

SPRING 2018

# Ransom

center  
MAGAZINE



**Arthur Miller**

Ellsworth Kelly

Digital Archaeology

“ We live today in a time of growing tribal enmities, of communities fracturing into bitterly opposed groups. Like literature, my own field, the Nobel Prize is an idea that, in times like these, helps us to think beyond our dividing walls, that reminds us of what we must struggle for together as human beings.”

*–Kazuo Ishiguro, excerpt from his speech at the Nobel Banquet, December 10, 2017*





# SPRING 2018 Contents

## 18 Life on the Circuit

Ken Grant on how amateur repairs help preserve the history of vaudeville.

## 12 The Price

Steve Ennis on how the Arthur Miller papers came to the Ransom Center, a story more than 50 years in the making.

4 *Borges, Beowulf, and Texas*  
Researcher Joe Stadolnik on how the Argentine poet ended up reading and writing about Old English poetry.

7 *Scholarship, Time Machines, and Madness*  
Hidden Room Artistic Director Beth Burns on John Wilkes Booth's promptbook for *Richard III*.

20 *Teaching in the Archives*  
Reid Echols on facilitating the thrill of discovery in the undergraduate classroom.

24 *Digital Archaeology*  
Abby Adams on digging up computing histories in literary manuscript collections.

## *The Poetic Space of Ellsworth Kelly's Prints*

by Tracy Bonfitto | pg. 22



### DEPARTMENTS

Around the Plaza . . . . .	2
Artifact . . . . .	6
Events . . . . .	9
Membership . . . . .	10
Researcher Publications . . . . .	26
The Archivist's Archive . . . . .	29

## Director's note



Many of us followed with particular interest and pride the Nobel Prize in Literature award ceremony in Stockholm.

In his Nobel Prize lecture, Kazuo Ishiguro spoke in deeply personal terms about his own childhood and his early development as a novelist. He recalled his very first radio play, which he submitted unsuccessfully to the BBC but which he later used as a writing sample when he applied for admission to Malcolm Bradbury's creative writing program at the University of East Anglia. He recalled as well some of his other earliest efforts including a macabre short story about a suicide pact and another about street fights in Scotland where he had briefly worked as a community organizer.

"Potatoes and Lovers" was perhaps an inauspicious title for an aspiring writer, and Ishiguro omitted mention of the title in his Nobel lecture, but the typescript of this early radio play is present among his papers along with early versions of the two stories he mentioned: "Waiting for J." and "The Playground." In fact, the archive, which the Ransom Center acquired in 2015, tells a complementary story to the one Ishiguro recounted in his Nobel address, and it will be the primary resource for all future study of his life and work.

**STEPHEN ENNISS**  
Director, Harry Ransom Center

## Community

### ARTS AND CLASS

The Ransom Center's planned exhibition on the Arts and Crafts movement—scheduled to open in spring 2019—recently served as the focus for a semester-long advanced interior design studio within the School of Architecture.



The studio, led by Associate Professor and Director of the Interior Design Program Tamie Glass, engaged students in several aspects of exhibition design. Between assignments, students attended a series of lectures by professionals in the fields of lighting and graphic design, historical color research, and interactive technologies, as well as lectures and tours by Ransom Center staff and the exhibition's curators. Students balanced their exploration into concepts for twenty-first-century exhibition design against the specific parameters of our exhibition project, from its objects and narrative to the gallery space.

**8,429** undergraduate & graduate students visited our classrooms last year

### CONNECT WITH US @ransomcenter

 **France in Texas**  
**@franceintexas**  
Jan 31

French Ambassador Gérard Araud visits the archives at the Harry Ransom Center & takes a look at rare documents by #dreyfus #cocteau #picasso #ravel #apollinaire #sartre



 **@reyintexas**  
Pablo taking in the beauty of the world's first photograph (ca. 1826). Photo by Joseph Niépce. SO many treasures @ransomcenter! Come and visit! #atx #texas #photography  
JUNE 27



# Scholarship & Research

## THOUSANDS OF CULTURAL HERITAGE MATERIALS INSTANTLY SHAREABLE IN NEW ONLINE PLATFORM

More than 50,000 images in the Ransom Center's digital collections portal are now available via the International Image Interoperability Framework (IIIF). IIIF offers new ways to view, compare, and engage with images. Our images and descriptive metadata are now instantly sharable with other IIIF-enabled digital image collections such as the British Library, the Getty Museum, and the Yale Center for British Art, to name just a few.



### SECRETS! THRILLS! ADVENTURE!

*Decades of movie poster history go online*

The more than 10,000 posters in our Movie Poster Collection are being digitized. We are also making them available online to allow for remote access and easier exploration, and to provide greater opportunities for research while preserving their condition. Many posters are from the 1940s through the 1970s, and include musicals, epics, westerns, sword-and-sandal, horror, and counter culture films.

### NOW YOU SEE IT *Recently cataloged collections*

- Harry Houdini collection
- *Mad Men* collection
- Ralph Eugene Meatyard photography collection
- British Sexological Society records
- Nancy Cunard art collection

*See more of what's been newly cataloged, updated, and brought online at <http://budurl.com/cataloged>.*



### Vaudeville!

Through July 15, 2018

Drawing on our extensive performing arts holdings, *Vaudeville!* tells the story of one of the most popular forms of entertainment in the history of American theatre.

This exhibition features more than 200 items that relate to some of vaudeville's best-known performers—Harry Houdini, Bert Williams, George M. Cohan, Fanny Brice, Burns & Allen, Tony Pastor, the Nicholas Brothers, Barquette—and explores how this uniquely American form of entertainment helped shape the nation's identity for more than 100 years.

## SPRING 2018

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Phone: 512-471-8944 | [www.hrc.utexas.edu](http://www.hrc.utexas.edu)

To change your contact information, please notify:  
Suzanne Krause, Editor | [skrause@utexas.edu](mailto:skrause@utexas.edu)

Suzanne Krause *Editor*  
Anne-Charlotte Patterson *Designer*  
Leslie Ernst *Art Director*  
Daniel Zmud *Webmaster*

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The University of Texas at Austin

# Borges, *Beowulf*, and Texas

How did the Argentine poet end up reading and writing about Old English poetry?

BY JOE STADOLNIK

Jorge Luis Borges had learned English as a child with his English grandmother in Buenos Aires, and voraciously read English books in his father's library. In mid-life he gravitated to poetry written in our modern language's medieval Germanic forebear: poems like the heroic epic of *Beowulf* and forlorn elegies like the *Seafarer* and *Wanderer*.

But English learned chatting with your grandmother or reading Dickens novels won't help much with Old English. Borges encountered *Beowulf* in Old English, printed in *An Anglo-Saxon Reader in Prose and Verse* (1879) by Henry Sweet. Like most contemporary English readers, Borges would have found this incomprehensible. But he got to work trying to understand it.

In 1958, when he was director of the National Library of Argentina, Borges pored over the Old English in Sweet's *Reader* with a small group of students on Saturday mornings.

In *Borges: A Life*, biographer Edwin Williamson describes the poet's thrill in working through Old English word by word, dictionary at his side, during these weekly study sessions: "His first encounter with the language produced a strange exhilaration—he sallied forth into the street with his students declaiming a passage they had succeeded in deciphering that morning."

Borges himself describes the thrill of learning Old English in a poem, "Al iniciar el estudio de gramática anglosajona" ["Embarking on the study of Anglo-Saxon Grammar"]. Soon enough, the study of Old English had captivated Borges as much as the poetry itself had.

Sometime around 1958, Borges wrote an essay about that thrill one feels in the rediscovery of an ancient language belonging to a distant past, in a distant land. He imagined too how this labor of love could end in

Jorge Luis Borges (left) with Dr. Miguel Gonzalez-Gerth in 1982. Photo by Larry Murphey.



Ezra Pound's copy of Henry Sweet's *An Anglo-Saxon Reader in Prose and Verse, with grammar, metre, notes and glossary* (The Clarendon Press, 1898). From the Harry Ransom Center's Ezra Pound collection.

heartbreak. The essay retells the story of Grímur Jónsson Thorkelin, an Icelandic scholar who rescued the *Beowulf* manuscript from obscurity in London's British Library.

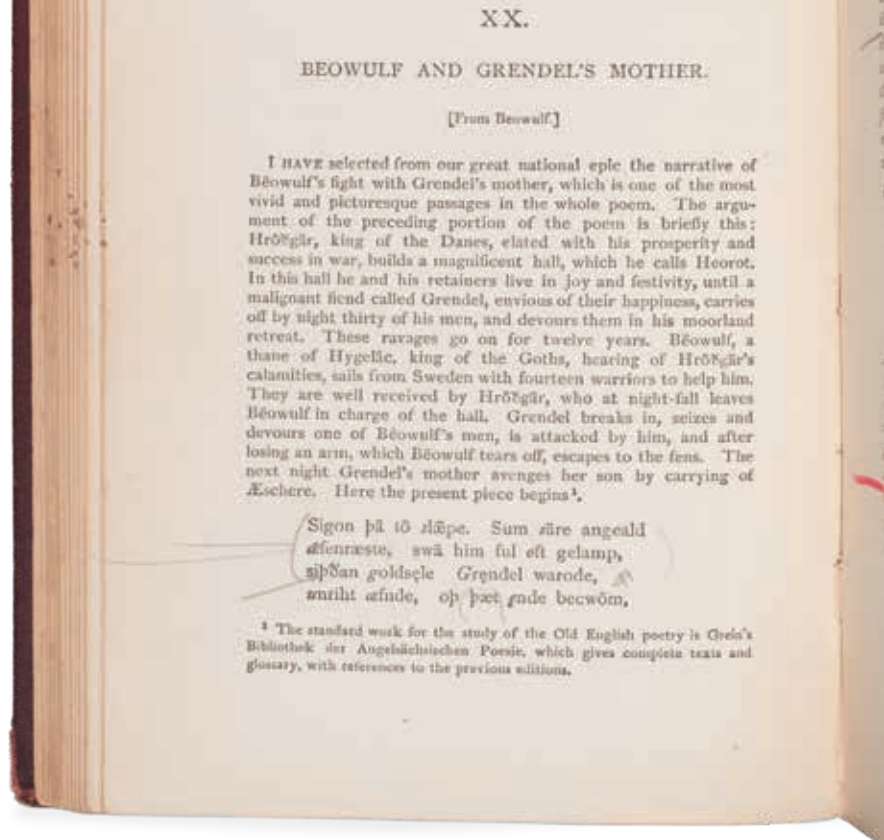
Thorkelin took decades to publish his research, and when he did, he was crushed by some harsh criticism of his scholarly missteps (of which there were many). This essay, called "Thorkelin y el Beowulf," closes with Borges wondering whether and how the devastated Thorkelin might be loving the poem still, in the afterlife:

*Such is the singular story of Thorkelin and his ill-fated passion. Death took his body in 1829, but we are free to imagine a continuation on a different plane. Thorkelin, in a Christian heaven, talking with the poet of Beowulf; Thorkelin in a Platonic heaven, gazing at the eternal archetype of Beowulf. . . . We're free also to think in a Pythagorean way, that Thorkelin inhabited other bodies and that today, in some bookstore in Buenos Aires, he turns the pages of this chanced-upon book, sees the unfamiliar word Beowulf and feels, just barely, the beginning of some vague disquiet—*

This is an example of what David Foster Wallace called a "Borges trademark," the "distant interrogative ending" that dangles infinite implications before the reader: What if Thorkelin is spending eternal bliss talking to the Beowulf-poet? What if his soul, somewhere, is just now re-embarking on an ill-fated passion for Anglo-Saxon? What if that's you?

