

SIGNIFICANCE OF PRIMARY RECORDS

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Modern Language Association of America

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SIGNIFICANCE OF PRIMARY RECORDS

Statement on the Significance of Primary Records

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The Modern Language Association of America applauds two developments aimed at ensuring the future accessibility of texts from the past. One is the organized effort to microfilm the texts of nineteenth- and twentieth-century books containing acidic paper that is now, or will become, brittle; the other is the systematic transference of printed and manuscript texts of all periods to electronic form. Everyone who cares about the past should be grateful to the library world for the way it has responded to the challenges of textual preservation. Frequently, however, discussions of these developments imply that, once reproductions exist, many of the artifacts from which they derive need no longer be consulted or saved. In this climate of opinion, the MLA believes that it is crucial for the future of humanistic study to make more widely understood the continuing value of the artifacts themselves for reading and research. The advantages of the new forms in which old texts can now be made available must not be allowed to obscure the fact that the new forms cannot fully substitute for the actual physical objects in which those earlier texts were embodied at particular times in the past.

Without broad public perception of the significance of this point, sizable portions of certain classes of textual artifacts face destruction. The MLA is expressing no opinion about the relative desirability of different forms of dissemination for future writing; rather, it is strictly focusing on the future study of texts that appeared in the past in handwritten or printed form on paper or parchment. By outlining the theoretical reasons for the importance of physical evidence in textual artifacts, the MLA wishes to promote awareness of the issues and to stimulate practical recommendations for taking action on them.

Texts are inevitably affected by the physical means of their transmission; the physical features of the artifacts conveying texts therefore play an integral role in the attempt to comprehend those texts. For this reason, the concept of a textual source must involve attention to the presentation of a text, not simply to the text as a disembodied group of words. All objects purporting to present the same text—whether finished manuscripts, first editions, later printings, or photocopies—are separate records with their own characteristics; they all carry different information, even if the words and punctuation are indeed identical, since each one reflects a different historical moment. Any such record may be a primary source, but an object that is primary as a source for one purpose is not necessarily so for another. A *primary record* can appropriately be defined as a physical object produced or used at the particular past time that one is concerned with in a given instance.

Physical evidence in manuscripts and printed matter is indispensable in two ways. First, physical clues (such as the structure of the folded sheets in a book) reveal facts about how an item was produced—facts that can in turn lead to the discovery of textual errors and contribute to a knowledge of contemporary textual, printing, and publishing practices. This kind of evidence has primarily been used by analytical bibliographers and scholarly editors. Second, elements of a book's physical design (such as paper quality, page size, textual layout, choice of letterforms, and arrangement of illustrations) can be significant indicators of how the text thus displayed was regarded by its producers and how it was interpreted by its readers. This category of evidence is

currently being used by those investigating the history of reading and the social influence of books.

Not only do editions differ from one another, but also copies within an edition (of any period) often vary among themselves; as a result, every copy is a potential source for new physical evidence, and no copy is superfluous for studying an edition's production history. Furthermore, since the shape, feel, designs, and illustrations of books have affected, and continue to affect, readers' responses (some of which have been recorded in the margins of pages), access to the physical forms in which texts from the past have appeared is a fundamental part of informed reading and effective classroom teaching; if that access is to be as widespread as it can be, the number of available copies of past editions, held in libraries of all kinds, must be as large as possible. The existence of community libraries along with academic libraries has been, and will continue to be, essential for bringing historical embodiments of texts—and the sense of the past they impart—to a wide readership. The loss of any copy of any edition—from the earliest incunables to the latest paperback reprints (regardless of whether its text is considered interesting or consequential at the present time)—diminishes the body of evidence on which historical understanding depends.

There is an obvious practical consideration that also supports the retention of textual artifacts (handwritten as well as printed) after their texts have been copied: the fact that the accuracy and stability of reproductions can never be guaranteed. For this reason, the preservation of the sources of photographic or electronic reproductions would seem a prudent course even if those reproductions were the equals of the sources; but since they cannot possibly be, a concern for maintaining our inheritance of textual artifacts is not simply desirable but imperative.

It is clearly unrealistic to expect that all currently surviving manuscripts and printed books can be saved. They are subject to the same vicissitudes as every other physical object, and their survival depends both on the materials out of which they are made and on the nature of the events that befall them. But the attitudes that people hold about them can be instrumental in either mitigating or exacerbating the destructive effects of these factors. As more people come to see the impor-

tance of primary records, more use will be made of them in reading and teaching, and more constituencies will join together in the search for ways of financing artifactual preservation, storage, and access. More records will then be saved because there will be wider support for the allocation of resources to this purpose. Decisions about priorities for preservation will still have to be made, by individual as well as institutional owners of material, but those decisions will be reached in a framework that recognizes the artifactual value of every object. An appreciation of the significance of physical evidence also necessitates the adoption of standards for the creation and identification of reproductions, in order to minimize the damage done to primary records by the processes of reproduction and to maximize the usefulness of the reproductions.

Readers find themselves turning continually to reprints or reproductions of some kind. As they welcome the benefits conferred by new technology for creating reproductions, they must remember the distinctive limitations of every form of reproduction and the continuing need for the artifactual sources on which the reproductions are based. Not only do those artifacts provide the standard for judging the reproductions; they also contain, in their physicality, unreproducible evidence that readers (scholars, students, and the general public) need for analyzing and understanding, with as much historical context as possible, the writings that appeared and reappeared in them. If we approach the electronic future with these thoughts in mind, we will be more rigorous in our demands of new forms of textual presentation and more vigilant in our protection of the artifacts embodying the old forms. Both these actions are necessary to ensure the continuation of productive reading, teaching, and scholarship.

The Modern Language Association of America recommends that representatives of library, conservation, and scholarly organizations form a task group to promote continued thinking and cooperative activity leading toward (1) the maximum retention and preservation of textual artifacts, as well as a refining of the selection criteria necessarily entailed, and (2) the use of responsible procedures in the creation and identification of photographic and electronic reproductions based on those artifacts.

SIGNIFICANCE OF PRIMARY RECORDS

Introduction

G. Thomas Tanselle

I

The material gathered here results from the activities of the MLA Ad Hoc Committee on the Future of the Print Record, which during the past two years has considered how best to publicize the importance of preserving textual artifacts after the texts in them have been reproduced in microfilm, electronic, or any other form. The committee, which (despite its name) understands its charge to encompass manuscript as well as printed material, consists of Shelley Fisher Fishkin (English, University of Texas, Austin), Phyllis Franklin (ex officio, MLA), Everette E. Larson (Hispanic Division, Library of Congress), Philip E. Lewis (French, Cornell University), J. Hillis Miller (English, University of California, Irvine), Ruth Perry (English, Massachusetts Institute of Technology), Alice Schreyer (Rare Books, University of Chicago Library), Philip Stewart (French, Duke University), and G. Thomas Tanselle, chair (John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation).

The origins of the committee go back to a paper that Phyllis Franklin, executive director of the MLA, read at the June 1992 convention of the American Library Association. In preparation for that paper, she took an informal survey of 319 people (members of the MLA and of other associations in the American Council of Learned Societies), asking them to comment on the widespread belief that reproductions of texts can supplant the originals. Of the 169 respondents, 94.5% affirmed the importance of preserving primary records, noting the inadequacy of reproductions for bibliographical and textual research and for studies that focus on the materiality of texts. In the light of this unambiguous response to her survey and of the interest aroused by her paper, she asked the Executive Council of the MLA to consider what the MLA might do to further the cause of the preservation of textual artifacts in an age that has seen considerable discarding and

deaccessioning of materials once they are reproduced. At its February 1993 meeting the council established an Ad Hoc Committee on the Future of the Print Record, charging it to develop an association statement on the subject and to determine other ways of publicizing the issues.

The main activity of the committee thus far has been to prepare the "Statement on the Significance of Primary Records" printed here, which is the product of four meetings (8 Oct. 1993, 4 Mar. and 14 Oct. 1994, and 31 Mar. 1995), correspondence and telephone conversations between meetings, and the consideration of many letters of suggestion from interested persons in the library and scholarly worlds. The draft of the statement that emerged from the 14 October 1994 meeting was given wide circulation on the Internet, by mail distribution to members and other interested persons, as handouts at the San Diego convention last December, and in the Spring 1995 *MLA Newsletter*. In addition, one of the three convention sessions held by the committee (sess. 499, on 29 Dec.) was an open hearing entirely devoted to discussion of the draft statement. The committee took all the responses to the draft into account and at its 31 March 1995 meeting produced a considerably revised document for submission to the MLA Executive Council. On 19 May 1995 the council formally adopted this version as an official statement of the association. Besides being printed here, the "Statement on the Significance of Primary Records" will be circulated widely to newspapers and magazines as well as to scholarly and library associations. The

The author is Vice President of the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation.

committee hopes that it will be endorsed by other groups or used by them as the basis for statements of their own and that it will thus serve to promote further discussion and action.

The pages that follow present a number of related papers stimulated by the committee. All but the last are drawn from two of the sessions that the committee sponsored at the 1994 convention to acquaint the MLA membership with the relevance of the committee's work to research and teaching. The first of these sessions was a forum entitled "The Importance and Challenge of Preserving Research Materials in Their Original Forms" (sess. 254, on 28 Dec.), which was divided into two parts. Part 1 consisted (after a brief introduction from me as chair of the committee) of two major papers: one by Paul Mosher, director of the University of Pennsylvania Library, on the electronic future as seen from a librarian's perspective, and the other by J. Hillis Miller, a former president of the MLA and a member of the committee. Miller's paper is printed here and provides an excellent illustration of how the physical presentation of a text affects reading and why a reprint can be a primary record for studying a critic's response.

