Introduction

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> Amongst historians, literary critics and anthropologists, archives have been elevated to a new analytic status with distinct billing, worthy of scrutiny on their own (Stoler 2009: 44)

A significant shift has occurred in the way we view archives. As Ann Laura Stoler describes, we have moved from an idea of the 'archive-as-source to archive-as-subject' (2002: 86). Writing in the early 1990s, Alice Yaeger Kaplan observed that 'conventional academic discourse requires you to tell a story about *what* you found, but not about how you found it' (1990: 103). Invoking Gérard Genette's notion of the '*paratext*' (1997: 3), Kaplan lamented that the 'dedication and the acknowledgements, the list of libraries you worked at, the thank-yous to *x, y, z* for bibliographic wisdom or for access to a collection' (1990: 103) were the only space for the archival worker and the process of working in the archive to speak. Kaplan called for the archival process to be foregrounded in order to 'learn something about the forces that seem to be drawing students of literature back to the archives' (1990: 104).

A spate of current works testify to the increasing interest in the archive-as-subject into the early 2000s – amongst them Helen M. Buss and Marlene Kidar's *Working in Women's Archives* (2001), Carolyn Hamilton et al.'s *Refiguring the Archive* (2002), Anita Helle's *The Unravelling Archive* (2007), and Stoler's own *Along the Archival Grain* (2009). Telling the story of the 'work' has become a stronger imperative in the wake of what Terry Cook describes as 'the fundamental revolution affecting the very nature of society's collective memory caused by the widespread use of the computer' (2007: 401). In *Archive Fever* (1995), Jacques Derrida explicitly focused on the transformative effects of technology upon the concept of the archive, considering how technology 'virtualizes communication' and thus 'makes communication

"spectral"' (Lawlor 1998: 797). Since the publication of Derrida's influential lecture, the technology of the archive has rapidly developed and expanded; the contemporary moment is experiencing a significant new stage in the archival turn, where issues of the digital make more insistent claims than ever upon our understanding of and interaction with literary archives. The twenty-first century archive is thus bounded by two insistent, and often seemingly opposing claims upon preservation and the ways in which we make use of its materials; the physicality of the original archival document, and the virtual qualities of the digitised, and, increasingly, born digital content. These claims require us to interrogate further the idea that the story of what we do in the archive—physical or virtual—must be positioned alongside (and in dialogue with) the conclusions, revelations and formulations we take out of the archive.

Attentive to the ways in which all archives, physical and digital, have their own histories alongside the 'stuff of history' (Dever et al. 2011: 1) that they contain, *The Boundaries of the Literary Archive* addresses the archive as both source and subject. In doing so, the collection poses a number of key questions for archival study and investigation in a digital age. What does the archive offer current literary scholarship? How can it complicate and enrich our engagement with both canonical and lesser known texts and writers? How can it help us to push the boundaries of existing methodological approaches to textual study? What challenges do we face as researchers, but also as curators and as teachers, utilising different kinds of literary archival holdings, spaces and interactive platforms? Our collection foregrounds current work in the field exploring these issues through a range of approaches. Contributors employ archival theory and textual scholarship, single-author studies, pedagogical theory, examinations of the relationships between scholars, archivists and other key figures in the wider world of collecting, and consideration of the possibilities and value of diverse archival material. In the process, the volume casts its net across collections and holdings, personal,

private and institutional, in the UK, North America and Canada, alongside existing and newly founded digital archives.

Several of the articles collected within explore how archives help us to reclaim and reframe the work and reputations of literary figures, both living and dead. These essays investigate an international literary heritage in addressing writers and poets from the late eighteenth-century to the contemporary period – some whose reputations are firmly established critically and culturally, others deliberately chosen for their lesser known status. Writers examined include the Romantic and Victorian authors Amelia Opie and Elizabeth Gaskell, novelist and playwright John Galsworthy, avant-garde novelist, poet and playwright Samuel Beckett, the poets Ted Hughes and Elizabeth Jennings, and Canadian author Douglas Coupland. Other essays in the collection critically engage with alternative figures whose work and influence is in need of equal attention in understanding how archives fundamentally shape processes of reclamation and representation. Contributors here focus upon agents, editors, family members and readers, and, of course, archivists themselves, to whose passion, as Kaplan asserts, the archive frequently 'owes its existence' (1990: 103).