Borges would never publish this essay for an Argentine Thorkelin to chance upon in a Buenos Aires bookstore, but it survives in manuscript in an unassuming notebook in the Borges papers at the Ransom Center. It is written by his mother, Leonor Acevedo, as his growing interest in the study of Old English coincided with the onset of his blindness.

Borges came to The University of Texas as a visiting professor in 1961, a short time after this essay's probable composition. While in Austin, he developed a deeply-felt affection for Texas. (Eric Benson tells this story better than I could in his essay for *Guernica* magazine "Forgotten but Not Gone.")



Borges struck up a friendship with Rudolph Willard, a resident Anglo-Saxonist with whom he could chat about Old English poetic devices like the kenning and gossip about the field's foremost scholars.

Borges would eventually write a short story, "The Bribe" [El Soborno], populated by fictionalized Old English faculty members in UT's Parlin Hall who try to outmaneuver one another in the small world of their profession.

His co-authored introduction to medieval Germanic literatures, written after his stay in Texas, recommends a translation of the Icelandic *Edda* by UT's then resident scholar of Old Norse, Lee M. Hollander.

The University embraced Borges, too; campus flags flew at half-staff upon his death in 1986. Borges, for his part, put a line from the Old English *Battle of Maldon* on his tombstone: "And ne forhtedon na," "do not fear at all."

Borges's fondness for Texas and his love of the study of Old English got all tangled up in one another in that fall semester of 1961. It's fitting, then, that "Thorkelin y el Beowulf" would find a home at the Ransom Center.

*Joe Stadonik is a Junior Research Fellow at the Institute of Advanced Studies, University College London. His research explores scientific language in the literary and public culture of medieval England.*



# Calculating Beauty

AARON PRATT  
PFORZHEIMER CURATOR OF  
EARLY BOOKS AND MANUSCRIPTS

These early astrological devices were also cutting-edge IT

During the summer of 2017, the Kozmetsky Family Foundation and Reissa Foundation made a generous—and stunning—donation to the Ransom Center: a set of eight large woodcut diagrams on paper, each featuring several layers of rotating parts. Among other things, they include intricate star charts illustrating constellations and slender dragons that serve as pointers.

Issued around 1575, the set was designed and printed by Leonard Thurneisser zum Thurn to accompany the second edition of his alchemical and astrological treatise, *Archidoxa*. The German polymath and miracle doctor thought that, with the help of his book and the eight devices, readers would be able to determine the influence that the heavens were going to exert on their lives and the natural world. In essence, his diagrams are horoscope calculators. More broadly, rotating devices of their kind are known as “volvelles,” and the complexity and detail of Thurneisser’s make them a strong contender for the most elaborate ever produced. The set now at the Ransom Center has the added benefit of sumptuous hand coloring.

Cutting-edge information technology in their time, volvelles like Thurneisser’s transformed the otherwise static surface of pages into interactive vehicles for learning and knowledge creation. From Latin *volvere*, a verb meaning “to turn,” “volvelle” emerged in the Middle Ages as a noun that emphasizes the dynamic nature of new devices that were being made of parchment and paper. The Center is fortunate to have many examples in its extensive collections of early printed books, and the Kozmetsky Family Foundation and Reissa Foundation are to be thanked for their especially impressive addition.





# John Wilkes Booth's Promptbook for *Richard III*: Scholarship, Time Machines, and Madness

BETH BURNS,  
HIDDEN ROOM THEATRE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

*"Ready trumpet. Boy ready with armor  
Take time. More piano. Long flourish  
continued till discovery, next Sc. - and  
do not W Till Mr Booth is on stage."*

I'm trying to decipher this sentence. I'm trying to translate these notes, some written by a prompter (basically our modern-day stage manager) and some by the star of the show (our modern-day actor/director), into usable instructions. I'm trying to resuscitate playing practices that have been dead for over 100 years, using an 1861 promptbook of Shakespeare's *Richard III*. (Really, it's Restoration playwright Colley Cibbers "fix" of Shakespeare's *Richard III* in 1699, but that's another story.) The promptbook is the play script with detailed notes handwritten inside to instruct actors and theatre staff before the star arrives to play his part.

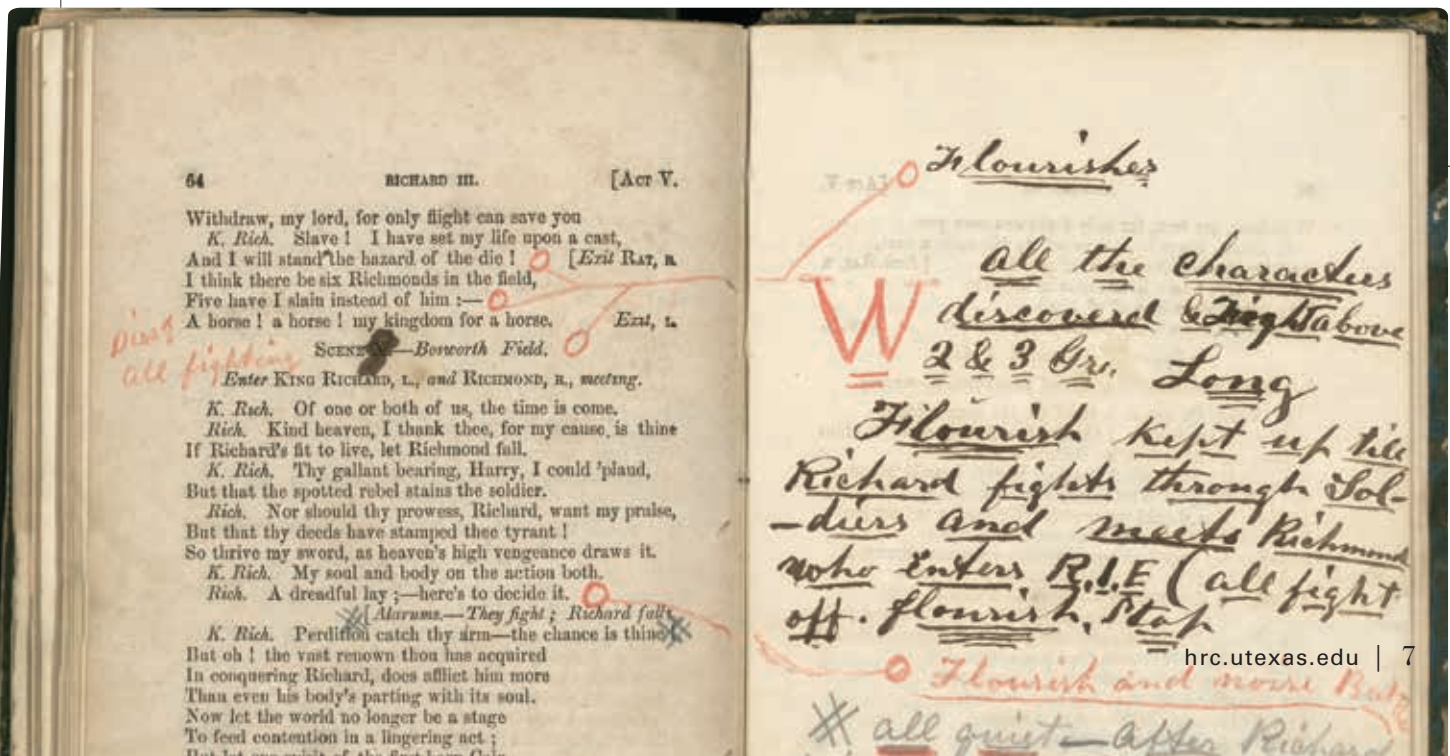
For The Hidden Room, a company that specializes in scholar/practitioner collaborations, often re-creating historically significant theatre, these

handwritten notes are DNA hidden in the book's rich amber. But the actor/director who wrote most of them, the man who is assisting me from the beyond, is John Wilkes Booth.

I hate John Wilkes Booth.

In 1865, John Wilkes Booth will assassinate Abraham Lincoln. Yet here in 1861/2018 he kindly assists me, blissfully unaware that he will become one of the most detested villains in American history. "Shouts. Clashing of swords all through—distant at times." That's good. That's a good note. The sound effects of swords clanging, sometimes more quietly as though far away helps build an encompassing battle for the audience to imagine.

"All the characters discovered & fight above. 2 & 3 groups. Long flourish kept up til Richard fights through Soldiers and meets Richmond who enters R.I.E. All fight at flourish stop." Now I have a better idea of the timing and accents of the battle,



CONTINUED

and its extravagance. I know this is a massive, violent spectacle, and I see the drama of the lead-up to Richard and Richmond's epic fight, as Richard forces his way through a curtain of struggling soldiers. These are remarkably helpful notes. But I remember again that they come from him, and I struggle to focus.

We almost certainly would not have this promptbook had its owner not been so morbidly interesting. It is well-traveled, and such books often didn't survive past their usefulness in production. It could have been chucked at any point. Legend has it most of John's belongings were burned by his brother Edwin, an actor whose reputation for greatness lives on despite his brother's infamy.