Part 2 of the forum, organized by Ruth Perry under the title "Object Lessons," presented six speakers who offered personal testimony, with specific examples, regarding the way physical evidence has been important in their own work. Three were selected for inclusion here to represent the range of situations dealt with: Susan Staves, on the eighteenth-century playwright and novelist Elizabeth Griffith; Miriam Fuchs, on the diaries of Queen Lili'uokalani; and Anthony R. Pugh, on Proust's manuscripts.

The second of the committee's sessions at the convention was entitled "Teaching in the Library: A Workshop on Using Primary Materials in the Classroom" (sess. 459, on 29 Dec.). Shelley Fisher Fishkin, who presided, had chosen ten short papers that described specific instances in which teachers put primary records to successful use in the classroom. As with part 2 of the earlier session, three of the papers have been chosen to reflect the rich diversity of that second session: Manon Anne Ress, on Diderot's *Encyclopédie*; Gregg Camfield, on Mark Twain; and Catherine Golden, on Victorian serialization.

The final piece is by Ruth Perry and entitled a post-script because it is an extension of a point made in the statement. Her paper calls attention to the essential role that public libraries play in intellectual and cultural life and to the fact that the existence of many libraries is currently threatened. The committee did

not include this topic in the statement because it was focused on the role of primary records in understanding the past; the value of the intellectual exchange that has traditionally taken place in public libraries, though certainly a valid point, is a separate concern. (The committee, by the way, has emphasized throughout that it takes no position about whether printed or electronic forms are more desirable for the dissemination of new writing; its concern has been solely with the importance of artifacts in reading—the importance, that is, of reading texts in the physical forms they took at the historical moment one is studying.) The statement does, however, make clear that public as well as academic libraries have performed a great service in bringing the historical forms of texts to a broad public; and it is this point that the Perry paper builds on.

II

Because these papers focus on showing, through examples, the practical uses of primary records, it is perhaps in order here to provide—as background for the concisely expressed theoretical points in the "Statement on the Significance of Primary Records"—some of the comments I made at the opening of the 28 December forum. In pointing out that reproductions of texts cannot entirely supplant the original forms of those texts, the committee is not making any criticism of the current programs for microfilming brittle books or for creating databases of electronic texts. Obviously a microfilm of a book is better than no book at all, and electronic texts are searchable and manipulable in ways that printed texts are not. The committee's aim is not in the slightest to disparage new developments but simply to make more widely understood the fact that no reproduction of a text can ever be a fully adequate substitute for the original, since every reproduction necessarily leaves something unreproduced. Besides, there is always an uncertainty attaching to a reproduction; the user of one at any point may wonder whether the original was accurately rendered, and the only way to find out is to examine the original. The use of originals as the ultimate check on the accuracy of reproductions is simply an illustration of what it means to use primary evidence. Even if there were no other reason for needing access to originals, this one is sufficient.

But there are other reasons that are rooted in the significance of artifacts and the relation of form to content. All artifacts—not just books—can be studied as physical objects to discover two major classes of his-

torical information that can influence the interpretation of any visual or verbal symbols present on the objects. One class relates to their production history, to the techniques of their manufacture; the other focuses on their postproduction history, on the implications of their physical appearance once the objects were created. Those scholars pursuing the first class of information examine objects for clues that reveal details about how the objects were made. In the study of printed books, this pursuit is called analytical bibliography, and it can provide information about typesetting, proofreading, and presswork—information that is essential not only to printing and publishing history but also to textual history and textual criticism (the genealogy of texts and the evaluation of their correctness, according to whatever standard of correctness is chosen). In the latter half of the twentieth century, an age of scholarly editing in many fields, editors have increasingly recognized that one of the foundations of their work is analytical bibliography—which in turn requires an understanding that printed books are like manuscripts in offering primary evidence for textual study and in regularly presenting variant texts, since even copies from a single edition can be expected to contain variations (a point that applies to books of all periods).

The second major approach to artifacts concentrates on the sensuous—primarily visual—characteristics of objects. Every object, whether or not it was intended by its producers to have a utilitarian function, can be looked at for whatever aesthetic value it may possess. The historically oriented form of this investigation, when applied to books, not only attempts to show how their visual and tactile features (such as typography, layout, leaf size, and binding) reflected cultural trends but also tries to understand how those features have affected the responses of readers over the years. Such research is clearly relevant to the history of reading and of the spread of ideas—that is, to the broad field often called *histoire du livre*, the history of the effect of printed books on society, which has attracted a great deal of attention in the last several decades.

Of the two approaches to books as artifacts, the first deals with hidden evidence, with details not normally noticed by readers; the second treats of features that readers were meant to notice and that do in fact influence, to one degree or another, their interpretations of what they have read. The first produces evidence for reconstructing the texts that authors (or others) intended; the second looks at the texts that actually appeared and their physical settings. (A discrepancy between intended and published texts—that is, be-

tween works and documents—is always to be expected, since the medium of verbal communication, language, is intangible and any tangible representation of it may distort what was intended, even in those instances where visual effects were part of what was intended.) The two approaches are thus complementary. Both illustrate the ways in which the reading of physical evidence is involved in the interpretation of texts; both show why the historical study of printed texts rests on the examination of the actual artifacts in which they have appeared.

It follows from these points that the books in existing book stacks should never be abandoned, because they will remain crucial as the original sources for future study of works transmitted in printed form. There can be no book in which the format and other physical features are unrelated to the process of reading and understanding the book's text. But a recognition of this fact does not stand in the way of an enthusiastic acceptance of the developing technology for the electronic dissemination of texts. After all, even those scholars who understand that microfilm and xerographic copies do not fully substitute for originals have gladly used them as convenient interim tools. The availability of printed texts in electronic form is an advance greater in degree but not different in kind: it accomplishes in a far more sophisticated way the same function that xerography has fulfilled, making texts widely accessible and more easily manipulable at the price of removing them from their original physical contexts. All scholars should welcome the day when they can sit in their studies and call up on their terminals an enormous array of texts without the cumbersome process of interlibrary loan or the ordering of xerographic copies. But they should also realize what evidence they are thereby missing and why recourse to the originals can never be rendered irrelevant, however inconvenient it may happen to be. Many discussions of the future of libraries speak of access replacing ownership; but when it is understood that access to physical evidence is an essential kind of access and that printed books must therefore be preserved in multiple copies, the questions of ownership and care remain significant.

The theoretical content of the "Statement on the Significance of Primary Records," in short, is that texts and their settings are not separable; that all the characteristics of the artifacts conveying texts are potentially relevant to the act of careful reading; that those characteristics can differ even among copies of individual editions; and that there is a consequent need to preserve as many copies of printed editions as possible in

order to maximize both the quantity of evidence available and the access to that evidence. The usefulness of textual reproductions is not in question, but it has no bearing on the rationale for the preservation of artifacts.

III

Those who wish to read further on this topic might turn to several of the papers in the published proceedings of the Houghton Library fiftieth-anniversary symposium (ed. Wendorf), especially the papers by Nicolas Barker, Werner Gundersheimer, Alexandra Mason, David McKitterick, Ruth Perry, and me (my comments are largely reprinted in section 2 above). Other useful readings are Elizabeth Witherell's presidential address to the Association for Documentary Editing, D. F. McKenzie's concluding remarks at the Elvetham Hall conference on humanistic scholarship and technology, and my "Reproductions and Scholarship" (which contains many references to related material, as does a forthcoming article of mine entitled "The Future of Primary Records").

The committee hopes that the present addition to the literature of this subject—in the form of the statement and the articles offered below—will arouse further interest in the cause of preserving textual artifacts. By the end of 1995, various members of the committee will have spoken on this subject at the New York Public Library, the University of Kansas, and meetings of the American Library Association, the American Institute for Conservation, the College Language Association, the National Council of Teachers of English, and the Rare Book School of the University of Virginia. The committee has also scheduled two sessions at the 1995 MLA convention in Chicago, one to be presided over by Philip Lewis, on decision making in libraries, and the other to be chaired by Alice Schreyer, on shared

decision making. A sharing of ideas and discussion among relevant professional organizations (many of which have already given thought to these questions) is the heart of the recommendation made at the end of the statement, and the proposed task group would provide a way for all interested parties to pursue the issues together. The MLA can usefully act as a catalyst in setting this joint activity in motion; it has taken the first step in implementing the committee's recommendation by accepting an invitation from the Preservation of Library Materials Committee of the Association of Research Libraries to form a joint working group. In this spirit of cooperative action, the committee encourages members of the MLA to distribute the statement to persons who might not see it otherwise and to bring it to the attention of other organizations with which they are connected. The MLA office welcomes letters from members reporting on such initiatives or commenting on related matters.

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What Is the Future of the Print Record?