The collection as a whole is framed by attention to the issue of boundaries and what this means for both archival collection and study. For Paul Voss and Marta Werner, the archive is necessarily constituted by borders; it 'is both a physical site – an institutional space enclosed by protective walls – and an imaginative site – a conceptual space whose boundaries are forever changing' (1999: 1). Archives are incomplete sites of knowledge, necessarily fragmentary and changeable – subject to growth but also to diminishment and deconstruction (through damage, decay, sealing, selling and loss). They are sites whose physical and ideological boundaries are continually being reconstituted as the status of a writer or an area of study changes, and as institutional policy, cultural policy, funding bodies and managements shift in influence.

A conceptualisation of archival boundaries and their unstable nature influences our own study in several important ways. In one sense, boundaries concerns what is archived and how different materials and ways of engaging with literary legacies fall within and beyond the boundaries of the literary. Manuscripts, diaries and letters are all examined, but so too are more diverse materials, including ephemera, illustration and ekphrasis, watermarking materials and mass produced magazines, as are processes of memorial and communal memory enacted through spatial mappings and marking. Boundaries also concerns the processes by which this material is archived and the barriers, both crossable and uncrossable, that these processes create for the researcher and for the archivist in terms of access, selection, weeding, sealing and digitising. The collection moves to consider boundaries in a third sense, where many of the contributors look to test the existing boundaries of how archival material can be used to inform literary scholarship by employing different methodological tools and approaches, including genetic criticism, palaeography, intertextuality, psychological and biographic interpretation, and the application and interrogation of archival codes of ethics. In the process, our contributors – some relatively early entrants into vocations beginning to be shaped by archival scholarship, others writers and curators who have enjoyed long careers working with and within literary archives – present the investigation from the specific but interconnected positions of the scholar and the archivist. By drawing upon the experiences not only of scholarship but of those who work with and curate literary archives, the volume seeks to bring these perspectives into dialogue to look at issues of use, collection, and analysis from both sides.

Archive as Subject

Speaking at a seminar on modern literary manuscripts held at Kings College London in 1979, Philip Larkin discussed the ‘magical value and the meaningful value’ of archives. With the latter, and less elusive of the two terms, Larkin underscored the significance of working with

archival manuscripts for the ways in which they help us to 'enlarge our knowledge and understanding of a writer's life and work' (1999: 99). Where they allow us to interrogate, dialogue with or re-evaluate conventional conceptions of a writer, or to reclaim an author from critical or cultural obscurity, the archive certainly facilitates Larkin's meaningful value. Anita Helle in her edited collection *Unravelling the Archive*, for example, has suggested the ways in which we can 'enlarge and enrich' the contexts of an author's work by using the archives as an 'informing matrix' (2007: 1). Helle focuses upon the way the archive enables an 'unravelling' of 'histories, temporalities, narratives, contingencies' (2007: 1) in the work of a writer. Here, the archive facilitates a revisiting and reshaping of the direction of study in one particular field, where developments in archival accessibility have offered, in Helle's case, new more widely available material crucial to developing a 'second stage' of debate surrounding Sylvia Plath's canonicity.

The use of manuscripts in literary studies can thus offer up new and unseen material, and also suggest in their physicality the writing methods and processes unique to the subject of study. They can further 'solve factual problems like the dating of a poem or establishing an accurate text' and 'illuminate the broader meanings of a literary work' (Gioia 2004: 36). Beyond their ties to the individual author or their bodies of work, however, archives offer us other conduits of research and knowledge, where, as Cook argues, the 'context behind the text, the power relationships shaping the documentary heritage, and indeed the document's form and content' can often 'tell us more than does the objective thing itself' (2007: 434). Archives reveal the often obscured yet inescapably significant influence of the process of archiving upon the materials available for study and their presentation, and about the nature of the impulse to archive. Derrida's image of the *arkhe* viewed the archives as 'a place where things begin, where power originates' (Steedman 2001: 1); Michel Foucault's much earlier work in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* described the archive as the 'system that establishes statements as

events (with their own conditions and domain of appearance) and things (with their own possibility and field of use) ... as systems of statements' (Foucault 2002: 145).