But still this promptbook remains, and was recently pulled from its careful storage at the Harry Ransom Center by Eric Colleary, Cline Curator of Theatre and Performing Arts. Colleary recognized its immediate practical use, especially to a theatre company like the Hidden Room. Regardless of the man it belonged to, despite him even, it is a treasure to me. It's a time machine back to forgotten practices in drama, and there is so much to learn. The big red "W" underlined, what is that? Into the vaults Colleary and I go to find books from the period on acting and "amateur theatricals." There it is! "W" is for "whistle," and indicates a scene change. Different types of whistles

for different scenes. I learn from an extant poem that the whistle is "shrill" and audible to the audience. I learn that the Prompter has a whistle around his neck to call for these scene changes, and a bell around his wrist to cue music. I wonder if this is where the term "bells and whistles" originates, from over-the-top scene changes and music as noisily called for by the prompter. I also realize this must be the root of the superstition not to whistle in a theatre. No one wants to be crushed under the weight of a scenic drop.

The promptbook keeps creating questions for me, and further research at the Ransom Center keeps providing answers. I know that there is a "boy ready with armor," but what did that armor look like? Off to the stacks to see pictures of other "Richards" of the period and their armor choices since no pictures of Booth's Richard are known. What music was likely being played here? How was gesture acting articulated in the 1860s? Theatre is at a tipping point in this period. What side did Booth's production fall towards? How did resident actors approach their scripts? What was it like for a traveling actor like Booth to perform five shows a week with an ensemble he'd meet only a few days before the run? The dive goes on and on, and I'm reassured and guided by Eric and Visual Materials Circulation



Coordinator Michael Gilmore as we keep uncovering, learning, questioning.

I remember to be grateful for the promptbook even though it sometimes gives me a shudder as I turn a page. I breathe and keep my focus on unlocking the way we told stories in 1861. I think about the way that helps us as story tellers and story receivers today, and do my best to accept the unintentional gift, this magic mirror back into a theatre in 1861, that a madman left behind.

"All quiet - after Richard tries twice to rise and cannot."

*The Hidden Room Theatre will present Booth's Richard III in co-production with the Harry Ransom Center and presented at the glorious 1863 Scottish Rite Theatre in June.*



# Calendar

Unless otherwise noted, events are free and take place at the Ransom Center. Full calendar at [hrc.utexas.edu/events](http://hrc.utexas.edu/events).

APRIL

**10 LECTURE TUESDAY 6 PM**  
Nate DiMeo, creator of the historical story-telling podcast *The Memory Palace* and 2016–2017 Artist in Residence at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, discusses his methods of research, the production of his podcast, and the role of public scholarship in the American media landscape. Organized by the Department of American Studies.

**16 FILM/DISCUSSION MONDAY 6 PM**  
A screening of the documentary *The Newspaperman: The Life and Times of Ben Bradlee* (2017), followed by a conversation with Leonard Downie Jr., who served as managing editor of *The Washington Post* under Bradlee and later succeeded him as executive editor. The conversation will be moderated by R. B. Brenner, Director, UT School of Journalism. Co-sponsored by the School of Journalism.

**24 FILM/DISCUSSION TUESDAY 6:30 PM**  
*An American Conscience: The Reinhold Niebuhr Story* (2017) explores the life and influence of Niebuhr (1892–1971), a theologian, writer, political activist, and one of the most influential public intellectuals of the twentieth century. Presidents from Barack Obama to Jimmy Carter have credited his impact on their thinking, as did Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who cited Niebuhr in his “Letter from a Birmingham Jail.” The screening will be followed by a discussion of Niebuhr’s ongoing relevance with filmmaker Martin Doblmeier. Co-presented by Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary.

**11 READING WEDNESDAY NOON**  
Poetry on the Plaza celebrates National Poetry month and the work of poets from the University of Texas faculty including Roger Reeves and Lisa Olstein.

**17 DISCUSSION TUESDAY 4:30 PM**  
In conjunction with *Vaudeville!*, Chair of the American Studies Department and Ransom Center Faculty Curator Steven Hoelscher leads a conversation about visual representations of race and ethnicity from the late nineteenth century to the present. Panelists include Jacqueline Jones, Professor and Chair, Department of History; Leonard N. Moore, Professor, Department of History and Vice President of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement (Interim); and Shirley E. Thompson, Associate Professor, Department of American Studies and Department of African and African Diaspora Studies.

**VAUDEVILLE FILM SERIES THURSDAYS 7 PM**  
**Eric Colleary, the Ransom Center’s Cline Curator of Theatre and Performing Arts, will introduce the films.**



**3** *She Done Him Wrong* (1933) features Mae West in her early stage persona of Diamond Lil. Alongside Cary Grant, West’s performance captures the environment of a late nineteenth-century Bowery theatre.

**10** *Lime Kiln Club Field Day* (1913) and *The Natural Born Gambler* (1916). Starring vaudeville sensation Bert Williams, these rare silent films are believed to be among the earliest to feature African American actors. *Lime Kiln Club Field Day* was preserved by The Museum of Modern Art with support from The Lillian Gish Trust for Film Preservation.

**17** The Marx Brothers’ early vaudeville acts were pieced together and expanded to create elaborate stage and screen musical comedies like *The Cocoanuts* (1929).

**24** William Powell and Myrna Loy star in *The Great Ziegfeld* (1936), the biographical musical of legendary impresario Florenz Ziegfeld Jr.

[Mae West on the Columbia Burlesque circuit in Chicago], 1914. Unidentified photographer. New York Journal American Photographic Morgue, Harry Ransom Center.

MAY

# Don DeLillo's LIBRA at 30

Decades after its publication, this fictional account of the assassination of John F. Kennedy in Dallas remains provocative.

LISA PULSIFER, HEAD OF EDUCATION AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Remember the ambulance in Atsugi, camo green,  
bringing the pilot to the plane?

Me-too and you-too.

Lee didn't feel real good. First they shoot  
A spaceman in a helmet and rubber suit?

, then they <sup>died</sup> ~~try~~ <sup>know</sup> to give him artificial  
respiration. He <sup>knows</sup> from marine training this  
is the last thing you do for a man with abdominal  
wounds.

Aerospace.

He sees himself shot as the camera caught it.

adopts ~~the~~ an audience viewpoint.

He sees it happen as if on TV.  
He has always had an  
ability to adopt a distant view.  
Lidell's guidance - a gain twisted by  
self-mockery.

is the white nightmare I saw,  
in the sky. Me-too and you-too.  
is a stranger, in a mask, falling

He felt a dully and a  
cop talking to  
him

The depth of knowledge and range of opinions that can emerge from a good book discussion has always been one of my favorite aspects of reading. Even though reading is a solitary activity, it brings people together and gives us a common language. Questions (usually unanswerable) often arise during book discussions about the intentions of an author. How fortunate then, to have access to the archives here at the Ransom Center where the creative process and choices made by an author can be gleaned from the materials in their archives. For our member book clubs, materials from a particular book are pulled from the archive and shown preceding a discussion with small groups who have already read the work.

Using the archives to understand an author's viewpoint is helpful, but clarity on the author's every intention cannot be expected. I ask members in the discussion to think skeptically about what's there, but also what's *not* there. What might they wish was there (possibly a diary, a calendar, or a map that proves the author visited a particular setting)? Do those items reside somewhere else, or maybe they never existed? Conceivably, items have been lost over time. Just because it's not in the archive doesn't mean that it didn't happen.

One book we recently discussed was Don DeLillo's *Libra*, which marked its 30th anniversary this year. The book is a fictional interpretation of the motives and events around Lee Harvey Oswald's assassination of John F. Kennedy.

The larger discussion focused on aspects of the book including the many characters and settings, and debating what parts were true and what might have been fictionalized.



## THE BOOK CLUB EXAMINED

**DeLillo's field research** from walking around locations mentioned in the novel (New Orleans, Miami, Dallas) and keeping notes for each setting in a separate, small colorful notebook.

**A copy of a letter that Lee Harvey Oswald wrote** when he was 16 years old to the Communist Party Youth League, asking if he could join.

**A copy of the Marine training manual** from the era of Oswald's enlistment. DeLillo underlined passages about weaponry, and readers can see those lines reprinted in *Libra*.

**Reviews that DeLillo saved.** Some positive, some negative. DeLillo occasionally reacted to the reviews and wrote notes directly on the printed articles.

One thing I like to do when I'm selecting items from the archive is to show the author's process by laying multiple drafts of the same passage side by side, so we can see how one scene builds and changes over time. DeLillo's archive is particularly rich for this activity as he would re-work the same scene again and again until it met his standards. Each round of edits is laid out on a different typed page with annotations added by hand in pencil and ink.

We looked at three versions of the scene in *Libra* where conspirator Wayne Elko is in a movie theater following Kennedy's assassination. We carefully examined what was rewritten and what details changed. Between each draft the number of people in the movie theater changed dramatically. We discussed why this might be. How did that change affect our understanding of the scene, or the larger book? The details about the particular films playing in the theater were also discussed, and the archive revealed a printed film synopsis that DeLillo used as a resource for this scene.

Another item that prompted a lively discussion was a list DeLillo wrote to his publisher's lawyers to tell them who the "real" and the "invented" characters were. Those were his words for it. The members found this added context to be invaluable because his characters were so believable it was not immediately obvious who the invented characters were.

Our discussion of *Libra* repeatedly questioned which parts of the story were historical and which were fiction. DeLillo's archive helped guide us through his research and showed how he was able to accurately portray some of the historical facts, while being mindful about filling in gaps in the story with fictional aspects.

## MEMBER BOOK CLUB

APRIL

**David Foster Wallace,  
A Supposedly Funny  
Thing I'll Never Do Again:  
Essays & Arguments**

JUNE

**Doris Lessing,  
Alfred and Emily**

slipcover. Beside/on its left, a small table with  
a filigreed radio of the Twenties on it; on the right

ate  
around  
airs  
area,

The Price

by Steve Enniss,  
Ransom Center Director





# THE STORY OF HOW THE ARTHUR MILLER PAPERS CAME TO THE RANSOM CENTER HAS BEEN MORE THAN 50 YEARS IN THE MAKING

**IN JANUARY 1961 ARTHUR MILLER AND MARILYN MONROE DIVORCED**, and that same month Miller's personal attorney approached the New York bookseller Lew David Feldman seeking an appraisal of Miller's papers and guidance on where they should be placed. Feldman was one of the most active dealers in rare books and manuscripts in the city at the time, and he had become a principal supplier of collections to the rapidly growing Humanities Research Center at The University of Texas at Austin, now the Harry Ransom Center.

Miller's mother passed away in March of that same year, and there was no further movement on the matter of Miller's papers until the following September when Feldman wrote to Warren Roberts, the then Director of the Humanities Research Center, to report on his first meeting with Miller: "We have had an extraordinary visit with Arthur Miller and brought back to the shop a lovely lot of original manuscript material and, needless to say, we made a strong pitch for Austin although it is entirely possible the he might want it to go to the Library of Congress to whom he leans rather strongly at the moment."