J. Hillis Miller

It is a great honor and a great responsibility to be a member of the MLA Ad Hoc Committee on the Future of the Print Record. The future of the print record is jeopardized in two quite different ways these days. The first threat: approximately one hundred million books and other materials in United States libraries printed on acid paper will become unusable during the next several decades. They are oxidizing, slowly burning up, becoming brittle, crumbling away, and becoming unreadable. Second threat to the print record: new electronic communication technologies are bringing about a revolution as great as was the shift from manuscript culture to print culture. Books and other materials printed on paper will become, indeed have already become, less and less important in the new electronic culture we are rapidly entering. Computers, e-mail, faxes, the Internet, electronic books, and multimedia materials are already decisively transforming research and teaching in the humanities. They are doing this in ways we have hardly begun to understand fully, since we are in the midst of the revolution. Books will be with us for a long time, decisive in the lives of many for the foreseeable future, but already the sensibilities, the ethos, the politics, the sense of personal identity of many of our citizens, including college students and faculty members, are determined more by television, cinema, and video than by printed books.

Both these changes are, for better or worse, irreversible. Those brittle books are going to fall apart. The electronic revolution has already, to a considerable degree, occurred. It joins the end of the Cold War and the globalization of university research (which means that universities more and more serve transnational corporations rather than the nation-state) as one of the three major factors that are rapidly transforming American higher education.

In preparing these remarks, I have asked myself what I really do think about the use of original materials. One thing is clear to me. The first obligation of the MLA is to support vigorously those efforts in textual preservation, now funded to a large degree by the NEH, that will at best be able to save only twenty-five or thirty percent of the titles printed on acid paper.

The second obligation: the MLA needs to make every effort to study the effects of the electronic revolution, along with those of the globalization that goes with it, and to make sure that it happens in ways that will be beneficial to our interests. To study this revolution means supporting the radically new graduate training that will make our young scholars and teachers appropriately educated for the study of many cultures (as in, for example, global literature in English or United States literature in languages other than English) as well as for the study of those media that mix language with other visual and auditory materials, media such as cinema, television, and video, which have such influence on our lives today. To make sure the electronic revolution proceeds in ways beneficial to our interests means resisting the rapid commercialization of the Internet that is at this moment occurring. It means also doing our best to make sure that electronic storage of printed materials carries as much as possible of the history that is embodied in the physical artifacts: for example, all the illustrations in Victorian novels and all the information in the dust jackets, title pages,

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end pages, and so on of physical books in general that electronic books now characteristically leave out but could easily include. We need to ensure the preservation of full bibliographical information about the originals when books are electronically or photographically stored. We need to urge care in the choice of exemplars to be copied. We need to urge those who prepare electronic transcriptions to follow the guidelines of the Text Encoding Initiative.

The third obligation is to attend closely to the uses of original materials and to save as many of those artifacts as possible. I strongly urge that the MLA appoint a joint working group with the Association of Research Libraries to make decisions about preserving original materials where the artifactual value is questionable. In urging that this joint group be formed, I join Betty G. Bengtson, chair of the ARL Preservation of Library Materials Committee. In her recent letter to Phyllis Franklin she said: "The issue of cost is critical, given the magnitude of the preservation problem and the vast number of endangered research materials. In a context where choices will be made, it is vital to distinguish between materials that have significant artifactual value and those for which surrogates can be created through electronic, photographic, or other means."

The difficulties will come in trying to make such distinctions. Let me give a little example. Last summer on Deer Isle, Maine, where I spend my summers, I was rereading a novel by Anthony Trollope, *Ayala's Angel* (1881). I brought with me my old copy of the Oxford World's Classics reprint of this novel. Originally published in 1929, this reprint was reissued several times thereafter (my copy is dated 1960) as part of a more or less comprehensive edition of Trollope's novels. They were included over fifty years ago in the World's Classics series (in which *Ayala's Angel* was number 342), long before personal computers were invented. A note at the end of the book tells me it was "set in Great Britain at the University Press, Oxford, and Printed by J. W. Arrowsmith Ltd, Bristol." It cost "10s 6d. net in U.K. only," and I bought it in London in the late 1960s. I first read the novel in this edition. It is a quasi-sacred object for me, one with which I have a long personal association. I have carried it from place to place as part of my library. My relation to this object is an example of the way so many readers of my generation and many generations before mine have participated in a reasonably benign fetishism of the book.

Ayala's Angel, however, was also available to me on Deer Isle in another way: as an electronic book, part of the Oxford Text Archive collection of such books. I had access to that by way of my laptop computer and

the modem that connected me by courtesy to the Internet server at Colby College. What is the difference between reading *Ayala's Angel* in book form and reading it in electronic text form? I have stressed the physical embodiment of *Ayala's Angel* in the World's Classics edition. Not only is the text of the novel caught in the materiality of the book, it is also tied by way of the book's paper, cardboard, ink, and glue to the historical and economic conditions of its production and distribution. The edition was part of a moment in English publishing history when one of the great academic-commercial English publishers made classic books of Western literature available in inexpensive form. This moment was preceded by earlier moments, first by the initial publication of the book in 1881, then by subsequent cheap editions. Many of Trollope's novels were reprinted as yellow-bound paperbacks sold in railway stations in the late nineteenth century. The twentieth-century World's Classics version was thus a later stage in English publishing history. It depended on the existence of a large literate middle-class reading public in Britain. It also depended to some degree on the fact that television was not yet available.

The Oxford University Press in the twentieth century has been, moreover, an international operation. Its books have been marketed all over the world, but especially in cities in what were once British colonies or parts of the British Empire. The globalization of the English language did not occur by accident or because of some intrinsic superiority of that language. The list of cities—printed on the page facing the title page—where the Oxford University Press in 1960 asserted itself as located reads like a litany of sites associated with British colonialism and imperialism: Glasgow, New York, Toronto, Melbourne, Wellington, Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Karachi, Kuala Lumpur, Cape Town, Ibadan, Nairobi, Accra. The sun never sets on the Oxford University Press. In all these ways, and in others space does not allow me to specify, the little book that I hold in my hand is embedded in history, embodies that history in material form, and gives me access to that history.

The electronic text version of *Ayala's Angel* is cut off from all signs of historical context. Or, rather, it is given a strange new historical placement in the cyberspace of today. A date of original publication is indicated, and that is about all. The novel exists not as embodied in material form, or at least not material in the fixed way of a printed book. It exists as a large number of bits of information, zeroes and ones inscribed as magnetic differences on a hard disk or on magnetic tape or as minute scratches on an optical disk

or as electrical pulses on the wired and wireless transmissions of the Internet. *Ayala's Angel* as an electronic book takes on a new meaning when it is placed in this new context, when it floats in cyberspace. It is detached from its local historical context and becomes a text in the context of an enormous and incoherent abundance of works of all kinds—verbal, pictorial, and auditory—on the Internet. As such it might now become the object of a globalized “cultural studies” by scholars who are themselves more and more transformed—in part by their use of the computer and by their inhabitation of cyberspace—in their relation to the culture of the book. This transformation is occurring even though it is still a primary goal of literary history and literary criticism in the modern languages to understand and interpret that culture of the book.

To show the difficulties involved in deciding which original materials to preserve and which not, I have deliberately chosen an example, *Ayala's Angel* in the Oxford World's Classics edition, that is not original in the ordinary sense. A well-known essay by R. W. Chapman long ago demonstrated how unreliable as texts the Oxford World's Classics editions of Trollope's novels are. Probably this edition of *Ayala's Angel* would not qualify as a book worth saving in its original form for its artifactual value, whereas a first edition of *Ayala's Angel* might conceivably do so. My example is meant

to show, however, that much can be learned about history, even with such secondary or tertiary editions, from close attention to the materiality of the book, its binding, dust jacket, title page, and so on. My example is also meant to show how difficult it is, in practice, to distinguish between the book as artifact and the book as the bearer of pure verbal information, data that might be transcribed unchanged and without loss into any form, including electronic, just as it might be translated, without loss, into another language. This does not weaken my allegiance to the three obligations I began by identifying, or the hierarchy in which I placed them, but it does indicate the extreme difficulty of deciding which books to save in their original form for their artifactual value, as they cannot all be saved. Nevertheless, we must decide. I hope the MLA will play an important role in that process.

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SIGNIFICANCE OF PRIMARY RECORDS

Discussion

Traces of a Lost Woman

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Elizabeth Griffith was the author of six plays, three novels, and a variety of other works published between 1757 and 1782. With her husband, Richard Griffith, she also published six volumes of *A Series of Genuine Letters between Henry and Frances*. Although we do not know to what extent the letters have been edited since the manuscript letters have not survived, these nevertheless do seem to be genuine letters between Richard, writing as Henry, and Elizabeth, writing as Frances. The letters chronicle first a seduction attempt resisted, then a marriage, and finally many happy years in which the two share love and common literary interests (see Tompkins 1–40).

Until recently, scholars were inclined to dismiss Griffith as unworthy of serious inquiry. They contented themselves with fleeting mention of her works in comprehensive literary histories of the drama or the novel or produced perfunctory notes explaining who she was in cases where she or her works were mentioned in the texts of canonical writers. Not surprisingly, the low level of scrutiny she was thought to deserve accounts for a significant amount of disinformation in reference works. For instance, in *Bibliotheca Britannica* the title of Griffith's play *A Wife in the Right* is transformed—whether through the accident of a printing error or by a Freudian slip on the part of the nonfeminist compiler—into *A Wife in the Night*.¹

Now, of course, critics and scholars are very interested in refinding, researching, and reevaluating the works of women writers of many historical periods and many countries. Some early women writers have been profoundly lost, with no trace of their works apparently remaining; others only relatively lost, as in the case where we have copies of at least some works and reason to suspect the existence of more.² Three facts pose particular difficulties for those compiling lists of the works of early women writers we are now trying to rediscover. First,

many women circulated their works in the form of unsigned manuscripts or published them anonymously or with formulas like “By a Lady” instead of the author's name. Second, some women wrote kinds of texts scorned by collectors and libraries, like children's books. And, third, most women changed their names on marriage, and some women were married more than once.