Archival materials offer us interrelated knowledge about the practices of editors and publishers and the power relations between writers and these figures and institutions. They further tell us about how collections have been physically organised and reconstituted - processes which mediate materials in a variety of complicated ways, governed by institutional policy as well as the demands of individual authors, living and dead, and the trustees of their estates. Such processes underscore the fact that literary criticism has wrongly tended to 'regard the archive as a neutral zone, untouched by the questions of selection, evaluation and subjectivity that they apply to their own more self-conscious interpretive activities' (Gerson 2001: 7). The archive, then, turns us towards the archivist and the institution and the discourses of power, knowledge and memory that surround the impulse towards archivisation as much as it does towards the author. In the process, it tells us related stories about the changing value and meaning of archiving literary history as a cultural imperative – one which was not always so universally applied, as Larkin stressed at a crisis point for British manuscript collecting in the late seventies when so many nationally relevant materials were being 'lost' to the aggressive acquisition policies of American institutions. And, as our own volume emphasises, the archive also tells us about its boundaries where representation and reclamation reach beyond the individual author, but also beyond what we might consider any standard form of manuscript.

A number of distinct modern archives illuminate this diversity of objects of study, and raise significant issues about the manner in which different forms of archival interfaces mediate the experience of working with and making meaning from such materials. The National Library of Scotland's Attic Archive,[1] for example, contains materials documenting the life of the

[1] www.nls.uk

journalist and artist Pete Horobin/Marshall Anderson/Peter Haining – all the same man – through three decades of his life. Where the fonds contains what we might consider more 'standard' manuscript materials, such as journals accompanied by drawings, the archive itself has been self-consciously constructed and presented as a tangible experience for the researcher. The journals and their containers have been bound by Anderson with the refashioned cloth of the artist's own clothing; portfolios are further bound in material from tents used in an itinerant period of Anderson's life. The experience for the archival reader becomes fundamentally about touch, literally unbuttoning Anderson's dress shirts to reveal the heart of his journals. This focus upon physicality, here taken to the extreme where the author constructs new forms of mediation specifically designed for the archive, seems to feed into a conceptualisation of an archival value beyond Larkin's material value and towards the magical. The novelist Justine Picardie, for example, a writer who has fictionalised the processes of archival investigation in works such as *Daphne* (2008), has spoken of the unique qualities of working in the archive as a multisensory encounter; manuscripts, she suggests, 'even have a smell … it is fantastically evocative' (Picardie 2012: n.p.).

Where such an emphasis brings us back to magical value, it is tempting to see the concerns of the physical as standing in opposition to the contemporary digital archive. What does digitisation do to the physical status of the manuscript, where such an archival encounter could not be recreated through any existing digital interface that so directly requires the use of hands, the feel of the material, and the 'evocative smell' of the tent cloth and clothing? On one side, there is the 'older and more universal' (Larkin 1999: 99) quality of first-hand contact with the manuscript that researchers and writers clearly treasure; on the other, the concerns of digitised material, where the primacy of touch and sensory encounter is seemingly threatened or forsaken in favour of access and immediacy. The imperative to return or keep returning to the physical documents might be more directly linked to the ways digitisation and electronic

cataloguing yield their own set of issues. As Carole Gerson noted in the early 2000s, electronic cataloguing can 'only replicate the level of effort that has going into the hands-on management of the physical collection' (2001: 12), whilst digital research tools can 'create new problematics due to their dependence upon the exigencies and priorities affecting resources and institutions, including granting agencies, universities', libraries and archives' (Gerson 2001: 21).

Digital access takes increasingly sophisticated and unprecedented forms in new projects of the late 2000s and early 2010s, however. The recently launched Samuel Beckett Digital Manuscript Project is one such example. The project represents a collaboration between the Centre for Manuscript Genetics (University of Antwerp), the Beckett International Foundation (University of Reading) and the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Centre (University of Texas at Austin), and combines 'genetic criticism with electronic scholarly editing' (Van Hulle and Nixon 2011: n.p.) to allow intense close study of Beckett's manuscripts in a digital environment. The project enables a dialogue and comparison between dispersed holdings from different institutions, facilitating intertextual analysis across the writer's works through a range of digital tools. This cutting-edge example certainly pushes the current boundaries of what the digital can offer for archival study and archival access, bringing electronic facsimiles of paper sources together in a virtual environment that seemingly bypasses the geographical, economic, and cultural policy problematics that divide archival collections globally and make access a complicated process for researchers and academics. It allows a reader, once subscribed, to magnify a tiny fragment of the Beckett drafts and documents from any device with an internet connection – a very different experience from that of an earlier generation of scholars entering the archives as part of a long-winded processes of travel grants, flights, hotels, opening hours, pencil transcriptions and holiday closures.