Feldman wrote to Harry Ransom, the then Chancellor of the University System, on the 9th of October to say that Miller was still "on the fence" about where to place the papers, but he was committed to taking action by the end of the year. Feldman was advocating for his best customer: "Although we keep pitching strikes," he wrote Ransom, "we do not wish to press too hard lest he might recoil under pressure, but we do think a get-together with him amongst ourselves will turn the trick." Miller had moved out of the apartment he and Marilyn Monroe had shared on East 57th Street, and he was living temporarily at the Chelsea Hotel. Harry Ransom and Warren Roberts traveled to New York to meet with him on the 24th of the month.

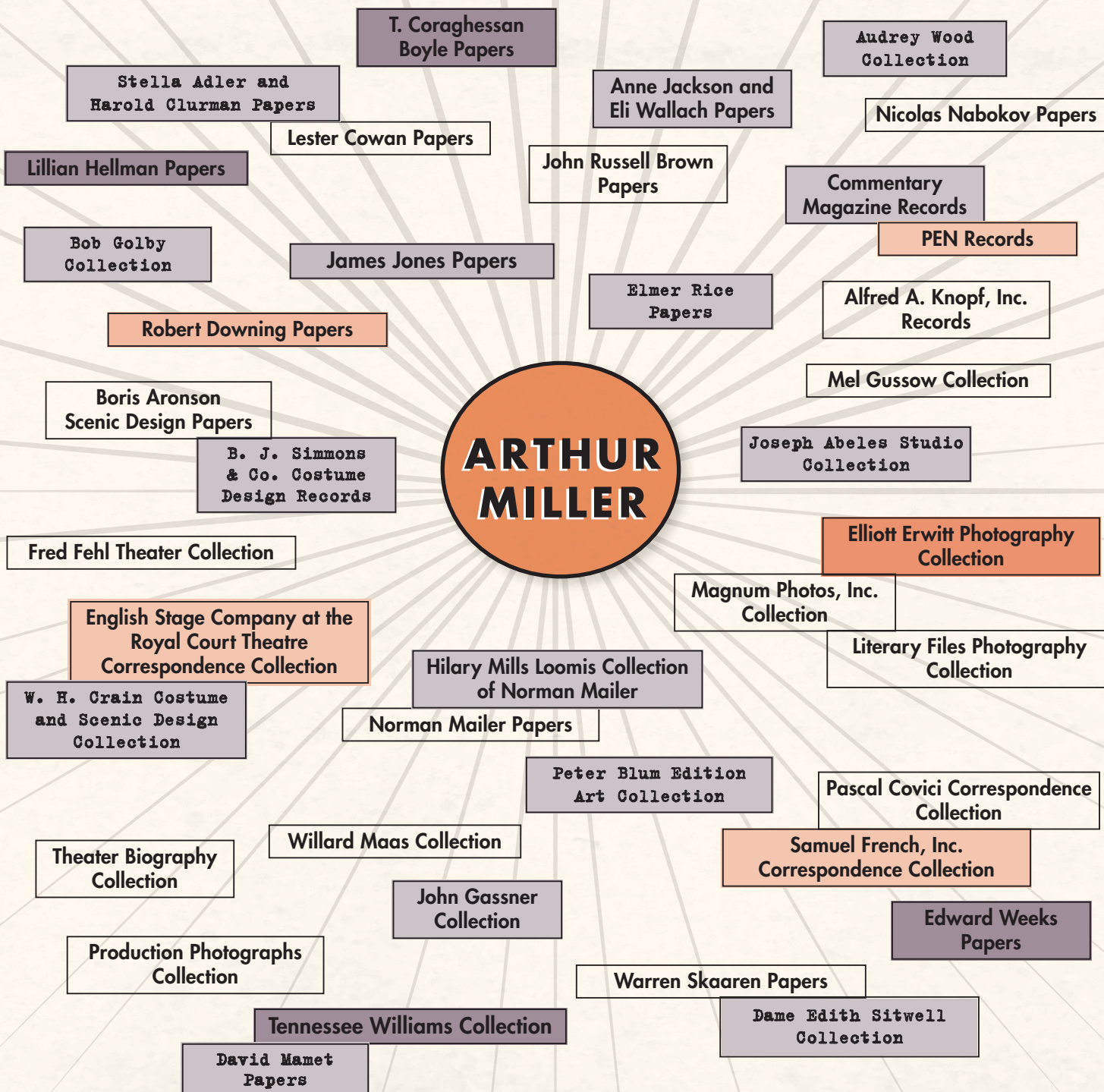
The collection Feldman appraised spanned Arthur Miller's writing life. Present was a typescript of the early play "They Too Arise," written when Miller was still a student at the University of Michigan. An early radio script for "Joe the Motorman" bore the handwritten note "This is my first radio play – as well as the first writing for which I was paid." The materials that Miller turned over to Feldman also included drafts of each of Miller's major plays, including the earliest drafts of *Death of a Salesman*, *The Crucible*, and *A View from the Bridge*. Feldman split the manuscripts into two groups for two distinct donations, the first valued at \$30,050 and the second \$21,050 for a combined valuation just over \$51,000.



The first of the two gifts was finalized quickly, Christmas week, after the campus had shut down for the holidays. President Smiley wrote to express The University of Texas's appreciation for the gift just three days before Christmas. "Arthur Miller, Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright, has chosen the University of Texas Humanities Research Center as the repository for his manuscripts and other literary papers," *The New York Times* reported at the time. A few weeks later,



# THE CENTER OF A NETWORK OF RANSOM CENTER COLLECTIONS





Arthur Miller has long had a significant presence at the Ransom Center. In 1961 and 1962, Miller donated a collection of his manuscripts to the Center. These materials—including drafts and working notebooks for *All My Sons*, *Death of a Salesman*, *The Crucible*, and many other plays—have been studied and enjoyed by researchers and students in the decades since. The Ransom Center has also been seeking out and acquiring original letters, scripts, photographs, and papers from other sources to offer researchers additional resources to study. The extensive Arthur Miller archive recently acquired from the Arthur Miller Trust joins these materials and a rich network of other collections at the Ransom Center that connect with Miller and his work.

One of the Ransom Center's key priorities in developing its collections is to bring together materials that complement and enhance one another. To this end, the Center works to build a network of interrelated archives that demonstrate the ties between creative figures. Individuals represented in the Ransom Center's collections often collaborated with, influenced, or corresponded with one another. Theatre productions are represented in the papers of playwrights, actors, designers, critics, and photographers, who each provide a different perspective on a play. The various nodes of connection between our collections give scholars and students the ability to approach their research from a wide range of angles, allowing them to delve deeply into a subject and to better understand the context in which works of art and literature were created.

Arthur Miller is a key figure connecting dozens of the Ransom Center's collections.

These collections are carefully preserved and accessible for research at the Ransom Center. This extensive network of collections demonstrates the breadth and significance of Arthur Miller's impact on twentieth-century culture, and the Ransom Center's dedication to the study of his legacy.

**– Megan Barnard & Eric Colleary**

in March, President Smiley wrote again to acknowledge the gift of the second portion of Miller's papers.

### THE PRICE

It was in part the deaths of his own parents that prompted Miller to undertake a new play based on the disposal of a family's personal effects, but the recent disposition of his own papers would have been on his mind as well.

While his 1968 play *The Price* is about the different life choices two brothers have made, these choices are drawn into relief in the course of a negotiation over the disposal of the family's property. The play is about our negotiations with the past, but it also reveals Miller's own initiation into the world of accountancy and tax planning. Walter has become a successful doctor, while his brother, Victor, became a policeman and went to work at a young age in order to support his father. Walter is the more successful in a conventional way, and he explains to his brother how the second-hand furniture dealer they are to meet can help them and how they should handle the disposal of the family's possessions. "It's a dream world but it's legal," he tells his brother:

*"He estimates its highest retail value, which could be put at some such figure. Then I donate it to the Salvation Army. I'd have to take ownership, you see, because my tax rate is much higher than yours so it would make more sense if I took the deduction. I pay around fifty percent tax, so if I make a twenty-five-thousand-dollar contribution I'd be saving around twelve thousand in taxes. Which we could split however you wanted to. Let's say we split it in half, I'd give you six thousand dollars. A pause. It's really the only sensible way to do it, Vic."*

The "price" is the least of the play's preoccupations, but the changing state of tax law



CONTINUED

would have a profound effect on the remainder of the Arthur Miller archive, which would not be united with Miller's own early manuscripts and notebooks for more than 50 years.

When *The Price* closed after a successful run on Broadway, Congress was debating legislation that would eliminate the charitable deduction for artists or writers who wished to make a gift of "artistic works and letters, memorandums, etc. produced by the donor." As a result of the passage of the Tax Reform Act of 1969 Miller would make no additional gifts to the Humanities Research Center, but instead began keeping his papers while he waited for the tax benefit to be restored.

### 1983 DEPOSIT

In 1983 Miller and his third wife, the photographer Inge Morath, had a fire at their Connecticut home, and many of their books were damaged or destroyed. Fortunately his papers escaped harm. Most had been stored in the barn down the hill from the house, while others were in the small writing cabin Miller had built for himself behind the house. Following that disaster, Miller asked Andreas Brown of the Gotham Book Mart to undertake an insurance valuation and to supply copies of any books that could be replaced. It was during his visit to Miller's Roxbury home that Brown learned the extent of the growing collection of manuscripts, correspondence,



**FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION** **CONFIDENTIAL**

Form No. 1  
THIS CASE ORIGINATED AT **NEW YORK, N. Y.** NY FILE NO. **100-57673**

REPORT MADE AT <b>NEW YORK, N. Y.</b>	DATE WHEN MADE <b>9/27/44</b>	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE <b>8/10, 18, 22, 25; 9/5, 25/44</b>	REPORT MADE BY <b>[REDACTED] B7c</b>
TITLE <b>ARTHUR ASHER MILLER</b>	AGENCY <b>cc - 6112</b>	SECURITY MATTER - <b>0</b>	CHARACTER OF CASE <b>C AGENCY / cc - DNI</b>
ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN OTHERWISE	REQ. REC'D <b>2-18-54</b>	REQ. REC'D <b>10-14-58</b>	REP'T FORW. <b>10-27-58</b>
SUMMARY OF FACTS: <b>[REDACTED]</b>	BY <b>[REDACTED] B7c</b>	BY <b>[REDACTED] B7c</b>	BY <b>[REDACTED] B7c</b>

AGENCY **cc - 5012**  
REQ. REC'D **3-3-53**  
REP'T FORW. **3-25-53**  
BY **[REDACTED] B7c**

Classified by **926910**  
Declassify on: **DATE 7-23-84**  
**244-541**

(c) B1

The records of Selective Service Board 133, 129 Montague Street, Brooklyn, reflected that ARTHUR ASHER MILLER resided at 18 Schermerhorn Street, Brooklyn; that the subject was born on October 17, 1915 in New York City. The records further indicated that the subject had graduated from high school and had attended the University of Michigan, completing a four-year course in English literature and history. Subject's occupation is given as author, radio and playwrighting, in which he had engaged since 1935. In November 1942



and other personal and professional papers. Brown could hardly contain his excitement. Writing to the new Director of the Humanities Research Center, Dechard Turner, he reported “A fortuitous event has occurred and could result in considerable benefit to the Humanities Research Center.”