The truism we do not know what we do not know is especially relevant to the study of neglected women writers. Let us suppose that we replace the surviving printed copies of Griffith's works with reformatted versions, anything from microfilm to electronic text. What sorts of information present in the existing paper documents might disappear in the reformattings?

Much, of course, depends upon the principles of selection used. Suppose that our reformatting program decides to select “good copies” of first editions of original works—a frequent and unsurprising choice. We then lose evidence of subsequent authorial revision, and, in Griffith's case, sometimes more important, the evidence contained in preliminary matter to later editions. For instance, in the second edition of volume 1 of *Genuine Letters* Griffith added a new dedication, “To my Sex.” (For comments on the significance of this and other variations between different editions, see Bernstein.)

No one, after all, can really tell what a good copy is without collating it with others. The value of the textual critic's maxim that every copy is unique until proven otherwise is amply demonstrated by the work on Griffith that Brandeis graduate students and I have done (see Staves, “Revising the Pedagogy”). Horace Walpole's copy of her first performed play, *The Platonic Wife*, has pasted into it a printed announcement with the heading “To the PUBLIC from the Author of the PLATONIC WIFE,” an attempted defense of herself

against charges of “Indelicacy” in the play. This looks like it was clipped from a contemporary newspaper, but we have not been able to find this text in any surviving newspaper.

One copy of the Dublin second edition of volumes 1 and 2 of *Genuine Letters* (currently at the Beinecke Library of Yale University) is quite imperfect, missing many pages, and, as the librarians say, “mutilated” in various ways by marginalia and crossings out of words and passages. The mutilation, however, seems to have been done by Griffith herself, who used this particular printed copy as a base text for making revisions intended for a future edition (although these revisions were not incorporated in later editions). Many of the deletions are of low phrases, descriptions of Elizabeth’s poor health, references to money, or references to Richard’s passions—all revisions designed to make the text more genteel and more belletristic. Griffith also decides to excise a playful early threat that she will publish Richard’s letters, presumably because it makes her appear too aggressive, too poor, and too mercenary: “[I]f I am reduced, I vow, I will print your Letters—I think they will keep me in Tea, clean Linen, and Plays. . . .” The printed letter is signed “Your affectionate Pauper,” but “Pauper” is crossed out and replaced with the more decorous “Frances” (55). Richard’s wish for the “Enjoyment” of her “Person” is transmuted into a chaster hope for the “certainty” of her “Love” (122). His willingness to marry her is made less casual and more eager. Instead of forming “a Sort of vague Determination in his Mind, to marry her,” he forms “a Determination” and the caveat that “he had not resolved with himself on the Time” is stricken (163). When she writes with the direct question of whether he intends ever to make her his wife, a deleted passage unromantically explains that he deferred a reply until he saw her, “for he did not chuse to give any thing under his Hand, which might be construed into a Contract” (268).

Among versions of texts “of no authority” likely to be ignored in reproduction programs designed to preserve “intellectual content” are translations.³ Translations are also likely to get short shrift in reproduction programs supported by government funds and designed to preserve particular national heritages. Yet translation has long been an important literary medium for women writers, and earlier norms of translation practice often made less of a distinction between translation and adaptation than we do now. Griffith did a number of book-length translations from the French, which on inspection add considerably to our knowledge of her ideas. She believed that translators had a right to com-

ment on the texts they translated, so her translations characteristically contain interpolated, even on occasion feminist, commentary. Despite her English literary persona as a champion of sentimental virtue, she translated some French libertine texts, notably *The Memoirs of Ninon de L’Enclos* and Claude Joseph Dorat’s *The Fatal Effects of Inconstancy*.⁴ When one of Dorat’s libertine protagonists discusses women’s incapacity for disinterested resistance to seducers, Griffith retorts in a note:

Such is the artful and insidious manner of arguing, with all libertine wits; but ’tis certainly most unphilosophic. They seem to speak of Women, not only as of a different gender, but of a different species, too, from Men. There is no distinction of Sexes in virtue or vice; and whatever has been once determined to be the point of honour, in man or woman, will be equally defended, by each. (9–10)

Who would have guessed a hundred years ago that in 1995 roughly half the new professors of literature would be women or that so many of them would want to study women’s writing? Not only do we now not know what we do not know, we cannot predict what scholars or what society will want to know a hundred years from now. But we certainly can proceed to let decay or to destroy the printed texts that could support the inquiries of 2095.

Notes

¹A less amusing example in a more recent work attributes the novel *The Gordian Knot* to Elizabeth Griffith, though it was in fact written by her husband Richard (Martin, Mylne, and Frautschi). That this error should arise is not startling, since Elizabeth and Richard together published *Two Novels: In Letters. By the Authors of Henry and Frances*, the set containing one novel by her, *The Delicate Distress*, and another by him, *The Gordian Knot*.

²For example, we know that Ann Masterman, Griffith’s contemporary, was the author of one novel that survives, *The Old Maid*, but contemporary sources say she wrote more than this. We have not yet found another title that can be attributed to her. See Staves, “Matrimonial Discord.”

³For the phrase “intellectual content,” see United States 6.

⁴For a discussion of the significance of Griffith’s involvement with libertine texts and details about her interventions in *Memoirs of Ninon*, see Staves, “French Fire.”

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The Diaries of Queen Lili‘uokalani

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Many factors in Hawaii work against the preservation of print media. They include Hawaii’s semitropical climate—high humidity and frequent rain—and long tradition of the open-window system of air cooling, which takes advantage of the trade winds. State and university buildings that house important documents are usually air-conditioned but not always in all rooms, and the conversion to air conditioning has been gradual and slow. For example, only one floor of the undergraduate library at the University of Hawaii at Manoa is currently air-conditioned; my office still waits. Rooms used by the English department were only recently converted, putting an end to such dramas as classroom windstorms and visits by local birds. Sunlight, even when filtered through windows on the opposite side of a room, has a quick, devastating effect on print media. Books lose their color, and the writing fades. Hardbound covers attract a type of mildew that leaves them soft and with a slightly furry surface. Paper clips oxidize and leave documents with brown imprints. Paper stays soggy, and as the ocean salt works its way into expensive machinery, printers jam and computer innards begin to corrode. Cockroaches eat the glue of bindings until books come apart. What the cockroaches neglect, the bookworms undertake. They burrow their way through the text and leave behind them pin-size tunnels, sometimes from cover to cover.

Manuscripts and records are therefore guarded with vigilance, and they are not always easy to gain access to. In particular, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century documents from the time when Hawaii was a monarchy and, as such, a Pacific island nation tend to be kept out of sight in restricted sections of library collections, state archives, and museums, so cool that one might think

they were refrigerated. But as sovereignty for Hawaiians has become a pressing ethnic and political issue, interest in Hawaiian language, history, and culture has gained momentum, and increasing numbers of people are requesting access to print materials that once were of interest primarily to scholars and historians. Among these documents are memoirs, official reports, and newspaper accounts containing information about the 1898 annexation of Hawaii to the United States as well as about Hawaii’s last reigning monarch, Lili‘uokalani. The year 1993 marked the hundredth anniversary of her overthrow and 1995 the hundredth anniversary of her formal statement of abdication. These landmark dates and numerous commemorative activities continue to generate interest in Lili‘uokalani, who could readily serve as a rallying symbol for the Hawaiian sovereignty movement.

Interested in Lili‘uokalani myself, I did research on the book *Hawaii’s Story by Hawaii’s Queen*, which Lili‘uokalani wrote from late 1896 through 1897 and which is widely known and read in Hawaii. Published in the United States only months before Congress was to vote for or against the annexation of Hawaii, the book was Lili‘uokalani’s final effort to intervene in the political process, from which she had been removed by her overthrow, forced abdication, trial, and imprisonment in her own palace (which now stands restored in the middle of Honolulu). In the book, Lili‘uokalani argues and pleads with the American people not to take over her country. She declares “absolute authority” in saying that “the native people of Hawaii are entirely faithful to their own chiefs, and are deeply attached to their own customs and mode of government; that they either do not understand, or bitterly oppose, the scheme

of annexation” (370). *Hawaii’s Story by Hawaii’s Queen* is rich in Hawaiian history and will undoubtedly be cited in future debates on the contested history and status of indigenous Hawaiians and of their land and political rights.

The question that arose in my research on Queen Lili‘uokalani resulted from my willingness to rely on photocopies of her transcribed diaries from 1878 through 1906. The original volumes are not readily available to the public, but I anticipated no particular problems in using the photocopied versions, which are conveniently shelved in the Hawaiian and Pacific Collection at the University of Hawaii. I offer the following paragraphs as a cautionary tale to illustrate the dangers of not using original documents, dangers that unfortunately become apparent only when researchers decide for some reason to examine the original documents. Reproducing primary materials by any method—even simple ones such as transcription and photocopying—may have the effect of distorting the original text.

