's Ted Hughes Archive." *Emory Across Academe* 6 (Academic Exchange 2006).

--- . *Eliot's Dark Angel*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1999.

--- and Steven Enniss. "The Growth of Emory's Modern Irish Collection." *Gazette of The Grolier Club*: New Series 50 (1999), 35-55.

--- . *The Last Minstrels: Yeats and the Revival of the Bardic Arts*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008.

Seamus Heaney Papers. Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library. Emory University.

Spivak, Gayatri. "The Rani of Simur: An Essay in Reading the Archives." *History and Theory* 24.3 (October 1985): 247-272.

Staley, Thomas F. "Literary Canons, Literary Studies, and Library Collections: A Retrospective On Collecting Twentieth-Century Writers." *Rare Books and Manuscripts Librarianship* 5.1 (1990).

Stewart, James T. "The Development of the Black Revolutionary Artist." Edited by Amiri Baraka and Larry Neal. *Black Fire: An Anthology of Afro-American Writing* (Baltimore, MD: Black Classics Press, 2007), 3-10.

Strange, Sharan. “Of Beginnings, Journeys, and the Writer’s Food: The Dark Room Collective.” *Painted Bride Quarterly* 60 (1997), 39.

Ted Hughes Papers. Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library. Emory University.

Thomas, John B. III. “Beginnings: The Rare Books Collection 1897-1955.” Ed. Megan Barnard. *Collecting the Imagination: The First Fifty Years of the Ransom Center*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007.

Vendler, Helen. *The Given and the Made: Recent American Poets*. London: Faber and Faber, 1995.

--- . *Last Looks, Last Books: Stevens, Plath, Lowell, Bishop, Merrill*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2010.

--- . *Our Secret Discipline: Yeats and Lyric Form*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

--- . “Raptures and Readings.” *The New Yorker*. (December 31, 1984), 66-70.

--- . *Seamus Heaney*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998.

Williams, William Carlos. *Selected Poems*. New York: New Directions, 1985.

Wolff, Geoffrey. *Black Sun: The Brief Transit and Violent Eclipse of Harry Crosby*. New York: New York Review of Books, 1976.

W.S. Merwin Papers. Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library. Emory University.

Yau, John. “Street Song: The Art of Jean-Michel Basquiat and The Poetry of Kevin Young.” *TWO CENTS: Works on Paper by Jean-Michel Basquiat* (Miami, FL: Centre Gallery, Miami-Dade Community College, Wolfon Campus, 1995), 33-4.

Young, John K. *Black Writers, White Publishers: Marketplace Politics in Twentieth Century African American Literature*. Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2006.

Young, Kevin, Ed. *Blues Poems: Everyman's Library*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003.

---. *Dear Darkness*. New York, NY: Knopf, 2008.

---. "Introduction." *Democratic Vistas: Exploring the Raymond Danowski Poetry Library*. Edited by Kevin Young. Atlanta, GA: Emory Libraries, 2008.

---. "Introduction." *John Berryman: Selected Poems*. Edited by Kevin Young. American Poets Project: The Library of America, 2004.

---. "Introduction," *The Art of Losing: Poems of Grief and Healing*, Kevin Young, ed. (New York, NY: Bloomsbury, 2010), xv-xxiv.

---. "Introduction," *The Best American Poetry 2011*. Edited by Kevin Young. New York, NY: Scribner Poetry, 2011), xxi-xix.

---. "The Black Psychic Hotline, or/ The Future of American Writing," Edited by Kevin Young. *Giant Steps: The New Generation of African American Writers*. New York, NY: Harper Perennial.

--- . "won't you come celebrate with me." *The Collected Poems of Lucille Clifton 1965-2010*. Ed. Kevin Young and Michael Glaser. Rochester, NY: BOA Editions, 2012.

---. *The Grey Album: On the Blackness of Blackness*. Minneapolis, MN: Graywolf Press, 2012.

---. *To Repel Ghosts: The Remix*. New York, NY: Knopf, 2005.

II. Non-Print Sources

"About Cave Canem: Cave Canem Mission and History." *Cave Canem Poets*. Accessed March 3, 2012. http://www.cavecanempoets.org/mission.