Improved and increasingly sophisticated digital platforms like the Beckett archive – or the Jane Austen Fiction Manuscript Digital Edition and the First World War Digital Poetry

Archive[2], for example – explicitly foreground their ability to circumvent the restrictions of the 'exigencies and priorities' enforced by individual institutions and private collections by stressing the unique benefits of uniting dispersed holdings. Yet the polarisation of 'touch' and its associations with 'magical value' verses digital, virtual encounter cannot be reduced simplistically to an issue of accessibility. The Beckett Project website emphasises its role in enhancing the 'preservation of the physical documents' (Van Hulle and Nixon 2011: n.p.), whilst the project's co-director, Marx Nixon, stresses the importance of confronting students 'with real issues of working at archives rather than hypothetical models' (2012: n.p.) when using original Beckett manuscripts alongside electronic tools in archival study. As archives radically transform through digital tools, an insistence that 'manuscripts still matter' in their material incarnation surrounds those organisations, institutions and individuals that preserve and work with original collections.[3] The promise and potential of the digital still signposts us back to the original material encounter. Whilst we may have access to the digital facsimile, we have less access to the human quality of the archive – the detail that might be gained from encountering those who have executed the original 'hands-on' management of which Gerson speaks, or who have worked with those who have. We may also lose a clear understanding of how a collection is physically presented and ordered in its original box or container and how

[2] *Jane Austen's Fiction Manuscripts* is a three-year AHRC-funded joint project of the University of Oxford and King's College London, which has digitised some 1100 pages of Austen's writing between 1787 and 1817, allowing for comparison between original manuscripts from global holdings across libraries and private collections (http://www.janeausten.ac.uk/index.html). The First World War Poetry Digital Archive is an online repository of text, images, video and audio intended for research, teaching and learning. The digital archive is based at the University of Oxford and was launched in 2008 to public access as one of 22 projects funded by the JISC Digitisation programme (http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/ww1lit/).

[3] The recent conference of the UK Literary Heritage Working Group held at the British Library in London of April 2012, for example, took this statement as its title, bringing together a collection of national writers, collectors, archivists and scholars to 'celebrate the depth and diversity of modern literary archives and manuscripts in British institutions as a rich and vibrant source of research and teaching' (Conference programme 2012: 1).

this order was debated and decided upon, which, as the Attic Archive shows, can often be essential to the way in which the manuscripts are used, or a sense of how a less typical archival artefact might be experienced by a reader.

These considerations help us to move beyond a notion of the magic of archives where pinning down precisely what 'magical value' is can tend to remain elusive in the rhetoric of those who work with and within archives. Archivists', scholars', collectors' and authors' repeated emphasis upon Larkin's praise for 'magical value' threatens to substitute real critical insight into exactly what that value means beyond a seeming fetishisation of touch and smell, authenticity and the excitement of embarking upon a research trip. In a period where, for the first time, archivists are increasingly 'not producing, managing, and saving physical things or artifacts' (Cook 2007: 400-2), the digital invests the material archival work with a nostalgia which, as Ann Kaplan emphasised, seems to be 'only heightened by the disappearance of handwriting in this age of word processors' (1990: 108). Suzanne Keen has argued, for example, that the development of 'romances of the archive' (2001: 4) in British fiction in works such as A.S. Byatt's *Possession* (1990) and Margaret Drabble's *The Gates of Ivory* (1991), points to the influence of electronic access to research materials upon a construction of a romantic notion of the physical archive, where research features 'hands-on work in actual archives … requiring real travel on the part of the questioning characters' that 'invests scholarly research with glamour and excitement' (2001: 9).