“He [Miller] gave me a ‘tour’ of the files and I can assure you they are a treasure trove. He has saved everything, including unpublished manuscripts, diary-journals, literary correspondence (Steinbeck, Tennessee Williams, John Updike, Roth, Bellow, etc.), play and film scripts, etc., etc. As you know, he also had close associations with many people in the film industry (his former wife Marilyn Monroe, Clark Gable, Montgomery Clift, John Huston, Mildred Dunnock, Elia Kazan, Eli Wallach, Maureen Stapleton, etc.).”

Brown shared Miller’s thinking on the matter: “He wanted to know if the Humanities Research Center would be willing to take the papers on deposit until the tax laws are revised or until he might decide to make a sale. I did nothing more than suggest that if he were willing to give Texas a firm first refusal on a future purchase at the fair market value, you would probably give serious thought to taking the papers.”

Brown closed, however, with some words of caution: “I do get a little nervous when I note that Yale University is only a 45 minute drive from the Miller’s front door.” (Many years later Yale would make an unsuccessful attempt to purchase the latter half of the Miller archive, including those papers Miller deposited at the Humanities Research Center for safekeeping.)

The tax laws never were revised to reinstate the charitable deduction for a gift of a writer’s own papers, and the largest part of Arthur Miller’s papers would remain in this limbo for decades: not properly part of the Ransom Center’s holdings and therefore not cataloged, conserved, or publicly accessible. Just weeks before Arthur Miller’s death in 2005 he made a second large deposit of materials, title for which passed on his death to the Arthur Miller Trust.

Occasionally over the years the Miller family would ask that a writer be permitted to consult the papers being stored for them at the Ransom Center (Christopher Bigsby was granted access for his two-volume biography), but for the most part Miller’s manuscripts, journals, and correspondence were out of reach.

### FINAL ACT

Arthur Miller’s centennial in 2015 was a time for a reappraisal of Miller’s contributions to American theatre. New interpretations of *Death of a Salesman*, *The Crucible*, *A View from the Bridge*, and *The Price* were produced to critical acclaim; and soon after Rebecca Miller released a poignant documentary about her father. Yet Miller’s papers remained largely unavailable for study. For many years the Ransom Center had been receiving requests for access to a collection over which it had no legal authority. Complicating matters further was the Beinecke Library’s sudden interest in purchasing the materials Miller had long promised to the Ransom Center.

Like President Smiley before him, UT Austin President Gregory L. Fenves took a personal interest in saving the archive of America’s finest playwright, and with authorization from



the Board of Regents the Ransom Center at last purchased Arthur Miller’s remaining papers this past November.

The formerly scattered parts of the Arthur Miller papers are now together where they reside alongside deep complementary collections. They have joined here the archive of the Magnum Photos Agency with its many photographs by Miller’s wife Inge Morath; the records of PEN International, which Miller led from 1966 to 1969; set designs by Boris Aronson, including his designs for *Incident at Vichy*; the papers of Eli Wallach and Anne Jackson, including production materials for *The Misfits*; the papers of acting teacher Stella Adler and those of theatre critic Mel Gussow; and the archives of many of Miller’s peers including Tennessee Williams and Lillian Hellman. For generations to come our understanding of Arthur Miller’s extraordinary achievement in the theatre will be informed by these deep and intertwined collections. **R**

# LIFE ON THE CIRCUIT

## Seen through Poster Repairs

BY KEN GRANT, HEAD OF PAPER LAB

### MAKE-DO REPAIRS HELPED PRESERVE THE HISTORY OF VAUDEVILLE



Collection items that have been selected for exhibition frequently come to the paper lab for repair and stabilization before they are prepared for exhibition. Recently, conservators Kimberly Kwan (left) and Jane Boyd repaired several late nineteenth-century lithographic posters for inclusion in the exhibition *Vaudeville!*

On several of the items we noticed old patches made of poor-quality paper scraps from newspapers, gummed paper tape, and fragments of other prints on the backs of these posters. We often see these sorts of “provisional repairs”—made by previous owners, collectors, and dealers. The decision we have to make in the paper lab is whether to remove this material from the posters before we make our own repairs with high-quality Japanese paper and wheat starch paste.

The nature of the old repairs is interesting. We can surmise that many were made to extend the usable life of the posters. These advertisements for complete shows and particular vaudeville acts were carried by the traveling companies as they moved from one performance venue to the next. Typically, performers were required to provide their own publicity materials and advertising. Many of the posters were quite elaborate large-format four-color lithographic posters that would have been expensive to print. After rough handling, these valuable publicity items were repaired multiple times to extend their usable life.

Several of the posters in the collection were repaired with strips of newspaper clippings—some in French, which suggests that, as the troupe traveled internationally, any readily available scrap paper was used for repairs.

One particularly interesting example for the show production *Ship Ahoy!* has extensive newspaper clipping provisional repairs on the back. Some of the repairs are from a New York newspaper and others, that have birth and death announcements for the city of Rouen, France, appear to be clipped from a copy of a newspaper from that city. It would be interesting to try to track the cities where *Ship Ahoy!* played and see if at some point the show passed through Rouen. This might give a date to the repairs themselves.

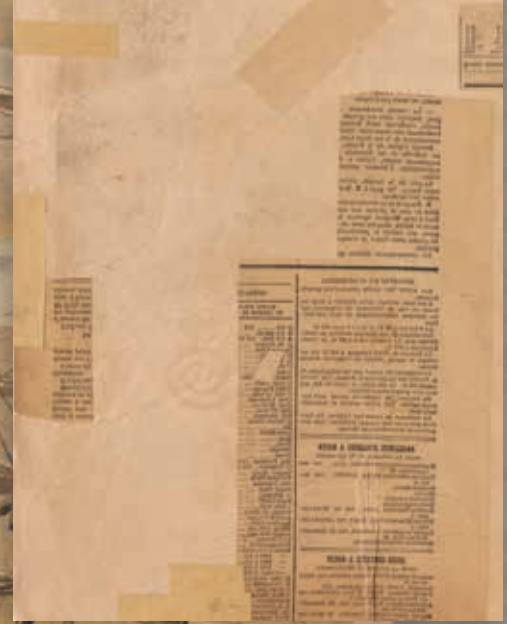
After conferring with Eric Colleary, Cline Curator of Theatre and Performing Arts, who is the exhibition’s curator, we decided to leave the provisional repairs in place unless they posed an imminent danger to the physical stability of the collection item.

In a very real sense, the provisional repairs document the history of these ephemeral prints and the way they were used and re-used through time. **R**



# DONNELLY & MILLER'S FARCICAL OPERA

**STANDARD**  
THEATRE  
COMMENCING  
MONDAY,  
**DEC. 8**



Newspaper clipping repairs on back of poster.



# Teaching in the Archives

BY REID ECHOLS



Tell me why you think this is in the room," I ask, pointing to a pair of delicately beaded moccasins on the lower shelf of the display case.

After facilitating several class visits to the Ransom Center, I'm not surprised by the silence that follows. Many of the students' faces seem to say, "Wait, isn't that your job?"

It is, of course. Which is to say, there is always a logic to the materials in the cases and on the tables, always some connection to the course's methods and matter. That's the unspoken contract between us, the terms of the whole enterprise: I provide content; they provide attention and, if I'm lucky, interest. In asking the question I am, ostensibly, breaking this contract.

The expectations I've disrupted are largely borne out by students' academic experiences: generally, you do the reading, attend the lectures, and hope to absorb enough data to perform well on the exam. Correspondingly, most students (and even some professors) who visit the archives expect to be walked through a selection of significant objects; to be provided with content. This is a reasonable expectation, considering many of their first experiences with cultural institutions like the Ransom Center are with curated public exhibitions.

But there are no exams here, and it's the rare professor who provides assessment based on a single day's visit. Archival education is often, to borrow the expression, all carrot and no stick. You hope to display objects that evoke a strong response: discovery,

curiosity, even occasionally disgust. There's a showmanship to it that can be addictive: "And behind this curtain, you'll find Arthur Conan Doyle's collection of ghost photographs! Step right up and see Radclyffe Hall's prize-winning dachshunds!" You hope for the collective gasp, laugh, or groan. Many times, you even get it.

After a while, however, you begin to wonder what the students really take away from these experiences.

As archival educators, we often work hard to re-create the excitement of the archives, the magic moment of discovery. Maybe this impulse proceeds from our awareness of the extensive, often frustrating labor behind these discoveries: archival research is many things, but rarely is it glamorous. We instinctively fear the frustration that



might cut off a student's engagement with research before it can begin. Further, as scholars and library staff we are trained to offer results, to provide answers, draw connections. We are experts, after all: our primary language is expertise.

As educators, however, we are responsible not only for providing answers, but for generating good questions. I went in search of ways to help students experience, however briefly, what it is like to be faced with an unfamiliar object and begin the labor of making meaning from it—in other words, what it is like to be a researcher. I had discussions with colleagues about what flipping the classroom might look like in a special collections setting.

After an appropriate period of silence, I reveal that the moccasins in question belonged to the English modernist writer D. H. Lawrence. The class hasn't read any Lawrence, but they have just finished Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, a manuscript draft of which is also displayed on a nearby table. After identifying the shoes' owner (I am not so cruel as all that), I invite a group of students to see what they can find in a few minutes of research on their phones.

They soon report a wealth of details: that Huxley and Lawrence had been close friends; that Huxley had visited Lawrence in New Mexico; that Huxley had edited the first volume of Lawrence's letters. One student wonders out loud whether the famous reservation scenes of *Brave New World*, or the character "John the Savage," might have been based on Huxley's visit. Another

raises questions regarding cultural appropriation, and what role the Native American communities Huxley and Lawrence visited might have had in the production of this famous novel. This soon branches into a discussion of other collection materials: manuscripts, paintings, and photographs in the D. H. and Frieda Lawrence collections, the J. Frank Dobie and Anita Brenner papers, western art by Frank Reaugh.