"About the Library Building: Online Tour." *Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library Yale University*. Accessed December 30, 2010. http://www.library.yale.edu/beinecke/brblinfo/brblslides_tour.html.

Alexander, Paul. "Ted Hughes Avoids the Subject In Birthday Letters." *The Observer*. April 5, 1998. Accessed February 10, 2011. http://www.observer.com/node/40357.

Basquiat, Jean-Michel. "To Repels Ghosts." *Wikipaintings: an encyclopedia of paintings*. Accessed April 24, 2012. http://www.wikipaintings.org/en/jean-michel-basquiat/to-repels-ghosts.

"Biography." *Dark Room Collective Reunion Tour*. Facebook.com. Accessed May 7, 2012. https://www.facebook.com/thedarkroomcollectivereuniontour/info.

"Biographical Note." Thomas Flanagan (AC 1945) Papers 1866-2002. *Amherst College Archives and Special Collections*. July 20, 2011. http://asteria.fivecolleges.edu/findaids/amherst/ma171_bioghist.html.

"Boris Pasternak." *Poets.org*. Accessed July 29, 2011. http://www.poets.org/poet.php/prmPID/364.

"Burns Library Visiting Scholar in Irish Studies." *Boston College*. Accessed August 11, 2011. http://www.bc.edu/centers/irish/studies/facstaff/burns.html.

--- . "won't you celebrate with me." *Poetry Foundation: Poems and Poets.* Accessed April 20, 2012. http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/181377.

Cole, Henri and Helen Vendler. “The Art of Criticism No. 3.” *Paris Review* 141 (Winter 1996). Accessed July 20, 2011. http://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/1324/the-art-of-criticism-no-3-helen-vendler.

Cronk, Olivia. “To Repel Ghosts: The Remix by Kevin Young.” *Bookslut*. Accessed April 24, 2012. http://www.bookslut.com/poetry/2005_11_007062.php.

“Danowski Poetry Library Debuts at Emory.” *Georgia Library Quarterly* 45.2 (Summer 2008), 24. Accessed April 8, 2012. http://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1211&context=glq.

Delap, Mick. “Life After Plath: Birthday Letters, by Ted Hughes.” *Magma* 12 (Spring 1998), n.p. Accessed February 10, 2011. http://www.poetrymagazines.org.uk/magazine/record.asp?id=3556.

Diamond, Laura. “Emory gets poet’s papers.” *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. June 14, 2010. Accessed May 17, 2012. http://www.ajc.com/news/dekalb/emory-gets-poets-papers-548668.html.

“Eamon Grennan: Acclaimed Irish Poet.” *Blue Flower Arts*. Accessed August 11, 2011. http://blueflowerarts.com/eamon-grennan.

“Eavan Boland.” *Stanford University Department of English*. Accessed August 11, 2011. http://english.stanford.edu/bio.php?name_id=27.

Flanagan, Thomas. “Biographical Note.” Thomas Flanagan (AC 1945) Papers 1866-2002. *Amherst College Archives and Special Collections*. Accessed July 20, 2011. http://asteria.fivecolleges.edu/findaids/amherst/ma171_bioghist.html.

--- . “Michel Foucault. “Of Other Spaces (1967), Heterotropias.” Trans. Jay Miskowiec. Accessed March 10, 2011. http://foucault.info/documents/heteroTopia/foucault.heteroTopia.en.html.

Foran, Timothy M. “What ‘ish’ Macmorris? A Study of the Loss of Identity created by Colonialism in *Henry V*,” *VMI Undergraduate Research Shakespeare Conference*. November 12, 2005. Accessed July 20, 2011. http://www,vmi.edu/WorkArea/downloadasset.aspx?id=33819.

Fricker, Karen. “Give Me Your Answer, Do!” *Variety* (April 25, 1999), n.p. Accessed February 3, 2013. http://www.variety.com/review/VE1117914034/?refCatId=33

“F.R. Leavis.” *Encyclopaedia Brittanica*. *Encyclopaedia Brittanica Online*. Accessed July 26, 2011. http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/334127/FR-Leavis.