Using typed copies of the diaries seemed altogether reasonable to me—that is, until I began to think, very surprisingly, that Lili‘uokalani may not have written *Hawaii’s Story by Hawaii’s Queen*. It was not my intention to discredit her authorship of a book that is so widely known. Still, rumors of a ghostwriter or of a very liberal collaboration with the man who served for a time as Lili‘uokalani’s secretary have existed at least since the 1930s, when Lorrin A. Thurston, a grandson of missionaries and a leader of the pro-annexationist party, declared Lili‘uokalani’s authorship of *Hawaii’s Story by Hawaii’s Queen* a sham. In his own memoir of the overthrow of the monarchy, Thurston uses Lili‘uokalani’s diaries to support his embittered accusations against the queen, who had worked so hard to thwart his plans for a Hawaii that would be tied politically and permanently to the United States. After his political party confiscated the diaries and other personal papers from the queen, Thurston, who had a law degree from Columbia University, examined them. Certain passages turned up in the case against the queen when a military tribunal of the Provisional Government put her on trial for treason. She was found guilty of misprision of treason and sentenced to five years of hard labor and a \$5,000 fine. The sentence was commuted to imprisonment, and when it was over, she had spent eight months confined to one room of her palace, five months under house arrest in her private residence, and for another eight months she was forbidden to leave the island of Oahu (Allen 341). In *Memoirs of the Hawaiian Revolution* (1936), Thurston discredits the queen’s authorship even though,

while imprisoned in 1895, she worked on the first English translation of *The Kumulipo*, a Hawaiian poem and chant of the Creation, which she published in 1897 with her own introduction. (She was also one of Hawaii’s most talented and prolific composers.) Thurston insists, however, that there is too large a disparity between the style of the diaries and that of *Hawaii’s Story by Hawaii’s Queen*. “I have checked the record in various sources,” he writes, and “[t]he English of the book, as compared with that of the diary, is evidence of my statement. Lili‘uokalani personally was incapable of using such clear-cut English as that published” (175, 180).

To my regret, the typed copies seemed at first to confirm Thurston’s charge: the entries were often short and oddly fragmented or elliptical, with a pattern of abbreviations and errors. Lili‘uokalani seemed also to write on standard-size paper, but strangely she ignored its horizontal dimension; her sentences were foreshortened and rarely came close to the right-hand margin. There were many oddities in the diaries that I read for the years 1878, 1885, and 1898 and many inconsistencies from diary to diary. Deciding it was necessary to view the original volumes, I learned that some were sequestered in the State of Hawaii Archives Building and others in the Bishop Museum, both in Honolulu. I went to the Bishop Museum, which stores thousands of documents and artifacts from pre- and post-Contact Hawaii, and consulted with an archivist there. He agreed to remove the diaries from a room that is dehumidified and air-conditioned twenty-four hours a day, which I was not allowed to enter. Returning to another room in which I waited, the archivist handled the diaries with spotless white gloves and carefully placed one volume, then another, and then another on a table before me, and he patiently turned down each fragile page for me to examine but not to touch. I then discovered something that surprised me even more than had my initial skepticism of Lili‘uokalani’s authorship, something I would never have discovered had I not seen the original entries.

Utterly absent from the photocopied transcripts and utterly obvious in the originals was the way in which the physical dimensions of each diary determined the odd style of its entries. Only by viewing the originals did I realize that the diaries, in contrast to the photocopied versions, come in a variety of shapes and sizes. Furthermore, nearly all the diaries are very small. For example, the 1886 diary is 3 by 4½ inches, the 1898 diary 3 by 5 inches, and the 1906 diary 2¾ by 5½ inches. Some of the diaries are so small they are more accurately described as appointment books with space only for quick, hasty entries. The materials that I had

examined earlier were physically identical, all the standard 8½ by 11 inches, all in bound notebooks the size of academic theses. Also, and again in contrast to the photocopied texts, the original diaries do not generally have conspicuous gaps between the text and the edges of the paper. In fact, the original diaries show what the typed copies camouflage, that Lili'uokalani's handwriting often goes to the very edge of the page, leaving no space whatever. In the smaller diaries the queen's handwriting is very cramped with occasional additions even written upside down, providing evidence that she worked hard to utilize all the space available to her and was thus expressive rather than reticent.

The conclusion I drew from even a cursory study of the original documents was the opposite of the impression I first received from the photocopied version: Queen Lili'uokalani was more than capable of writing *Hawaii's Story by Hawaii's Queen*. Many of the supposed errors and idiosyncrasies of her prose are a natural and logical result of writing in what she considered a private genre and in the physical books she chose for her diaries. The typed copies that are available throughout Hawaii give the impression that Lili'uokalani used standard American notebook paper, which she collected and bound as a manuscript. They also suggest obvious improbabilities—that, for example, she typed some of the entries or that when she wrote in Hawaiian, she also translated those sentences. In retrospect, I see that the insufficiencies of the copies are embarrassingly evident, and yet I was slow to recognize them. They corrupt the originals in ways that led me, at least for a few days, to divest Lili'uokalani of authorship of her important *Hawaii's Story by Hawaii's Queen*.

Although without systematic study it is difficult to generalize about the textual corruptions from one year's diary to another, I think it fair to say that the duplicating process and the preparation of fragile materials for undergoing that process create significant problems. In fact, they produce "copies" that are dangerously unfaithful to the original. The decision, for instance, to photocopy typed versions of handwritten diary entries produces odd differences and dislocations. The decision concerning the relation between text and page tends to magnify minor errors so that they appear glaring. Without sufficient editorial apparatus, copies that aren't really copies emphasize qualities of Lili'uokalani's prose that seem idiosyncratic on a standard page but are absolutely appropriate to the cramped format of the actual diaries. Lili'uokalani's prose, removed from its original context, is thus stripped of its history.

Thurston, who read the original diaries, surely understood that the fragments and elliptical constructions

were the result of the dimensions of the diaries. Given Hawaii's benign climate, which is anything but benign for the preservation of print, and given Hawaii's volatile politics, perhaps he believed that the diaries would not survive but that his accusations would. The crucial diary of 1897, which Lili'uokalani must have written in while she worked on *Hawaii's Story by Hawaii's Queen* and which would probably corroborate her authorship and offer details of the drafting process, has never been found. In view of the history of Lili'uokalani's confiscated possessions, I suspect that it never will be found.

Thurston proclaims Lili'uokalani incapable of writing her own book. I conclude that Hawaii's last indigenous ruler not only wrote her own book but also was someone for whom writing was imperative. Using those pocket-size diaries was very practical. Lili'uokalani was able to keep one or two of them hidden in the folds of her late Victorian dresses and write the instant she felt the urge to write. Symbolically, if not in fact, she was protecting the record of her life from those who she feared might gain political ascendancy and who eventually did. They were the same people who imprisoned her, ransacked her private rooms, and confiscated every diary and personal and official paper they could find, allowing her to keep only one document, her last will and testament. We are uncertain why some of the diaries still have not surfaced and why others show evidence of tampering and erasures, but we know this much: Lili'uokalani could not be stopped from writing. Not only are the diaries written in English and Hawaiian, but in later years, after Hawaii became a Territory of the United States, Lili'uokalani began to use a private numerical code that was not broken until 1971 and occasionally a personal shorthand. It seems certain that *Hawaii's Story by Hawaii's Queen* was indeed written by Hawaii's queen, and it is ironic that the original diaries, but not their typed copies, offer strong support for this conclusion.

Note

My thanks to DeSoto Brown, an archivist at Bishop Museum, Honolulu, Hawaii, for his helpful reading of this paper.

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Manuscripts on Microfilm: The Disturbing Case of Proust

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I have three anecdotes, three for the price of one: together they indicate that there is more than one aspect to the business of manuscript versus microfilm. One of the anecdotes even suggests that we should be happy that some manuscripts have been preserved on film.

For the last ten years or so I have been working on the manuscripts of Marcel Proust, trying to establish the chronological sequence of everything that he wrote in preparation for his great novel *A la recherche du temps perdu*, from 1909 (when it first took shape, and the pillars were set down) through 1911 (when Proust completed a first draft) to 1913 (when a typescript of half the novel was ready for a publisher; half this typescript was set in proof and half the proof published). My examples come from the first book of the novel, *Du côté de chez Swann*, the part entitled “Combray”; from the central portion, *Le côté de Guermantes*; and from the last part, now *La fugitive* or *Albertine disparue*.

The “manuscripts” are essentially exercise books, with the addition of a few episodes written on loose sheets and of a seven-hundred-page typescript that covers about half the novel as it was envisaged in 1911. Proust wrote on the recto pages of his exercise books, frequently passing from one book to another, and maybe another, and back again to the first; he used his verso pages for subsequent additions. Occasionally he saved himself the trouble of recopying by giving a whimsical cross-reference (a sketch of a boat, or a butterfly, for instance), but generally, as he refined his prose and reorganized his episodes, he rewrote the whole text.

This material was all in private hands until the early sixties, when the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris acquired the lion’s share (other exercise books have come into the library since then). It was not in good order, with exercise books falling apart, and so the books were all “restored,” which means essentially that they were rebound, with the loose pages firmly fixed in place. A practical method of classification was devised, assigning each rebound exercise book to the part of the novel to which it seemed most closely related; thus the books that work on the overture were numbered 1–7, the books on “Combray” 8–14, the books on “Un amour de Swann” 15–19, and so forth.

For twenty years scholars had a field day with this material, gradually analyzing the contents, identifying

problems, proposing solutions. But the day came, inevitably, when it was decided that too many fingers in the Proustian pie were having a destructive effect on the precious pages and that henceforth consultation would be done on microfilm, in order to preserve the manuscript. It is not impossible to obtain permission to see the originals, but all routine work has to be done first under glass. In the process, things can get overlooked.