Some of these results I had anticipated, others I couldn't have foreseen. It doesn't always go this well, but then, neither does research: dead ends are inevitable—maybe even invaluable—in the production of knowledge. In any case, the moccasins make a useful "cold open" for the session. Seeing what kinds of questions they might bring to even a well-worn pair of shoes, the students' engagement with the somewhat less inscrutable drafts, letters, and photographs displayed around the room quickly becomes

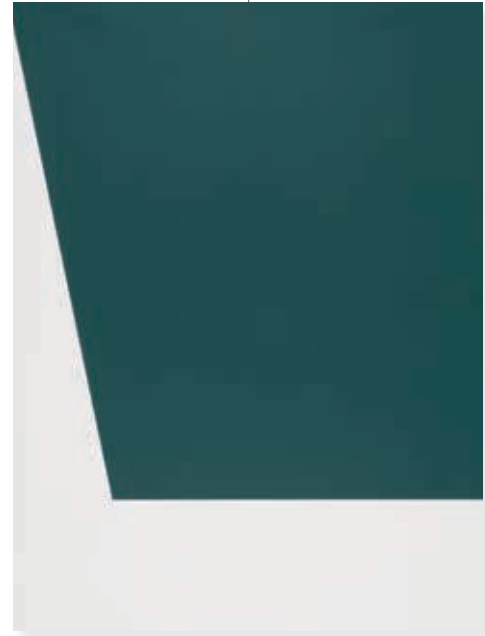
animated, as different groups look up names, compare originals, decipher handwriting, and prepare to present "their" object to the rest of us.

Students are occasionally frustrated when I employ this approach, but more often they express surprise at what they've been able to find on their own. The thrill of discovery is still there, and I'll admit to reserving a few choice anecdotes to keep the discussion moving, but as with most skills, it seems that engaging with a process yields more tangible results than being presented with a product.

*Reid Echols is a Ph.D. candidate currently completing his dissertation in modern English literature at The University of Texas at Austin. As a graduate intern, Reid helped facilitate class visits to the Ransom Center for a number of undergraduate courses, and developed a set of teaching collection guides in the environmental humanities for the Center's Instructional pages.*

D. H. Lawrence's moccasins





## THE POETIC SPACE OF ELLSWORTH KELLY'S PRINTS

TRACY BONFITTO, CURATOR OF ART

*The Mallarmé Suite* comprises four monochromatic lithographs created in conjunction with the 1992 Limited Editions Club publication of Stéphane Mallarmé's 1897 poem *Un Coup de Dés Jamais N'Abolira Le Hasard* (often translated to *A Throw of the Dice Never Will Abolish Chance*), which is illustrated with 11 original black-and-white lithographs by Kelly.

Each of the four prints that make up *The Mallarmé Suite* features a block of thick, matte, uniform color—in red, green, blue, and black—on a sheet of white wove paper. Severe lines sliced at different angles articulate each color shape starkly from its white sheet, causing the inked portion to read as a separate, distinct surface. The result is a surprising dimensionality.

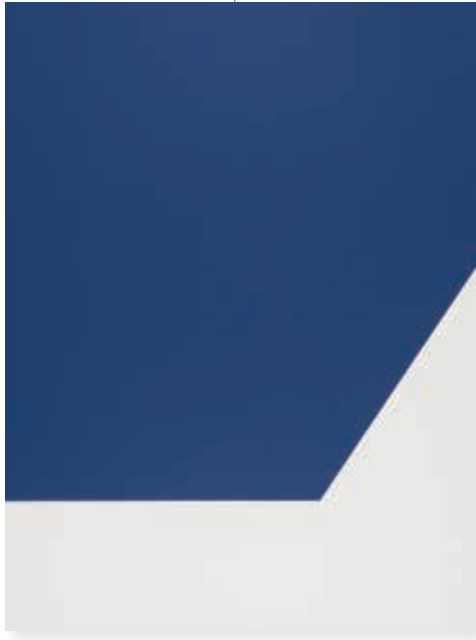
Independently, each print has its own identity as a beautiful, striking form that makes economical and powerful use of line. The four prints together constitute a single artwork—one that is only realized upon meeting the artist's exacting terms for display on the wall. Included as part of the suite are Kelly's requirements for display, which consist not only of the order in which the prints are to appear from left to right but, more meticulously, specifications for the mat (8-ply, 100% rag-board, mounted with 3¾ inches at sides and top and 3½ inches at the lower edge), and the frames (white rub ramin glazed with UV-4 plexiglass). Beneath Kelly's typewritten notes is a hand-drawn sketch with annotations to indicate the exact required measurements of the frame face and depth.

Our display of Ellsworth Kelly's *The Mallarmé Suite* celebrates the opening of *Austin*, the only freestanding building designed by Kelly, which was realized by the efforts of the Blanton Museum of Art and is located on campus.

Displayed as per Kelly's instructions, the angle of the red print at the far left sharply draws the eye toward the center of the suite, a movement that is advanced by the more mildly angled green form. The two right-side prints—the blue and the black—for their part gently disrupt the momentum of the eye's sweep across to the right by anchoring the viewer's vision towards the center of the suite via their subtler angles. The right-most print—the black color shape, with its slightly angled lower edge—acts both as a nudge towards the suite's center and as a full stop, providing a final visual landing point.

Exacting installation specifications and deep attention to interior settings of display are hallmarks of Kelly's practice. In the artist's 1952 series of






cotton-dyed panels titled, *Red Yellow Blue White*, the 22-inch space between each of the five panels contributes as much to the work as the configuration of the dyed panels themselves. The four wall-sculpture panels that make up Kelly's 1993 *Memorial* at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum were designed in relation to the walls, windows, and stairs that are also part of the museum's third-floor lounge, and the panels interact with the space's ever-changing light and shadows. Architecture, as Kelly intimated to influential art collector and dealer Betty Parsons in the late 1950s, makes its own demands on artists.

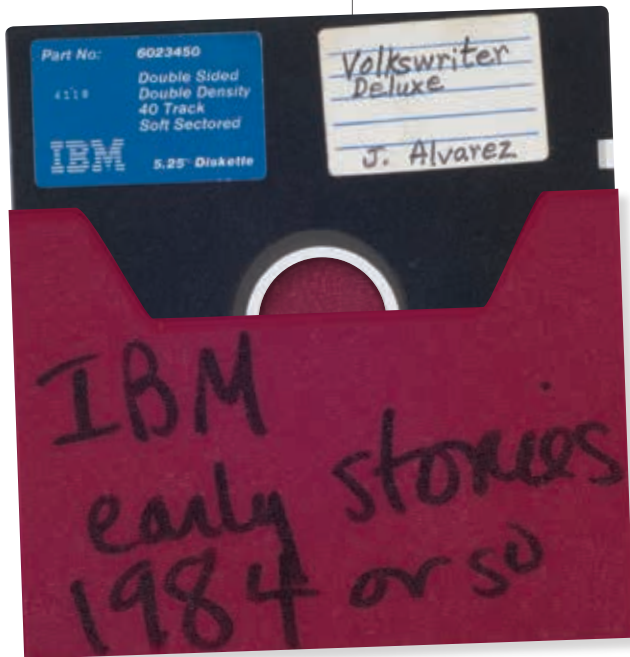
But architecture, as the Limited Editions Club publication of *Un Coup de Dés* makes clear, need not only be understood as the physical spaces of wall and gallery. The structure of Mallarmé's poem also provides an intriguing space within which Kelly's prints operate. The poem is itself a spectacle, a 20-page upheaval of

the reader's visual experience that implements varying typeface, print size, and white space. Anticipating the concrete poetry movement of the twentieth century, *Un Coup de Dés* was a radical typographical experiment. In preparation for its original publication in the London-based magazine *Cosmopolis* in 1897, Mallarmé provided exact specifications for the way in which he wanted the shape, size, and spacing of words to be arranged on the printed page. The poem as a result is structured to act on one level as something of an exploration of vision, in that it directs the eye along an inconsistent track from page to page, top to bottom and across, sometimes moving smoothly and sometimes jarringly. On several pages the placement of words assumes the form of a constellation of stars.

There are a number of deep currents of commonality between Kelly's practice and *Un Coup de Dés*. With their close consideration of "already-

made" forms, both can be thought of in relation to the very act of seeing. There is resonance also between the poem's interest in the arbitrary roll of the dice and Kelly's earlier investigation of the function of chance in the creative process.

Kelly himself determined the placement of his lithographs within the Limited Editions Club's publication of *Un Coup de Dés*. A sweeping, harshly angled form placed between the pages upon which the outsized, bolded declaration "UN COUP DE DÉS / JAMAIS" acts as an emphatic fist on a table. The very subtle arc of the form placed a few pages later anticipates the more even distribution of the words on the page of text to follow, where the actions and limitations of "LE MAÎTRE" ("the master") are contemplated. Kelly's prints inhabit the architecture of the poem as his other works inhabit their display settings. 



## DIGITAL ARCHAEOLOGY AT THE RANSOM CENTER

# Digging up computing histories in literary manuscript collections

ABBY R. ADAMS, DIGITAL ARCHIVIST

Since opening access to born-digital collection materials, the Ransom Center has heard from researchers interested in discovering what kind of impact computer technology made on an author's writing. Questions have ranged from which models of Macintosh computers Gabriel García Márquez used to compose which works to how J. M. Coetzee's experience as a computer programmer in the 1960s dictated what software he selected to write his novels, and why Christine Brooke-Rose chose to write her later, more experimental novels on what was, at the time, a high-end hybrid typewriter/word processing machine.

Preserving and reconstructing context can be challenging for two-dimensional paper-based materials, but it is far more complex for electronic files. Not only is the content of the file key to research, but so too may be the technology the author employed to create it, from the computer model, operating system,

and software used to file naming conventions and embedded metadata like timestamps.

Some questions that arise are:

- How did the author's writing style change with the adoption of new technologies?
- What differences become apparent when comparing an author's manuscripts drafted by hand, typewriter, and computer?
- What pieces of history have been lost in the midst of technological advancement and why?
- What can those gaps themselves reveal about a person and his or her concern or disregard when it comes to preserving one's digital legacy?

The following examples from the Center's collections show the abundance and complexity of technological influences on contemporary literature. And they are part of a bigger story yet to be told, a tale about computer history

and its impact on artistry, on a writer's evolving mode and style of composition.