Genzlinger, Neil. “Thomas Flanaghan, 78, Author of Trilogy about Ireland.” *New York Times*. March 29, 2002. Accessed July 20, 2011. http://www.nytimes.com/2002/03/29/us/thomas-flanagan-78-author-of-trilogy-about-ireland.html.

Gleason, Jen. “Library’s Acquisition of Ted Hughes’ papers brings greater depth to literary collections.” *Emory Report*. March 31, 1997. Accessed September 29, 2010. http://www.emory.edu/EMORY_REPORT/erarchive/1997/March/ermarch.31/3_31_97Hughes.html.

Hammacher, Deb. “Ted Hughes Papers offer a touching prelude to tragedy.” *Emory Report*. April 3, 2000. Accessed September 29, 2010.

http://www.emory.edu/EMORY_REPORT/erarchive/2000/April/erapril.3/4_3_00hughes.html.

"Helen Vendler." *Bedford, Freeman & Worth*. Our Authors. Accessed July 29, 2011. http://www.bfwpub.com/catalog/Author/helenvendler.

Hoban, Phoebe. "Basquiat: A Quick Killing in Art." *New York Times Books*. Accessed April 24, 2012. http://www.nytimes.com/books/first/h/hoban-basquiat.html.

"Introduction to Practical Criticism." *University of Cambridge Virtual Classroom*. Accessed July 26, 2011. http://www.english.cam.ac.uk/vclass/pracrit.htm.

"Kevin Young: Biography." *Poetry Foundation.* Accessed April 8, 2012. http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/kevin-young.

McCrum, Robert. "Ted Hughes: The Poet who is coming in from the cold." *The Observer*. May 9, 2010. Accessed February 2, 2011. http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2010/may/09/ted-hughes-robert-mccrum.

Miller, Margaret. "In His Own Words: Ted Hughes on Sylvia Plath." *The Yale Review of Books*. 1.3 (Fall 1998), n.p. Accessed February 10, 2011. http://www.yale.edu/yrb/fall98/feature2.htm.

"Notorious B.I.G.: Full Biography." *MTV.com*. Accessed May 2, 2012. http://www.mtv.com/music/artist/notorious_big/artist.jhtml#biographyEnd.

O'Brien, Carl. "Heaney hands notes to National Library." *Irish Times*. December 21, 2011. Accessed May 17, 2012. http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/breaking/2011/1221/breaking30.html.

"Philip Hobsbaum: An Inventory of His Collection at the Harry Ransom Research Center." Austin, TX: Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin,

2003. Accessed July 23, 2011. http://research.hrc.utexas.edu:8080/hrcxtf/view?docId=ead/00329.xml.

"Poetic Form: Elegy." *Poets.org*. Accessed April 16, 2012. http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/5778.

"Raymond Danowski Poetry Library." Collection Overview. *Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library*. Accessed May 18, 2012. http://marbl.library.emory.edu/collection-overview/raymond-danowski-poetry-library.

Satter, Raphael G. "Poem details Plath's suicide." *Atlanta Journal Constitution*. October 7, 2010. Accessed January 3, 2011. http://www.newstatesman.com/blogs/cultural-capital/2010/10/hughes-poem-poet-publish

"SFA Mission." *Southern Foodways Alliance*. Accessed May 2, 2012. http://southernfoodways.org/about/mission.html.

"Visiting Professors." *The Keough-Naughton Institute for Irish Studies*. Accessed August 11, 2011. http://nd.edu/~irishstu/visiting.html.

"William Alfred." Poets of Cambridge, U.S.A. *Harvard Square Library*. Accessed July 29, 2011. http://www.harvardsquarelibrary.org/poets/alfred.php.

"William Empson." *The Poetry Archive*. Accessed July 26, 2011. http://www.poetryarchive.org/poetryarchive/singlePoet.do?poetId=7502.

"Woodruff Exhibition Opens at Emory's Library." *Emory University Robert W. Woodruff Library Press Release*. October 12, 2010. Accessed December 30, 2009. http://web.library.emory.edu/woodruff-exhibit.

Young, Kevin. “curating.” *Kevin Young: Official Web Site*. Accessed May 7, 2012. http://www.kevinyoungpoetry.com/curating.html.