One disadvantage of microfilms, as everyone who has used them knows, is that all sense of the physical reality of the book disappears. A microfilm is like a black-and-white reproduction of an oil painting. The words are there, but everything has become intellectualized, distant. For the scholar in search not only of evidence but also of suggestions, some clues are no longer discernible—the color of the ink, for example. Ten years ago I realized that the first part of the “1911” typescript, including nearly all of “Combray,” must have been made toward the end of 1909, and I asked a young Japanese doctoral student, Akio Wada, who was writing a thesis on the evolution of “Combray,” if he had considered that possibility. “Yes,” he replied, “and, what is more, I can prove it.” His proof, which he would not disclose at the time but which became public knowledge once his thesis had been defended, was that a note in Proust’s personal *carnet*, which we can certainly date December 1909 or January 1910, indicates in red ink that there were passages added on certain pages. On the typescript all these pages have marginal additions, and they are all in red ink. Red ink is very rare in Proust. Luckily Wada noticed the red ink in time, before the manuscripts were taken from him.

With microfilms you proceed one dreary page at a time, without the sense of the whole, which you get physically from the exercise books themselves. My second anecdote suggests that the mechanical process of microfilm reading encourages laziness. It was always said that there was a gap in the manuscript version of the central portion of Proust’s novel, *Le côté de Guermantes*. The manuscript version is found in exercise books 39–43 and 49 of the Bibliothèque Nationale collection. The last page of 43 ends in mid-sentence, and the first page of 49 begins in mid-sentence, and they are not the same sentence. The assumption, never questioned, was that we were in the presence of two different versions, the

first version missing only its last exercise book, the second version known only through its last exercise book. Or maybe it was the other way around; there was some dispute about which was the first version and which the second. But nobody doubted that there were two distinct versions. We were, however, in the presence of a modern-day “golden tooth.” The gap between 43 and 49 is of only a few lines, as we see if we compare the draft with the published text, and it seemed to me unlikely that 43 and 49 did not belong together. That the remaining portions of two different versions should fit almost exactly was too much of a coincidence. Evidently a few lines, perhaps one manuscript page, was missing. Could the missing text be found? More easily than I had imagined; for when I looked at the microfilm of book 43, I realized that when Proust had got to the end of his last page (writing, as usual, on the recto), he continued on the facing verso. But once again he reached the end of the page without finishing his sentence, and he picked up a new book (our 49) and completed it there. The scholars who had studied *Guer-mantes* had evidently not thought to wind back the reel to the previous image. It can get quite hot and soporific in the microfilm room, but even so. . . . Can you really afford not to bother to read the verso pages of a crucial manuscript?

My third example comes from later in the novel, the part that never made it to the 1911–12 typescript. Here we find that the microfilm, far from obscuring the evidence, actually leads us to the truth about the original version. This part of the novel, reworked by Proust during the war, is one of the rare instances where he simply cut out pages and included them, without recopying them, in his new manuscript. Another Japanese scholar, Jo Yoshida, had spotted and identified five such pages. When I was trying to reconstitute the original 1911 version, using the microfilm, I noticed a sixth page, of which only the margin (which

was empty) remained in the original exercise book; the rest of the page had been pasted into the wartime exercise book. But in 1911 Proust had written something on the back as well, going of course all the way to the right-hand edge of the page, so when he cut along the margin line of the recto, which was the text he wished to reuse, the writing on the verso was divided about one inch from the end of each line. The text could be reconstituted by putting together the two portions of the divided page, but this is quite unpractical on microfilm, even if one could for a few minutes use two adjacent readers. So I preferred to add this question to the list of questions I needed access to the originals to answer. Imagine my surprise when I had the original 1911 exercise book in my hand and could find no trace whatever of the page I wanted to see. I can only assume that the one-inch margin was “tidied up” when the exercise books were rebound and that fortunately this tidying up occurred after the microfilm was made. I have no proof of this, however. It shows why the Japanese scholar counted only five such pages: in the early eighties, he was working straight from the originals. It also presents a horrendous prospect to the conscientious scholar, who would have to compare every page of the originals with every page of the microfilms to be really sure that nothing was missed. This is impossible, practically speaking, but it shows just how careful one has to be.

This final anecdote leads to another conclusion. Scholars are responsible for their evaluation of the evidence put before them. The onus is on libraries to give very complete bibliographical descriptions of their manuscripts and to suppress no evidence, however untidy it may be. Scholars need to contemplate the mess and work it out for themselves. The assumptions of librarians and archivists may not be beyond reproach, and it is dangerous to present assumptions as facts and tidy up the evidence.

Twentieth-Century Undergraduates and an Eighteenth-Century Edition of Diderot's *Encyclopédie*

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Undergraduates come to my course on French civilization with a variety of backgrounds and with different ideas of what studying civilization is all about. The shape the course takes depends to a great degree on the interests and needs of the students. However, a basic goal shared by all students is the discovery of connections among such areas as history, art, music, literature, and religion. Students are introduced to major events in French history and to works of art produced in France from the Middle Ages to the present. Since we have only fourteen weeks to cover such a large amount of material, we select a few works of art to illustrate each period we study. Students participate in the choice by deciding together what event or work of art they will discuss more in depth in class or in their written work. Conducted entirely in French, the course is primarily a discussion class where students are expected to learn how to express their opinions about French civilization. By the end of the course they should be able to describe several French institutions, historical events. They should also be able to recognize and define basic concepts of French society in terms of its social and political structures and literary and artistic movements.

This year Diderot's *Encyclopédie* was the document selected to start a discussion on the French Enlightenment. The short extract in the textbook could of course not represent fairly the huge compilation that took twenty-nine years to publish in full and eventually ran to twenty-one volumes of text, twelve plates, and two indexes. The complexity of the document and its place in French eighteenth-century society are best investigated using the document's original form. After a class during which we discussed the background of this formidable work and its effect on French culture, the students were given specific assignments to be carried out in the university library. They were to meet in small groups in the rare books collection and then report back to the class about a variety of issues. We had agreed on the entries they would check, such as "autorité politique," "guerre," "peuple," or "droits féodaux." Two students chose to focus on the famous illustrations of the *Encyclopédie*. All the students reported their findings with enthusiasm and had many

interesting observations. They were struck by the number of volumes (thirty-five) and their size and by the names of the numerous intellectuals who participated in Diderot's project. The look and feel of the document were also discussed in class—by students who had never seen or touched an eighteenth-century edition. The calligraphy and spelling interested them. The rare books collection itself was an important discovery for them. Most had never been in that part of the library and found the experience fascinating, though the rare-books librarian did not seem to have enjoyed their visit much. Some students were reprimanded for writing on pieces of paper placed directly on the eighteenth-century edition. With humor, they told different anecdotes of their first contact with the rare books and with the librarian there.

The discussion of the different entries they looked up was very informative. They had discovered, on their own, through the difficulty of consulting the original work, some of the subtlety of the *Encyclopédie*. We spoke, for example, about censorship and self-censorship. I am convinced that, in many ways, students have gained more from working with an eighteenth-century edition of the *Encyclopédie* than they ever did from working with a textbook reproduction of an *Encyclopédie* article or two. For example, the students raised interesting questions about the cost of such an edition and about the number of readers who were able to acquire these huge volumes at the time.

Looking at, touching, and reading the *Encyclopédie* is a wonderful way to put oneself into the mind-set of eighteenth-century France, to grasp what was considered so sensational, shocking, and revolutionary then. The hundreds of engraved illustrations that show people at work making all manner of industrial products definitely helped my students understand why the *Encyclopédie* embodies the Enlightenment and is one of the most important documents on eighteenth-century France in general.

I asked the students to evaluate our pedagogical experiment. Most were very positive even when they had encountered difficulties. Many students told me that using an eighteenth-century edition had changed their

conception of what a research project could be. One student I met later told me that she had just got a good grade on a research project about Frederick Douglass (in a journalism course) because her use of Douglass's articles instead of the course's compilation of secondary sources had helped her shape a personal and creative approach. She laughed as she was telling me about the

difficulties of finding his articles in various libraries and about her perseverance. She struggled with the libraries' catalogs and the texts themselves but eventually learned a lot. At the end of our brief conversation the student, young but a scholar indeed, mentioned that she is still thinking of trying to find original copies of *The North Star* and maybe even some of Douglass's manuscripts.

On the Importance of Judging Books by Their Covers

Gregg Camfield, University of Pennsylvania

Any proposal to make an exclusively electronic library is predicated ultimately on an extreme idealism, an idealism crudely but accurately expressed by the axiom "You can't judge a book by its cover." This axiom implies that the words alone count and that if we could simply pour them unmediated into our brains, we would best be able to judge books. According to this principle—by which we teach our classes out of cheap paperback reprints of authors' words—the medium doesn't count at all. Get the words right and the student can read them off microfilm, a VDT, or even listen to them on audiotape.

But as the amount of money publishers spend on covers suggests, we can—indeed we usually do—judge books by their covers. The Harlequin romances at the checkout counter in the supermarket have covers that tell us not only what but also how we will read. Leather-bound, gilt-edged volumes also tell us how to read: reverentially in the face of transcendent genius, which we have the good taste to purchase and display ostentatiously. My point is simple and obvious: the physical presentation of a piece of literature gives us essential clues about how we are intended to read it and gives us further clues about the means of its production and the social role it plays. In my classes on nineteenth-century literature, I insist that the students take the physical book into account as a part of their reading experience. For that I need libraries to have early editions of the books I assign.