### CHRISTINE BROOKE-ROSE

One of the Center's earliest acquisitions of digital media is from the Christine Brooke-Rose papers. Brooke-Rose is known largely for the experimental novels she wrote later in life. Within her materials are several 5.25-inch floppy disks containing drafts of her science fiction novel *Xorandor* (1986). Brooke-Rose wrote these on an Adler ScreenTyper. The ScreenTyper, which connected to most Adler electronic typewriters, touted an 8-bit processor and Control Program for Microcomputers (CP/M) as its operating system.

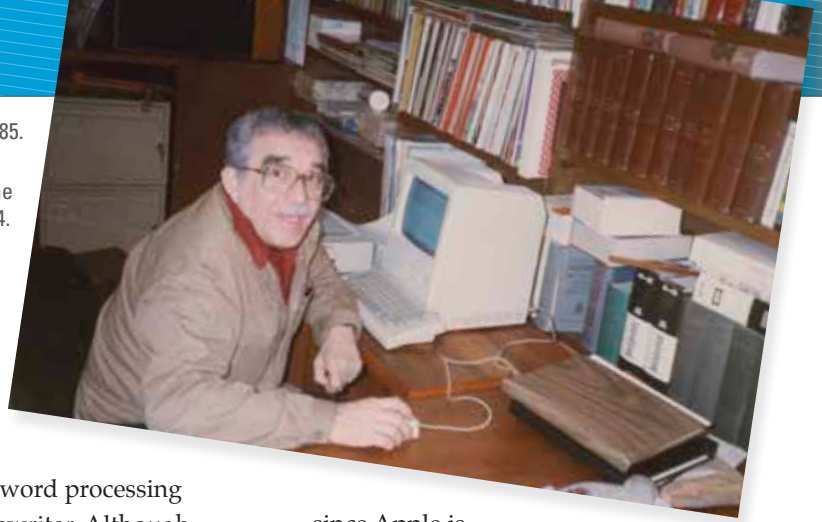
### J. M. COETZEE

The Center also holds the papers of J. M. Coetzee, among which are nearly 130 floppy diskettes containing drafts of various novels and essays. Surprisingly, Coetzee was writing with an early version of WordStar for



Gabriel García Márquez in his study, March 1985.

Left: 5.25-inch floppy disk and container from the Julia Alvarez papers, circa 1984.



IBM compatibles into the late 1990s, at a time when most PC users had upgraded to a Windows operating system and Microsoft Word.

Many writers were, and still are, committed to WordStar, the most well-known being fantasy author George R. R. Martin.

At a time when WordStar files by default did not have an extension, Coetzee developed his own conventions when naming files. For instance, he used the extension .NOT to indicate his notes (either research or editing) or a .V followed by a number to label different versions of his drafts. Essays were labeled with the suffix ESS, interviews with INT, and literary reviews REV.

**JULIA ALVAREZ**

Julia Alvarez’s papers came to the Ransom Center in 2013. Included in the collection are 15 5.25-inch floppy disks containing drafts of short stories Alvarez wrote in the mid-1980s on her IBM personal computer. The

majority of the drafts were written in the word processing program Volkswriter. Although largely forgotten in computer history, Volkswriter was actually quite popular among IBM users prior to the rise of WordStar.

**GABRIEL GARCÍA MÁRQUEZ**

The literary manuscript collections at the Center reflect a preference for Macintosh among contemporary authors. The Gabriel García Márquez archive arrived with a total of five computers, two of them Macintosh Plus models, one IICx, a G4, and a PowerBook. García Márquez was an early and dedicated Macintosh user throughout his life. The first major work he composed on a computer was *Love in the Time of Cholera*, published in 1985, less than a year after the first two models of Macintosh computers debuted to the public. García Márquez was not necessarily remarkable in this respect

since Apple is known for marketing to creative types, which made many writers and artists take notice. Some of them whose papers are held at the Center are Iain Sinclair, Billy Collins, Leon Uris, and Michael Joyce.

Details about a creator’s use of technology are often overlooked with literary manuscript collections, but they are key to providing context to born-digital materials. Archivists at the Ransom Center continue to dig up these important facts in order to provide an authentic representation of collection materials and preserve the past.

*Items from the born-digital collections of Brooke-Rose, Coetzee, Denis Johnson, and García Márquez are on view in the exhibition Stories To Tell through August 12, 2018.*

**Ransom**  
NOTES

1,305  
collection items  
conserved

54,063  
online digital collection items

researchers  
from  
43  
states and

Last year at the  
Harry Ransom  
Center

79  
fellowships  
awarded

total visitors 64,784  
\$2,687,451  
in funds raised

30  
countries



# A very good year for Modernism

INTERVIEW WITH BILL GOLDSTEIN BY LEIGH HILFORD

Bill Goldstein's critically praised book *The World Broke in Two: Virginia Woolf, T. S. Eliot, D. H. Lawrence, E. M. Forster, and the Year That Changed Literature* (Henry Holt and Co., 2017), which draws from research at the Ransom Center, broadens our view of Modernist writers from the vantage point of a single year.

**Why did you choose the year 1922 as the focus of your book?** The year 1922 is very often seen as a watershed moment in literary history: James Joyce's *Ulysses* was published in February, and T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* in October. The title of my book comes from a remark of Willa Cather's from the mid-1930s that "the world broke in two in 1922 or thereabouts." She was referring to the changes in literary fashion brought about by those two epochal books. I wanted to focus not on what was published in 1922, but rather what other writers were doing in that year "the world broke in two." And what they might have done to further that break.

**Did you focus on specific authors at the Ransom Center or take a broad approach to this research?** I'd begun thinking through the book and the structure and the focus, and even did a fair amount of writing, before I got to Austin. I knew I would look at specific collections at the Ransom Center. But it was thrilling to discover in person the breadth of the holdings—and the depth. I'd say the biggest surprises were items in the collections I'd already pinpointed as of interest.

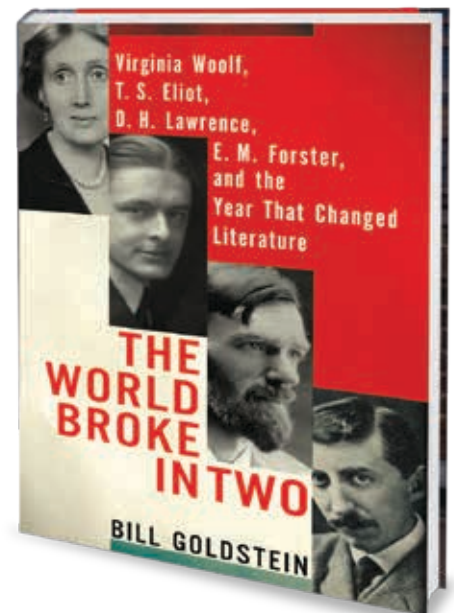
Even though I knew the literary story of 1922 that I wanted to tell, and the writers who would be my main subjects, as I continued my research at the Ransom Center even though the story of the year stayed the same, the details changed completely. Research changed the narrative in ways I couldn't have foreseen. What was in the collections was so much richer and more vivid—and more pertinent—than I could have hoped.

One of the most important things about the magnitude of the Ransom Center's holdings is that they are not papers of only famous writers. When you are writing a biography, the most interesting and illuminating—even revelatory—material is often to be found in the papers of those who knew the people you are writing about, many of whom are not well-known at all. It is often through their eyes that you see the central figures in your book whole, or in a new way.

**Did you discover anything while working here that changed your research focus or surprised you?** Everything surprised me! Even if it was just the miracle of holding the actual piece of paper on which some letter or manuscript was written—the

constant reminders that this was not a facsimile, but the paper Virginia Woolf or D. H. Lawrence touched, this was the ink. I was very lucky to have two months in Austin because of the Center's fellowship program: I didn't have to stop before I got to what, in the abstract, might have seemed collections of lesser importance and which at other institutions I might not have had time to get to.

The perfect example is the Mary Hutchinson papers. Mary Hutchinson was on the edges of Bloomsbury: she knew Virginia Woolf, and was a friend of T. S. Eliot and a close confidante of his and his wife, Vivien, particularly during the period I was





writing about. The greatest find perhaps in all of my research was in her papers. Hutchinson was the mistress of Clive Bell, Virginia Woolf’s brother-in-law (married to Vanessa Bell, Woolf’s sister) and a critic famous in his own time. And he wrote hundreds of letters to Hutchinson over the years, including dozens during 1921–1923, the period in and around “my” year. For me they contained stories and observations of unparalleled value. I quote many of the letters in my book, and they are probably the funniest (and sometimes cattiest—even nastiest) comments of all.

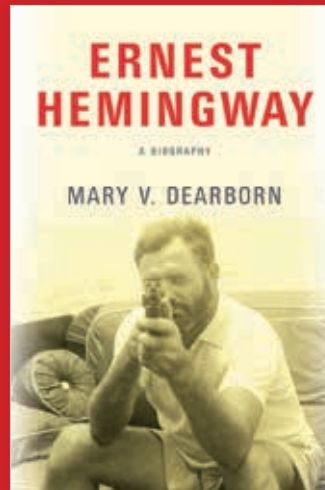
I also looked at the writers’ correspondence, some of which spanned decades. For example, letters between Forster and his friends J. R. Ackerley, Malcolm Darling, Leonard Woolf, and Lytton Strachey were substantive and essential to understanding Forster’s character. And the fact that people, famous and not, saved their letters, often hundreds of them, gave me a sense of how beloved they were by those who knew them, even when those same friends sometimes found them very difficult to tolerate.

**How did the collections help you tell the story of this significant year? What do you think archival material adds?** I felt confident that there were new things to say about these very famous writers by looking at them in relation to one another and during a specific period of time—even though so much has been written about each of them. By narrowing the chronological focus I had more room, paradoxically, to juxtapose the material—diaries and letters against manuscripts—and to see how the range of things that they wrote might illuminate one another.

For example, as my book opens, Virginia Woolf is trying to finish her third novel, *Jacob’s Room*. It has taken her longer to do than she’d anticipated, and on top of that she is very sick with influenza. She’s frustrated about her work, and in despair about her creative prospects; she is at a loss about what to write next. In the spring, she conceives of and begins to write a short story called “Mrs Dalloway in Bond Street.” By the end of the year, she sees that it has “branched into a book”—and in November she writes out lengthy notes for what becomes the novel *Mrs Dalloway*.