Recent critical work across the disciplines of both literature and history, however, has moved to interrogate this romanticisation. Historian Carolyn Steedman, in re-appropriating Derrida's notion of archival fever and underscoring his lack of attention to *actual* archives, wryly deflates the romance of the archive in offering a vision of 'Archive Fever Proper' – that which:

> … usually starts at the end of the penultimate day in the record office. Either you must leave tomorrow (train times, journeys planned, a life elsewhere) or the record office will shut for the

> weekend … Your anxiety is more precise, and more prosaic. It's about PT 52/1/1, which only arrived from the stacks that afternoon, which is enormous, and which you will never get through tomorrow (2001: 18)

Alternative approaches like Steedman's offer greater attention to the realities of the practical and scholarly processes that archival study involves.

The essays collected within our own volume attempt neither to romanticise the archival encounter, nor to uncritically valorise the possibilities of the digital. Rather, they move beyond simply acknowledging or unearthing for display the 'magic' of the archive and its treasures towards an interrogation of what these treasures yield within the contexts of critical theory and the processes of archival acquisition, preservation and accessibility in their physical and digitised forms, particularly where some of our contributors have created their own archives. By foregrounding the archive itself, we aim to interrogate the 'work' in tandem with the findings in a way which tackles the magical value by addressing directly what is involved intellectually and practically in the processes of archival investigation and professional practices, recognising archives as working and teaching spaces.

The Shape of the Collection

The collection is divided into four principle sections: Theorising the Archive; Reclamation and Representation; Boundaries; and Working in the Archive. The essays in Part I offer progressive theory-led approaches to archival-based literary scholarship and investigation, using archival theory to reflect on how manuscripts can be close read and how we understand the nature of composition, and how the manuscripts and materials we study are shaped and selected. The collection opens with Wim Van Mierlo's 'The Archaeology of the Manuscript'. Drawing upon a range of examples from Shelley to Wordsworth and Wilfred Owen, Van Mierlo makes a case for the 'archaeology of the poem' in demystifying the process of composition. Van Mierlo stresses the importance of the literary archive for the ways it facilitates access to the work-in-

progress and the physical processes that underpin poetic construction, provocatively arguing that the 'pre-history' of the text moves us 'away from the finished text to the processes that created it'. Thereafter, Iain Bailey's chapter 'Allusion and Exogenesis: The Labouring Heart of Samuel Beckett's *Ill Seen Ill Said*' explores the ways in which the archive may open up new possibilities for investigations of the work in progress, shifting the emphasis towards an in-depth exploration of the intersections between exogenesis as a sub-category of genetic criticism and intertextuality. Bailey uses the archive to examine processes of textual production, focusing upon specific minutiae to illuminate methodological tensions between elements of the pre-text and a conceptualisation of movement and process in Beckett's composition. Jennifer Douglas' chapter 'Original Order, Added Value?' brings the perspective of the archivist into theoretical debates surrounding archival holdings. Douglas considers how archivists have obscured the value and influence of a respect for 'original order' in the preservation of personal archives, using the fonds of the Canadian author Douglas Coupland as a case study. Douglas explores the effects of the archivist's imposed order upon the interpretation of the material and on a user's understanding of their author, and questions whether original order 'adds value' to the physical order in which materials are received by an archive.

Part II turns to examine authorial reputation and editorial influence. These case studies bring to light a cross-section of approaches to archival reclamation and re-representation, attentive to the specificities and complexities of the authorial legacies and reputations of a varied set of writers. Isabelle Cosgrave's chapter 'Untrustworthy Reproductions and Doctored Archives' addresses the issue of lost archives relating to the Romantic author Amelia Opie, examining doctored correspondence to trace the editing and selection processes of Cecilia Lucy Brightwell's 1854 biography which falsely 'poses' as manuscript collection. Cosgrave's work raises key questions about the difficulties in methodological terms of envisaging a 'trustworthy' biography where archival materials have been heavily compromised. Fran

Baker's chapter 'The Double Life of 'The Ghost in the Garden Room"' explores issues of editorial influence from a different perspective by examining the textual history of a short story by Elizabeth Gaskell, investigating how the archival record can shed light on the significant role played by its first editor, Charles Dickens, in shaping the story. Baker's chapter, composed from the viewpoint of the archivist, uses the fragmentary archival record to raise issues of authorial intention and, like Van Mierlo, enrich knowledge of the pre-history of a text.