Let me give an example. In my class on Mark Twain, I want my students to understand what risks Twain ran and what benefits he sought in publishing his books by subscription. I refer to his own words to describe his sense of his business, but these words themselves refer to the physical artifacts quite concretely:

There is one discomfort which I fear a man must put up with when he publishes by subscription, and that is wretched paper & vile engravings. I fancy the publisher don't make a very large pile when he pays his author 10 p.c. You notice that the *Gilded Age* is rather a rubbishy looking book; well, the sale has now reached about 50,000 copies—so the royalty now due the authorship is about \$18,000. (81)

Twain traded aesthetic pleasure for economic power, but what that tradeoff meant is not fully obvious to late-twentieth-century readers.

To show what the tradeoff meant, I have my students study the physical copies of books that span much of Twain's career, from the early days when he did not control the presentation of his books to the days when he took control by publishing his books himself. Using copies of *The Innocents Abroad*, *Roughing It*, and *The Gilded Age* as examples of Twain's earlier works, I have my students take note of the gaudy covers; the cheap woodcuts; the brittle, thin, yellowing paper; the thin cardboard covers; the crude typesetting; and the simple heft of the books. These details concretely show that the books were relatively inexpensive. They suggest further that such books were directed to an audience not used to buying books, an audience buying books not for status but rather for entertainment, an audience wanting as much as possible for the price and willing to trade quality for bulk. When I add to this an example or two of subscription book prospectuses, my students see all the more clearly the economic conditions of subscription publishing and the audience expectations that to a large extent determined the range of content of the books.

Thus, reading the material artifacts helps my students read the content, especially when they turn to those books that Twain published himself. Their new

insight into the entertainment value of Twain's early subscription books allows them to see how having control over the production of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* put Twain in something of a bind. He wanted the book to sell as a typical subscription book, but he had written a biting satire. Rather than alienate an audience that expected simple entertainment, he hired an artist to draw conventional comic illustrations, essentially muzzling the biting prose with silly pictures.

When my students examine the beautiful book that is *Connecticut Yankee*, they can see how Twain tried to extend the range of meaning available to a subscription book by changing its material circumstances. The cover is sturdier, and its ornamentation is more tasteful. Inside, the paper is relatively slick, allowing for crisp printing of both text and illustrations. The illustrations are beautiful and expensive, even though Twain hired a previously unknown illustrator in order to hold costs down. The careful layout of each page to integrate words and illustration into one visual whole hints at the effects soon to be exploited by popular magazines of the twentieth century after typesetting costs diminished with the development both of the Morganthaler typesetter and of several less expensive techniques for reproducing graphics. But in *Connecticut Yankee*, the typesetting was done by hand, and the cost was high. Not surprisingly, Twain never made much money on the book, in part because his desire to expand the range of the subscription book outran the technology available to him.

As the book's presentation suggests in yet another important way, Twain may not have cared about profitability. Unlike in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, in *Connecticut Yankee* he made no attempt to hide his political intentions behind benign illustrations of harmless

clowns. On the contrary, he gave his illustrator, Dan Beard, free rein to highlight the book's satire. Beard penned biting political cartoons, most of which pointedly attacked abuses of political or economic power. He brought to the fore the novel's allegorical significance by depicting contemporary political and literary celebrities in his illustrations. To make illustration explicitly serve purposes other than ornamentation is a notable departure from the formula for success in subscription publishing. This and the other merely aesthetic departures from the conventions of subscription publishing suggest that Twain meant his work to have enduring artistic and political value as opposed to ephemeral entertainment value. All of this is suggested not so much by the words as by the book itself. Thus, the material artifact helps students understand authorial intention as well as the book's social and economic circumstances.

I do not know how I could make such points real to my students without the physical copies of the books. I understand the difficulties of making nineteenth-century subscription books available. They are by nature fragile, and their fragility makes them increasingly rare. Rebinding robs them of some of their usefulness, but restoring old bindings is difficult and expensive. Yet in spite of these difficulties, the benefits of maintaining a multifaceted understanding of our cultural history are worth the trouble and expense. If we wish to give our students a truly usable past, we must give them a realistic rather than a purely idealistic sense of the past.

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Rekindling the Reading Experience of the Victorian Age

Catherine Golden, Skidmore College

I confess that part of the mystique of visiting the rare book room at Skidmore College lies in its location; even graduating seniors are as surprised of its existence as Mary Lennox is surprised, in *The Secret Garden*, when she discovers her cousin Colin in a forbidden wing of Misselthwaite Manor. Like Mary's visits to the forbidden wing, visits to the rare book room unlock a world: the

world of Victorian literature and culture. Thus I regularly bring students in my nineteenth-century literature courses to the rare book room in the Lucy Scribner Library of Skidmore College. Together we examine works in the Hannah M. Adler Collection, which features illustrated nineteenth-century periodicals, part issues, books, and multivolume works by leading and popular writers.

Undergraduates reading nineteenth-century novels often marvel at the length of works by Dickens, Thackeray, and Eliot. Seeing long novels in their original installments, however, shows how these texts appeared to the Victorians who read them as multivolume works, as parts of works published independently, or as serials in the leading weekly and monthly journals of the day. Examining pivotal texts and periodicals—Eliot’s *Middlemarch* (1871), *Master Humphrey’s Clock*, and *Bentley’s Miscellany*¹—rekindles the reading experience of the Victorian age. A first edition of *Middlemarch* in eight slim volumes shows how reading a long novel, a challenge for many of my students, was in 1871 a far more manageable task than that of absorbing the fat paperbacks we assign today. A more dramatic point is made when we examine serial publication in the collected volumes of *Bentley’s Miscellany* and in the unbound part issues of *Master Humphrey’s Clock*, which have their original blue-green paper wrappers, an artifact of Victorian publishing. As Linda Hughes and Michael Lund point out in *The Victorian Serial*, it is well known that serialization brought forth some of the best literature of the age, but the experience of reading a novel over a period of two years (or longer), as the Victorians typically did, is foreign to our students, who are given approximately two weeks to read the same work. The installments of Dickens’s *The Old Curiosity Shop* and *Barnaby Rudge* in the part issues of *Master Humphrey’s Clock* encourage students to ask themselves how reading lengthy novels one segment at a time, with breaks between reading periods, affected the ways Victorian audiences responded to and created meaning from these works as well as the ways in which Victorian authors and artists created fiction. Students today can thumb ahead to discover a mystery’s conclusion; the serial reader could not. Learning the story’s outcome thus was postponed, gratification delayed. Moreover, when students actually see from the publishing format that illustrated serial novels unfolded over months and years, they more readily understand how the illustrations provided continuity between installments and an aid to memory. Illustrations, a vital part of the reading experience even of sophisticated Victorians, were studied, as author-illustrator George Du Maurier has put it, “with passionate interest before reading the story, and after, and between” (350).

The monthly installments of *Oliver Twist* from February 1837 to April 1839 (omitting June 1837, October 1837, and September 1838) in *Bentley’s Miscellany* dramatize the benefit of using primary materials to teach about illustrated Victorian fiction. Dickens’s novels un-

folded through and with pictures, though modern editions typically eliminate all or most of the original illustrations. The monthly numbers of *Oliver Twist* in *Bentley’s Miscellany* show students all twenty-four illustrations, allowing them to understand why many Victorian readers considered the memorable characters in *Twist* more Cruikshank’s than Dickens’s. Cruikshank was known for his caricature art. In his illustrations, the body of Fagin, who lures Oliver into his den of crime, shrivels in emaciation, while the overweight forms of Mr. Bumble and Mrs. Corney, parish beadle and workhouse matron, call attention to the fact that, unlike thin Oliver and the backdrop of famished children, those who oversee the workhouse have no need to ask for more. Pictures integral to plot and character development, such as “Monks and the Jew,” have been dropped from modern editions,² and even the best reproductions available today do not capture the nuance of detail and shading so vital to illustrations like “Fagin in the Condemned Cell,” where the stippled effect on the cell wall calls attention to Fagin’s circular, glazed eyes and crazed manner. Seeing all twenty-four images reveals that the story of *Oliver Twist* is told through Cruikshank’s pencil as well as Dickens’s pen and adds credibility to Cruikshank’s grand claims, in his book *The Artist and the Author*, for authorship in his collaborations with Dickens and William Harrison Ainsworth.³

The novels we typically read in my Victorian literature classes are all now part of the canon of British literature. However, viewing these texts in their originally published format in the rare book room demythologizes the aura of classic that now surrounds them. *Oliver Twist*, collected in volumes 1–5 of *Bentley’s Miscellany*, demonstrates how a new serial was often started alongside a successful one nearing completion to entice established readers to keep purchasing the periodical. In volumes 1 and 2 (each volume contains six monthly numbers), the installments of the new serial *Oliver Twist* follow *Songs of the Month*, by Ainsworth, Samuel Lover, and other authors now forgotten but then more established than Dickens. The placement of *Twist* indicates the publisher’s lack of certainty about the success of this new serial, even though Cruikshank was quite popular in the 1830s and Dickens, then better known as a journalist than as an author, still had enjoyed success with *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club* (1837), which popularized serial fiction in the first place. Not surprisingly, *Oliver Twist* rises to the lead position in the table of contents of volumes 3 and 4 of *Bentley’s*. But despite the enormous popularity of *Twist*, the final four installments drop to the sixteenth position

in the table of contents for volume 5.⁴ Instead, Ainsworth's *Jack Sheppard* has first billing, which reveals the publisher's desire to excite his readership with the escapades of another Newgate novel.