I’ve said to people, “You don’t have to have read *Mrs Dalloway* in order to understand my book because Virginia Woolf hasn’t written it yet.”

*Goldstein was the recipient of a Harry Ransom Center research fellowship jointly supported by the Frederic D. Weinstein Memorial Fellowship and Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Research Fellowship Endowment.*

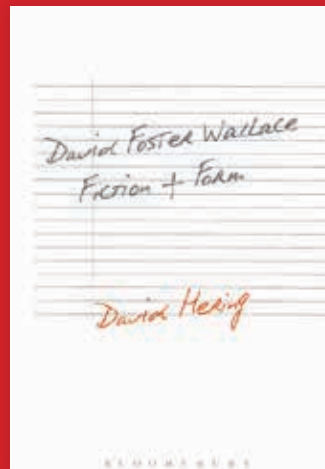


**Ernest Hemingway: A Biography**  
Mary V. Dearborn  
Knopf, 2017

A revelatory look into the life and work of Ernest Hemingway, Dearborn’s biography gives a rich and nuanced portrait of this complex, enigmatically unique American artist, whose same

uncontrollable demons that inspired and drove him throughout his life undid him at the end.

Dearborn was the recipient of a Harry Ransom Center research fellowship supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Research Fellowship Endowment.



**David Foster Wallace: Fiction and Form**

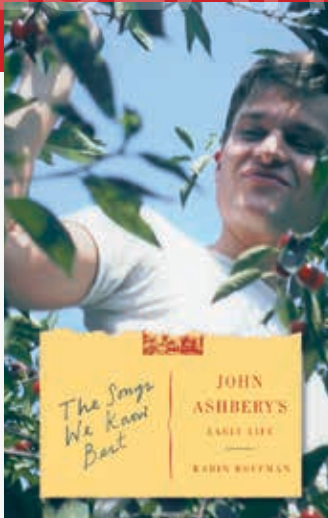
David Hering  
Bloomsbury, 2016

Hering analyzes the structures of David Foster Wallace’s fiction. Incorporating extensive analysis of Wallace’s drafts, notes, and letters, this book argues that

the form of Wallace’s fiction is always inextricably bound up within an ongoing conflict between the monologic and the dialogic, one strongly connected with Wallace’s sense of his own authorial presence and identity in the work.

Hering was the recipient of a Harry Ransom Center research fellowship supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Research Fellowship Endowment.

CONTINUED



**The Songs We Know Best: John Ashbery's Early Life**

Karin Roffman  
Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2017

The first comprehensive biography of the early life of John Ashbery reveals the unusual ways he drew on the details of his youth to

populate the poems that made him one of the most original and unpredictable forces of the last century in arts and letters. Roffman draws on unpublished correspondence, juvenilia, and childhood diaries as well as more than 100 hours of conversation with the poet.

Roffman was the recipient of a Harry Ransom Center research fellowship supported by the Dorot Foundation Postdoctoral Research Fellowship in Jewish Studies.



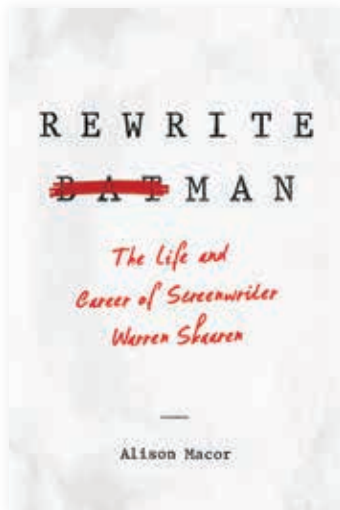
**The Magician and the Spirits**

Deborah Noyes  
Viking Children's Books, 2017

A century ago, the curious idea that spirits not only survive death but can be contacted on the "other side" was widespread. Psychic mediums led

countless séances, claiming to connect the grieving with their lost relations through everything from frenzied trance writing to sticky expulsions of ectoplasm.

Well-known by then as a magician and escape artist, Harry Houdini began to investigate these spiritual phenomena. Peopled with odd and fascinating characters, Houdini's gripping quest will excite readers' universal wonderment with life, death, and the possibility of the Beyond.



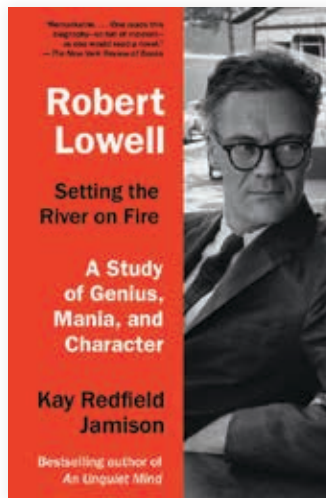
**Rewrite Man: The Life and Career of Screenwriter Warren Skaaren**

Alison Macor  
University of Texas Press, 2017

This lively biography of the screenwriter of 1980s hit movies *Top Gun*, *Beverly Hills Cop II*, *Beetlejuice*, and *Batman* illuminates issues of film authorship that have become even more

contested in the era of blockbuster filmmaking.

Macor was the recipient of Harry Ransom Center research fellowships supported by the Warren Skaaren Film Research Endowment and the Filmscript Acquisitions Endowment.



**Robert Lowell: Setting the River on Fire**

Kay Redfield Jamison  
Alfred A. Knopf, 2017

This magisterial study of the relationship between illness and art brings a fresh perspective to the life and work of Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Robert Lowell. In his poetry, Lowell put his manic-depressive illness (now

known as bipolar disorder) into the public domain, and in the process created a new and arresting language for madness. Jamison brings her expertise in mood disorders to bear on Lowell's story, illuminating not only the relationships between mania, depression, and creativity but also how Lowell's illness and treatment influenced his work (and often became its subject). **R**



# Visions of the Future Past

STEVE MIELKE, RANSOM CENTER ARCHIVIST & COLLECTIONS LIBRARIAN

Building plans from the 1960s show concepts for office and classroom arrangements for housing the Rare Books Collection, the foundation of the Harry Ransom Center.

The renderings were drawn by Professor William B. Todd (1919–2011). In 1958, Harry Ransom appointed Todd to become the bibliographic intelligence behind the newly envisioned Humanities Research Center. Later known for his discoveries about the forgeries by Thomas J. Wise in the Wrenn Library and for helping to select the perfect Gutenberg Bible for acquisition (Carl Pforzheimer's, as it were), Todd spent some of his earliest time at the Center imagining new library layouts and building plans for the growing research library.

The blue and white print shows a proposed arrangement for administrative offices for the Humanities Research Center in the University's Main Building Tower. It would house receiving, cataloging, and staff spaces to support the growing collection of research materials and rare books, which the public accessed in the building's lower floors.

The black-and-white drawing, dated April 24, 1960, is a proposal for the new building, situated on the Ransom Center's current site and facing north toward Sutton Hall and the School of Architecture. It visually matched nearby buildings in the Spanish-Mediterranean Revival style.

Both designs illustrate the continuous growth and change in space allocation, administration, and collections storage. Ultimately, the Humanities Research Center's new building—what exists today—was designed and built in the Brutalist style of the late 1960s.

Sixty years later, the Ransom Center is again making plans to redesign its spaces for the future.

HUMANITIES RESEARCH CENTER

White stucco, blue roof. Blue and white glass panels. 140 x 80'. Scale 3/8" = 20'.

**DETAIL SKETCH of F&G**  
(not to scale)

- Staff closet
- Staff elevator, opening N to stack, E to service area.
- Dumb waiter and intercom.
- Staff closet
- Access for stain wall display.
- Janitor closet

**General:** Each floor 11, 20 main floors 10', basement stack area locked; other reading room (R) or red. Facilities occasionally marked #, always open +

**All floors:**

- A. NW stack staircase
- B. Main stack aisle
- C. Stacks. Total capacity books. Catalogued A on 1st floor, adjacent
- D. NE stack staircase
- #E. Dumb-waiter and intercom for kitchen and stack
- \*F. Main spiral staircase
- G. Communications. See #M or W. Lounge. On 1st

**Second Floor**

- #H. 3 seminar rooms, each
- I. 2 study (or exhibit)
- \*J. Lecture room, 40 x 80 doors to stack and
- K. Room for projection equipment, 10 x 20'
- L. 2 offices (or study)

**First Floor**

- #N. Kitchen
- O. Catalogue room
- \*P. Public exhibition area
- \*Q. Main foyer
- R. Reading room: main (15 x 4', total 144 logs, 40 x 80'. reference works.
- S. 7 carrels for mechanical violet light, &c.,

**Ground Floor**

- #T. Typographical collection room, both connecting 20 x 36'.
- U. Manuscript stack
- V. 8 offices for research receptionist, secret storage, accession director's office
- W. Storage, to be

TEXAS QUARTERS Kim TAYLOR

Hand-drawn floor plan of the Texas Quarters, showing various rooms and their occupants:

- 1807: Card making
- 1808: Prof Webb
- 1809: Mrs Smith
- 1810: RECEIVING? CHECKING? Card making? etc.?
- 1801: Dr. Clay K
- 1802: PAX-1 PAX
- 1803: PAX-1 PAX
- 1804: FILES PAX-1
- 1805: PAX-2 PAX
- 1806: PAX-2 PAX
- SECRETARY
- ROBERTS
- Mrs Lawrence



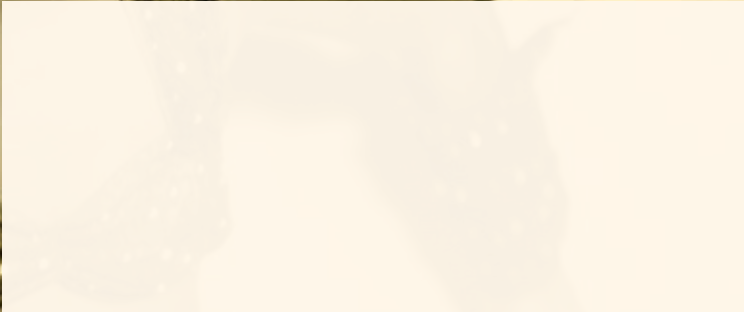
HARRY RANSOM  
CENTER

The University of Texas at Austin

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Ethel Waters got her start on the Theatre Owners Booking Association circuit, one of the only major vaudeville circuits to employ African American performers. Her talents as an actress and blues artist quickly made her one of the most celebrated entertainers of her generation. From the exhibition *Vaudeville!*

Herbert Mitchell (American, 1898-1980), [Ethel Waters], 1931. Gelatin silver print, 35.5 x 27.8 cm. Theater Biography Collection, Harry Ransom Center.

Mitchell ny.