Moving from editing towards reclamation, Simon Barker's chapter 'Lost Property: John Galsworthy and the Search for "that stuffed shirt"' focuses upon how reputation is formulated and perpetuated in relation to the author John Galsworthy. Barker's case study opens up questions addressed more broadly by the volume, considering who 'owns' the Galsworthy reputation, the relationship between the owners of the archive and the reputation that the archive can speak of, and discussing the responsibilities of the researcher to earlier biographers, descendants and those still alive who remember a writer. Jane Dowson's chapter 'Poetry and Personality', the final in this section, offers a discussion of the papers and reputation of the English poet Elizabeth Jennings, suggesting how personal and literary papers can form a constructive dialogue. Using a comparative study with Sylvia Plath, Dowson explores Jennings's persona as one which conceals as much as it reveals, and that questions the validity of personal documents to support biographical readings of her work. Dowson's discussion comes to focus upon the creation of her own digital archive which consolidates the multifarious resources concerning Jennings's life and writing in an effort to present a comprehensive portrait of the author, offering a critical model for the future direction of digital archives.

Part III more directly addresses issues of boundaries in terms of the varied material available for study in the archive, looking at artwork and ephemera and relating them to poetic composition and letter writing. Carrie Smith's chapter 'Illustration and Ekphrasis' takes as its case study the working drafts of Ted Hughes's 1975 collection *Cave Birds*, marked by its

compositional processes of collaboration between Hughes and the American artist Leonard Baskin. Smith employs ekphrastic criticism in combination with an exploration of the complex relationship between artists and close manuscript analysis to inform an understanding of the development of the collection and the nature of the collaboration. Lisa Stead's chapter also assesses the relationship between print and visual culture, but from a distinctly different perspective. In 'Letter Writing, Cinemagoing and Archive Ephemera', Stead considers how published magazine correspondence contained within Exeter's Bill Douglas Centre museum and archive complicates the notion of the literary in the archive, where ephemera allows access to the self-representation of 'everyday' women in the early twentieth-century as letter-writing cinema fans who used the interactive format of the fan magazine as a way of both contributing to and shaping a female print culture surrounding early cinema.

Part IV constitutes the final section of the volume, which turns to examine working in the archive from three different perspectives: curating, teaching and researching. These chapters shed new light on the practical and diplomatic issues involved in the processes of archival work. The archivist Sue Hodson explores privacy and confidentiality in literary archives for contemporary authors in relation to issues sealing and weeding in her chapter 'To Reveal or Conceal'. Examining case studies of modern personal papers, Hodson's chapter poses important questions about the responsibility of the archivist and the rights of the researcher in an on-going debate surrounding privacy and open access. Karen Kukil's chapter 'Teaching in the Material Archive' refocuses upon how those materials selected and catalogued by an institution might be put to use for pedagogical means in higher education institutions beyond their application for research students and academics alone. Looking at Smith College's Sylvia Plath and Virginia Woolf collections, Kukil discusses the pedagogical value of students working hands-on with archival holdings of author's letters, demonstrating how these materials can be used to highlight some of the essential value of original documents in

comparison to published texts, the ways in which the physical form of a manuscript affects the content, and processes of editing manuscripts and letters for publication. The final chapter of the collection, Helen Taylor's 'Archives, Scholarship and Human Stories', looks back upon 'a lifetime's archival scholarship and research' from the position of the literary scholar, considering key issues of access and preservation and deconstructing the ways by which archives are sought, acquired, donated and used by scholars as well as popular writers, general readers and biographical researchers. Like many of the contributors contained within this volume, Taylor's discussion draws her towards a direct consideration of the digital challenges of contemporary archival practice. Where she considers the ways in which not only digitisation and digital access, but also digital originals and digital creation and composition suggest new ways of accessing writers' literary careers, Taylor returns to the paper collection and the resulting intensification of its rarefied, precious status.

The archival studies and investigations offered within *The Boundaries of the Literary Archive* present new strategies and approaches for literary study. We have aimed to present a diverse range of voices and subject matter to consider why archives matter, what archives offer, and what challenges they, and we, as scholars, students and the creators and curators of such institutions face moving further into the twenty-first century.

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