Extending the boundaries of the classroom into the rare book room of a library is more than a field trip to view dusty artifacts. Seeing novels in the very publishing format the Victorians once saw them in makes Victorian cultural constructs accessible to students. The rare book room thus becomes a window into Victorian culture as well as into the best literature of the age.

Notes

¹*Master Humphrey's Clock* was a weekly periodical written wholly by Dickens to carry installments of his full-length novels *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840–41) and *Barnaby Rudge* (1841). *Bentley's Miscellany* was a distinguished monthly periodical including important contributions by William Harrison Ainsworth and by Dickens, who was also the first editor of *Bentley's*.

²Many paperback editions that retain illustrations do so only erratically. For example, following Dickens's own later selection of illustrations, the Oxford edition of *Oliver Twist* retains only eight of Cruikshank's original illustrations, which editor Kathleen Tillotson numbers as twenty-five to include an illustration Dickens rejected. "Fagin in the Condemned Cell" and "Oliver Asking for More" are retained; but other, less memorable illustrations, such as "Sikes and

His Dog," are included rather than, for instance, "The Last Chance" or "Mr. Bumble and Mrs. Corney Taking Tea." Similarly, the Signet edition of Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* retains some of the inset capital designs and an occasional woodcut. Recently, there has been a trend to include illustrations in modern editions, and the complete illustrations of *Vanity Fair*, for example, are printed in the 1994 Norton Critical Edition as well as in the Oxford University Press edition of that novel. Furthermore, the Norton Critical Edition of *David Copperfield* also includes all of Phiz's illustrations. These are but a few examples of the reevaluation of Victorian illustrations in recent paperback editions.

³Cruikshank's career ended in controversy over his exaggerated claims that his illustrations had altered Dickens's original concept of *Oliver Twist* and had inspired Ainsworth's *The Miser's Daughter* and *The Tower of London*. His struggles over authority ended his collaboration with Dickens in 1841 and with Ainsworth in 1844.

⁴Other factors may have influenced this decision. The final magazine installments of *Twist* appeared serially after the three-volume publication of *Twist* and after Dickens had resigned the editorship of *Bentley's*. Also, Ainsworth, the subsequent editor, may have been eager to showcase his own fiction, *Jack Sheppard* (1839).

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Postscript about the Public Libraries

Ruth Perry

The MLA “Statement on the Significance of Primary Records” is part of a wider professional response from the library and scholarly communities to problems of funding and space that they are encountering in their efforts to preserve the print record. The conservation of damaged or deteriorating books and the creation and distribution of adequate reproductions of manuscripts and printed texts for scholars and students without access to originals are two issues that concern those responsible for transmitting to the next generation our cultural and intellectual heritage. Less well understood and publicized but also crucial to the future of our culture is the threat posed to local public libraries by cutbacks in public spending. The closing of even small neighborhood branch libraries, with the loss of their collections, means that the public suffers an irreplaceable loss of a wide variety of books, many dating back to earlier eras and containing material as well as intellectual evidence of cultural history. Furthermore, while these closings may not directly affect the lives of academic professionals with their university library cards, specialized private collections, and online computer texts, they accelerate our society’s alienation from books and reading culture and thus in the long run undermine the work we do and the textual history we value. Most important, the defunding of public libraries stymies the taste for books and reading in those who are poor and less mobile and cuts off their access to a quiet, non-commercial place of respite and imaginative renewal.

Every state in this country has seen branch libraries close or cut back their hours in the last decade. Operating with reduced staffs, many small branch libraries stay open only a few hours a week, often when people working nine-to-five cannot get to them. Cutbacks in federal funding in combination with the diminishing

tax base for many state budgets (a function of disappearing industry and declining property taxes) are making it impossible to keep libraries open at times and in neighborhoods most convenient for the people who most need libraries. Meanwhile Buck-a-Book stores are springing up in many shopping malls, and large chain bookstores flourish, testifying to a newly structured mass market for books and a new level of commodification of literacy and reading.

In California this year there is a statewide library crisis because of the reallocation of local property taxes from library budgets to school districts. It is an expressive double bind—to promote either public libraries or schools, either public ownership of books or institutional selection of reading materials, either autonomous browsing or regulated learning, either book culture or textbook culture, but not both. Although the California case has a special poignancy, libraries everywhere have been in trouble since at least 1990, given their shrinking resources to maintain collections and pay expert staff.

Some larger public libraries, forced to raise money and save space, have been selling their older, out-of-print books to private dealers. Used book dealers will tell you that the market in rare books is picking up again as libraries quietly deaccession to make ends meet. But the cheapest way to dispose of books when they are beyond repair or when bulging shelves need relief is simply to throw them away. Susan Koppelman, known for her anthologies of nineteenth-century women’s stories, was

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dismayed to learn, on repeatedly submitting call slips for nineteenth-century American women's novels and collections of short stories in the Saint Louis Public Library, that many rare and important volumes were permanently unavailable because they had ended up in a landfill. Indeed, according to Koppelman, many of the sources from which she gleaned her first short story collection, *Old Maids* (1984), have been fatally deaccessioned. It has been reported that the works of Langston Hughes and Edmund Wilson were removed from some New England municipal libraries, probably because of the poor condition of the books, but the libraries apparently had no funding to replace them.

Built long ago as a public resource funded by taxpayers' money, the network of public libraries in this country belongs to everyone and to no one in particular. These public buildings with their irreplaceable collections of books are our common property, like parks and beaches and highways. They are not a phenomenon of the market; not much money changes hands for the service they provide. The current Congress is less inclined to support public enterprises than to privatize them, but while some private service industries, like the mail businesses, are turning a profit, so far no one has figured out how to turn a profit from the public libraries. Still, there is clearly more money to be made from selling books than from lending them, and library collections, of no obvious fiscal advantage to anyone, are being allowed quietly to run down, despite the dedication of many library workers and managers and the needs of the public.

Yet public libraries are the very cornerstone of a true democracy. They provide access to information and ideas about everything a thinking citizen might want to know to make a reasoned judgment, cast a vote, or register an opinion. Democratic access to knowledge is essential to the free play of ideas, a concept originating in the Enlightenment and very much conditioned by the rise and spread of print culture. Books provide literary art and entertainment. They support productive aims as well and are the resource of inventors and dreamers. They supply information on everything from building machines and filing patents to fertilizing gardens and raising children. A free society needs free public libraries.

In our century, public libraries have also been an important wellspring of serious literary production. Many of our best writers educated themselves in public libraries, browsing the open shelves, absorbing influences, coming upon unknown authors long out of print, following the trail of sudden interest and inspira-

tion. Libraries thus represent our literary future as well as our literary heritage. Where will the poets and citizens of the future make their unexpected discoveries? Where will they roam uncalculatingly among writers out of fashion and not to be found in any undergraduate syllabus? Aspiring writers cannot buy everything they need to read. And how many poets can afford computer access to online texts—even if screen reading were the same as hand-held book reading? Democratic access to books in our thousands of public libraries will not soon be replaced by any electronic or market mechanisms. Professors of literature in particular should be aware of the cultural cost of the erosion of this public resource.

A letter written by the author Helena Maria Viramontes in 1993 as part of a campaign to save a local library makes the case eloquently:

Several weeks ago I was informed that a branch library in the city of Orange [California], appropriately called "The Friendly Stop / La Parada De Amistad," is being shut down. This deeply concerns me. I have been involved with the library which is a trailer situated in the barrio of West-Central Orange. The one room library is constantly visited by Latina/os primarily, mostly teens, who have found the library a comfortable reprieve from the streets. They read, receive homework assistance, or become involved in the many bilingual activities the library has to offer. . . .

How many of us Chicana/o-Latina/o writers grew up in bookless homes? How many of us found solace and rapture in being able to attend the library, sit in a quiet place and read or have the right to exercise our imaginations? I, for one, made an office of a library chair and a piece of table where I would sit for hours and read, conduct meetings, write in my journal, dream, even nap. In a house with eleven people, this library space was my private heaven. It was a space filled with floating answers, infinite questions, and the quiet time for meditation. It was a space for me like no other and we simply can't sit by and let this experience be ripped away from our youth who so very much need it AND want it.

Viramontes speaks for thousands of intellectuals and writers who rely on such oases in our speedy and materialistic world. More, she speaks for the poor and on behalf of the young at risk.

Free public space is in increasingly short supply in this country; there are few places to go any more and few things to do that do not cost money. Public libraries are among the last places left where all people are welcome, qualified for admittance merely by their humanity, curiosity, and literacy. Public libraries symbolize the commitment of our society to something other than commercial exchange. They provide democratic access to books and knowledge for a broad cross section of our population including the elderly, the self-educated, immigrants, children, the poor. It is extremely shortsighted

for academics to ignore the current defunding of public libraries and the real and symbolic threats it poses to the reading public and to extracurricular book culture. We need to defend our public libraries for the sake of an informed citizenry and for our children's children, the readers and writers of the future. Our art and our politics depend on the fullest possible access to the cultural record. If we do not make the effort to keep our librar-

ies intact during these lean years, we will jeopardize for all time what is best in our society.

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